



Written by [John F. McManus](#) on September 16, 2015

## Combat Is No Place for Women

Recently, news reports flooded the nation about [two women soldiers](#) who had passed all requirements and were now Rangers, the Army's elite group of warriors. All Americans were supposed to cheer their accomplishment. But one of the two, both of whom graduated from West Point, stated in an interview that she certainly couldn't lift the amount of weight her male counterparts could.



No one in the large gathering of media representatives pressed this new Ranger even though she should have been asked whether she can manage to carry one end of a stretcher bearing a wounded comrade on the way to a medical station. Then, she should have been asked if her natural female cycle that brings to most women such consequences as depression, mood swings, suicidal thoughts, self-abuse, and more that men don't experience. Did she know that when acceptance of women at the nation's service academies began, physical standards were lowered? Had she read former infantry officer Brian Mitchell's 1989 book *Weak Link: The Feminization of the American Military* where he noted that when women recruits couldn't complete a required run in boots while carrying a rifle, the new standard allowed both women and men to perform the task in sneakers? Many more questions that should have been asked can be cited but not one was offered.

Having served three years as a lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps gives this writer an excellent perch from which to answer the question, "Should women be placed in combat roles in the military?" And the answer is "No!" Serving in our nation's armed forces should never be looked upon as a right possessed by everyone. Instead, it's a privilege, and it should be awarded to only those who qualify — mentally, physically, and emotionally.

Retired Army Brigadier General Andrew Gatsis expressed outrage when the matter of women being given equal status with men became an issue in the 1980s. He stated:

No woman should have the right to go into combat simply because she desires to do so. It's a matter of jeopardizing the lives of soldiers who depend on all members of the team to do their full share, and of the right of every American citizen to have the strongest national defense possible to protect his and her freedom.

A highly decorated Vietnam veteran, Gatsis had already witnessed situations where female soldiers even in non-combat situations couldn't lift heavy equipment, drive a truck through rough terrain, erect bulky tents, dig latrines, or construct ammunition bunkers. He insisted that the violence always present during combat "calls for force, and force requires physical strength" that women don't possess. Current presidential candidate James Webb, a Vietnam veteran, spoke out about this issue in his 1989 article entitled "Women Can't Fight," published in *Washingtonian* magazine.

There are many more reasons why females should not be assigned combat duty. Plenty of opportunities to serve in uniform exist in a variety of non-combat assignments. The current policy that leads to opening every position in the military should be reversed. A likely enemy would send only men while our men in battle would invariably be forced to carry not only their assigned load but also a portion of whatever is expected of a woman. Unit morale, the fundamentally important motivator of all troops in



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battle, would surely suffer. We conclude: Women can serve in the military but placing them in combat is not only foolish, it endangers all participants.

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