

WOMEN FIGHTING ON THE FRONT LINES

What Does It Mean For Women, Men, And Military Preparedness?

A DISCUSSION
SPONSORED BY THE
INDEPENDENT WOMEN'S
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WITH THE LONDON
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MISSION STATEMENT

IWF's mission is to improve the lives of Americans by increasing the number of women who value free markets and personal liberty.

IWF is a non-partisan, 501(c)(3) research and educational institution. By aggressively seeking earned media, providing easy-to-read, timely publications and commentary, and reaching out to the public, we seek to cultivate support for these important principles and encourage women to join us in working to return the country to limited, Constitutional government.

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What Does It Mean For Women, Men, And Military Preparedness?

A discussion sponsored by the Independent Women's Forum in conjunction with the London Center for Policy Research, March 23, 2016 in the Rayburn House Office Building on Capitol Hill

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MODERATOR

Lieutenant Colonel Tony Shaffer
U.S. Army (ret.), Senior Fellow, London
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GUEST SPEAKER

Congressman Duncan Hunter (R-CA)
House Armed Services Committee,
Former Major in the U.S. Marine Corps

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PANELISTS



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(L to R) William Chatfield, Jessie Jane Duff, Major General Bob Newman, Jr., Lieutenant Colonel Tony Shaffer, Katherine Kidder, and Amber Smith



(L to R) Katherine Kidder, Amber Smith, Lieutenant Colonel Tony Shaffer



(L to R) Representative Duncan Hunter, Jessie Jane Duff, Major General Bob Newman, Jr.



(L to R) Representative Duncan Hunter, Jessie Jane Duff, Major General Bob Newman, Jr., Lieutenant Colonel Tony Shaffer, Katherine Kidder, and Amber Smith

INTRODUCTION

Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter announced in December 2015 that all positions in the military, including fighting on the front lines, would be open to women. There are no exemptions. The order already has gone into effect. But many critics worry about the effect on military morale and preparedness, and specifically on standards that might eventually be lowered to accommodate women. The Independent Women's Forum has an interesting history on this issue. Throughout the 1990s IWF's supported the idea that women can and should have careers in the military and that everybody benefits when they rise to top positions but opposed deploying women to fight on the front lines. The late Ricky Silberman, an IWF founder, represented roughly that point of view when she was appointed by then-Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to serve on the Defense Advisory Commission on Women in the Services (DACOWITS).

We were sometimes accused of being against integrating women into the military. That was never the case. We always appreciated the many contributions women have made and continue to make to the military. But we did not want to see women in hand-to-hand combat and believed that separation of the sexes during basic training had many positive effects. Over the years, IWF's position on women fighting on the front lines changed. It became more nuanced. There are those who like me believe that sending women into combat on the front is a terrible policy that will be harmful for women, men, and the military. When outgoing Defense Secretary Leon Panetta lifted the ban on women in combat as

practically his last action in that job, I called the move a “triumph of ideology over reality.” That is my view. Amber Smith, former U.S. Army Kiowa Warrior helicopter pilot-in-command and air mission commander for almost eight years in the 101st and also an IWF senior fellow, has an entirely different take. She supports women on the front lines and even women registering with Selective Service, a point of view she represented ably on this panel.

While women at IWF may hold a variety of views on the issue, there is one thing we all believe: the issue needs further study. Defense Secretary Carter made the announcement without sufficient study and without listening to different opinions within the military. The commandant of the Marine Corps requested exemptions for some front-line positions but was denied. Even the panelists who support women in combat admitted that less speed and more consideration of the complexities of the situation would have helped.

We were delighted to team with the London Center for Policy Research to supply some of that needed debate. The partnership came about when we approached Jessie Jane Duff, a retired Marine Gunnery Sergeant and London Center senior fellow --who vehemently opposes women in combat—about joining the panel. It was a pleasure to work with Jessie Jane and Eli Gold, a London Center vice president. They had wonderful ideas and scholars, who participated as panelists. It was quite an event: an overflow crowd and guest speaker Rep. Duncan Hunter’s impassioned remarks attested to the compelling nature of the issue. We were also delighted that former Selective Service director William Chatfield was in the audience and able to offer insights gleaned from his experience.

We are so grateful to our panelists for making this a provocative and weighty discussion. One audience member asked Congressman Hunter what we needed to do with regard to this issue. Talk about it, he advised. That is what we did. It was such a valuable conversation that we are making it available for a wider audience in this booklet.

Charlotte Hays

**Director of Cultural Programs,
Independent Women’s Forum**

WELCOME

Good afternoon, thank you all so much for coming. I’m here to welcome you today and to introduce our moderator in this important policy discussion. But before I make that introduction, I’d like to say how glad we are to be working with the London Center for Policy Research, and I want to thank Eli Gold and Jessie Jane Duff for joining us in presenting a panel on a topic that has enormous implications not only for the military, but also for our culture. We are holding this panel because Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter announced last December that all military positions, including on the front line in combat, will be open to women. The Marines have asked for an exemption of certain positions, but Secretary Carter denied the request. Given the significance of this issue, IWF encourages further discussion of this policy change. And that’s precisely what we are here to do today. We are fortunate to have as our moderator Tony Shaffer. He is a retired U.S. Army Reserve Lieutenant Colonel and a New York Times bestselling author of *Operation Dark Heart*, and his latest, *The Last Line*. He is a senior fellow with both the London Center for Policy Research and the Center for Advanced Defense Studies.

Julie Gunlock

**Senior Fellow
Independent Women’s Forum**

The military is not meant to be a social experiment - it's meant to win wars. I think that should be the baseline of whatever we think, whatever we do--it's an important decision.

Lt. Colonel Tony Shaffer

U.S. Army (ret.),

Senior Fellow, London Center for Policy Research

I'll be very brief in going through this. First, thank you for having me at the panel. I appreciate the Independent Women's Forum and our own London Center for taking this on as a policy issue. I joined the Army back in January of 1981 and went through Army basic training until June of 1981 and under the tutelage of the great Carter White House political experiment. It was the first time basic training had been sexually integrated. And I was at Fort Benning, Georgia - I was a civil soldier. And it was interesting because one of our drill sergeants was a woman, an E-5 Sergeant named Christine Capers. Sergeant Capers was our driller. There was actually a PBS special about her - about her training and how she became one of the first female drill sergeants in the Army.

So this is not a new issue to me in a sense. This was something that was deliberately begun at the beginning of my career. During that time the policy was no fraternization, no contact between the men and women, other than during the day during training. Somehow, magically, despite the fact there was officially no contact, there were seven marriages and two pregnancies that came out of that training camp. Now I don't know how that happened, you know--just magic?

So there are some fundamentals, physiological issues that cannot be ignored. No policy is going to change the physiology of the male and female anatomy. It's just not going to happen. So I think we have to be realistic and clear-eyed in our assessments of women fighting on the front lines. Now, those of you who read my book, *Operation Dark Heart*, know that I was in combat with women into the early 2000s. In fact, I preferred to have a female sergeant as my gunner because she was more competent than her male counterparts. That is just the whole point. My assessment was she was better than everyone else. So therefore that female gunner was in that seat next to me on combat operations. It is what it is. So I'm not saying that I am taking one side or the other. I'm saying that it is important to take a look at practical issues.

Some of you know I had to testify a few years ago on something called Evil Danger. When I made my initial disclosures, it is not well-known that inside the room was the Army's senior female operative on a unit which does not exist. Officially exist. So my point is the Army has found a way to bridge that gap, and we have recognized the need for a female operative. But one size does not fit all situations. I think we have to look at this issue from a practical standpoint. Therefore, since those who were charged with reviewing and helping form policy--the current Secretary of the Navy and Secretary of Defense--have chosen to ignore their responsibilities in their office to fully examine this issue, it falls to us to examine it in more detail, and for the right reasons. The military is not meant to be a social experiment - it's meant to win wars. I think that should be the baseline of whatever we think, whatever we do--it's an important decision.

I concede at the outset of this discussion that some women certainly can perform the duties required of combat, of infantrymen, and of special operators. But we aren't just talking about a few women who can make the grade. What we are talking about here is the institutionalization of dramatic change overnight that I think will negatively affect combat capabilities.

Major General Bob Newman

U.S. Air Force (ret.), Former Adjutant General of Virginia

Senior Fellow, London Center for Policy Research

I'm pleased to be with you today and join my fellow panelists to discuss this issue - one that has recently risen to the highest levels in our military and promises to affect our country, its Armed Forces, and those who wear a uniform for decades to come. I am proud to serve as a senior fellow at the London Center whose mission is to examine the key issues in national defense, foreign policy, international conflicts, domestic policy, human rights, energy policy, and missile defense. Led by Dr. Herb London in New York and Vice President Eli Gold here in Washington, the London Center has been active in helping to inform the public and

decision makers internationally on the issues that are destined to shape the future of our nation and I'm certainly including the topic for discussion today in that group.

Ladies and gentlemen, there's no doubt that in times of danger, patriots need to rise up and defend their country and its way of life. We've seen throughout history that great men and women, young and old, have answered their nation's call when their country is in danger. We have only to look to Joan of Arc who led the French to defeat the British at Orleans, or Molly Pitcher, who manned the cannon when her husband was wounded at the Battle of Monmouth, to see that women have demonstrated throughout history their ability to fill the line when needed. So I concede at the outset of this discussion that some women certainly can perform the duties required of combat, of infantrymen, and of special operators. But we aren't just talking about a few women who can make the grade. What we are talking about here is the institutionalization of dramatic change overnight that I think will negatively affect our country and the combat capabilities of these units upon whom our nation has come to depend for the toughest, no-fail assignments.

My concern about this policy set forth by Secretary Carter last December focuses on four questions. Number one: Are women physically strong enough to endure the stress and strain of combat units, and ultimately, combat? And notice I said the stress of combat units, because before entering combat there's a lot of tough living that goes on. Number two: Will culture norms and attitudes of units long dominated by the toughest men in our military allow the successful integration in the current environment? Number three: Will the men in these units feel it necessary to protect the women in their units, placing their unit, their mission, and themselves at risk? And lastly: Are we, as a civilized nation, willing to place our women, even those who might be the fiercest warriors, in harm's way to accommodate the very few who can qualify for those tasks? I question the wisdom of such a move that would, today, in my mind, likely jeopardize the combat capability of our nation's infantry and special operation units.

Men and women are different. Physically, the differences are obvious. That is why there are no women in the NFL, why there are no women playing on the PGA tour, and why there are men and women winners in the Boston Marathon. Biologically, our bodies are built for different missions. Emotionally, we are different creatures, reacting, in general, to situations differently. Women tend to be more nurturing and more likely to react more based on their

feelings, I suggest, while men tend to be more aggressive and impulsive, again, my opinion. Culturally, through many decades, even centuries, Western society has protected women, recognizing that they are, generally, less physically strong, and also, perhaps, because they're our mothers to our children, worthy of society's admiration and deference. This is evidenced in today's society, when men open doors for ladies, stand up when they enter the room, pull out chairs to help them get seated, help them take off their coat and put it on. For years we have embraced this conduct in all aspects of our culture. In movies, books, schools, and businesses throughout our culture today, these traditions endure.

That is not to say that some, not many, but some, women will have the temperament, the physical strength, the emotional qualities, and the inner drive, along with the determination, to serve successfully in combat units. But the Administration's move to overnight inject women into combat units is institutionalizing a change that I submit is beneficial to no one - not to our nation's military, and perhaps not even to the women who can meet the challenges serving in combat. I submit that even if a few women are ready for this integration, our nation and its combat units, are not, and we should not risk the security of our country because of decisions based on the ability of a few to do twenty pull-ups and complete a twelve-mile march. Our country needs to move on this issue as if we were turning a battleship, not a sports car. I suggest that we work to recruit more women, as the Army is actively doing today, assign more women to combat support units, evaluate their performance, promote those qualified into positions of leadership, and then evaluate their abilities and how they interact with units and the units interact with them. This is a dramatic step. It should be taken slowly. We must make sure we have all of the facts and make the decisions based on what I call the whole of nation evaluation. Not just physical, but the culture, and cultural and societal effects, remembering at the end of the day it's not about a promotion, but about the security of our nation and those things we value as Americans.

Women who want to serve in these positions are going to work very hard to get there. They are going to be the big leagues - the best of the best. No, these positions are not for everyone, but the military isn't for everyone, either.

Amber Smith

Former U.S. Army Helicopter Pilot,

Senior Fellow, Independent Women's Forum

I want to start with giving a little bit of my background, which I think will help show where I come from on this stance. I was in the 101st Airborne for almost eight years as a Kiowa Warrior helicopter pilot, and for those of you who aren't familiar with the aircraft, it is a light attack reconnaissance aircraft. It carries just two seats, one for the pilot, one for the co-pilot, and it carries a fifty-pound machine gun, a rocket that carries seven 2.75-inch rockets with the capability of a weapons configuration to carry Hellfire missiles. And our mission consists of being direct support for the guys on the ground. The infantry, special operations, Marines, Navy NATO forces, Iraqi Army, Afghan Army - I've worked with all of them. And probably one of the best compliments I ever received during my time in service was that we act as infantry in the air, we fly very low-level, in eyesight of the enemy, and ground forces call us in to respond to something called Troops in Contact, where they are in a firefight with an enemy, they call in air support, and we come in very low-level and help them out in any way that we can. I served in Iraq in 2005 and 2006 and Afghanistan 2008 and 2009 and saw combat in both years of operation.

Now, where I stand on this issue with Secretary Carter's decision to remove all restrictions without exemptions from any combat jobs in the military is I believe there needs to be a mission standard, not a gender standard. And this has been an issue across every bridge in the military for a while. For anyone familiar with the military, there are two separate physical standards: a standard for females and a standard for males. And those scores go into many different things - anywhere from career tracks to promotion. With the rise of the number of women that are in the service today, there is perhaps a little bit of resentment within the ranks over these separate standards. So when I mean a mission standard, I mean that in order to qualify for special operations, you need to meet that mission standard, not a gender standard - you need to meet whatever that physical requirement is to tryout and contribute to the mission, be a part of the team, and ultimately have mission success.

I don't believe in quotas, I don't believe in double standards, and I don't believe in lowering the standard in order to ensure women remain within the ranks. I think Secretary Carter's decision in December of 2015 was a little bit rushed in terms of not thinking out some of the consequences that go along with the decision, especially after asking people in each branch to basically come up with a decision and tell him why you are going to recommend or not recommend that women should be serving in the service. The Marines spent millions of dollars on this study, and they came up with an answer that says, "This is why we are going to apply for exclusions in certain infantry and ground roles for women," and Secretary Carter overrode that decision. So I think in terms of leadership that that was an interesting choice to not listen to the recommendations that were made by the experts in those areas.

One of the conversations we need to have, now that women are now allowed to serve in all of positions in the military, is about Selective Service. Are women now going to be signing up for the Selective Service? Is it discriminatory towards men if they don't? Do we even need the Selective Service anymore? All of those conversations now need to be had because of that decision that was made in December. That being said, I think women should be given the opportunity to try out for these positions. They should not be given a guarantee to succeed, as I mentioned the quotas, but they should be given the opportunity to try. Women who want to serve in these positions are going to work very hard to get there. They are going to be the big leagues - the best of the best. No, these positions are not for everyone, but the military isn't for everyone, either. So if these women feel that

they want to try out for some of these special operations or ground roles then they should be given the opportunity to try and if they meet every single mental, physical, emotional standard and test that men have to go through as well, then they should be given that opportunity to try.

I think that a lot of society is unaware that a lot of women are already serving in these roles. It just hasn't been approved on paper. Women are already serving in some of these roles. So my number one concern with this is how it will be implemented. I don't want to see it becoming political. National security always must remain our number one priority for military. I don't want to see two years down the road from now two women made it through the SEAL program and are now Navy SEALs and only one of them can maintain those physical standards, so one leaves, and now the concern is "Oh, we only have one female - who is going to be her battle buddy?" The second can't be less qualified than the first. I don't want to see that happen. We need the best people, regardless of gender, to be filling those positions, because they are the ones who are going to be doing these very tough jobs. And I don't want someone else on the team picking up their slack. That's when things get dangerous; that's when resentment develops.

The fact that I made it 20 years only means I've got an angel surrounding me, because the bulk of the women I know were discharged or had to get out before they even hit the 10-year mark.

Gunnery Sergeant Jessie Jane Duff

U.S. Marine Corps (ret.),

Senior Fellow, London Center for Policy Research

I'm a Gunnery Sergeant with the United States Marine Corps. I served two decades on active duty, supporting infantry and wing units. I'm not going to sugarcoat this. I don't give a darn if women already have been serving in combat. The fact of the matter is sticking women in the infantry is going to cause lethal problems for women. Right now women have been removed - do not have combat exemption anymore. Period. That means women will be involuntarily assigned to these units. The Marine Corps is already making those plans. So let's get down to the nitty-gritty of this. The women of the United States Marine Corps have some of the most difficult training of any branch of service. Twelve weeks of recruit training, and I'm not going to sugarcoat this, people - it is hard. The fact that I made it 20

years only means I've got an angel surrounding me, because the bulk of the women I know were discharged or had to get out before they even hit the 10-year mark.

I've got friends today who saw a truck with 11 women inside blow up - 14 women, actually - 11 survived. Three were killed instantly. One was a single mother. They had been assigned to be part of the female engagement teams to search Iraqis as they approached in their burkas. They weren't trained to do that. Not only were they not trained, there was no way they could have defended themselves. Women have a lower level of muscle mass than men. We're not going to get around that. In fact, studies have proven that the more they train, their muscle actually can depreciate because it is too intense for their bodies. We've had over 2,000 years of men fighting in the infantry. I'm not talking about the job I do. As a member of the tractor-trailer infantry, I hauled for the infantry and wing units. Some of the people who lost their limbs in combat were the motor transport, because the trucks were blowing up under them because of IEDs.

A good friend of mine who served in Iraq had to replace the truckload of women who were killed or physically disabled. One of those women, under two years ago, had to have surgery to her face because of severe burns. She knows for a fact, because the Marine Corps told her this, that Al Qaeda targeted the truck because it had women. Do not think for two seconds they are afraid of us. They will fight harder to kill women because no ISIS man, or Al Qaeda, or Hezbollah, or any other terrorist out there, wants to be known for bowing at the hands of a women. That is not going to happen. Where were these women who wanted to fight when combat in Fallujah happened? When they were fighting with knives. Because you couldn't pull out your M16 rifle, you could not pull out a pistol, and a .50 cal was nowhere to be seen. Where were they then? Because I've got friends of mine who are dead and buried because in hand-to-hand combat - ISIS is on methamphetamines, people. We get drug tested. We have to fight sober. They don't. So when they come at you with that knife would you stick your daughter in an MMA fight with a man? No, you would not.

I don't believe in quotas either. But guess what - they're going to have them. General Dempsey said as much when he retired: his exit speech stated women will be fairly represented in these MOSs. An MOS, by the way, is a job. They will be represented. Let's go to the Army Ranger School. First of all, Army Ranger School is a misnomer that

was to get them into rangers. In order to go to rangers, you have to go through rangers training battalion. Ranger school is a leadership school. Every one of those women had to be recycled multiple times through every single phase of the training. Twice the first days, twice the second days, twice the third days, and the last people to graduate had to go through one of the phases three times. That is not what the men get. They ignore the combat. Guess what that's going to be like? Ranger school over and over and over and over again.

Let me explain what it's like to be on the ground, because I supported the infantry. I went on routine missions with more than a hundred pounds of weight on my back. Women have exceptionally high rates of pelvic injury. They have exceptionally high rates of ACL injuries. On average, women are pulled out of the field anywhere between three to five times the rate of men. So, if we're putting a woman in these units, we have to replace her if she is pulled out. You have to replace her with another woman, because according to what Congresswoman Sanchez wants, women should have a 20 percent representation in combat units.

So we could talk all day about whether women want to do this. Guess what? Twenty-six women wanted to be infantry officers - not one of them graduated. More than 400 women wanted to get through infantry training, battalion in the Marine Corps, and only 35 percent of them passed. Many of those women who wanted to were discharged because of injuries. So okay. Let's help women do this. But you better disclose to the American public the odds of their making it. Women are three times more likely to have PTSD than men. Just PTSD.

Right now the VA can't even take care of the women who have traumatic injuries, because they don't have facilities for a lot of the OB/GYN issues. They don't have any of these facilities that are set up in many hospitals. So okay, let the women do it. Are we prepared to pay out the disability ratings? No. We can't even take care of the men right now. Are we prepared to handle women being replaced who get killed or disabled by combat injuries? How can a woman defend herself when she doesn't have an equal amount of muscle mass? The top 25 percent of the women in the Marine Corps who were selected for that study, let me tell you, these were the top - they had all graduated infantry training battalion. Let me also tell you something about Marine women - they're vicious, and they're

hard. They go through twelve weeks of recruit training, then they go through Marine combat training, so we're talking now already almost six months into a very, very short career. Military service requires that I can shoot three different weapons. Shooting from a turret of a .50-cal is not combat - I know how to do that. Combat is carrying my pack of 120 pounds for long periods of time. We will end up having to replace women who can't make it with other women. I was a recruiter. I recruited over a hundred men, three women. Two of the women were discharged. Before we do this, why can't Congress talk about the rates of injury and how much this is going to cost taxpayers? Let's have an educated discussion on it before we move forward, because right now combat exemption has been lifted, and women will be involuntarily assigned.

When we look at the metrics, within the Army specifically, approximately 10,000 women received the Combat Action Badge, which is only given to individuals who have directly engaged with the enemy. So regardless of the official policy over the last ten years, women have been fighting in these front line positions.

Katherine Kidder

Bacevich Fellow, Center for a New American Security

Military, Veterans, and Society Program

I'm a Bacevich Fellow at the Center for a New American Security, where I work on the military personnel policy, and I come down on the same side as Amber in opening opportunities to women in combat. But I come from a nuanced perspective of how we manage the broader personnel system, thinking through how do we get the most competitive people in the correct jobs in order to ensure that we are effectively carrying out our national security needs. I think part of the issue in the broader conversation about women in combat is that in the general population, not in the military population, you are more framed in the terms of gender equality. I think that's the exact wrong way to go about doing this. If you're a military commander, you need to know that you have the best people under your command, and you want the most competitive individuals there. It shouldn't be a social experimentation center.

But what we've seen in the last couple of years as the Marine Corps and the Army were researching how to go about addressing this issue is what Amber was referring to earlier about actually setting the standard of the gender neutral, occupation-specific standard required for each individual, which doesn't only raise the quality of the female participants, but it also raises the quality of what we expect for our male service members as well. There are some jobs where frankly men are involuntarily placed simply because they are men and that in and of itself is not an argument for an effective military either. So I think we need to take a broader perspective and look at how we are managing our military personnel system and our job placement and then the data and the standards and the metrics that we follow over their career. One of the ways that we evaluate our service members, particularly our Officer Corps, is with a two-page free text OER report, an Officer Evaluation Report. What if we could rely on not just this one-page write-up, but also the physical data, the performance data. Currently the physical fitness test is one of the data points that we look at and again, with Amber, I agree that we need to look at what the standard is for the position and how an individual member is up to that, and then we need to be placing the best individuals in individual billets.

I want to point to the reality that we have had over 300,000 women fighting on the front lines in Iraq and Afghanistan, though the front lines are blurred, as Jessie experienced. When we look at the metrics within the Army specifically, approximately 10,000 women received the Combat Action Badge, which is only given to individuals who have directly engaged with the enemy. So regardless of the official policy over the last ten years, women have been fighting in these front line positions. I think we've gained through this process again a better, data-driven perspective on what was needed for each position, and I think that as the plan is implemented, we need to be making sure that those standards are being maintained. I think it also requires us to critically reexamine how we manage the volunteer force. So one of the questions that has been raised, as Amber brought up earlier, was if there is not an equal burden placed on women signing up for this Selective Service, maybe we take another look at the Selective Service.

What we are looking for is folks who can make the standards. Perhaps a draft is not the way to go, and we need to rethink how we're getting the best and brightest in our military. I think, too, there are concerns about both with the culture and with issues like sexual assault, but what we see in the literature is that the increasing number of women changes

the culture, or you see a tipping point where any minority culture becomes fully assimilated at a certain percentage - some people say it is 20 percent - and again I don't think that means you need to have the 20 percent in infantry, but there's also something to be said for the way that we view culture change from leadership and the top. And so if we figure out different ways of assessing the ways people are promoted and thinking more broadly about what the promotion path looks like and how to get more women in the top - whether it is through the infantry or if we're looking more broadly at the promotion path and rates of women who are in leadership positions throughout the force.

So number one, my generation has never seen real war. Period. Counter-terrorism, counterinsurgency is not warfare. There are no mass artillery fires, there are no tank battles, there are no people dying by the hundreds. . . . My point is it is suicide and naive to think that what we are seeing now and what we are talking about now is even in any way comparable to what real combat is.

Congressman Duncan Hunter (R-CA)

House Armed Services Committee,

Former Major in the U.S. Marine Corps

My name is Duncan Hunter, I'm congressman for San Diego. I did three tours - my first was in '03, United States Marine Corps, '04 Iraq, got out in '05, served with a company, back to Afghanistan in '07, and got elected to Congress in 2008. I'm on the Armed Services Committee and the Transportation Committee and the Education Committee, and I chair the Coast Guard Maritime Subcommittee on Transportation. So let me - we'll just go with four easy points.

So number one, my generation has never seen real war. Period. Counter-terrorism, counterinsurgency is not warfare. There are no mass artillery fires, there are no tank battles, there are no people dying by the hundreds. It's not Hiroshima where you've got thousands of people dying in one day. It's not - it's not the Civil War, where you've got thousands of people dying in one day. It's not World War II, where you have thousands of people dying in one day, or even Vietnam where you have hundreds of people dying in one day and 60,000 dead in the entire war. We lost about five, six thousand people since 2003 until now in Iraq and Afghanistan. In terms of real death, that is almost nothing. My point is it is suicide and naive to think that what we are seeing now and what we are talking about now is even in any way comparable to what real combat is. So that's the first thing.

Number two, people say that, well, if the standards stay high, then it's not a big deal. As long as the standards stay where they are, and if you meet the standard, then everybody should be able to do it, right? Here's what the problem with that is. The standards will change. Because you will have a quota where you say two out of five people have to be women, the standards have to change to accommodate that, the Marine Corps and Army are not training people right, why do they have to lift one hundred pounds? They should only have to lift fifty pounds. So we're all going to lift fifty pounds, and then we can guarantee that we are training the women right to do their job. This is number two.

Number three - most of the women who join the U.S. military don't want to go to infantry. They want to do transportation, they want to learn how to do computers, satellites, communication, all of that kind of stuff. They don't want to go to infantry. If you join the Marine Corps, you don't get to choose where you go. You go where the Marine Corps wants you. How many women now are not going to join, like my daughters, who wanted to join someday but don't want to go to the infantry. What are they going to do? They don't have the option. If all equal, then there's no option. You go where the Marine Corps needs you, period.

Number four, Navy SEALs, special warfare, you will never have a woman who is at the top of the class. Who watches "Broken Skull Challenge" with Steve Austin on CMT? Anybody? You know the "Broken Skull Challenge?" Anybody watch the CrossFit Games? These are the best women in the world at carrying heavy things, beating each other up, going long distance, bench pressing, squatting, running, tough women. Tough, tough women. They

are always three minutes slower than the slowest guy, so the top - the top women will never be the number one class person at all. She will never be the number one person who had special forces training, ever. The top women will match up with the lower third of men, just because of our physiologies.

Okay, I'm going to say the last one, if I can remember without notes. So say that you have two women who pass training. Or two women who pass. Does that mean you build an extra dorm, an extra bathroom, an extra shower, and take that with you throughout the world for those two women? Do you change the entire setup for the two women who could make it? Or do you say, it's like "Starship Troopers" - anybody seen "Starship Troopers?" It's a great movie.

In "Starship Troopers", we're all the same. We shower together, we go to the bathroom together, we live together, getting together is not an issue because we are all equal at that point. If we're going to go that route, then let's go 100 percent. And have no gender difference whatsoever. At all. You don't get a different barracks, there are no different bathrooms, there's no different showers for men and women. We're all the same, so let's be treated the exact same and make it so the standards can never be changed. But I would say, going back to my first point, the Marine Corps has done studies on this, the Army has done studies on this, and what they have found is this: If women want to do artillery, if women want to do tanks, tracks, other combat or specialties, they are okay with that. Both the Army and the Marine Corps, they are okay with that.

The only thing that they want exempted is infantry and special operations. Because that is a different beast. It involved death and destruction and closing with the enemy and destroying them with fire and close combat. That's what the infantry does. It's not a little corporate group, it's not a get together and feel good group - it's a hellacious group of men who will destroy you. They will kill you with their helmets, their knives, rocks on the ground. They will destroy you, kill you, and rip your throat out.

I'd like to make one last point. One of the arguments to this from the Department of Defense is that real war will never happen again. It's all cyber, it's going to be all cyber and smart bombs and UAVs and robots. And I'm telling you--the world's been around for thousands of years and civilization for thousands of years. Big war will happen again.

It's going to happen. Period. And you know, when the Russian plane got shot down by Turkey, that could have been the beginning of World War III. Game on. And then you send out hundreds of thousands of Americans to go fight in a conventional - the Ukrainians have lost tens of thousands of people because the Russians are fighting them in a conventional war, meaning mass artillery fires, tank companies rolling through positions and slaughtering people. That is war that we have not seen. I'm telling all of you that you are looking at me - you have not seen it. Unless you watched Saving Private Ryan. That is real war.

And we have not seen it, we don't understand it, it hasn't touched us. [The new military rules on women] are like mandating two women per NFL team quota. Why don't we do that? Why do you have an LPGA and a PGA? I understand football. So let's say that physical ability does matter, otherwise you'd have women playing pro football right now, right? There's nothing stopping them. Why is there an LPGA? There's no contact involved. In fact, small guys could hit the ball further than I can. So it's not a size thing either. So why can't a woman win a PGA tour? Anybody? Title IX. Let's take this argument to its logical stream, get rid of Title IX. Get rid of any kind of gender difference whatsoever and let women that want to play college sports compete against men that want to play college sports.

Period. You want to play basketball? Well, guess what. You're going to be in March Madness - you've got to be on the men's - not the men's - on THE basketball team. On THE hockey team. On THE soccer team. Let's do that, then. Let's take this all the way to the end and let's see if that's really where we want to go as a nation, and let's see if that's really where women want to go, frankly. I don't think it is.

People don't understand the difference between registering for the draft and mandating a young man be drafted against his will. If that had happened, I would have been one of the most unpopular men in America because, I'd have been the one on that TV screen drawing the lottery numbers, and you would have hated me.

DISCUSSION: SHOULD WOMEN REGISTER FOR THE DRAFT?

*A member of the audience was **William Chatfield**, 11th Director of Selective Service from November 29, 2004 to May 29, 2009. He responded to the panel's discussion of the Selective Service:*

There's a lot of confusion out here [about Selective Service], especially in this election year. Now, a guy fifteen, sixteen blocks away, on ill advisement, thinks he can, with his pen and telephone, make a law. No, I'm sorry, he cannot. We already have a law. It's called the Military Selective Service Act. I was proud to serve the head of Selective Service. We hope never to be called upon in war. We haven't been since 1973. We have to be ready just in

case. When I was in office, I'd be asked by young ladies, "Why not women?" And I'd say, "Respectfully, ma'am, see me after this talk, and I have the rolodex of the phone numbers of every recruiter of every one of our services. If you'd like to serve, I'm proud of you. I'd be happy to share that phone number." But they didn't actually want to serve. They wanted to create confusion. So once again we have that confusion. The Pentagon is confused about a few things - but they cannot change the law. Changing the law requires the Congress. And maybe they're not willing to do that, right? You're going to talk to your two senators; you're going to talk to your representative. Maybe they'll conclude not to change the law. Unless they do, nobody has the right to have women register for the draft. The guy sixteen blocks away has totally confused our friends in the media on this issue. Selective Service is about men unless these people up on Capitol Hill in the Congress change the law. It's simple. It's not confusing.

One more point on Selective Service and confusion--and I'm trying to stay apolitical, but let's just say that when you work for a president and that president is up for reelection in 2004 - they had a little political football from the other side. I forget the candidate running against us. He was a senator from Massachusetts, he's got some job or other, but that doesn't matter, that doesn't matter. It matters that the campaign was confusing America. Because we were involved in action where we got 2003, 2004, so the secret campaign behind the scenes was [to insinuate that] George Bush wants to bring back the draft. That was erroneous. The President of the United States cannot bring back the draft. It's against the law. Congress must bring back the draft. Most people don't know that. Now, the president may, as Gerry Ford did, because he came along in the late 1970s, stop registration. That's allowed within the tenets of the law. So Gerry Ford stopped the draft. Jimmy Carter, in 1979, when the Russians were going into Afghanistan, may not have had the greatest defense policy but he understood that the country needed the Selective Service. Jimmy Carter reinstated registration. People don't understand the difference between registering for the draft and mandating a young man be drafted against his will. If that had happened, I would have been one of the most unpopular men in America because, I'd have been the one on that TV screen drawing the lottery numbers, and you would have hated me.

Panelist Amber Smith had a different take: We haven't had a draft in decades, since Vietnam. We've been fighting in two wars since 2001 and 2003, an all volunteer force and

it's definitely taken a toll on our military since it's been an all volunteer force, but that's what is acceptable in society today, and to what I spoke to earlier in terms of the consequences that come with Secretary Carter's decision in December of '15 is that draft question. So does this mean now that we're going to have to talk about women signing up for the Selective Service? Does this mean - but I think it also opens the door to this question: do we need to have Selective Service at all anymore? And just because you are signing up for Selective Service doesn't mean you are getting drafted to war. First of all, the draft has to be enacted. Second of all, you have to still have the mental, physical, emotional testing where someone determines whether or not you are qualified to serve, so it's not this automatic, "Oh, we're sending America's daughters to war." I think it's a little bit of hype.

Q & A

Segment

SHAFFER: A question for Kate. You mentioned a quota system. Quota system to me is a code word for path away from standards, because to obtain and retain quotas, often you have to lower the standard to obtain a quota, so how do you address that?

KIDDER: I was going to say that I am not pro quota. I am pro standards, all the way. What I was hinting at is that there are studies that whenever there's a smaller group of individuals, whether it be on race or gender or what have you within an organization there's a tipping point where the smaller group becomes accepted within the culture and that's where you see a change, but I would in no way be for a quota. I think that individual standards must be maintained across the force.

SHAFFER: A question for Jessie Jane. I know you are very critical of women fighting on the front lines in combat with certain aspects relating to physical shortcomings and that sort of thing. What do you make of the Israeli model?

DUFF: Those are not factual models that we could even exemplify because right now Israeli women do not fight on front lines. That has been an argument that people continually throw at

me--that Israeli women are in the infantry. First of all, it's a national security need. Women are drafted in Israel because of national security needs. Their training is nothing like ours, at all. They serve two years, and they have massive exemptions: pregnancy, marriage, various other issues. The fact is that when they serve on the lines they are at safe borders, which is basically like guard duty. I can do guard duty. I've done guard duty. It's not that hard.

What my concern is that if U.S. women go through all this training and have high rates of disability and injury ratings, then you better disclose it to the American public. Half of the facts I have I had to get through the Freedom of Information Act because the Pentagon will not let me say 92.5 percent of the Army females do not want to serve in the infantry. And not one of the women who graduated our courses has volunteered to serve in the infantry, none.

SHAFFER: What kind of information do you have?

DUFF: The women only performed at 69 percent of all integrated units, with female and male, not to 100 percent as the all-men units. Sixty-nine percent, first of all. Second of all: Six times the rate of injury than men. Six times! And all these women volunteered. Pregnancy. There were women who were in the study who got pregnant. How'd that happen? We're supposed to be on birth control, right? We're not supposed to be screwing in the field. Sorry. Can I say that?

Why does data have to come out with Freedom of Information? I am talking about a 900-page document. And very few people have had access to it. The reality is that the women in this study were the best of the best, and Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus came and challenged it and said, "Well I don't think you selected the best women to do that." Look, these are the women that you've got and if you think drafting them is going to get you a higher rate, no, why don't you invest that money into finding more men? Only 1 percent of this nation serves, for God's sake. Please don't tell me that we've gotten this desperate.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: All of you have said that you are against quotas, and I think everyone agrees with that. But is there any place in American history where we've demanded that a certain group be incorporated where we had not had a quota system? You've already said that Congresswoman Sanchez wants 20 percent of women in these positions. How do we avoid quotas?

SMITH: Well, I completely disagree with that. Twenty percent? What is that number? That's ridiculous. That's insane politics over what's best for our national security and what's best for our military.

NEWMAN: Well, I'll just say that we can discuss standards; we can talk about capabilities. It gets to me - it gets down to my point of asking are we as a nation willing to put women at risk and suffer the horrendous casualty that war brings? Whether it's an IED or whether it's hand-to-hand combat, are we willing to see women thrust the on the stage in such ugly ways?

I'll tell you - this is a quote from a Marine Corps Special Operator Staff Sergeant. He said, "I've zipped up body bags on men and on women. And with men, I could eat Cheerios after it but with women, the smell of burnt hair, I can't smell anymore. I can't stand it." What this staff sergeant is saying is that men naturally, and I would say appropriately, are affected when women are injured. It's part of our DNA. I'm glad it is.

So I think as a nation we err trying to send women to the front. I mentioned Molly Pitcher. Molly had to man that cannon because the redcoats were coming. Her husband was down, okay, God bless her. As Jessie asked, are we to this point in our nation that we have to do this? I don't think so. So I would defer to Jessie and to Kate and I'd say sure, we've got women who probably can meet the standards, and if we could hold those standards, well, I'd be surprised, but that might be a worthwhile goal. To me, we're missing the point on this. I don't think we as a nation, regardless of how progressive we've become and how gender neutral the rest of society is should send women to the front lines. And when they turn your flank and that squad gets rolled up and the company, and the battalion, and it comes down, it affects my granddaughters here in the country. So I'm not willing to risk that for what I think is a failed experiment, so, that's all I'd say.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: This is the first time that I've ever been to Capitol Hill, and the only thing that brought me today was my three-year-old and my five-year-old daughters. And the sheer terror it inspires in me to think that one day they will be drafted just like men and sent to the battlefield. Anybody in this group who thinks that that is not the next logical step after quotas happen, you - you are living in la-la land. What can the ordinary citizen do about this?

HUNTER: Number one, talk about it. So I introduced, with Ryan Zinke, the only Navy SEAL -

he's a former Team 6 Navy SEAL commander from Wyoming, a congressman. We introduced a Draft America's Daughter Act. That's our bill. It mandates that women be drafted into the U.S. military, that they have to sign up for - for, oh, what is it - when they turn 18? We mandate it. And the reason that we did this is that we saw no other way to equal talking about this, because here's what I found. Whether you are a Christian family that goes to church on Sunday, or you're a coffee house liberal family that lives in D.C. and goes and drinks Bloody Marys Sunday morning, neither one of those groups wants their daughters drafted. Neither one of them, right? From the coffee house liberal families to the hardcore conservatives, neither one of those groups want their daughters drafted. So we introduced this bill - simply get it out there and talk about it, so talk about it. Get it on the radio. Talk about it. Talk to your congressman about it. Because people don't know what the Administration is doing. This should be a congressional decision. So say that I'm wrong and the majority of representatives want women to serve in combat. In bloody, gory combat. Let's say that most congressman want that. Then let's vote on it. This should not be a unilateral decision by the Administration changing literally thousands of years of warfare precedent because Obama says oh well we want to make it a normal society and it needs to reflect that, right? Let's get out there and talk about it. It should be a congressional decision where it's discussed, debated on TV publicly, and then people get in and then call their representatives or write them letters and say I don't like you for doing this or keep on going with this. But it should be a public debate, not something that they do in the administration without any studies or discussion.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Do you think that Congress will reverse Carter's new regulations on women on the front lines?

HUNTER: I would suggest to you that Congress will not do that. Once this is implemented, it's hard to walk this backwards. Truly. It's hard to go backwards once this goes into effect. If you had a different administration, they could walk it back much easier because Congress can't legislate for any combination or permutation of an outcome, right? But the administration can change rules and tweak things and walk something back because they can keep changing and adjusting really quickly, whereas we have to pass a law, the Senate's got to pass it, and the President's got to sign it. That takes a long time. And slow, and it just would not work that way.

FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER: I'm an Army veteran that spent 25 years on active duty. I joined at 17 when I was told I was too short to be a military police officer, so I spent ten years

enlisted. I was a senior drill sergeant, where I was in an integrated environment where I saw men and women. Then when I became commissioned I joined an airborne unit, I commanded two airborne units as one of the first females to command at Fort Bragg. I jumped out of a lot of planes. I did counter-terrorism operations in Iraq, and all - I was very humbled in performing my mission. But time and time again, as a woman, I was told there's something in place where you cannot first enter that branch or do that mission. But thank God I had people who would allow me to establish a foothold so I could prove that I am part of that success for that mission. So I retired in 2009 and worked at the Pentagon, worked at OSD policy. It is important for these discussions to continue. Let's take our time, integrate those women into those infantry and those special operation units. If it's not a good idea, then we can change course. But not to allow that decision to happen at all is not justice to the women serving in our United States military right now.

SHAFFER: Thank you for those comments. I don't disagree agree with you, what you're saying, I just think there's a fallacy that's been publicly perpetrated. The Army has picked women for special missions going back to the beginning of the Army. I served with multiple females in units that don't officially exist because the Army recognized there was a requirement for [someone with their particular skills] to serve in a special mission unit. So I think there's an idea that there's been discrimination by the Army, and that is not correct. It's been a [mission] requirements based system: if you have a mission requirement, we'll find someone to fit that requirement. I think the problem is, and I'll say this because of my position, is that the idea of opening everything up because people want them to be open might lead to catastrophic failure. One of the things that I spoke to a senior member of the Pentagon about is the fact that if you lower standards, and my big issue is standards - if you lower standards to complete the inclusion of females, what you then do is open it up for inferior males as well. You get people who are just not qualified. And that will lead to catastrophic mission failure. So I think - I don't disagree with what you are saying. I see women in every aspect - I had a drill sergeant who was female. I've served under female generals. I've served with them in combat. The issue is not their being there; the issue is what is the standard to be retained and put forth as a permanent standard for the Department of Defense?

Audience Member: As I understand the situation, the Carter rules are likely to be rolled back only after a different administration, and that administration chooses to roll it back? Is that correct? My follow-up question really is let's assume that that does not happen. You are

concerned that standards would gradually fall. I would want to know what other outcomes do we see, and the remaining question is assume it does happen, a new administration rolls it back, what kind of damage could potentially have arisen between the beginning of October when it gets implemented, and a year-and-a-half later when it's rescinded?

SHAFFER: I'll open it up and say that what the congressman was saying is that Congress could legislate the answer, but it would take everybody being in consensus, which is never going to happen. So the easiest path to changing it would be a new administration. The new administration coming in, depending on which party, could look at it again. If it's the Democrats, it'll be business as usual. I'm pretty sure the Republicans would relook at it. Regarding the last part of your question, I don't think you are not going to see a change today, six months from now, but the cost to women is going to have far more measurable damage in the long-run, that includes VA care. My friend Walter Jones, God bless Walter, you know, you probably all know - Congressman of North Carolina, dear friend of mine. He always says why don't we think in advance of the costs that we are going to incur by these policies? How this is an Article I issue. Congress does have the right to legislate control of the budget. And it's Congress's role to look at policies for what it's going to cost. It's why they have something called the OMB, right? So we often do not look at the inherent secondary, tertiary costs of a policy. So this is something Congress should look at. I will - that's my two cents. But let's open it up to the panel...

DUFF: The Army has already said that they are going to increase female recruiters by 17 percent over the next two years. Why? So you can recruit more women? Again, all of the money is being spent on recruiting more women instead of recruiting more qualified men, which we've already shown have a higher rate of injury and disability, get pulled out of the field five times higher than men, I'm not telling women they can't do it. The stats generally show that women have a 35 percent success rate compared to a 98 percent success rate with men. Why would you blindly allow them to go in and get injured at these rates? I think it has to be disclosed. I was never told I couldn't do anything in my twenty years in the Marine Corps. Never. I did everything that I needed to do and that I could do. So my recommendation is that people don't say well then just let them go do it. If this was any other minority group that was suffering at a higher rate than another group, wouldn't it be reviewed and analyzed a little closer? We now have legalized violence against women? That's what we've done. Let's be very clear. Having them in combat is real, and it goes on every single day. Our special forces did it just this past summer. They did it in Fallujah. I'm sorry, I don't think any female who just

happens to get through some training is going to be capable of handling that type of impact. Dead bodies will make a difference.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: My name is Miranda Rosenkranz, I am an officer in the United States Marine Corps. Semper Fi. So you kind of touched on, a little bit, well, we get training twice a year for hazing and rape that is, unfortunately, very common in our military. Now with integrating women into combat at the front line in units that are traditionally only men, do you think this is going to have a negative effect on hazing towards women, and potentially even increasing rape towards women in these units? Because it happens in the military now - is it going to just get worse?

DUFF: I think it's going to get worse. And I'm going to say it from my own personal experience. Shoving something down people's throats who are adamantly against it only creates hostility. Rape is not an act of sex. It's an act of control. It's an act of violence. And the fact of the matter is that anybody in the infantry who has ever served in combat, in a combat unit, in the infantry -- not motor transport, not even artillery, talking about the infantry here -- they will tell you that they go after the weakest member. They always do. About 20 percent of those who had reported rape were men. Sexual assault is not always about sex. It's about an act of aggression and control. We can't even resolve our sexual assault problem now, and yet you're going to stick women in infantry operations, six months out in the field, and then assume nothing's going to happen. They have overwhelmingly shown that the top 25 percent in the Marine Corps are at the bottom 25 percent with the men when they are integrated in these combat units. That's not going to change. Will rape increase - yes. They haven't even fixed it now. They will not fix it. They will not. Because when you are in combat, I believe, and we all know this - testosterone and mindset changes. The same man in combat is not the same man that comes home to his wife and children.

SHAFFER: There's male on male rape too...

DUFF: That's 20 percent.

SHAFFER: ...and that's an issue that I think is underreported and overlooked a lot. And I'm saying that, as one of my last assignments in the Army was to do an investigation, an investigation for those who know, of an attempted rape at Fort Bragg - your old stomping grounds. And it was a tough investigation because I came to find that witnesses who were

there to see it just kind of dried up, and so it's one of those peer things where you have a culture that I don't think is mature enough to actually do the right thing, necessarily. I don't want to give the details, but this was a senior E7 who was investigated for attempted rape, and my recommendation as the investigating officer was to prosecute. They decided to go with administrative separation, which was the same effect - he was reduced to E1 and kicked out. But this isn't a small issue, and it's something that I think people have to recognize as we take it seriously.

KIDDER: Yeah, I'll jump in. So as Jessie said, so if you look at the sheer numbers of individuals who are victims of sexual assault, the number is actually much higher for men. The percentage of women who have experienced sexual assault is much higher than the percentage of men but what that triggers is - you know, the military - the culture of the military should be excellence and leadership. And command climate and looking at ways of enforcing true leadership from the top down and controlling the climate within their units is a huge, important piece of this, right? So I don't think we should take it as a given that this is going to happen. I think that we need to push on our leadership to make sure it doesn't. On the issue of hazing, I think some of the research has shown and there have been a lot of studies on this, actually Amber's comment earlier about you know, women's double standards hurt unit morale and it doesn't actually set the women up for success. Right, so yeah, I would be ticked off too. Now does that necessitate hazing? I don't think so. But I think if we can get to a place where the standard is the same, and everyone is measured based on how he or she performs against the standard, you reduce some of the incentive that seems to come along culturally to haze new or weak members.

SHAFFER: One last thought before we go - one of the great leaders of our time said once that we are the last best hope for humanity, the United States, and our way of government in our republic. What we had today is a healthy debate on issues, which we as a society must decide upon what is best for us. The fact that we had this debate speaks volumes about who we are as a people. People can disagree with good-natured and reasonable thought, but again, it is our job, as the leadership - we are all leaders - to continue to make progress for our nation to keep it the strongest, most effective military on the planet, and I think we all would agree that we want to see our republic continue to thrive and our military along with it, so thank you all for coming today. We hope to see you again soon.



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