

SMA: Army needs female NCOs to transfer to combat arms MOSs

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Pvt. Kaleena Gaeth was one of 16 women in a class of 75 Soldiers who graduated June 3 from Advanced Individual Training as 13B cannon crewmembers at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. (U.S. Army photo by Meghan Portillo)

Sgt. Maj. of the Army Daniel A. Dailey has asked female NCOs to consider transferring into combat arms military occupational specialties.

More than 100 women have volunteered to join the ranks as combat arms Soldiers, but these Soldiers also need female leaders. Dailey said he hopes female NCOs will answer the call and rise to the challenge.

"These young women have demonstrated the drive and desire to take on some of the most challenging assignments the Army offers," Dailey wrote in a memo to the force Aug. 1. "As young Soldiers do, they will look for leadership and mentorship from their superiors. Unfortunately, we have not had a sufficient number of serving female Soldiers and NCOs volunteer to transfer into these mentorship and leadership roles."

In April, the Department of Defense opened the remaining combat-arms MOSs to women, including all positions in 19-series armor and 11-series infantry. Dailey said he personally supports the move to remove all gender-based restrictions, and is glad to see anyone who is qualified, male or female, serve the Army in any capacity.

As it has done in the past when integrating women into an MOS, the Army is taking a "leaders first" approach. Placing female leaders in those MOSs before integrating new Soldiers has been made a priority, but finding those leaders has been a challenge. Dailey is asking more female NCOs to make the change to combat arms because there are still not enough female mentors for the new recruits.

"We need leaders to help shape the next generation of combat Soldiers," Dailey said. "I know we already have female Soldiers with the drive and ability to be successful in ground combat arms formations. If you think you have what it takes, I am personally asking you to consider transferring to combat arms."

Dailey noted that it will not be easy. Soldiers are required to pass MOS-specific High Physical Demands Tests, for which men and women are graded on the same scale.

"The standards have and always will be very rigorous," he said. "You will be challenged both mentally and physically. If you are interested in taking on this challenge and leading our Soldiers into the future, please talk to your career counselor today."

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