



## Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services Articles of Interest for the Week of 18 September 2015

---

### GENDER INTEGRATION

#### 1. [Navy secretary threw us 'under the bus,' say Marines in gender-integrated infantry unit](#)

(14 Sep) *The Washington Post*, By Thomas Gibbons-Neff

Marines involved in a controversial experiment evaluating a gender-integrated infantry unit say they feel betrayed by Navy Secretary Ray Mabus after he criticized the results of a nine-month study that found women are injured more frequently and shoot less accurately in simulated combat conditions.

#### 2. [Navy to open all jobs to women despite experiment](#)

(15 Sep) *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, By Gretel C. Kovach

Navy Secretary Ray Mabus has made his final decision. The infantry, SEALs, and all other combat jobs under the Navy should open to women by the end of this year, with no exemptions to the Pentagon's new gender-neutral employment policy, Mabus said Monday during a speech in Ohio.

#### 3. [Congressman says SecNav's stance on women in combat insults Marines](#)

(15 Sep) *Marine Corps Times*, By Hope Hedge Seck

As rhetoric surrounding the decision to open combat jobs to female Marines heats up, a lawmaker on the House Armed Services Committee is denouncing Navy Secretary Ray Mabus for comments questioning the integrity of the Corps' research on the subject.

#### 4. [Early Tests Show Female Airmen Can Perform Many SpecOps Tasks: General](#)

(15 Sep) *Military.com*, By Brendan McGarry

Preliminary tests show female airmen can perform many of the same battlefield tasks as their male counterparts in Special Operations positions, a general said.

#### 5. [Third female Ranger student to recycle Swamp Phase](#)

(15 Sep) *Army Times*, By Michelle Tan

The female soldier, who has not publicly been named by the Army, has been at Camp Rudder, Florida, since Aug. 29, after successfully completing Ranger School's Mountain Phase in Dahlonge, Georgia. This latest recycle is the fourth time she has been sent back to reattempt one of Ranger School's three phases.

#### 6. [Mabus: I'm not asking for women-in-combat exemptions](#)

(Sep 15) *Marine Corps Times*, By Hope Hedge Seck

Days after the Marine Corps released new data showing men outperformed women in a host of combat-related tasks, Navy Secretary Ray Mabus erased any doubt about his plans to open all jobs in the sea services to female troops — including those in the infantry and Navy SEALs.

#### 7. [USAF general: Women in combat standards test can keep up](#)

(16 Sep) *Military Times*, By Stephen Losey

The results of this summer's test to set gender-neutral standards for combat jobs — which could pave the way to opening up the last six male-only Air Force combat jobs to women — aren't in yet.

#### 8. [Head of SpecOps Command: Decision on Women in Combat Imminent](#)

(16 Sep) *Military.com*, By Matthew Cox

"I expect to get our recommendation on the behalf of SOCOM to the secretary of defense probably here in the next week," Votel told an audience at the 2015 Maneuver Conference at Fort Benning, Ga. "I will tell you from a SOF standpoint, from a SOCOM standpoint, we value people. People are our most important resource."

## **9. Congressman calls for Navy secretary to resign as Marines' women-in-combat feud escalates**

*(17 Sep) Navy Times Scoop Deck, By Meghann Myers*

An outspoken member of the House Armed Services Committee on Thursday called for Navy Secretary Ray Mabus to resign, the latest twist in what has become an impassioned public feud over the pending decision whether to let women join the Marine Corps infantry and its elite special operations command.

## **CAREER PROGRESSION**

**10. Flag Officer Announcements.** Secretary of Defense Ash Carter announced today that the president has made the following nominations:

- Navy Rear Adm. Raquel C. Bono, nominated for appointment to the rank of vice admiral and for assignment as director, Defense Health Agency, Falls Church, Virginia. Bono is currently serving as director, National Capital Region Medical Directorate/chief of the Medical Corps, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Bethesda, Maryland.
- Navy Rear Adm. Elizabeth L. Train, nominated for appointment to the rank of vice admiral and for assignment as deputy chief of naval operations for Information Dominance, N2/N6, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations/director of Naval Intelligence, Pentagon, Washington, District of Columbia. Train is currently serving as director, National Maritime Intelligence Integration Office/commander, Office of Naval Intelligence, Washington, District of Columbia.

**11. General Officer Assignments.** The chief of staff, Army announces the following officer assignments:

- Maj. Gen. Leslie A. Purser, U.S. Army Reserve, commander (troop program unit), 108th Training Command (initial entry training), Charlotte, North Carolina, to special assistant to the assistant secretary of the Army (manpower and reserve affairs) (individual mobilization augmentee), Washington, District of Columbia.
- Brig. Gen. Christie L. Nixon, U.S. Army Reserve, commanding general (troop program unit), Military Intelligence Readiness Command, Fort Belvoir, Virginia. She most recently served as deputy commanding general (individual mobilization augmentee), U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command, Fort Belvoir, Virginia.
- Brig. Gen. Arlen R. Royalty, U.S. Army Reserve, deputy commander (troop program unit), 108th Training Command (initial entry training), Charlotte, North Carolina, to assistant deputy chief of staff G-3, mobilization and reserve affairs (individual mobilization augmentee), Office of Deputy Chief of Staff G-3/5/7, Washington, District of Columbia.

## **1. Navy secretary threw us ‘under the bus,’ say Marines in gender-integrated infantry unit**

*(14 Sep) The Washington Post, By Thomas Gibbons-Neff*

Marines involved in a controversial experiment evaluating a gender-integrated infantry unit say they feel betrayed by Navy Secretary Ray Mabus after he criticized the results of a nine-month study that found women are injured more frequently and shoot less accurately in simulated combat conditions.

“Our secretary of the Navy completely rolled the Marine Corps and the entire staff that was involved in putting this [experiment] in place under the bus,” said Sgt. Danielle Beck, a female anti-armor gunner with the task force.

Mabus questioned the findings of the research after a four-page summary of the results was released Thursday, saying he still thinks all jobs in the Marine Corps should be opened to women. He said results that found women were more than twice as likely to be injured and ultimately compromise a unit’s combat effectiveness were an “extrapolation based on injury rates, and I’m not sure that’s right,” [he told NPR](#).

Sgt. Joe Frommling, one of the Marines who acted as one of Beck’s monitors for the experiment, said he was frustrated with the secretary’s comments.

“What Mabus said went completely against what the command was saying the whole time,” said Frommling. “They said, ‘Hey, no matter what your opinion is, go out there and give it your best and let the chips fall where they may.’”

“All the work that the task force did, the rounds that we shot, didn’t mean anything if he had already made up his mind,” he added.

Capt. Patrick McNally, a spokesman for the secretary, said Mabus had no further comment beyond his earlier remarks and “remains committed to opening combat fields to women.”

Last week, the Marine Corps released the results of the nine-month experiment, known as the Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force, which examined and tested the effectiveness of a gender-integrated infantry unit. The results, in short, determined that women were injured at a higher rate and did not do nearly as well as their male counterparts in the majority of the tested areas.

“It started out with a fairly large component of the men thinking ‘This is not a good idea’ and ‘Women will never be able to do this,’” Mabus said in the Friday interview with NPR. “When you start out with that mind-set, you’re almost presupposing the outcome.”

The task force was stood up in October 2014 and consisted of roughly 300 men and 100 women broken down into a number of smaller units. Each job that is currently closed to women, known as combat arms, was represented. Artillery, tanks, amphibious and armored vehicles all had a component. The task force then conducted training exercises like any other. Its mission was to hold a number of trials that would evaluate the performance of a female-integrated ground task force.

“If you were to look at our training plan and how we progressed from October to February, you’re not going to find any evidence of institutional bias or some way we built this for females to fail,” said one Marine officer who participated in the experiment.

The officer, who asked to remain anonymous because of his active-duty status, explained that for the first five months of the experiment the Marines of the task force trained as a unit in North Carolina to prepare for the testing phase in California. This phase of training is known as “the work-up,” with the second phase in California — where the trials would be held — acting as the deployment.

“We consulted physical trainers from [the school of infantry] to help develop an appropriate hike plan, and we fired roughly a year’s worth of ammo for a regiment in a quarter,” the officer said, referring to the massive amounts of ammunition used to train the relatively small task force at Camp Lejeune. “In the time that we had, there wasn’t a day wasted when it came to training for California . . . From the top down, we were trying to level the playing field.”

The main components of the task force were Alpha and Weapons companies. Alpha would be a female-integrated rifle company, or “line” company, while the Weapons company would consist of three female-integrated sections: mortars, machine guns and an anti-armor section.

A weapons company in an infantry battalion, arguably, has the most rigorous set of requirement in combat. Each section in the company is dedicated to hauling a weapons system that regular rifle companies don’t have to carry—from 90-pound 81mm mortars to 85-pound .50-caliber machine guns.

Beck, a Weapons Company Marine in the Task Force, was one of 17 women and 21 men who were left in the company at the experiment’s conclusion in August. According to Marines involved in the experiment, numbers fluctuated frequently as those who volunteered to participate could drop at any time. A large number of men in the company dropped because they were promised an assignment to any unit in the Marine Corps for participating in the experiment. This caused the company to shrink considerably from its initial strength of around 90 volunteers in October.

“Every day we were training,” said Beck. “We didn’t know what we were going to expect when we got to Twentynine Palms, but the training that we did do got us physically ready and mentally in the mind-set for what we’re going to do.”

Though the entirety of Weapons Company, men and women, trained to the same standard before deploying to California for the evaluation period of the test, another criticism leveled by Mabus was that the women probably should have had a “higher bar to cross” to join the task force.

To Beck, a 30 year-old who was one of the strongest women in the company, Mabus’s remarks were insulting.

“Everyone that was involved did the job and completed the mission to the best of their abilities,” said Beck, adding that Mabus’s remarks about the type of women in the experiment were a “slap in the face.”

“The caliber of the women in Weapons Company are few and far between in the Marine Corps,” she added. “They are probably some of the most professional women that anybody will ever have chance to work with, and the heart and drive and determination that they had is incomparable to most women in the Marine Corps.”

Of the men and women who were in Weapons Company and participated in the majority of the experiment's trials, the women performed better than the men on the Marine Corps-wide physical-fitness test. The average score for the men in Weapons Company was 244 out of 300 while the women's average was 283, according to documents obtained by The Washington Post. For an average all-male infantry unit, physical-fitness scores are usually in the 260s.

In Weapons Company, all of the women who were evaluated against their male infantry counterparts had passed the same School of Infantry the men had attended.

In 2013, the Marine Corps opened its enlisted infantry school to female volunteers. From September 2013 to June 2015, 144 of the 401 females volunteers had passed the once male-only school.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2015/09/14/navy-secretary-threw-us-under-the-bus-say-marines-in-gender-integrated-infantry-unit/>

## **2. Navy to open all jobs to women despite experiment**

*(15 Sep) The San Diego Union-Tribune, By Gretel C. Kovach*

Navy Secretary Ray Mabus has made his final decision. The infantry, SEALs, and all other combat jobs under the Navy should open to women by the end of this year, with no exemptions to the Pentagon's new gender-neutral employment policy, Mabus said Monday during a speech in Ohio.

Results of a controversial Marine Corps study on women in combat released last week did not sway the Navy leader, who must approve recommendations from the sea services before they are forwarded to the Secretary of Defense and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The lengthy Marine Corps experiment involving about 300 men and 100 women who volunteered as research subjects found that all-male units performed significantly better than mixed-gender ones on 69 percent of tactical tests. The task force on gender integration also found that women were injured more than twice as often as men, according to a brief summary of results released by the Corps.

Mabus and other critics of the study have questioned its premise and methodology, saying the experiment was not designed to accurately assess gender integration of combat jobs as directed by Congress and the defense secretary. He contended that the goal is to see whether some women can excel in rigorous ground-combat assignments.

Amid a firestorm of passionate commentary by supporters and detractors of the report, Marine officials described their task-force research as unbiased and groundbreaking. In particular, they said it revealed that adding women to all-male units made them slower and less lethal, reducing combat effectiveness in most instances.

Some defenders of the Corps' experiment are accusing Mabus of choosing political correctness over research-driven facts.

At Marine headquarters, officials said they would not debate with Mabus about his criticism of their experiment.

"The purpose of the service's research was to show scientific method and rigor that would help inform our military leaders and others about the possible considerations of gender integration into previously closed combat arms jobs," Capt. Philip Kulczewski, a Marine spokesman who observed the task force since its inception, said Tuesday.

Gen. Joseph Dunford, the Marine commandant, is weighing the task-force findings as well as related research on entry-level training courses, the opening of 12 occupations to women and the addition of female support staff to some ground-combat units.

As of Tuesday, Dunford had not announced his recommendations. The deadline to request an exemption is Oct. 1.

Mabus considers the Marine Corps decision a moot point. "I'm not going to ask for an exemption for the Marines," he said Monday at a forum by The City Club of Cleveland.

### **Commandos**

What's more, "Nobody is asking for an exemption in the Navy ... The SEALs aren't asking for an exemption. Our notion is set standards, make sure those standards have something to do with the job, and then if you meet it, you meet it," Mabus said.

He may not have the final say on the SEALs and other special operations jobs in the Navy Department, which fall under the operational control of U.S. Special Operations Command. People familiar with the process say a recommendation from the four-star general in charge of the commandos, Gen. Joseph Votel, may be weighted equally.

Rear Adm. Brian Losey, head of the Coronado-based Naval Special Warfare command, has said he does not think gender should

be a consideration for employment in the SEALs.

In a rare public speech in February, Losey compared the debate over women in combat to racial integration and sexual orientation. “In this person’s view, if you take away all the descriptors, you have two things left: You have a candidate and you have a standard,” Losey told the San Diego Military Advisory Council.

“At one point you could have put ethnic or racial descriptors in front of the candidate, and you could have had a discussion about that. At one point five to eight years ago, we had a discussion about sexual preferences and how that might impact the community,” he said.

Losey called the debate over allowing gays to openly serve “irrational and emotional” and said, “We’ve crossed that rubicon.”

He added, “We are now at the crossing where the question is being asked of women. Again, I think it’s about candidates and standards, pure and simple.”

### **Marine approach**

As for the Marines, Mabus said he was aware of their research from the beginning but it was Marine Corps officials who decided what to study and how.

Complete results of the experiment contained in a nearly 1000-page report have not been released by the Corps. Mabus said he read through the study carefully a couple of times.

After their nearly yearlong experiment, the Marines came out in a different place than he did, Mabus said, “because they talk about averages, and the average woman is slower, the average woman can’t carry as much, the average woman isn’t quite as quick on some jobs or some tasks.

“The other way to look at it is we’re not looking for average. There were women that met this standard, and a lot of the things there that women fell a little short in can be remedied by two things – training and leadership,” he said.

The Marine Corps already had a grip on individual female performance because of its experiments with infantry courses for officers and enlisted Marines, among other research, Col. Anne Weinberg, deputy director of the Marine Corps Force Innovation Office, said last week in an interview.

They created the task force to move to the next level. “When you add that dynamic of, on average, a population that is physiologically at a comparative disadvantage in terms of strength and endurance and bone density and all those things we know about human physiology, trying to understand what that did in a collective task ... that is really where the combat effectiveness of our small units becomes so incredibly important,” Weinberg said.

Looking at the results: “no matter how you slice it, it was gender that kept popping up,” Weinberg said.

### **Research value**

According to Mabus, the value of the Marine research was helping to set entry standards for physically demanding combat jobs such as the infantry that never had them before. “Male or female, you’re not going to get to be in the infantry, you’re not going to get to be in armor, or whatever, unless you meet these standards up-front. That is a tremendously good thing that came out of the study,” he said.

“Once you’ve done that I just see no reason to say ‘because the average person, woman, cannot meet these, we’re not giving anybody a chance,’” Mabus said.

The Marine Corps asked scholars at independent organizations such as George Mason University, the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and the University of Pittsburgh to help develop its research plan and analyze findings.

One recommendation for the task force experiment that went unheeded involved the need for a comparison against set standards such as loading an artillery gun within 60 seconds. If men could do it in 30 seconds and women in 40, the difference in combat effectiveness may not be significant.

“You might say the women are less lethal, but you can’t say they are outside of the standard,” said a senior Pentagon official who followed the Marines’ integration experiment from the start.

Another criticism was the use of a broad measure of statistical significance. The standard p-value for scientifically rigorous research is .05 or less, indicating strong evidence. The Marines used a much weaker measure of .10, casting a wider net.

The sample size of research subjects was also very small. In the infantry company, 29 women participated, including 16 in the provisional platoon not required to meet minimum physical fitness standards like the rest of the task force. For that reason,

some feel that results from the provisional platoon should be discarded.

The tankers included three women in combat trials. “Are we really going to use three women to set the standard for every woman in the nation today and every girl in the entire Marine Corps? It’s hard to believe that,” said the official, who described the overall experiment as “ambitious” but limited.

Whether the Marine experiment truly isolated gender as a factor in combat performance as claimed is in dispute, since more experienced Marines were pitted against women fresh from schoolhouse training in ground combat specialties.

The weapons company, for example, had 20 women and 22 men, commanders told the Union-Tribune during testing at Twentynine Palms. All the women joined the experimental task force straight from the infantry schoolhouse, but none of the men did (although more than half were reservists.)

### **Pushback**

Marine officials said months of training together mitigated differences in experience levels, since the women checked into entry-level courses in July of 2014, started training with the task force in October and completed combat tests this spring. However, these women newly assigned to combat occupations continued to build muscle and become more efficient throughout the combat trials, according to observation and interviews with task force participants during and after the tests.

On more than one occasion, Mabus said the experimental Marine task force should have screened for a higher caliber of women. That hit a nerve with Marine officials and task force participants who said they were insulted by the insinuation that the women were bottom of the barrel or simply average as tactical athletes, since most of the female participants had to pass a male physical fitness test and perform at least three pull-ups.

Paul Johnson, principal investigator of the study for the Marine Corps, said the female Marines joined the task force with slightly better marksmanship scores than the average woman in the Corps, whereas the men were below average on the rifle range. The women were also at the “top end of the female spectrum” on physical fitness and combat fitness test scores.

“These are highly motivated Marines. If you’re a slacker and you’re just getting by, the last thing you’re going to do is volunteer for something really rigorous. It takes a certain kind of person who wants to put themselves through this. Not surprisingly, it is really high-quality female Marines,” he said.

Sgt. Maj. Justin LeHew, a Navy Cross recipient and the senior enlisted Marine for the Corps' Training and Education Command, slammed Mabus in a lengthy Facebook post for being “way off base” and “unfair to the women who participated in this study,” the Marine Corps Times reported.

“In regards to the infantry....there is no trophy for second place. You perform or die,” he wrote in the post, which has since been removed or hidden from public view. “In this realm, you want your fastest, most fit, most physical and most lethal person you can possibly put on the battlefield to overwhelm the enemy's ability to counter what you are throwing at them and in every test case, that person has turned out to be a man.” (In two tasks in the experiment, mixed-gender groups outperformed all-male ones when firing the .50-caliber machine gun as a crew.)

Sgt. Joe Frommling, a Marine monitor for the gender-integrated research, told The Washington Post that Mabus was wrong to say they went into the \$36 million experiment expecting women to fail: “All the work that the task force did, the rounds that we shot, didn’t mean anything if he had already made up his mind.”

No one babied the women or held them to a lower standard during training and testing, Capt. Mark Lenzi, the weapons company commander for the task force, told the Union-Tribune in March at Twentynine Palms.

The men and women repeatedly ran the gauntlet during an intense 45-minute trial that had them charging uphill with heavy weapons, evacuating a 220-pound casualty dummy and scaling a tall container.

“A significant amount of this job is your ability to withstand misery and suffering,” said Lenzi, who has since been promoted to major. “The key ... is never allowing them to feel sorry for themselves. If we put it like it’s some insurmountable infantry challenge, they won’t be able to do it.”

With proper training, “They’ll rise to the occasion. They just have to believe in it,” Lenzi said. But size and strength does matter. “The machine gun doesn’t care who’s carrying it, and neither do the people you’re going to shoot on the other end. It favors someone bigger, stronger, and more durable.”

### **Reaction**

On the other side of the debate, military women who support the end of all gender restrictions for employment praised Mabus for what they described as his leadership and acumen at gauging weaknesses in the Marine Corps research.

“His points are dead center – all on target. This is a historic opportunity that will make our force stronger in the generations to come,” said Marine Reserve Maj. Katey Van Dam, a former Cobra attack helicopter pilot and combat veteran who co-founded the “No Exceptions” initiative of the Truman Project and Center for National Policy.

Marine Lt. Col. Kate Germano said Mabus’ “willingness to question the veracity of the combat integration study results will ensure that in the future, all Marines will have the chance to earn their place in the most challenging of jobs, regardless of gender.”

Germano, who was fired from command recently of the Marine recruit battalion that trains all female enlistees in the Corps, said the status quo won’t cut it to prepare women for ground combat jobs. She had argued for tougher standards for female Marines, but a Marine investigation substantiated complaints of “toxic leadership.”

“In order to prevent any perception of lowering standards, senior leaders are going to have to acknowledge that revolutionary change is needed in terms of how we recruit and train women to be Marines. ... Setting universal high standards for recruitment, performance, and conduct will be the only way to keep the faith of both male and female Marines and ensure we can meet our national security obligations in the future,” she said.

Nancy Duff Campbell, co-president of the National Women’s Law Center, said the Marine Corps study raises potential constitutional concerns in her eyes. “At best it was only measuring the performance of some women and some men, and a very limited number of them at that,” she said.

“If we want to have the best military in the world – and we do – we should not exclude 50 percent of the population from any military job simply because of gender. If the best man for the job is a woman, she should get the job,” she said.

### **Infantry**

Looking ahead, the Marines will follow orders and carry on as they always do, according to an infantry company commander, former instructor at The Basic School for Marine officers, and veteran of heavy combat in Sangin, Afghanistan.

The active duty captain, who asked not to be named so he could speak freely, said he doesn’t think women belong in the combat arms because of their smaller stature, the benefits of all-male camaraderie, and feminine hygiene needs. He lost 30 pounds during his 2010 combat tour and became infested with fleas. His experiences of grunt life at war included patrolling for hours at a time in murky canals and going without showers for days.

“As a staff platoon commander at The Basic School I had some extremely talented females who were in exceptional shape. These ladies could handle everything that the men did,” he said. But the Cross-Fit trained superwomen are the minority. “Are you going to stick one girl in a battalion of a thousand men?” he asked.

If the Corps is forced to accept women in the combat arms – just as it was forced to accept stricter rules of engagement in the war zone and the open service of gays – it won’t be as catastrophic as many Marines fear, the captain predicted.

“If they come in the infantry, it’s not going to be the end of the world. The Marine Corps will continue to go on ... We will do what we are told and make it work,” he said.

<http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/2015/sep/15/mabus-final-decision-women-combat-marine-debate/>

### **3. Congressman says SecNav's stance on women in combat insults Marines**

*(15 Sep) Marine Corps Times, By Hope Hedge Seck*

As rhetoric surrounding the decision to open combat jobs to female Marines heats up, a lawmaker on the House Armed Services Committee is denouncing Navy Secretary Ray Mabus for comments questioning the integrity of the Corps’ research on the subject.

Rep. Duncan Hunter, R-Calif., a former Marine officer and Iraq veteran, released a statement Tuesday saying Mabus’ recent public comments were an insult to the service.

“Secretary Mabus is quickly proving that he’s a political hack who cares more about doing the White House’s bidding than the combat effectiveness of the Marine Corps,” Hunter said. “Mabus is not only insulting the Marine Corps as an institution, but he’s essentially telling Marines that their experience and judgment doesn’t matter.”

A spokesman for Mabus did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Hunter’s remarks, but the office has previously said that Mabus’ comments stand on their own.

Hunter’s comments come a day after Mabus told an audience at a forum in Cleveland that he plans to open all Navy and Marine Corps



jobs to women, despite the release of data last week showing that Marine combat teams with female members performed more slowly, shot less accurately, and received higher rates of injury than all-male teams.

Since the release of findings, Mabus has publicly criticized the study, saying the Marines in charge were biased against the idea of women in combat, and the women who participated may not have been the best the Corps had to offer.

During his Monday speech, Mabus said it's likely that gender-neutral standards will be implemented for combat jobs.

"Once you've done that, I can see no reason to say, because the average woman cannot make it through, we're not giving anyone a chance," he said.

A number of Marines close to the Corps' women-in-combat test have bristled over Mabus' remarks. Sgt. Maj. Justin LeHew, the senior enlisted Marine at Training and Education Command, said in a public Facebook post Sept. 12 that Mabus was "way off base" to question the caliber of the Marines participating in the experiment or the integrity of those conducting the test.

It's possible more lawmakers will come forward to criticize Mabus for his comments: An aide with Hunter's office said the congressman was preparing a letter to the Navy secretary from multiple members of the House of Representatives asking him to hear the Marine Corps out before making a final decision.

Meanwhile, a spokesman for Defense Secretary Ash Carter maintains that the Pentagon's top official is still determining how to proceed as he awaits information from all the services regarding the impact of opening combat jobs to women.

"To the best of my knowledge, the secretary has not received information from any of the services yet," Pentagon Press Secretary Peter Cook said in a briefing Tuesday. "...They have until the end of the month to provide their information, and then he has until January 1 to make his decision."

<http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/story/military/capitol-hill/2015/09/15/congressman-secnav-insulting-marines-women-combat/72336286/>

#### **4. Early Tests Show Female Airmen Can Perform Many SpecOps Tasks: General**

*(15 Sep) Military.com, By Brendan McGarry*

Preliminary tests show female airmen can perform many of the same battlefield tasks as their male counterparts in Special Operations positions, a general said.

The Air Force ran a series of tests involving 170 airmen, including about 70 women, between May and July at [Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland](#), Texas, to predict how they would perform on a series of physical tasks required on the battlefield and for Special Operations jobs, according to Brig. Gen. Brian Kelly, the service's director of military force management policy.

"In lots of cases, they were able to compete and stay up with the men," Kelly said on Tuesday during a briefing with reporters at the annual [Air and Space Conference](#) held outside Washington, D.C. He later confirmed they did so most of the time.

"There were some tasks and places where they would say had they known that that was the task and had they the ability to train to that over time they were pretty comfortable that they would be able to do that over time," he said. "They may have struggled that particular day because their job is maybe a desk job and they weren't able to do 100 pull-ups or whatever they were doing in that regard.

"But there was confidence that if they really had a desire to do that career field, and had the ability to train to it, the test subjects all thought that they would be able to accomplish the task and be successful," he added.

The findings -- which have been submitted to [Air Force](#) Secretary Deborah Lee James as she considers lifting restrictions on women serving in direct-action combat jobs -- will likely raise questions about a recent [Marine Corps](#) study that found female Marines struggled to perform some infantry tasks and were more likely to be injured on the job than their male peers.

The service secretaries have until the end of the month to make recommendations to Defense Secretary Ashton Carter on whether to open direct-action combat jobs such as infantry to women. Under a 2013 directive from then-Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, the



military services must open all combat jobs to women by next year or explain why any must stay closed.

James has already signaled that she intends to open the remaining Air Force jobs closed to women.

"I don't see any barriers to opening up those remaining career fields" that are still closed to women so long as gender-neutral standards are kept in place, [she said on Monday](#) to applause from the audience at the conference, which is being held this week in National Harbor, Maryland, by the Air Force Association.

Her comments came a month after [Army](#) Capt. Kristen Griest and 1st Lt. Shaye Haver made history by becoming the first women to graduate from the Army Ranger School and earn the coveted Ranger Tab.

The vast majority -- upwards of 99 percent -- of the Air Force's military occupational specialties are already open to women, Kelly said. "They Air Force had a shorter distance to go" than the other services, he said.

Indeed, there are just six MOSs -- all in Special Operations -- with about 4,000 positions currently closed to female airmen, Kelly said. They include two officer specialties (special tactics officer and combat rescue officer) and four enlisted specialties (combat controller, pararescue, special operations weather and tactical air control party, or TAC-P), he said.

The Air Force conducted the gender-integrated tests at San Antonio because they didn't have enough time to enroll women into the training pipeline for Special Operations career fields, a process that can last two to three years, and wanted to develop a predictive model for performance, Kelly said. Tasks included two-man teams carrying a litter up a helicopter ramp, he said.

"We know what the weights of those are and how steep that ramp is," he said. "Those operational tasks became the standard for our study.

"When you use those as your standards and say these are the things that have to be accomplished that we know directly tie to the operational requirement on the battlefield, that's when you can say, 'A standard is a standard,'" Kelly said. "It doesn't matter what your gender is or who you are, as long as you can perform that standard."

<http://www.military.com/daily-news/2015/09/15/early-tests-female-airmen-can-perform-specops-tasks.html>

## **5. Third female Ranger student to recycle Swamp Phase**

*(15 Sep) Army Times, By Michelle Tan*

She has been in Ranger School since April, slogging her way through the famously punishing course.

But for the final female participant in the Army's [gender-integrated assessment](#) of Ranger School, her journey is not yet over.

Army officials announced Tuesday that she will not graduate Friday alongside 140 male classmates. Instead, the soldier and 20 male students will recycle the Swamp Phase, Ranger School's third and final phase, beginning Sept. 26.

The female soldier, who has not publicly been named by the Army, has been at Camp Rudder, Florida, [since Aug. 29](#), after successfully completing Ranger School's Mountain Phase in Dahlonaga, Georgia. This latest recycle is the fourth time she has been sent back to reattempt one of Ranger School's three phases.

Capt. Kristen Griest and 1st Lt. Shaye Haver on Aug. 21 became the first women to earn the distinctive black and gold tab when they [graduated from Ranger School](#).

The woman who's still a Ranger student went through much of the grueling course with Griest and Haver until she was required to recycle – or try for a second time – the Mountain Phase.

The women are part of the Army's gender-integrated assessment of Ranger School. In all, 19 women started Ranger School in April. Griest, Haver and the third woman were the only ones who remained.

The assessment has drawn a high level of scrutiny, with many questioning whether the Army is lowering its standards for the elite

school, which until now has been open only to men, while many others have cheered on the female students.

Army officials have long insisted that the standards have not been changed in any way.

The Army on Sept. 2 announced that Ranger School is now [open to all](#) qualified soldiers regardless of gender.

"We must ensure that this training opportunity is available to all soldiers who are qualified and capable, and we continue to look for ways to select, train, and retain the best soldiers to meet our nation's needs," Army Secretary John McHugh said in a statement.

Army Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Milley said: "The Army's number one priority is combat readiness, and leader development is a function of combat readiness. Giving every qualified soldier the opportunity to attend the Ranger Course, the Army's premier small unit leadership school, ensures we are maintaining our combat readiness today, tomorrow and for future generations."

The prerequisites for students attending Ranger School remain in effect, including the standards of medical fitness, the Army said in its announcement.

Nineteen female and 381 male soldiers started Ranger School on April 20, the start of the Army's first integrated assessment of the course.

Eight of the women made it through RAP week, or the Ranger Assessment Phase.

None of the eight women made it past the Darby Phase on the first try and were recycled, along with 101 of their male classmates, on May 8.

After the second attempt at the Darby Phase, three female and two male students on May 29 were given the option of a Day One Recycle, which is a normal course procedure that's used when students struggle with one aspect of the course and excel at others, said officials at Fort Benning, Georgia.

The two male students declined to recycle, officials said.

The remaining five women returned to their units and were not recycled again. A total of 29 students were dropped from the course for failing to meet the standards of the Darby Phase.

These students did not meet the standard for a number of reasons, including leading patrols, poor peer evaluations, too many negative spot reports, or a combination of all three.

In the end, Griest and Haver completed Ranger School after three tries at the Darby Phase and one attempt each at the Mountain and Swamp Phases.

This third woman so far has completed three attempts at the Darby Phase, two at the Mountain Phase, and one at the Swamp Phase.

Ranger School's Swamp Phase is located in the coastal swamp environment near Valparaiso, Florida, according to the Army. It consists of two jumps for airborne qualified personnel, four days of waterborne operations, small boat movements and stream crossings, and a ten day field training exercise with student led patrols.

What remains to be seen is whether the Army will open its infantry, armor and special operations ranks to women.

That decision isn't expected until the end of the year.

The Army has already opened its combat engineer and field artillery military occupational specialties to women.

Ranger School is the Army's premier combat leadership course, teaching students how to overcome fatigue, hunger and stress to lead soldiers in small-unit combat operations. It is separate from the 75th Ranger Regiment.

Soldiers who have earned Ranger Tabs, male or female, are not automatically part of the regiment, which has its own requirements

and assessment process.

<http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/careers/army/2015/09/15/third-female-ranger-student-recycle-swamp-phase/72302334/>

## **6. Mabus: I'm not asking for women-in-combat exemptions**

*(Sep 15) Marine Corps Times, By Hope Hedge Seck*

Days after the Marine Corps released new data showing men outperformed women in a host of combat-related tasks, Navy Secretary Ray Mabus erased any doubt about his plans to open all jobs in the sea services to female troops — including those in the infantry and Navy SEALs.

"Nobody's asking for an exemption in the Navy," Mabus said Monday in a speech to the City Club of Cleveland in Ohio. "...The SEALs aren't asking for an exemption ... I've been pretty clear, and I've been pretty clear about this for a while: I'm not going to ask for an exemption for the Marines."

Mabus went on the offensive last week after the Marine Corps released partial findings from a nine-month experiment comparing the performance of ground combat units with female members to all-male teams. In the all-volunteer study, the men consistently outperformed the women in speed and accuracy, while female Marines were injured at more than double the rate of their male counterparts.

In a Sept. 11 NPR interview, Mabus alleged the Marines involved in the experiment were biased against the idea of women in combat and suggested officials should have picked higher-quality female volunteers to assess. During his speech, Mabus made clear that the course was set for gender integration. He was careful, however, to distance himself from the design and the creation of the Marines' infantry experiment that he has criticized as flawed.

"I knew about this study, of course, but I don't reach down and say, 'do this kind of study, do that kind of study,'" he said. "That came up from the Marine operating forces."

Mabus said the Marine Corps' study pointed to a need for gender-neutral, job-specific standards for each combat specialty. That the average woman couldn't perform some infantry jobs, he said, was irrelevant.

"We're not looking for average," he said. "There were women that met this standard, and a lot of the things there that women fell a little short in can be remedied by two things: training and leadership."

The creation of job entry standards would keep the Marine Corps from losing any of its strength or lethality on the battlefield, Mabus said. He also asserted that a force including women would be a stronger force, because it was more diverse. The Marines' infantry experiment illustrated some ways that men and women act differently, he suggested.

"Women got injured a lot or more than men on duty. Men got injured four times as much as women off duty. So, we've got these knuckleheads who are, 'here, hold my beer and watch this,'" Mabus said. "So, do we keep men from being in the infantry because they get hurt so much off duty? I don't think so."

Marine Commandant Gen. Joseph Dunford has been far more reticent about his own opinions regarding women in combat ahead of the Jan. 1 deadline to open all jobs to female Marines, saying in the past that he wanted to evaluate study data before making a decision. But Mabus plans to have the final say, telling Military Times earlier this month that the way forward on integrating combat units is "my call."

Mabus has received heavy criticism for his disparagement of the Marine Corps' infantry experiment. Female Marine volunteers told the [Washington Post](#) that the Navy secretary "threw us under the bus" by suggesting that the study was flawed and the participants not fit enough.

And Sgt. Maj. Justin LeHew, a Navy Cross recipient and the senior enlisted Marine for the Corps' Training and Education Command, slammed Mabus in a lengthy post on Facebook, calling his comments "counter to the interests of national security and unfair to the women who participated in this study."

The Marine Corps plans to release more data from its women-in-combat study later this month.

<http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/story/military/2015/09/15/mabus-m-not-asking-women--combat-exemptions/72306514/>

## 7. USAF general: Women in combat standards test can keep up

(16 Sep) *Military Times*, By Stephen Losey

The results of this summer's test to set gender-neutral standards for combat jobs — which could pave the way to opening up the last six male-only Air Force combat jobs to women — aren't in yet.

But Brig. Gen. Brian Kelly, the director of military force management policy, said Tuesday that many of the roughly 70 women who took part in the test at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland in Texas are certain that they kept up with the men in the test and — if they wanted it bad enough — could hack it as Air Force special operators.

"These 70 women weren't existing special operations airmen ... so these were volunteers from a variety of other career fields," some of whom came from desk jobs, Kelly said at a news conference at the Air Force Association's Air and Space Conference. "And they would say, in lots of cases, they were able to compete with and stay up with the men. There were some tasks where they would say that if they had known that was the task and they had the ability to train to that, over time they were pretty comfortable they would be able to do that."

When asked if most of the female test subjects had that confidence, Kelly said, "Absolutely."

"There was confidence that if they really had the desire to do that career field and had the ability to train to it, the test subjects that we put through it all thought that they could be able to accomplish the tasks and be successful," Kelly said.

All of the military services are in the process of deciding whether to open up the last combat jobs to women. By the end of September, Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James and the other service secretaries will submit their recommendations to Defense Secretary Ash Carter. Carter is expected to issue his own recommendations on which jobs to open up around Jan. 1, when Congress will then choose to act on or not.

James has said that she wants to open up these last Air Force jobs to women, and that the burden of proof will be high for anyone who wants to keep any of them closed.

There are six jobs encompassing about 4,000 special operations positions that are still closed to women: 13C special tactics officers, 13D combat rescue officers, 1W0X2 special operations weather enlisted, 1C2 combat control, 1C4 Tactical Air Control Party and 1T2 pararescue.

Other services have sent female service members through their special operations training programs, such as the Army's Ranger school, to see the women do the job.

But that wasn't an option for the Air Force, Kelly said. Air Force special operations career fields have training pipelines of two to three years, which meant there was no way to send female airmen through in time to meet the Pentagon's deadline for a decision.

So instead, the Air Force in April started testing 175 male and female volunteers over two months on the kind of physical challenges they would face on the battlefield. For example, battlefield airmen might have to carry a wounded comrade on a litter up a ramp into a C-17 aircraft. To find out what it would take for an airman — male or female — to do that job, Lackland built a structure to the specifications of a C-17 ramp, and then had the volunteers carry a simulated litter to the top of the ramp, raise it, hold it, and then mount it in the simulated aircraft.

The Air Force plans to use those results to set the first gender-neutral occupational standards for those jobs, linked to specific tasks battlefield airmen are expected to do in combat. Because setting up real-life scenarios to test those battlefield abilities would be too complicated and expensive to do on a regular basis, the Air Force is trying to match each of those tasks with regular physical fitness tests, such as pullups, distance runs, lunges, standing long jumps and dead lifts.

"If you can do that job, then it doesn't matter what your gender is, or who you are, as long as you can perform that standard," Kelly said. "Once we have those [operational standards], we can be sure they're gender-neutral because they're directly tied to operational tasks that have to be performed on the battlefield."

<http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/careers/2015/09/16/kelly-women-in-combat-standards-test-confident-they-can-keep-up/32494747/>

## 8. Head of SpecOps Command: Decision on Women in Combat Imminent

(16 Sep) *Military.com*, By Matthew Cox

The commander of U.S. [Special Operations](#) Command said today that his recommendation on women serving in direct-action combat units would be ready in days.

Gen. Joseph Votel would not talk directly about the recommendation, but said that diversity was extremely valuable to special operations forces.

"I expect to get our recommendation on the behalf of SOCOM to the secretary of defense probably here in the next week," Votel told an audience at the 2015 Maneuver Conference at [Fort Benning, Ga.](#) "I will tell you from a SOF standpoint, from a SOCOM standpoint, we value people. People are our most important resource.

"We are an organization that the nation expects to be able to go out and work in a variety of different areas with a variety of different people. And so I would make the argument that diversity is extraordinarily important to us."

Votel's comments come on the heels of a recent speech by Secretary of the [Navy](#) Ray Mabus, who said that [Marine](#) infantry, Navy [SEALs](#), and all other combat jobs in the Navy Department will open to women by the end of this year.

Mabus made his decision after criticizing a lengthy Marine Corps experiment that compared all-male combat units to ones that included women. The Marines released a four-page summary of results last week indicating that all-male units performed significantly better on 69 percent of tactical tasks, and [female troops were injured at more than twice the rate as men.](#)

Votel did not reference the Marine study in his speech but said that SOCOM has "paid considerable amount of attention to not just our own studies, but we have looked at a lot of the other studies the other services have done."

Then Votel referenced the role females played in special operations raids in Afghanistan.

"For years, we did raids and we did operations in Afghanistan, went into compounds and did stuff, and we missed 50 percent of the population every time we went," Votel said.

"When we included small cultural support teams made up of female volunteers who went through a very specific training course that brought them to a level of a standard of performance where they could move with our strike forces ... we changed the dynamic on the battlefield."

The pilot program was designed to train women and have them serve with Army [Ranger](#) and other special operations direct-action units so they could gather battlefield intelligence by talking to Afghan women in situations where male soldiers had been unsuccessful.

"We opened up the other 50 percent of the population, and I am here to tell you that having watched it first hand on objectives – I will just tell you that was a critical factor for us in being much more effective in things we were being asked to do on the battlefield," Votel said.

Votel said he recognizes that many are concerned about maintaining standards.

"I have talked to a range of people both in and out of the military, particularly those that are in and those in the SOF community the one thing they constantly emphasize to me is that if we do this we have to ensure that we maintain our very high standards," he said. "No female, no male, no one wants to be able to get into an organization having not met the standard ... so it will be imperative that we do that.

"We are looking very carefully at it, and for us it's a different challenge than it might be for big [Army](#) and it might be for the Marine Corps and for the other services, but as the SOCOM commander, I am specifically looking at what it means for the special operations forces.

<http://www.military.com/daily-news/2015/09/16/head-of-specops-command-decision-on-women-in-combat-imminent.html>

## 9. Congressman calls for Navy secretary to resign as Marines' women-in-combat feud escalates

(17 Sep) Navy Times Scoop Deck, By Meghann Myers

An outspoken member of the House Armed Services Committee on Thursday called for Navy Secretary Ray Mabus to resign, the latest twist in what has become an impassioned public feud over the pending decision whether to let women join the Marine Corps infantry and its elite special operations command.

In a letter to Defense Secretary Ash Carter, California Congressman Duncan Hunter, a Marine Corps combat veteran, slammed the secretary over his recent criticism of a Marine Corps research project that concluded combat teams containing women were less effective than those composed entirely of men.

“Recent statements by Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus — openly criticizing the Marine Corps and its study on the impact of gender integration — have created a deep sense of concern for the ability of the Navy Secretary to be objective and to continue leading the Marine Corps,” Hunter wrote to Carter.

A spokesman for Mabus declined to discuss Hunter’s letter. The secretary has said previously that he believes all ground combat jobs should be open to women who can meet rigorous gender-neutral physical standards.

Also on Thursday, the powerful head of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Sen. John McCain, [told the Washington Examiner](#) that if Mabus was dissatisfied with the Marine Corps’ study then he should have halted it months ago. Separately, members of the House Armed Services Committee have asked for a briefing on the Marine Corps’ gender research findings, according to [a Thursday report by The Hill](#).

The military is on the cusp of historic change, with a mandate to open all combat roles to women by January. Each of the services has until Oct. 1 to request any exemptions to that policy.

Mabus has made his intentions clear, saying he won’t allow either the Navy or the Marine Corps to keep any specialties closed to women.

“That’s still my call,” he told Navy Times in an exclusive interview Sept. 1. “I do not see a reason for an exemption.”

Days later, Mabus went a step further, telling NPR that the Marine Corps’ study was flawed. He reiterated his position again this week during a speaking engagement in Ohio.

Conducted over nine months, the Marine Corps’ study involved about 400 Marines, including approximately 100 women. Men and women were assigned to infantry and other ground combat roles as part of the research. They began the experiment in North Carolina and then moved to California, undertaking intensive training in the desert and mountains.

Marine officials concluded that women were injured more often than men, fired their weapons with less accuracy and experienced greater difficulty when tasked with evacuating simulated casualties. Mabus, however, contends the female volunteers were perhaps not the strongest that the Marine Corps could have put forward.

Mabus also has suggested the study’s results were predetermined.

“It started out with a fairly large component of the men thinking ‘this is not a good idea,’ and ‘women will never be able to do this,’ ” Mabus told NPR in an interview broadcast on Sept. 11. “When you start out with that mindset, you’re almost presupposing the outcome.”

Those remarks incited outrage within the Marine Corps, with one combat decorated senior enlisted leader taking to Facebook to call Mabus’ remarks insulting and uninformed.

In his letter to Carter, Hunter called Mabus biased, criticizing the secretary for declaring his decision before being briefed on the Marine Corps’ findings. At a minimum, Hunter said, Mabus should be sidelined from this decision-making process.

“He has openly disrespected the Marine Corps as an institution, and he insulted the competency of Marines by disregarding their professional judgment, their combat experience and their quality of leadership,” Hunter wrote. “Such a significant loss of respect is detrimental to the ability of the Navy Secretary to effectively lead the men and women of the Marine Corps and ensure the service

maintains the highest level of combat effectiveness.”

<http://scoopdeck.navytimes.com/2015/09/17/congressman-calls-for-navy-secretary-to-resign-as-marines-women-in-combat-feud-escalates/>