



Center for Military Readiness



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

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Co-Ed Combat Tests Hazardous to Women's Health

The **U.S. Army** has announced that for the first time ever, two female officers are about to graduate from the exceptionally tough, three-phase **Ranger Course**. The **Center for Military Readiness** congratulates the still-unnamed **U.S. Military Academy** graduates for persevering and earning their colleagues' respect.

CMR President **Elaine Donnelly** advised caution, however, before drawing the conclusion that women in the military should be considered interchangeable with men in combat arms units such as the **infantry, armor, cannon field artillery, Special Operations Forces** and **Navy SEALs**.

She also took issue with Obama Defense Department leaders and **“politicians in uniform.”** These include Chief of Naval Operations **Admiral Jon Greenert** — who, according to an [AP report](#) today, want to include women in Navy SEAL teams — Secretary of the Navy **Ray Mabus**, who overruled surface Navy concerns about enormous costs for restructuring small ships for gender-integration, and just-retired Army Chief of Staff **Gen. Ray Odierno**.

Said Donnelly, “These officials and more in this administration are putting gender politics above national security and the best interests of both women and men in the military. All of them are disregarding previously-undisclosed military combat experiments, which show injury rates among women twice as high as men’s.”

The Center has just released a new **CMR Policy Analysis** that focuses on women’s health and high injury rates in recent military combat experiments. “These inconvenient realities,” said Donnelly, “discredit theories of physical equality for women in the combat arms.”

[Co-Ed Combat Tests Hazardous to Women's Health](#)
[Research Reveals High Costs of “Gender Diversity Metrics”](#)

The eight page [CMR Policy Analysis](#), which cites previously undisclosed Army documents obtained through the **Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)**, encourages policy makers to consider the interests of all military women, not just a few.

Said Donnelly, “It is unfair and unseemly for high-ranking admirals and generals to pressure the military services to politicize major decisions at the expense of the majority of women, especially enlisted women who do not want to be treated like men in military occupations that are beyond their physical strength.”

Donnelly added, “Posturing politicians cannot justify disproportionate harm to female soldiers’ health, without informed consent, in direct ground combat positions that would have to be assigned on the same involuntary basis as men. No one should forget that in 2013, Joint Chiefs Chairman **Gen. Martin Dempsey** admitted that standards too high for women would be questioned, and “*significant cadres*” of women would be used to achieve a “*critical mass*” in formerly all-male units.

“Experiences of the two women who passed the Ranger course should not allay concerns about disproportionate injuries among the majority of average-sized female soldiers and Marines. Despite claims that all has been going well in research in progress since 2012, in the Army’s combat research “**Exception to Policy**” (ETP) experiments, female soldiers suffered twice as many injuries as men.” In particular:

- The **U. S. Army Medical Command** compared male/female injury rates in formerly all-male units such as field and air defense artillery, and found 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. Details are in [Appendix A](#), cited in the CMR Policy Analysis.
- Another document provided by the **U.S. Army Institute of Public Health** reported 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. Details are in [Appendix B](#), also in the Policy Analysis.
- Defense Department laws and regulations governing physically dangerous experiments with humans require informed consent. A sample consent form provided to CMR described test requirements, but failed to provide information about disproportionate risks of injury and other health issues unique to women.
- If women are assigned to positions beyond their physical strength and need to be

reassigned, retraining would cost the Army **\$30,697** per soldier. Decisions to drop out would cost an additional **\$17,606** in basic training costs, not counting individual recruitment expenditures that are higher for women. The shrinking American Army will have to sacrifice more important things to cover these avoidable losses.

Said Donnelly, “In theory, gender integration is supposed to occur without lowering standards or combat effectiveness. That goal is on a collision course, however, with Defense Department political mandates to achieve ‘**gender diversity metrics,**’ another name for ‘quotas.’ ”

A recent report from the **British Ministry of Defence**, which CMR analyzed in a February CMR Policy Analysis titled [New British Ministry Defence Review Paper Shreds Case for Women in Ground Close Combat \(GCC\)](#), ... quoted the British military’s grave concerns about two-fold higher risks of musculoskeletal (MSK) injury.

- Among other things, the British Review Paper noted, *“There will be some women, among the physical elite, who will achieve the entry tests for GCC [ground close combat] roles. But these women will be more susceptible to acute short term injury than men . . .”*
- Furthermore, *“Roles that require individuals to carry weight for prolonged period are likely to be the most damaging.”* The report also noted that *“combat marksmanship degrades as a result of fatigue when the combat load increases in proportion to body weight and strength.”*

The [CMR Policy Analysis](#) explains why female injury rates double those of men would increase demands on the military medical system and the under-resourced **Veterans Administration (VA)**. Military women have a right to know about risks related to differences in physiology, which are not going to change.

Asked Mrs. Donnelly, *“Do we really need to increase the number of female disabled veterans in order to advance women’s rights in the military?”*

She added, *“In theory, gender integration is supposed to occur without lowering standards or combat effectiveness. That goal is on a collision course, however, with Pentagon mandates to achieve “gender diversity metrics,” another name for “quotas.”*

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

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