



Center for Military Readiness



Promoting high standards and sound priorities for our military men and women.

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Navy Secretary Mabus to Marines: Gender Diversity More Important Than “Survivability and Lethality” in Battle

The **Center for Military Readiness** has published a new **Interim CMR Policy Analysis – Part II**, which reports on recently obtained results of **U.S. Marine Corps** research on the issue of women in direct ground combat units such as the infantry:

[Interim CMR Special Report – Part II, Section A](#)

[U.S. Marine Corps Research Finding: Where Is the Case for Co-Ed Ground Combat?](#)

CMR’s 9-page analysis presents direct quotations from an August 18, 2015, [memorandum](#) signed by **Brig. Gen. George W. Smith, Jr.**, Director of the **Marine Corps Force Innovation Office** at Quantico, VA.

The 14-page Smith memo, addressed to the **Commandant of the Marine Corps**, included 19 additional pages and briefing slides presenting significant facts and research data resulting from the **Marines’ Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force (GCEITF)**. For nine months, the Task Force worked with the **University of Pittsburgh** to scientifically measure the physical capabilities and unit performance of hundreds of male and female volunteers in simulated land combat.

The following comments may be attributed to Elaine Donnelly, President of the Center for Military Readiness:

“During his news conference yesterday, Secretary of Defense **Ashton Carter** promised to carefully consider the ‘**quality of information and analysis behind the recommendations**’ that military service leaders [submit] to the **Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff**. (Secretary Carter will make final determinations based on those recommendations sometime before January 2016.)

“If Secretary Carter honors his promise to be ‘**very facts-based and analysis-based,**’ he will pay close attention to research indicating that gender integration in the combat arms

would do significant harm to **“survivability and lethality”** – paramount factors that the Marines identified as critically important for effectiveness and victory in direct ground combat.

“Contrary to what critics of the Marine Corps say, **this isn’t about resistance to change in the culture of the Corps, it’s about resistance to loss of life caused by flawed policies imposed by politicians in the Pentagon.**

“A sound, objective approach would contrast with reckless comments made by Secretary of the Navy **Ray Mabus**, who [recently announced](#) that he will disregard the best professional advice of the **U.S. Marine Corps** on a serious matter affecting all servicemen and women.

“Contrary to Secretary Mabus’ insulting remarks about Task Force participants, female participants were above-average in strength and preparation going in, and they received full support from average-sized men who volunteered to participate.

“As in previous studies and reports in the **United States** and **United Kingdom**, scientific tests confirmed that men in the combat arms have more **strength, endurance, speed, and accuracy, with rates of injury usually less than half those of women.** Secretary Mabus nevertheless continues to pursue **gender diversity metrics**, another name for quotas.

“In an op-ed that he wrote for the *Washington Post* last Saturday, Secretary Mabus betrayed a fundamental misunderstanding of statistical analysis. Data points are derived from the performances of multiple research participants – not just the highest-scoring or lowest-scoring. It matters, therefore that all-male squads, teams, and units outperformed gender-integrated teams in **93 of 134 tasks.**

“Predictable problems that detract from combat readiness cannot be “mitigated” with politically-correct theories and unsupported hopes countered by reality. Pushing ahead for the sake of gender diversity and quotas would do great harm to women as well as men, while weakening the **All-Volunteer Force** on which our national security depends.”

The August 18 Smith report, which was initially obtained by the *San Diego Union-Tribune*, incorporated points made in a 4-page [Summary](#) released on September 10. Approximately 1,000 pages of detailed research results have yet to be released.

In an ongoing series, CMR will analyze inconsistent statements in the August 18 documents, which were based on unsupported theories and speculations contradicted by empirical data in the same report.

Links to previous CMR Policy Analyses and articles are here:

- CMR Policy Analysis: [Co-Ed Combat Tests Hazardous to Women’s Health](#)

- CMR Policy Analysis: [New British Report Shreds Case for Women in Ground Close Combat \(GCC\)](#)
- Interim CMR Special Report, Sept. 2014, [U.S. Marine Corps Research Findings: Where Is the Case for Co-Ed Ground Combat? -- Executive Summary](#)
- CMR: [Israeli Defense Force Decides: Armored Tanks Will Stay All-Male](#)

For more information or to arrange an interview with Mrs. Donnelly, call **734/464-9430**.

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*The Center for Military Readiness is an independent public policy organization that researches and reports on military/social issues. Elaine Donnelly founded CMR in 1993 following her service on the 1992 **Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces**. More information is available on the CMR website, www.cmrlink.org.*

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