



# Center for Military Readiness — Policy Analysis —

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## "Chilling Trend" of Sexual Assault in the Military

Buried in a new **Army** report about wartime stress and discipline in the ranks, bad news about the culture of the military is hidden in plain sight. Violent attacks and rapes in the ranks have nearly doubled since 2006, rising from **663** in 2006 to **1,313** last year. (Figure 111-25, p. 121). Even worse, violent sex crime is growing at an average rate of **14.6** percent per year, and the rate is accelerating. (p. 122)

No wonder the [news release](#) announcing the 211-page "**Gold Book**," titled [Generating Health & Discipline in the Force Ahead of the Strategic Reset](#), does not mention a brutally-frank section titled "**Sex Crime Trends**." Only the index mentions the unusually candid 9-page section, which illustrates with several graphs what the report describes as a "*chilling trend*." (p. 123)

Military women have served courageously in the Middle East since 9/11. They are not responsible for the consequences of politically-motivated policies and misguided decisions made by Pentagon authorities who have capitulated to feminists and social engineers since the early 1990s. In 1994, for example, civilian feminist appointees imposed [Gender-Integrated Basic Training \(GIBT\)](#) on the Army.

Following a rash of co-ed training sex scandals in 1996, the 1997 **Kassebaum-Baker Commission** unanimously recommended that GIBT be discontinued because it was "*resulting in less discipline, less unit cohesion, and more distraction from training programs*." (p. 15) The commission also noted that the **Marines'** single-gender basic training was producing superior results.

Instead of reconsidering Army GIBT and other policies known to weaken discipline, the Pentagon pressed ahead and is now doubling down. On February 9, 2012, Pentagon officials endorsed the goals of the [Military Diversity Leadership Commission, \(MLDC\)](#) an egalitarian group that is primarily composed of civilians and a few former military from the "diversity" community.<sup>1</sup>

The ultimate goal is to promote "diversity" by assigning women to direct ground combat Army and Marine infantry and **Special Operations Forces**. These are all-male battalions that attack the enemy with deliberate offensive action under fire.

The Pentagon also plans to establish "gender-neutral" training standards, which have never worked for two reasons: a) Women are at far greater risk of debilitating injuries, both in training and while deployed; and b) Feminists always demand gender-normed standards that award higher scores for "equal effort," not equal performance.

### ***Background: Incremental Assignments In or Near Land Combat***

As [CMR reported](#) previously, in 2004 the Army began violating Defense Department rules stating that combat-located support units were required to be all-male. Female soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan were "attached" but not "assigned" to support units that "collocated" or constantly embedded with all-male infantry battalions.

Eight years later, on February 9, the Defense Department dropped the "**collocation rule**" that the Army had been ignoring for years, belatedly declaring previously-unauthorized assignments to be legal. At that briefing Pentagon officials also said (five times) that the announced policy changes would be "*only the beginning, not the end*" of changes that the Diversity Commission recommends.

The ultimate goal is to order women into "tip of the spear" direct ground combat (DGC) units, similar to the all-male units that liberated **Baghdad** in March 2003 and **Fallujah** in November 2004. The commission also advocates "diversity metrics;" i.e., gender quotas to ensure women's promotions all the way to Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Definitions are important. All of our deployed troops, including female engagement teams (FETs) that personally search or talk with Muslim civilian women and children, are serving "in harm's way." Such missions, which men cannot do, are dangerous and deserving of recognition. But they are not the same as land combat missions, which involve deliberate attacks against the enemy.

The 1992 **Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces** confirmed that in the direct ground combat environment, women do not have an equal opportunity to survive, or to help fellow soldiers to survive. The Army's new findings on measurable trends and risk factors associated with **military sexual trauma (MST)** provide even more reasons why it would be a bad idea to assign women to land combat infantry battalions.

### ***Women as Targets***

The Gold Book reports, from 2006 through 2011, sex crimes in the active-duty Army have trended upward with a **28 percent** increase in the offense rate and a **20 percent** increase in offenders. Females are only **14 percent** of the force but **95 percent** of all sex crime victims. (p. 121)

Explicit details, illustrated with line graphs, report: "*The rate of violent sex crime, while seasonal, has increased year after year since FY 2006. Rape, sexual assault and forcible sodomy were the most frequent violent sex crimes committed in the Army in the last year. In FY 2011 alone, the CID [Criminal Investigation Command] found 515 rapes, 414 aggravated sexual assaults and 349 forcible sodomies.*" (p. 122) "*Violent sex crimes in FY 2011 clearly diverged from a seasonal pattern with an elevated trend upward, well above previous years.*" (p. 123)

It is not surprising that "*alcohol was known to be involved in almost 63% of all rapes and aggravated sexual assaults.*" The report further indicates that the occurrence of sexual assault in high-density housing, particularly military barracks, training dormitories, hotels and containerized housing units, "*remains a serious issue.*" (p. 124)

Environments conducive to "*alcohol-related socialization*" include barracks life, but also parties at private residences on and off the installation. "*Key components in both these scenarios include the opportunity for incapacitation and seclusion of potential victims. During the course of the party, the incapacitated victim is typically removed to a separate room /bedroom where the crime is later committed in isolation.*" (pp. 124-125)

Senior officers are encouraged to mentor and watch out for newly-arriving female soldiers, but human relationships are complicated and never perfect. In 1996, drill instructors were involved in numerous incidents of sexual assault at the Army's **Aberdeen Proving Ground** in Maryland. There were also several cases of "**consexploitation**" — inappropriate sexual relationships between drill instructors and junior trainees that were consensual but exploitive.

The same drill instructor/trainee problem has emerged again, this time at **Lackland Air Force Base**, Texas. At least four military training instructors (MTI) have been punished or are being prosecuted for sexual improprieties. One former MTI allegedly engaged in "*unprofessional relationships*" with ten trainees, ranging from "*flirting*" to rape.

### ***Ineffective "Sensitivity Training" and Victim Advocacy***

Countless hours of mandatory sensitivity training and leadership programs have downplayed moral hazards, based on the theory that sexual feelings, emotions, and human failings can be reliably managed by an army of highly-paid "sexual assault response coordinators" (SARCs) advised by civilian "victim advocates."

In April 2012 Navy Secretary **Ray Mabus** called for yet another mandatory "stand down" to observe "**Sexual Assault Awareness Month**," complete with weekly themes, "**Twitter Tuesdays**," and copious paperwork to make everyone feel good. According to Secretary Mabus, sexual assaults occur "*three times...every...single...day. This ought to make us mad.*"

The Navy is mad all right. Secretary Mabus used exactly the same words and phrases in 2011, in response to a report that 900 sexual assaults had been reported in FY 2010.<sup>2</sup> Doing the same thing over and over again while expecting a different result fits the definition of insanity.

Many military installations in all branches of the service have been hosting sexual assault "awareness" events that include role-playing and an adults-only interactive play called [Sex Signals](#). The two-person improvisational play is usually flagged with warnings of offensive language.<sup>3</sup> No one knows how much time and defense dollars are being invested in these "sensitivity" programs, but the primary beneficiaries seem to be professionals who receive the grants.<sup>4</sup>

### ***What About the Men?***

Issues of sexual misconduct are not about women only. Unsubstantiated allegations often destroy careers unjustly when men are treated as guilty without due process and adequate legal defense.

Unlike most Defense Department reports that assign "victim" status to female complainants even before a crime has been substantiated, the Army's Gold Book reports that many accusations are not truthful: "*Another review, which examined findings from three separate studies, found that false allegations occurred from 41-50%, including Air Force research that found that among 1,218 rape cases, 45% were deemed false.*" (p. 128)

The Gold Book also explained key motivations for false accusations: "*(1) a need for an alibi to compensate for problems arising from consensual sex, (2) in retribution for a perceived wrong such as rejection or betrayal, and (3) to satisfy a need for attention or other material gain.*" (p. 128)

Recognition that **95 percent** of violent sexual attacks happen to women means that **5 percent** since 2006 happened to men. But according to the **Sexual Assault Response and Prevention Office (SAPRO)** report for FY 2011, "Victims Making Restricted (confidential) Reports" were **83%** female, **14%** male, **2%** unspecified, and "Completed Investigations, Unrestricted," were **88%** female, and **12%** male. A Navy SAPRO trainer should have raised even more questions when she stated in Pensacola, "*Reports of male sexual assaults increased 181 percent over fiscal years 2009-2010.*"<sup>5</sup>

Contrary to premature claims that repeal of the 1993 law regarding homosexuals in the military has been a "non-event," the Gold Book report includes a caution: *"The Army is currently monitoring same gender sex crime for a potential increase in forcible sodomy and other sex offenses related to the disassociation of homosexuality from the crime itself."* (p. 122)

### ***Time for Accountability on Social Policy Results***

More than twenty years ago, male and female naval aviators partied wildly at the 1991 post-Persian Gulf War **Tailhook** convention in Las Vegas. The highly-publicized scandal ruined the careers of hundreds of officers and sparked a reckless "race with the Air Force" to get female aviators into combat aviation. After two decades of turmoil, it is time to take stock.

During the recent wars, Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine women have earned the nation's respect. The Diversity Commission confirms that women are promoted at rates equal to or faster than men. But little has changed in matters of sexual misconduct, both consensual and non-consensual.

[A Navy study](#) of reasons why ship commanding officers were "detached for cause" between 2004-2009, which was not officially released, reported a phenomenon called the "**Bathsheba Syndrome**" — an authority figure's belief that he, like King David, can get away with personal misconduct. The report recommended "**360 degree**" performance assessments, which invite junior personnel to evaluate their superiors. The strategy does not seem to be working. <sup>6</sup>

In 2010 and 2011, the Navy found it necessary to fire ship captains, executive officers, and senior enlisted officers at rates approaching two per month, most often for reasons of sexual misconduct. Bad news of Navy firings appear every other week, but no one has demanded an objective analysis of controversial policies that affect discipline. There is no effective strategy for reversing the trend.

Instead, the Navy began competing with private companies to win awards for "diversity"—a policy that sometimes lowers standards by not allowing favored individuals to fail. <sup>7</sup> The Navy also began training female officers to serve on submarines, without any serious discussion of habitability, social, and medical issues with a direct effect on operational readiness in the **Silent Service**. <sup>8</sup>

Given what the Gold Book reports about trends and risk factors conducive to violent sex crimes, it is reasonable to expect that elimination of women's remaining exemptions from infantry battalions would worsen the situation, not improve it. Cautionary information in the Army report seems to be lost on the sexual assault professionals, however.

On April 2, the Defense Department's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office announced [new directives](#) that will allow a woman claiming sexual assault to request an "expedited transfer" out of her unit. Her request must be answered by her local commander within 72 hours or by high-level authorities 72 hours after that.

Even if disruptive expedited evacuations are justified, such moves would not take into account the Army Gold Book's common sense warning: *"[Sexual assault perpetrators] seem to know those people who are least likely to report. They tend to be able to pick out people who are more vulnerable and then victimize them... This is especially true for young, newly arriving female Soldiers with under-developed social networks."* (p. 126)

Mid-level officers and NCOs would face additional burdens, especially in high-density housing where socializing is common. As stated in the Gold Book, *"Almost 60% of violent sex crimes occur*

*between Friday and Sunday which is consistent with the incidence of alcohol-related sex crimes; this indicates a need for increased surveillance during off duty periods. ...64% of rape victims are in the service less than 18 months." (pp. 126-127)*

The connection between high-density housing and disciplinary problems is addressed thoughtfully:

*"[C]rime—all crime—is transmittable both vertically and horizontally. It is transmittable vertically in the individual through the escalation from one crime to subsequent crimes and from minor infractions to increasingly more serious acts....once the line is crossed it becomes easier to cross the next time. Of greater concern to the Army is the horizontal transmission of crime to others, which is ironically facilitated by the same team cohesion that it erodes. Again, illicit drug use, but also sex crimes and larcenies are notable examples where a single individual will often transmit their acts of high-risk behavior and crime to others." (p. 91)<sup>9</sup>*

An infantry veteran of several deployments to Iraq has described rampant sexual misconduct that occurred with the knowledge of mid-level officers who did not issue orders they were unable to enforce. Noting that female soldiers are "easy prey for young men with evil intent," he wrote, "The military lives with the psychosis of advertising women warriors while acknowledging publically now that female soldiers are largely incapable of fighting off male aggressors."<sup>10</sup>

### ***The Jenga Block Military***

We are starting to see a military resembling [Jenga Blocks](#)—a table-top tower constructed of smooth wooden planks. Players remove planks from the bottom of the tower and load them on the top, destabilizing the structure until it buckles and falls. In the same way, severe budget cuts combined with social burdens loaded on top could irreparably weaken the culture and strength of our military.

The cultural consequences of controversial social experiments should be reassessed, discontinued, and replaced by constructive alternatives. For example, the next administration should:

- Restore sound priorities, putting the needs of the military above "diversity metrics."
- Reinforce core values and policies known to reinforce personal discipline, not indiscipline.
- In order to improve the transformation from civilian to military culture, retain separate-gender training in the Marine Corps and restore it in the other services.
- Retain and codify current exemptions of women from direct ground combat units, which are trained to attack the enemy with deliberate offensive action.
- Mandate complete candor about the consequences of cultural change in the military, barring penalties or retribution for persons who recognize and challenge flawed policies.
- Formulate new policies that are based on reality, not "social fiction;" i.e., beliefs that men and women are interchangeable in all roles, sexuality does not matter, and human beings can be trained to achieve perfection at all times.

For more than twenty years, feminists, social engineers, and "diversity" advocates have used sexual politics and scandals to intimidate Pentagon officials. Policy makers who capitulated to sexual

politics have not been held accountable for their decisions, but they ought to be now. It is time to drop the groupthink and reexamine conventional wisdom.

Contrary to claims of complete success warranting further “progress,” the Army's own analysis of risk factors reveals a connection between liberal social policies and escalating violent sex crimes in the military. Exposing female soldiers to even more violence—at the hands of land combat enemies—would not solve the problem. It would only make it worse.

It is time to reconsider and change flawed policies that are weakening the culture of the only military we have. Pentagon officials who are responsible for ineffective courses of action should not be given even more authority to impose more of the same. ■

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<sup>1</sup> The commissioners' [biographies](#) show an over-representation of military and civilians with background in the “equal opportunity” (EO) consulting field. The interests of “tip of the spear” Army and Marine infantry and Special Operations Forces are not represented adequately.

<sup>2</sup> William H. McMichael, *Navy Times*, “ ‘This Ought to Make Us Mad’ - Navy Leaders Call for Increased Effort to Prevent Sexual Assaults,” May 16, 2011, and Mark D. Faram, *Navy Times*, “Navy to Hold Sex Assault Standdowns,” March 29, 2012

<sup>3</sup> Said one of the *Sex Signals* producers, “*We use language that is very frank..these are phrases students use in real life and we see no reason to dumb it down or ‘baby’ the students.*” Four-letter words and crude slang for sexual activity are considered acceptable on a military base, provided that they are recited by civilian actors. There is no evidence that the mixed signals of *Sex Signals* actually reduce harassment or assaults.

<sup>4</sup> The Navy, for example, has hired a San Diego-based [technical service contractor](#) to conduct a new “Character and Integrity” training program, which reportedly will involve group discussions about taboo subjects such as fraternization, drinking, and even sexual tension. The program sounds like an adolescent girl's pajama party where participants confront each other about their personal faults and misbehavior.

<sup>5</sup> SAPRO Report, April 2012, p. 60, Exhibit 26, and p. 53, Exhibit 15. Also see Steve Vanderwerff, Naval Education and Training Command Public Affairs, “SAAM: Bystander Intervention Training Held at Pensacola Training Center,” Mar. 30, 2012. (Additional information not provided.)

<sup>6</sup> William McMichael, *Navy Times*, “Unreleased CO Firings Report Includes Few New Solutions,” Feb. 6, 2012, p. 26. On April 8, 2012, *Navy Times* reported, [“Commodore Fired for Partying, Nudity in Bahrain.”](#) Capt. David Geisler was fired for participating in a series of parties featuring heavy drinking, skinny-dipping, and fraternization with junior officers and enlisted personnel Bahrain's “Floating City.” In August 2011 the Army adopted the same “360 degree” evaluation program to identify “toxic” leaders.

<sup>7</sup> Navy.mil, [“Navy Wins Diversity Award Topping Leading Companies,”](#) Nov. 6, 2009.

<sup>8</sup> The constantly-recycled atmosphere of a submarines includes trace elements that are safe for adults, but not for a developing fetus in the earliest weeks of pregnancy. Mid-ocean evacuations are extremely hazardous, and non-deployability issues would affect undersea operations. See [Navy Ignores Warnings of Health Issues for Women on Submarines](#) ; [RADM Hugh P. Scott, MC USN \(Ret.\) letter to HASC Chairman Ike Skelton](#), 11 March, 2010.

<sup>9</sup> Tables of numbers and graphs in the Army Gold Book amplify a point that James Schlesinger made in an independent panel report describing what he called the “Animal House on the night shift” atmosphere at Abu Ghraib. The abuses at that infamous prisoner camp in Iraq actually had little to do with interrogations. Time-stamped photos indicated that the main perpetrators engaged in gross acts that degraded themselves first, before they degraded the Iraqi prisoners. Similar “girls and guys gone wild” behavior occurred in a military police unit at Camp Bucca in 2004. Reported distractions were exploited by Iraqi prisoners who almost succeeded in escaping through a tunnel they had dug without detection.

<sup>10</sup> In his email to CMR, the Iraq veteran added, “*Our battalion headquarters was located in a very small FOB (forward operating base) with a couple of infantry companies. It was an almost all-male environment, with the exception of a handful of support females who lived there to serve as cooks or mechanics. By the time we were seven months into our ‘surge’ deployment of 14 months, there was not a single female left on this FOB. They had all redeployed or had been sent back to their parent support unit due to personal problems, family issues or sexual misconduct. At least one went home pregnant. This is the reality of a gender integrated military.*”