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## "Gender-Neutral" Infantry Training Includes Gender-Normed Test Scores CMR Analyzes Double-Think About Double Standards and Violence Against Women

In response to Pentagon pressure to assign women to Marine and Army infantry battalions, and the ongoing Senate debate about legislation purporting to protect military women from sexual assaults, **Center for Military Readiness** President **Elaine Donnelly** made the following comments, expanding upon her op-ed published in the Washington Times yesterday:

## **DONNELLY: Ordering Women Into the Combat Grinder**

"Members of Congress who are engaging in a confused debate about sexual assaults in the military are missing the big picture. The pending House Defense Authorization bill contains two dozen measures focused on sexual harassment and assault, but nothing to prevent extension of those problems into the combat arms.

"Defense Department officials are implementing incremental plans that will result in military women being ordered (not "allowed") into direct ground combat battalions that attack the enemy. Acquiescent military leaders keep insisting that co-ed infantry training will be "the same," but the fine-print "catch" is hidden in plain sight.

"Details and links to cited documents are included in a new CMR Policy Analysis:

## **Double-Think About Double Standards**

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

"Instead of being carried away with emotion and misdirected chivalry, members of the Senate and House should seriously consider the facts and consequences of ill-advised policies that will lower standards and increase risks of violence against military women. For example:

- Footnotes in a June Marine Corps report to Congress stated, as occupational specialties are opened to women, Physical Fitness Test and Combat Fitness Test standards will be "gender-neutral" with "gender-normed" scores that "account for physiological differences between the genders." Incorporating gender-normed scores in infantry training contradicts disingenuous claims that standards will be "gender-neutral" and "the same" for men and women.
- In a Defense Department-sponsored study based on 13,000 confidential interviews of military women, published in the July 2013 <u>Women's Health Issues Journal</u>, female

veterans who were exposed to close combat violence reported sexual assaults at rates twice as high as other military women. The same study found that "Violent combat settings make men more likely to become aggressive toward . . . military women." In addition, "a high-stress, life-threatening combat setting may find it more difficult to avoid high-risk settings for sexual assault and harassment." (Navy Times, Oct. 14)

 During a recent congressional hearing, in response to a question from Rep. Loretta Sanchez (D-CA), Marine Lt. Gen. Robert Milstead confirmed that if women become eligible for direct ground combat battalions, assignments will not be voluntary. That's why we call them orders," said the general.

"In January Joint Chiefs Chairman **Gen. Martin Dempsey** <u>admitted</u> that high standards beyond the abilities of women will be questioned and modified to achieve a *"critical mass"* of women in the combat arms.

"Members of the House and Senate who want to reduce sexual assaults against women should codify women's exemptions from direct ground combat, stipulating that the policy may not change without an affirmative vote of Congress. This is the only way to show true respect for our courageous women and men in the military."

Elaine Donnelly is President of the Center for Military Readiness, and a former member of the 1992 Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces. To schedule an interview, write to <a href="mailto:elaine@cmrlink.org">elaine@cmrlink.org</a> or call 734/464-9430.

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