

Gen. Boykin: Female Soldiers Should Not Be on Front Line of Battles

Editor's Note: *Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Jerry Boykin, Family Research Council's executive vice president, had a strong response to news reports that the Pentagon will end its policy of "no women in units that are tasked with direct combat":*

Women have been in combat since the United States began combat operations in Afghanistan in 2001. They have fought and served with distinction. However, placing women in infantry and other front line units is a different issue and it has nothing to do with their courage or capabilities.

The people making this decision are doing so as part of another social experiment, and they have never lived nor fought with an infantry or Special Forces unit. These units have the mission of closing with and destroying the enemy, sometimes in close hand-to-hand combat. They are often in sustained operations for extended periods, during which they have no base of operations nor facilities. Their living conditions are primal in many situations with no privacy for personal hygiene or normal functions. Commanders are burdened with a very heavy responsibility for succeeding in their mission and for protecting their troops.

This decision to integrate the genders in these units places additional and unnecessary burdens on leaders at all levels. While their focus must remain on winning the battles and protecting their troops, they will now have the distraction of having to provide some separation of the genders during fast moving and deadly situations. Is the social experiment worth placing this burden on small unit leaders? I think not.

General Boykin *was one of the original members of the US*

Army's Delta Force. He was privileged to ultimately command these elite warriors in combat operations. Later, Jerry Boykin commanded all the Army's Green Berets as well as the Special Warfare Center and School. His last four years in the Army were spent in Washington, D.C. as the United States Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence.