



Center for Military Readiness



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

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## CMR Releases New Interim Special Report – Part II

### *U.S. Marine Corps Research Findings: Where is the Case for Co-Ed Ground Combat?*

The Center for Military Readiness has released a new two-section, 38-page [Interim CMR Special Report](#) that analyzes recently-released results of U.S. Marine Corps research done on the subject of **Women in Direct Ground Combat**. Data released to date confirm that implementation of plans to order women into direct ground combat units by **January 2016 would needlessly harm military women, men in the combat arms, and the All-Volunteer Force on which national security depends.**

CMR President **Elaine Donnelly** has called on **Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter** to honor his own promise that his decision regarding women in close combat recommendations would rely on “**the analytic underpinnings and the data supporting them.**” By that measure, Donnelly said, “*Secretary Carter must assign greater weight to Marine Corps empirical evidence than he does to wishful thinking, unsupported speculations, and ‘mitigation myths.’*”

Key findings analyzed in the December 2015 [Interim CMR Special Report](#) are highlighted here:

#### [Executive Summary](#)

As the report explains, for nine months in 2015, the **USMC Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force (GCEITF)** conducted scientifically-monitored field exercises that simulated wartime requirements for direct ground combat units. Unlike gender-integrated support units that serve “**in harm’s way**” in war zones, these are small fighting teams that seek out and attack the enemy with deliberate offensive action.

The full [Interim CMR Special Report-Part II](#) cites specific documents that are linked in

the endnotes. Among other things, all-male task force teams outperformed mixed-gender units in **69 percent (92 of 134)** ground combat tasks. Individual and group performance data also showed significantly higher rates of female injuries and early fatigue that affected marksmanship:

***Interim CMR Special Report Part II:  
Where Is the Case for Co-Ed Ground Combat?***

Donnelly continued, “Due to unchangeable physical disadvantages among women that clearly affect **survivability and lethality** in battle, officials should discontinue plans to order women into combat arms units such as the **Marine** and **Army infantry, armor, artillery, and Special Operations Forces**, including **Rangers** and **Navy SEALs**.”

Task Force tests were designed to test a simple **Research Study Hypothesis**: “[A]n *integrated unit under gender-neutral standards will perform equally as well as a gender-restricted unit.*” Despite positive expectations, Task Force data and findings *disproved the hypothesis*.

For purposes of comparison and clarity, the **Interim CMR Special Report** includes **two sections** that explain why this happened, and why it would be **wrong and dangerous to treat military women like men in the combat arms**:

- **Section A**, titled **Marines Set Priorities: “Survivability and Lethality” in Battle** summarizes specific empirical data showing significant gender-related disparities in physical size, strength, endurance, injury rates, and early onset of fatigue.
- **Section B**, titled **Marine Corps Research & “Mitigation Myths”** discredits flawed attempts to downplay the impact of gender-integration on unit **cohesion, discipline, recruiting, retention, deployability, and overall readiness**, and exposes unworkable proposals to “mitigate” the damage that would be done.

Donnelly concluded, “Comprehensive **Marine Corps** research tests have produced highly credible, reality-based, scientific data that discredits theories about gender equality in the combat arms. Much of this information was not available when the **Obama Administration** announced that women would be assigned to direct ground combat units.

“The armed forces should not be forced to rely upon unsupported theories, convoluted calculations or “best case scenarios” that disregard known high risks. It is necessary to analyze mitigation ideas that would make life in the combat arms more difficult and more dangerous, with *no offsetting benefits in terms of military effectiveness*.

“Secretary of Defense Carter and military service secretaries have the solemn responsibility to take this information seriously, and to restore sound priorities in all policies affecting women in the military. **Members of Congress** also must shoulder their constitutional responsibility to conduct responsible oversight *before* irreparable damage is done to the All-Volunteer Force.”

To schedule an interview on this subject, call Elaine Donnelly at **734/464-9430**. More information, including previous **CMR Special Reports**, are available at [www.cmrlink.org](http://www.cmrlink.org).

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*The Center for Military Readiness, founded in 1993, is an independent, non-partisan, educational organization that reports on and analyzes military/social issues. Elaine Donnelly served as a member of the congressionally-established 1992 **Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces**, which studied all aspects of the women in combat issue for a full year.*

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