



# SMA Chandler Describes Future Role of Women in Army during JBLM Visit

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Sgt. Maj. of the Army Raymond F. Chandler III spent two days at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., this week. During his stop, Chandler spoke to senior noncommissioned officers about the direction the Army is taking as it transitions into the future.

The Army announced its Soldier 2020 plan last week as part of a Department of Defense requirement. The plan describes how all combat arms career fields will open up to qualified female Soldiers. The plan also asks for the development of gender-neutral standards for every military occupational specialty. These new standards will aid leadership in selecting the most qualified Soldiers for any job, regardless of gender, Chandler said. The plan asks that these gender-neutral standards be implemented by 2016.

A precursor to the development of these standards is the Training and Doctrine Command, or TRADOC, review of current standards for each MOS, which Chandler said has not been done since the 1970s for

some career fields.

“Many of our standards are outdated and very old. What we’re doing now is looking at the physical requirements for any person, male or female, to serve in an MOS, and once the revised standard is implemented, that will be the standard for anyone to serve in that MOS.”

Chandler said this will allow the Army to better “manage talent and make sure that talent is best applied to the positions where it can best serve the Army and its needs,” Chandler said. “As we move to a smaller force but the demand to deploy, fight and win our nation’s wars is still very high, we need to manage the available talent pool to the best of our ability. This is about maximizing an individual’s ability to serve in our Army the best they can so that we’re more effective and efficient.”

After addressing the audience, Chandler answered questions about this policy change, including one about misconceptions.

“There’s a misconception that female Soldiers won’t have to meet the same standards as male Soldiers or that we’re going to lower standards. That’s just not the case,” Chandler said. “This is about one standard applied equally across the force.”

Chandler acknowledged, however, that this change won’t, and shouldn’t, happen overnight.

“We are doing this deliberately and incrementally,” he said, noting that conducting needed surveys and developing policies and procedures take time.. ■



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