

Name: _____ Class: _____

First Female Army Rangers Say They Thought of 'Future Generations of Women'

By Brakkton Booker
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In 2015, Shaye Haver and Kristen Griest became the first two women to graduate from the United States Army Ranger School. Women historically have been restricted to wartime support roles, such as serving as nurses and aides, but now they are gaining access to direct combat positions. This 2015 news article includes interviews with Shaye Haver and Kristen Griest on the eve of their graduation. As you read, take notes on how Captain Griest and First Lieutenant Haver describe their respective accomplishments.

- [1] The first two women to graduate from the Army's elite and grueling 62-day Ranger School said Thursday they were motivated to prove naysayers¹ wrong and also break open the hatch for future generations of women.

Capt. Kristen Griest, 26, a military police platoon² leader, and 1st Lt. Shaye Haver, 25, an Apache attack helicopter pilot, spoke for the first time since completing their training at Fort Benning, Ga., a day before they graduate and receive their Ranger tabs.³



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Both women were asked if they had ever thought about quitting. Griest responded she had some low points, especially training in the swamps in Florida.

"But I never actually thought anything was going to be too difficult that it was worth leaving the course," she said.

- [5] Haver, though, was not as confident.

"Seriously considering quitting throughout the course? I think I would be crazy to say if I didn't," Haver said. "But the ability to look around to my peers and to see they were sucking just as bad as I was, kept me going."

Griest and Haver have been called pioneers and trailblazers. They entered the Ranger School with 17 other women, but they were the only two to complete the training. Griest says she "felt internal pressure" to make it through to the end. Even after times when they were "recycled" — sent back to start a leg of training over with the next class of trainees.

1. **Naysayer (noun):** a person who habitually expresses pessimistic or negative views
2. a subdivision of a company of soldiers
3. The Ranger tab is a service school military decoration of the United States Army. It signifies the completion of the Ranger School course in small-unit infantry combat tactics in woodland, mountain, and swamp operations.

"I was thinking really of future generations of women that I would like them to have that opportunity so I had that pressure on myself," Griest said. "And not letting people down that I knew believed in me, people that were supporting me."

The two women appeared at the press conference, just as they had throughout their training, with their male Ranger School classmates. Some of the men admitted they were skeptical of the women at first but were won over throughout the demanding training. Some shared stories about how Haver and Griest offered to help carry heavy loads when male soldiers were "too broken" to help.

[10] Soon their gender didn't seem to matter.

"When we were given resupply and you're given 2,000 rounds of machine gun ammo,⁴ the last thing you're caring about is whether or not your Ranger buddy is a man or a woman. Because you're not carrying all 2,000 rounds yourself," said 2nd Lt. Michael Janowski.

At one point, Haver admitted she came to the Ranger School with her "guard up," wary of how the men would receive them.

"I think the battles that we won were individual. And the fact that at each event we succeeded in, we kind of were winning hearts and minds as we went. But that was more important to us, becoming teammates with our Ranger buddies that we're graduating with tomorrow," Haver said.

Though Haver and Griest have completed Ranger School, they are still not eligible to take part in front-line combat. That could change in the near future. As NPR's Tom Bowman reports, a decision on whether to change that policy could come in the fall.⁵

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4. ammunition

5. In March 2016, Defense Secretary Ash Carter approved final plans from military service branches and the United States Special Operations Command to open all combat jobs to women.

Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. PART A: Which of the following best identifies the central idea of the article? [RI.2]
 - A. Combat roles should be opened to female soldiers immediately because there are not enough male soldiers to fill the roles.
 - B. Army Ranger training is so hard it prevents many people from participating, especially women.
 - C. The first two female U.S. Army Rangers proved their strength but could not convince their male peers of their worth.
 - D. Army Ranger training is difficult but women are proving they are capable of completing it successfully.

2. PART B: Which phrase from the text best support the answers to Part A? [RI.1]
 - A. "Seriously considering quitting throughout the course? I think I would be crazy to say if I didn't," Haver said." (Paragraph 6)
 - B. "They entered the Ranger School with 17 other women, but they were the only two to complete the training." (Paragraph 7)
 - C. "Some of the men admitted they were skeptical of the women at first" (Paragraph 9)
 - D. "a decision on whether to change that policy could come in the fall." (Paragraph 14)

3. How does the discussion of carrying "machine gun ammo" in in paragraph 11 contribute to the development of the ideas presented in the article? [RI.5]
 - A. It emphasizes that gender does not matter when a person is in a combat situation.
 - B. It proves that women are incapable of performing as soldiers.
 - C. It demonstrates that army training is not difficult when teams work together.
 - D. It shows the danger of two women carrying weapons without proper training.

4. How did Griest and Haver shape the male rangers' opinions about women serving in the Army? [RI.3]
 - A. Many of their male classmates remained opposed to the idea of women serving in combat roles.
 - B. The women proved during training what all the men had previously believed about them.
 - C. Their hard work resolved any uncertainty the men had about serving alongside women.
 - D. The women proved that they were highly capable and better than men during training.

5. How did the two women's trainings compare to one another, and to their male peers? [RI.3]
Cite evidence from the text in your answer.

Discussion Questions

Directions: *Brainstorm your answers to the following questions in the space provided. Be prepared to share your original ideas in a class discussion.*

1. The author notes that some of the graduates' male classmates "admitted they were skeptical of the women at first but were won over throughout the demanding training" (Paragraph 9). Think of a time that you had to prove yourself to someone because they doubted. Why did they doubt you and how were you able to prove them wrong? How does your experience relate to that of the two female Army Rangers?
2. In the context of this article, how has America changed over time? Cite evidence from this text, your own experience, and other literature, art, or history in your answer.
3. In the context of this text, how do we define the roles of men and women? Why do you think women have traditionally been excluded from military positions? In your opinion, should women be allowed to serve in combat roles? Why or why not?
4. Of the 17 women who signed up for Army Ranger training, why do you think Griest and Haver were the only ones to complete it? How does a person overcome adversity? How might overcoming personal adversity impact others around you?