

**Interim CMR Special Report Summary: U.S. Marine Corps Research
Fails to Make Case for Co-Ed Ground Combat**

The **Obama Administration** expects the **Marine Corps** to find a way to assign women to ground combat units without lowering standards. In CMR's independent view, results of the Marines' multi-phased research projects indicate that these expectations cannot be met.

The Center for Military Readiness has released a 64-page **Interim CMR Special Report**, titled **US Marine Corps Research Findings: Where is the Case for Co-Ed Combat?** The report analyzes previously-undisclosed findings of USMC research initiated in 2012, as of Oct. 3, 2014.

None of the USMC research results produced so far support the theory that women can be physical equals and interchangeable with men in the combat arms. In fact, findings support the opposite view. **How will the Marines – and Congress – handle the truth?**

In direct ground combat units that engage the enemy with deliberate offensive action; such as **Marine and Army infantry, armor, artillery, Navy Seals and Special Operations Forces**, upper body strength and endurance are *essential* for survival and mission success.

Data produced in Marine Corps **Physical and Combat Fitness Tests (PFT and CFT)**, together with proxy test battery results, confirm that gender-related disparities are most evident and significant when measuring upper body strength capabilities. For example:

- In a **Pull-up** test of upper-body strength used in the PFT, women averaged **3.59** pull-ups, compared to **15.69** for the men – more than four times as many.
- The **Clean & Press** event involves single lifts of progressively heavier weights from the ground to above the head (**70, 80, 95, 115 lbs.**), plus **6 reps** with a **65 lb.** weight. In this event **80%** of the men passed the **115 lb.** test, but only **8.7%** of the women passed.
- In the **120 mm Tank Loading Simulation**, a gunnery skills test, participants were asked to lift a simulated round weighing **55 lb.**, **5 times**, in **35 seconds** or less. Quoting Marine researchers, "*Less than 1% of men . . . [compared to] 18.68% of the women . . . could not complete the tank loading drill in the allotted time...*" The report added, "*It would be very likely that failure rates would increase in a more confined space [such as a tank].*"
- In the **155 mm Artillery Lift-and-Carry** test simulating ordnance stowing, Marines had to lift a **95 lb.** artillery round and carry it **50 meters in under 2 minutes**. Noted Marine researchers, "*Less than 1% of men, compared to 28.2% of women, could not complete the 155 mm artillery round lift-and-carry in the allotted time.*" If trainees had to "shoulder the round and/or carry multiple rounds, the 28.2% failure rate would increase."
- On the **Obstacle Course Wall-with-Assist-Box** test, a **20"** high box, (used to simulate a helping-hand) essentially reduced the height of the **7 ft. wall** to approximately **5'4."** Quoting the Marine report, "*Less than 1.2 % of the men could not get over the obstacle course wall using an assist box, while wearing [protective equipment] . . . [compared to] 21.32% of women who could not get over the obstacle course wall . . .*"

Recent Marine proxy tests cannot replicate actual land combat, but they have produced empirical data confirming physical realities that contradict theories about gender equality.

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In 2013 congressional testimony, the Marines said that PFT and CFT standards would be "**gender-neutral**," but also admitted that "**gender-normed scores**" would be used "*in order to accommodate physical differences.*" Scores that are gender-normed in basic training should not be called "gender neutral," or used in performance evaluations to qualify for the combat arms.

The Pentagon-endorsed **Military Leadership Diversity Commission (MLDC)** advocates "**gender diversity metrics**" in the combat arms, another name for quotas. Implementation would have the effect of adjusting standards to "lower but equal" levels, on an incremental basis.

- **General Martin Dempsey** has suggested that standards too high for women should be questioned. The Joint Chiefs Chairman also has called for a "critical mass" of women in the combat arms – a goal that could only be achieved with involuntary assignments and "equitable" standards that are gender-normed and lower than they were before.
- This could result in higher-achieving men being displaced by less-capable personnel, in order to achieve demographic goals that are not the same as merit-based individual rights.

Combat arms assignments would harm women, not help them.

- Due to androgenic differences that are not going to change, ordering women to lift or march with heavy burdens in wartime would set them up for disproportionate injuries.
- It is not fair to impose heavy, unequal burdens on the backs of women, setting them up for higher risks of injury or death. Men who are less prepared for the physical demands of land combat also could lose their lives or be injured needlessly.
- The theoretical **3%** of women who might meet minimum male standards for the combat arms could go from the top of their fields to lower status in land combat units, where they would be at a severe disadvantage and vulnerable to career penalties as well as injuries.
- None of this is necessary. Defense Department data have shown for decades that military women are promoted at rates equal to or faster than men.

The Marines are setting up "**Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Forces**" to "test" a pre-determined hypothesis of success at three California bases during 2015.

- To prove a pre-determined hypothesis, experiments with mixed-gender task forces will evaluate "collective" performance of units having similar gender ratios. "Success" will likely involve burden-sharing, not evaluations of individual capabilities.
- Some of the organizations involved in the design of **Marine Corps Force Integration Plan** and subsequent studies, such as **RAND**, are not independent, objective, or likely to challenge the administration's monolithic group-think on military/social issues.

The **Interim CMR Special Report** calls attention to major issues that are not being addressed. For example: The impact of non-deployability and health-related personnel losses on readiness; Sexual misconduct, both voluntary and involuntary, in the military "workplace;" Recruiting and retention; Combat violence against women; Eligibility for Selective Service obligations, and many more.

Congress should hold hearings on the Marines' research and codify sound policies that would guard national security by *strengthening* the All-Volunteer Force. — www.cmrlink.org