# Center for Military Readiness — Policy Analysis —

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# **Double-Think About Double Standards**

# "Gender-Neutral" Training To Include Gender-Normed Scores

The Obama Administration is pushing hard for "gender diversity" in direct ground combat units, to include **Army** and **Marine infantry** and **Special Operations Forces**, between now and January 2016. The incremental campaign relies upon official dissembling about double standards that are disguised as "gender-neutral." Military leaders are going along with this, leading people to believe that if women are assigned to infantry fighting teams, training standards will be the same for all and as high as they were before.

Such assurances are equivocal and misleading. In July the **Center for Military Readiness (CMR)** submitted a statement to the **House Armed Services Personnel Subcommittee**, drawing attention to ways that **Defense Department** officials are justifying gender-specific (normed) standards that are deceptively labeled "gender-neutral." <sup>1</sup>

Contrary to promises that men and women will be trained with identical standards in "tip of the spear" fighting units that attack the enemy, the Marines have hidden the fine print "catch" in plain sight. Footnotes in a June **Marine Corps** report to Congress noted that "gender-neutral" standards will be implemented with "gender-normed" scoring on preliminary fitness tests that treat men and women differently. Resulting training standards will be "equal" but lower than they were before.

The same thing likely will happen in Army **Ranger** training, which Chief of Staff **Gen. Ray Odierno** intends to make co-ed. The Army plans to order (not "allow") women into previously allmale field artillery and armor units by July 2014, and infantry positions by July 2015.

In January Joint Chiefs Chairman **Gen. Martin Dempsey** admitted that high standards beyond the abilities of women will be "questioned." <sup>2</sup> Any training program deemed "invalid" under Pentagon -endorsed "gender diversity" goals eventually will be eliminated, modified, or scored differently to achieve what Gen. Dempsey called a *"critical mass"* of women in the combat arms.

No matter what the administration's leaders say about standards now, **President Barack Obama** soon will choose new military chiefs of staff who will fully implement his radical agenda. Under pressure from Pentagon feminists who see male-oriented military culture as a problem, new leaders will quietly change infantry training programs to promote "gender diversity metrics," another name for quotas.

Unless Congress intervenes, Defense Department and military leaders will continue to justify double standards involving women (DSIW, for short), using a misleading vocabulary to disguise a dubious social experiment. Protesting too much, military leaders are starting to echo the president's **Obamacare** promise: "If you like tough training in your infantry, you can keep it."

Given what is known about physiological differences, as well as the politics of the Pentagon, no one should believe this. In a single generation, pressures to achieve "gender diversity" in combat will degrade tough, male-oriented standards to a point at which no one will remember what they were before. Unwilling women who don't want to be treated like men will suffer disproportionate injuries, and less-demanding training will leave men less prepared for war.

Congress can correct health care insurance problems, but when military standards are corrupted for political reasons, national security is endangered and there will be no going back.

#### 1. Infantry Training Battalion (ITB) Physical Performance Standards

In the fall of 2012 the Marines invited female officers to volunteer for training on the extremely demanding Infantry Officer Course (IOC) at Quantico, VA. Ten spirited women have attempted the course so far, but none succeeded and nine did not last beyond the first day.

Now the Marines are conducting a similar research project at the **Infantry Training Battalion** (ITB) School of Infantry (East) at Camp Geiger, NC, which trains enlisted men for the infantry on a course that is far less demanding. <sup>3</sup> According to a Media Roundtable Information Brief released on September 25, "Initial and Final PFT (Physical Fitness Test) and... CFT (Combat Fitness Test) Minimums" will be part of the ITB program of instruction.

The information is significant because the PFT and CFT tests in question are heavily gendernormed, *not* gender-neutral. Incorporating gender-enhanced PFT and CFT scores into infantry training that used to have a single (male) standard nullifies claims of "gender-neutrality" in the infantry training program.

Consider what would happen if the **National Football League** trained physically fit, football-savvy female cheerleaders, using the same exercise equipment used by linebackers. Training facility machine adjustments would accommodate gender differences, in the same way that Marine PFT and CFT programs are "adjusted to account for physiological differences between genders." The cheerleaders would succeed in the gender-normed gym, but if they are suited up and sent out to face the opposing team's linebackers, none would last beyond the referee's first whistle.

#### a. Physical Fitness Course (PFT)

In November 2012, Gen. James Amos announced changes in the Physical Fitness Test (PFT) for female Marines, effective January 2014. Women will have to do three pull-ups to pass the new PFT – just above the failing grade for men. **Eight** pull-ups will earn **100** points for women, but only 40 points for men. To get the same 100 point grade, men will have to do 20 pull-ups.

- On June 18, 2013, the Marines presented a report to Congress on implementation plans for gender-integration in the combat arms. <sup>5</sup> As stated in footnote #4 of that report, "Starting in calendar year (CY) 2014, the PFT will be comprised of three gender-neutral events designed to measure general physical fitness (dead-hang pull-ups, crunches, and a 3 mile run.)" (Due to concerns about "potential risks," women's pull-up requirements were postponed into 2014.)
- Then footnote #4 contradicts its own assertion of "gender-neutrality" with double-speak: "The PFT is gender-normed for score in order to account for physiological differences between genders. Example: A male Marine must run 18:00 or faster to achieve the

**CMR Policy Analysis** Page 2 of 8 maximum score on the 3-mile run; a female Marine must run 21:00 or faster to achieve the maximum score on the 3-mile run."

The PFT component of enlisted infantry training for women is not gender-neutral; it is gender-normed. Generals who claim otherwise are walking around with no clothes.

#### b. Requirements of the Combat Fitness Course (CFT)

Footnote #5 of the Marines' June 18 report states, "The CFT is comprised of three gender-neutral events (800-meter run in the utility uniform, ammunition can lifts, and a course that simulates movement under fire). Then, another glaring contradiction: "The CFT is also 'gender-normed' for score, similar to the PFT, in order to account for physiological differences between genders."

MCO 6100.13 sets forth requirements of the CFT as they were revised on 10 Aug. 2009. <sup>6</sup> Among other things, the revised MCO replaces the simpler CFT pass-fail system that was used in 2008 with a scored system that is heavily gender-normed. Men and women do the same three physical exercises in the CFT, but the scoring system awards extra points to women. Sections of interest (6 through 8) are highlighted here with focus on requirements for 17-26 year-olds:

- (6) Performance. Table 3-3 sets forth men's requirements in three events that are the same as current Infantry Training Battalion (ITB) standards: Maneuver to Contact (MTC), 4 min. 13 sec.; Ammo Can Lift (AL), 33; and Maneuver Under Fire (MANUF), 3 min. 58 sec. However, CFT requirements for 17-26 year-old women, which are shown in the same table, are slower or easier in all three events: MTC, 5 min. 27 sec.; AL, 17; and MANUF, 5 min. 59 sec.<sup>7</sup> The attempt to be "fair" to women nullifies claims of gender-neutrality. 8
- (7) Classification. The 10 Aug. 2009 version of the MCO includes a revised Table 3-4, titled "CFT Classifications." Unlike the previous MCO dated 1 Aug. 2008, the classifications are based on a point system. For example, a 1st Class rating on the CFT requires 270-300 points, 2nd Class 225-269, 3rd Class 190-224, and Fail, 189 and below.
- **(8) Score.** The 1 August 2008 MCO stated simply, "The CFT is a Pass/Fail event." The Aug. 2009 version, however, includes 13 pages setting forth gender-normed scores that cannot be described as "gender-neutral." The detailed tables make it clear that female trainees in the CFT, a component of the ITB as well as other occupational training programs, will receive higher scores for physical tests that would be considered low or failing if they were performed by men. For example:
- In the CFT Movement to Contact event a male performing the test in 4 minutes, 13 seconds would be awarded 60 (minimum) points; a female doing the MTC event in the CFT in the same amount of time would receive 84 points.
- In the CFT Ammo Can Lift test, 60 repetitions score 79 points for a man, but 100 for a woman. The minimum score for a man, 33 lifts, earns 60 points, 75 for a woman. Below the 33 mark, a man fails. A woman does not fail unless she performs fewer than 17 lifts.
- In the CFT Maneuver Under Fire event, a man performing the test in **3 minutes**, **58** seconds, would get a (minimum) **60** score, but a woman would get **88** points for the same performance in the CFT. All of these requirements are gender-normed, not neutral.

CMR Policy Analysis
Page 3 of 8
November 2013

Under the CFT classification system, a man earning 189 points or less would fail the course. However, a woman performing at the same level or slightly lower than the male minimum (MTC-84, AL-75, plus MANUF-88), would earn a gender-normed total: 247 points. Due to padded scores, she would be highly rated in the "2nd Class" category. If the Marines want to increase resentment of women in the military, this is a sure-fire way to do it.

#### c. Other Infantry Training Battalion (ITB) Requirements

The Marines' September presentation for the media did not describe specific requirements for ITB events such as squadron automatic weapon (SAW) training, live-fire exercises, and offensive/ defensive infantry integration field exercises that were previously set forth on the Infantry Training Battalion website page titled "What to Expect." 9

The revised ITB "What to Expect" page replaces the previous week-by-week description of events with a single paragraph that omits most details. <sup>10</sup> If the object is to prove that men and women are being treated the same, it would seem better to provide more detail, not less.

Instead, the USMC June 18 Report to Congress concedes that obstacle course requirements and scores also will not be the same for men and women. Footnote #6 states that women will be allowed to use a "step" on certain obstacles, in order to account for height and other physiological differences between genders.

A detailed description of the ITB obstacle course is not available, but photos of a typical obstacle course at the USMC Officer Candidate School (OCS) at Quantico, VA, shows two side-by side paths with barriers that trainees must climb over – one for male officer candidates and one for females. 11 A horizontal bar on the female course is 12 inches lower than a similar one on the men's side. Discrete wooden "assists" nailed to side posts and the fronts of female climbing walls provide toe-hold help for women scaling barriers on that side. The gender-normed course helps to train talented women Marine officers, but if they become eligible for the combat arms, all should be required to pass the male obstacle course with identical non-gender-normed scores.

The Marines have attempted to divert attention from DSIW by noting that minimum ITB standards do not reflect the vast majority of recruits who score significantly higher on all three graded events. This is a misleading half-truth. Contrary to Amazon Warrior Myths that frequently appear in popular culture, there is no credible evidence supporting the notion that significant numbers of women can perform at maximum levels much beyond the minimum levels of men. 12

Attempts to induct a few exceptional women would require retention of marginal men who would otherwise wash out. This would put the Marines' special culture of excellence at risk.

### 2. Navy Gender-Norming in Riverine Training

Navy riverine units engage in land combat from small boats. According to the Virginian-Pilot, Navy officials are now validating unprecedented riverine training for women, with standards that incorporate physical readiness test (PRT) standards for fitness that are gender- and age-specific.<sup>13</sup>

The PRT's sliding scale is significantly easier for women in running and push-up requirements, and there doesn't seem to be a point at which women are held to physical standards identical to what they were in four phases of riverine training that used to be all-male.

**CMR Policy Analysis** Page 4 of 8 The Virginian-Pilot acknowledged that the riverine obstacle course was particularly difficult for short women. "Having to jump up to grab a bar or climb a high wall made some of the obstacles insurmountable." Any person's inability to drag a wounded colleagues across a field after running 100 yards could endanger lives and riverine missions. "[N] one managed to climb the ropes," reported the Pilot, "but they were satisfied." Officials insist that program standards remain unchanged, but some female trainees who could not climb ropes were advanced nonetheless.

Instructors flatter female trainees with effusive praise in the presence of reporters, but Pentagon pressure for "success" sets up the women for disproportionate risks in training and actual combat. Some will feel resentment and undeserved blame for lowered standards. Unsuitable assignments to achieve "gender diversity" will result in debilitating injuries for less-strong women, and inevitable reassignments will divert thousands of dollars from shrinking operational funds. 14

Due to significant, unchanging differences in physiology, treating women like infantrymen will not work. In a September 2011 presentation to the **Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services**, the Marines reported: <sup>15</sup>

- On average, women have 47% lower lifting strength, 40% lower muscle strength, 20% lower aerobic capacity (important for endurance), and 26% slower road march speed.
- Both female attrition/injury rates during entry level training and discharge (break) rates are twice those of men, and non-deployability rates are three times higher.

Gender-normed scoring systems might help women to pass in training, but the illusion of "equality" will leave both men and women less prepared for the physical demands of close combat on the battlefield, where gender-norming does not exist. Author George Orwell, who invented the phrase "double-speak," saw this coming decades ago: 16

"The point is that we are all capable of believing things which we know to be untrue, and then, when we are finally proved wrong, impudently twisting the facts so as to show that we were right. Intellectually, it is possible to carry this process for an indefinite time: the only check on it is that sooner or later a false belief bumps up against solid reality, usually on a battlefield."

## 3. When Does the Gender-Norming Stop?

Without question, women have performed with courage in contingent combat situations "in harm's way" – sometimes working with women and children in war zones and gathering intelligence in ways that men cannot do. Still, physical requirements in direct ground combat units, which engage in deliberate offensive action against the enemy, have not changed.

The 1992 Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces approved of gender-specific standards to promote wellness in basic, entry-level, and precommissioning training. The commission's recommendation remains valid, but only if a) The training program does not supply personnel to physically-demanding occupational specialties; and b) Women remain exempt from direct ground combat positions such as the infantry, in which physical strength is critically important for survival and mission accomplishment.

If the Obama administration drops women's exemptions from direct ground combat, gender-normed training allowances, assists, and gender-normed scores should be eliminated as well.

**CMR Policy Analysis** Page 5 of 8 Prior to January 2016, the military service chiefs may ask for exceptions to policy that keep some direct ground combat battalions all-male. Current leaders are not building political support for that option, however, and Congress has failed to obtain answers to legitimate questions. The House has not had comprehensive oversight hearings on women in combat since 1979; the Senate since 1991.

## 4. The Need for Clarity in Terms

The push for women in land combat depends on double standards, equivocation, and confusion about terms of discussion that require clarification. For example:

- Women have served with courage in contingent or incident-related combat, coming under fire "in harm's way." Requirements are different, however, in the infantry and other "tip of the spear" fighting teams that attack the enemy under fire. In that environment, women do not have an equal opportunity to survive, or to help fellow soldiers survive.
- At a HASC Personnel Subcommittee hearing in July, Rep. Loretta Sanchez (D-CA) asked Marine Lt. Gen. Robert Milstead whether close combat assignments could be voluntary for women. The general said No, "That's why they're called orders."
- In a project called "Soldier 20-20," the Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) is trying to determine the "physical components of specific military tasks and occupational specialties." Every time the Army has attempted such a project, going back to the 1980s, civilian feminists and the Pentagon's DACOWITS have successfully blocked any attempt to establish high standards that they consider to be "barriers" to women's careers.
- Enlisted women, who outnumber female officers five to one, will pay the price for career opportunities for a few female officers, even though, for decades, women have been promoted at rates equal to or faster than men.
- Feminists who demand "equality" will demand "fairness" when female injury rates soar. In 2002 and again in 2010, the **United Kingdom** decided not to assign women to the infantry for various reasons, including a failed experiment with "gender-free" training that was ended after 18 months due to excessive female injuries. <sup>1</sup>
- The administration's determined pursuit of "diversity metrics," as recommended by the Defense Department-endorsed report of the Military Leadership Diversity Commission (MLDC), is not about treating everyone the same. "Gender diversity" is about demographics and groups — a radical departure from the military's honorable tradition of recognizing individual merit, which was the key to successful racial integration.
- Intangible factors such as unit cohesion, morale, and discipline are even more important than physical strength. Problems of sexual misconduct, both voluntary and involuntary, remain unresolved. Extending these complicated issues into the combat arms will make them worse, not better. A recent Defense Department study has found that reports of sexual assault are almost twice as high among female troops who were exposed to contingent combat while deployed in war zones. 18
- According to legal experts, making female military personnel eligible for direct ground combat likely would result in a federal court ruling making young women subject to **Selective Service** and a possible future draft. <sup>19</sup>

**CMR Policy Analysis** Page 6 of 8 It is difficult to report on what is being done to implement the administrations mandate for women in combat because the military services keep revising terminology and websites – three of which were changed during the course of this research. In 2012 the Marines conducted extensive tests with hundreds of male and female volunteers, but officials have refused to provide specific information about the results, even to members of Congress.

#### **Conclusion: Congress Should Codify Sound Policy for Women**

To truly honor and respect military women, Congress should take these issues seriously. To retain policy-making authority, ensure high, uncompromised standards in the combat arms, and preserve civilian women's exemptions from Selective Service registration and a possible draft, Congress should codify "Sound Policy for Women In the Military."

Members should exercise diligent oversight, holding hearings with independent experts, and officially defining and differentiating direct ground combat from contingency, incident-related combat "in harm's way." An objective review of both historic data and research findings compiled in 2012 would highlight scores of issues not mentioned in this analysis, including questions of values: What kind of country are we? Is violence against women OK, as long as it happens at the hands of the enemy? <sup>21</sup>

For the sake of both women and men, Congress should codify women's exemptions from direct ground combat, with the stipulation that policy may not change without an affirmative vote of Congress. Proponents of further change should bear the burden of proof in showing how such changes would *benefit* both military women and men, while *strengthening* morale, team cohesion and readiness in the combat arms.

#### **Endnotes:**

- 1. CMR <u>Statement to House Armed Services Personnel Subcommittee</u>, July 24, 2013, pp. 6-9, available at: http://cmrlink.org/data/sites/85/CMRDocuments/HASCTestimonyWIC072413.pdf.
- 2. Video embedded in CMR article, <u>"Seven Reasons Why Women-in-Combat "Diversity" Will Degrade Tough Training Standards</u>, available at: http://www.cmrlink.org/articles/print/36488?author=0&image=0&domain=0.
- 3. PowerPoint slide presentation: Research Implementation Plan for Female Enlisted Marines at Infantry

  <u>Training Battalion, School of Infantry East -- Information Brief for Media Roundtable, TECOM, 25 Sep 2013,</u>
  p. 5, available at http://cmrlink.org/data/sites/85/CMRDocuments/MarineITB%20Media%20Roundtable.pdf.
- 4. <u>ALMAR Active Number 046/12</u>, "Change to the Physical Fitness Test," 12 November, 2012, available at: http://www.marines.mil/News/Messages/MessagesDisplay/tabid/13286/Article/134672/change-to-the-physical -fitness-test.aspx. Male PFT requirements are available at: http://usmilitary.about.com/od/marines/l/blfitmale.htm.
- 5. Report to Congress presented by Col. John Aytes, USMC, June 18, 2013, p. 2, footnotes #3 #6, available at: http://www.defense.gov/news/MarineCorpsWISRImplementationPlan.pdf.
- 6. MCO 6100.13, 1 Aug.2008, with revisions dated 10 Aug. 2009, available at http://www.marines.mil/Portals/59/Publications/MCO%206100.13%20W\_CH%201.pdf. See pages 3-8 through 3-21 in Enclosure (1) of the MCO, which is still covered by a 1 Aug. 2008 memo signed by former Commandant Gen. James T. Conway. The earlier version of MCO 6100.13, dated 1 Aug. 08, obtained in hard-copy and not available on the website, showed different information about the CFT in Enclosure (1), Table 3-3, p. 3-8. A PDF of 2008 MCO 6100.13 is available at: http://cmrlink.org/data/sites/85/CMRDocuments/MCO-6100 13-080108.pdf.
- 7. The 2009 MCO chart of gender-normed scores shows the MANUF minimum for women as 6 min, 2 sec.
- 8. The previous 2008 version of MCO 6100.13, obtained by CMR, indicated that some male standards have been reduced and women's increased. In the CFT Ammo Can Carry exercise, for example, the male requirement

CMR Policy Analysis

Page 7 of 8

- was reduced by 12, from 45 to 33, and the women's fluctuated: 20 in 2008, 17 in 2009, and 33 in 2013. (See footnote #6, above.) The Marines have not released data supporting higher expectations for the physical performance of women in these events.
- 9. Marine Infantry Training Battalion -- What to Expect (downloaded on Sept. 3, 2013) is available at http:// cmrlink.org/data/sites/85/CMRDocuments/MarineITB-WhatToExpect090313.pdf. The 1 Aug. 2008 page has the same URL as the 10 Aug. 2009 version (linked in footnote #10) which omits details.
- 10. The revised Marine Infantry Training Battalion -- What to Expect (downloaded October 6, 2013) is available at: http://cmrlink.org/data/sites/85/CMRDocuments/MarineITB-WhatToExpect100613.pdf.
- 11. Photos of the Marine Officer Candidate School (OCS) obstacle course at Quantico, VA, are available at: http://cmrlink.org/data/sites/85/CMRDocuments/OCS ObstacleCourse-Quantico.pdf
- 12. Information Paper prepared by Dr. William J. Gregor, PhD, Professor of Social Sciences at the School of Advanced Military Studies at Fort Leavenworth, KS: Physical Suitability of Women for Assignment to Combat and Heavy Work Military Occupational Specialties, available at http://www.cmrlink.org/data/sites/85/ Images/CMRDocuments/Gregor-Info-Paper-20120508.pdf. In a more detailed presentation, Dr. Gregor noted, "The data clearly reveals a very large gap between the physical strength, aerobic capacity and size of Army men and women. Training men and women correctly improves the performance of both groups but it also widens the gap in performance."
- 13. Dianna Cahn, Virginian-Pilot, "Four Women Undergo Warfare Training in N.C.", May 19, 2013, available at: http://hamptonroads.com/print/677945. For example, a 20- to 24-year-old man must do at least 37 push-ups and run 1.5 miles in 13.5 minutes, but a woman of the same age must do 16 push-ups and run the same distance with two extra minutes.
- 14. Numerous reports and sources from the United Kingdom as well as the U.S. are available on the CMR web site "Essential Resources: Diversity for Women in Land Combat" section at http://www.cmrlink.org/content/ essential-resources/34584/diversity for women in land combat. In April 1992 Army Col. Dennis Kowal informed the Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces that MOS reassignments cost approximately \$16,000—an expense that probably would be much greater today.
- 15. USMC Women in the Service Restrictions Review, DACOWITS Brief, 22 Sep 2011, Col. John Nettles, USMC, Slide #8, titled "Women Involuntarily Assigned to GCE - Impact on Recruiting and Retention," available at: http://dacowits.defense.gov/Portals/48/Documents/Reports/2011/Documents/DACOWITS% 20September%202011%20Committee%20Meeting/16%20USMC%20WISR%20DACOWITS%20Brief.pdf. In the same briefing, the Marines told DACOWITS members that male and female volunteers would be asked to perform six "common tasks" to test physical strength and stamina. But when the actual tests got underway in 2012, six tests were reduced to three. The toughest ones were quietly taken out, and the remaining three were made less demanding. See CMR Special Report: Defense Department "Diversity" Push for Women in Land Combat, pp. 15-17, available at: http://cmrlink.org/data/sites/85/CMRDocuments/CMR%20Special% 20Report%20-%20January2013.pdf.
- 16. George Orwell, "In Front of Your Nose," London Tribune, 22 March, 1946.
- 17. CMR Statement, footnote #1 supra, pp. 13-14, footnote #21, and Appendix, p. 20.
- 18. Andrew Tighman, Navy Times, "Female Combat Vets Report More Assaults," Oct. 14, 2013, p. 10.
- 19. CMR Policy Analysis, "Registration of Women for Selective Service Registration and a Possible Future Draft," May 2013, available at: http://cmrlink.org/data/sites/85/CMRDocuments/CMR PolicyAnalysis-May2013.pdf.
- 20. Center for Military Readiness, "What Congress Can Do: Sound Policy for Women in the Military," available at: http://cmrlink.org/data/sites/85/CMRDocuments/WhatCongressCanDoSoundPolicyforWomen041913b.pdf.
- 21. Lt. Col. Robert L. Maginnis, USA (Ret.), Deadly Consequences, How Cowards Are Pushing Women Into Combat, Regnery Publishing, 2013, pp. 193-196.



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**CMR Policy Analysis** Page 8 of 8