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# THE UTILIZATION OF WOMEN IN COMBAT: AN HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL ANALYSIS OF TWENTIETH-CENTURY WARTIME AND PEACETIME EXPERIENCE

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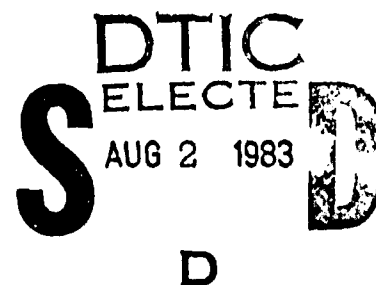
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January 1982



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in Communist-led Anti-Fascist Council of the People's Liberation of Yugoslavia (AVNOJ) partisan forces in Yugoslavia during World War II was even higher than in Russia. Some Israeli women fought as combatants in the War of Independence. At the other pole, Germany, although it employed women as civilians in both world wars, did not take them into the armed forces or permit them any military status or combat role. The British utilized women on a small scale in World War I and on a grand scale in World War II in a variety of roles but denied them a combat or arms-carrying function. As an armed neutral, Sweden mobilized 150,000 women as noncombatant auxiliaries during the Second World War. Under postwar conditions the liberal-democratic countries--except for West Germany--gave greater latitude to women in the armed forces than did the Communist countries.

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**Technical Report 563**

**THE UTILIZATION OF WOMEN IN COMBAT:  
AN HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL ANALYSIS  
OF TWENTIETH-CENTURY WARTIME  
AND PEACETIME EXPERIENCE**

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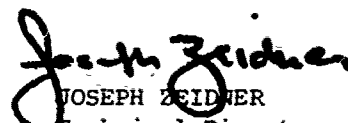
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## FOREWORD

The Leadership and Management Technical Area of ARI is conducting research on organizational cohesion. A factor said to be relevant to such cohesion, particularly in a traditionally male organization like the Army, is the way an organization uses its women members. The research reported here does not focus on cohesion per se; rather, it examines how and with what consequences women historically have been used in the various military organizations with which they have been associated.

Six of the seven working papers appended to this report are scheduled for publication in a forthcoming book edited by the first author, and the seventh will be published in a book edited by two other individuals. Several of the papers were presented at the Twentieth Anniversary Conference of the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society.

  
JOSEPH ZEIDNER  
Technical Director

THE UTILIZATION OF WOMEN IN COMBAT: AN HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL ANALYSIS  
OF TWENTIETH-CENTURY WARTIME AND PEACETIME EXPERIENCE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Requirement:

The Army required a concise and rigorous examination of the historical experience of women in combat and areas related to combat in a representative sample of countries at war in the twentieth century. The research describes the experience of women in Russia/Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Germany, and Britain in the two world wars and the postwar periods; in addition, the research describes the experience of Israeli women in the War of Independence of 1947, as well as the problems faced by Sweden and Denmark in the twentieth century.

Procedure:

The authors engaged a number of specialists (a) to examine a mass of historical materials that included primary and secondary sources on the seven countries and (b) to prepare a set of working papers reporting what they found. The authors read the working papers, summarized the major elements, consulted additional materials, organized the findings in standard format, and drew comparative conclusions.

Findings:

In Russia, women fought in World War I individually under the tsar and in women's battalions after the fall of the tsar. The role of women was expanded during the Civil War between the Communists and the anti-Communists, with the former using some 80,000 women in various capacities, including combat. In World War II, this role expanded dramatically, with more than a million women in the war, most of them in uniform, and many of them in direct combat as snipers, riflemen, machinegunners, tankers, pilots, and air force crew members. The ratio of women to men in the World War II partisan resistance struggle of the Communist-led Anti-Fascist Council of the People's Liberation of Yugoslavia (AVNOJ) movement (the Titoists) was even higher. In other cases where the nation was seen as mortally threatened, e.g., Algeria, Vietnam, and China, women were also used in fighting with arms in hand. At the other pole, Germany, although it employed women as civilians in both world wars, did not take them into the armed forces or permit them any military status or combat role. The British used women on a small scale in World War I and on a grand scale in World War II in a wide variety of roles but denied them a combat or arms-carrying function.

The major conclusions of this report are as follows:

1. The growth in technological complexity and the mechanization of war eroded some of the traditional division of labor between the sexes

in wartime and opened a growing number of military, noncombatant specialties for women.

2. Mass participation of women in combat occurred most often when two factors were present: the invasion and occupation of the homeland by enemy troops and an official ideology of sexual equality in labor and other areas of life.
3. Egalitarian ideologies--liberal-democratic or Communist--did not guarantee the equal utilization of women in war.
4. Nations that utilized women on a vast scale demobilized them after a war as readily as did nations that used women on a smaller scale.
5. Women were always a small minority in the armed services in every country in every war, and only a fraction of these fought in combat.
6. In wars that had a political-revolutionary dimension, women were useful in political mobilization and education.
7. The great majority of all women in every war in every country served as auxiliaries in communications, transport, logistics, and nursing.
8. Trained women performed in battlefield combat as infantry, armor, and artillery personnel; they also flew combat missions in aircraft.
9. Women had problems in performing battlefield tasks requiring upper-body strength.
10. Tensions arising from gender conflict and man-woman relations in the armed services have diminished somewhat since 1914.
11. The problem of pregnant women was rarely faced (and never solved) except by demobilizing them.
12. There were some parallels between government and public opinion on the use of women in war and the general level of women's rights activity in a given society.
13. Liberal-democratic countries (except West Germany) gave greater latitude to women in the armed forces in the postwar period than did the Communist countries.

#### Utilization of Findings:

The historical information given here, along with the conclusions, is for the use of those who need to know how and in what capacity women have performed in the services and in combat, particularly in the recent past. It provides a basic orientation about the dimensions and parameters of women in combat and women in war. Since it is rooted in historical fact, the report demythologizes certain current claims and notions about what women actually did in the past, how much they engaged in war, and how successful they were. It does not and cannot provide a rigorous statement about how efficient women

were in war because this was impossible to measure; but it does tell when, where, and under what circumstances they were utilized in combat, what they did, what weapons they used, what some people thought about their performance, and what problems they and their male cofighters faced.

THE UTILIZATION OF WOMEN IN COMBAT: AN HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL ANALYSIS  
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# THE UTILIZATION OF WOMEN IN COMBAT: AN HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL ANALYSIS OF TWENTIETH-CENTURY WARTIME AND PEACETIME EXPERIENCE

## PURPOSE

This research was undertaken with two purposes in mind. The first was to describe for selected countries the wartime and peacetime experiences of women in and with the countries' armed forces, both in combat and out of combat but with a major focus on the experience in combat. The second purpose was to analyze this historical experience, draw analogies, make comparisons, and extract from the historical account the major significant patterns of utilization in the wars of the twentieth century.

## METHOD

The method used in this research is comparative historical investigation combined, where data are available with social analysis. The authors engaged a number of specialists (a) to examine a mass of historical materials that included primary and secondary sources on seven countries (Soviet Russia, Yugoslavia, Germany, Britain, Israel, Sweden, and Denmark) and (b) to prepare a set of working papers reporting their findings. The authors read these working papers<sup>1</sup> (Appendixes A through G), summarized the major elements, consulted additional materials, organized the findings in standard format, and drew comparative conclusions. The next two sections present the summaries and a comparative historical analysis.

No experiments were conducted and no hypotheses were tested. The report is a work of history, made as rigorous as possible given the nature of the data available.

## COUNTRY STUDIES

### Russia and the Soviet Union

Introduction. Women's participation in the wars of Soviet Russia unfolded in four distinct episodes: individual women soldiers in World War I under the tsarist regime (1914-17); women's units in the same war under the Provisional Government that succeeded the tsar (1917); a broader and more comprehensive use of women under the Soviet regime in the Civil War (1918-20); and a similar use of women in World War II (1941-45).

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<sup>1</sup> Each of these papers, except for the paper on Israel, will be included in Goldman, N. L. (Ed.), Female soldiers--combatants or noncombatants? Historical and contemporary approaches. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1982. The paper on Israel will be included in Martin, M. & McCrate, E. (Eds.), Servants in arms: Essays in honor of Morris Janowitz. New York: The Free Press, in press.

World War I Under the Tsarist Regime. From 1915 to 1917, individual women entered the army, openly or in disguise, fought in combat, rescued wounded men from under enemy fire, and performed miscellaneous support services. Since government had no fixed or consistent policy on this matter, the participation of women was irregular and unofficial. Thus their status was undefined and semilegal, unlike the official status of the nursing units. There is no adequate record of their numbers, deployment, or performance.

World War I Under the Provisional Government. When the tsar was overthrown in early 1917, the provisional government continued the war in the face of large-scale desertion and antiwar politics throughout the army. In order to shame the deserters and set a model for fighting patriotism, the government formed a number of shock units, the so-called "Battalions of Death," among which were a few women's battalions and women's units of various sizes. The first was formed by Mariya Bochkareva, a veteran of the early war years. The women were mostly of the lower classes, like Bochkareva, with a sprinkling of upper class women of various nationalities (mostly Russian) of the Russian state; their motives were patriotic. Eventually some 5,000 women served in these units. In Bochkareva's outfit--the only one for which we have detailed sources--the training, overseen by male officers, was severe as was the discipline. The women volunteers had their heads shaved and were otherwise defeminized in appearance and segregated from males. At least two units fought in active combat against the Germans in the summer of 1917. The casualty rate of women was heavy partly because they were often deserted by their male comrades. The hostility of the men was sometimes expressed by lynching some of the women in the way that the men had been lynching officers and other military elements who tried to drive them into battle. The whole experiment was, therefore, a failure; but it was a failure that was part of the larger disintegration of the Russian army in 1917. Bochkareva claimed that her women fought bravely and killed Germans, but it is difficult to make a general assessment of their fighting capacity or performances from other sources. It was the first example in modern history of women used in all-women combat units.

Women in the Civil War. The Bolsheviks (later Communists) came into power late in 1917, championing among other things equality of the sexes. Some 80,000 women served in the Red Army and other services during the Civil War against the White anti-Communist forces from 1918 to 1920 and in the Polish campaign at the end of that war. The main roles of women were feeding the troops, providing medical and sanitary services, building fortifications and trenches, conducting propaganda among the troops, engaging in psychological warfare behind enemy lines, scouting, and participating in espionage and partisan warfare. Women also fought directly as riflemen, armored train commanders, gunners, and demolition troops. Most of these were integrated into male units, but there were also special all-female units of about 3,000. No record exists of the ratio of combatant to noncombatant women soldiers.

World War II. Data about women in the service are much more plentiful for World War II than for previous wars, and they make clear, even allowing for distortions of the Soviet press and the exaggeration common to the subject, that women's participation in all phases of the war greatly surpassed not only the experience of Russia's previous wars but that of all other wars in human history as well. Women were now better equipped in technical skills than in the past, and they were needed more desperately because of the massive invasion by the Axis powers and the severe manpower losses early in the war.

By 1942, these losses were so enormous that any official resistance to using women in military service gave way to outright mobilization. Komsomol schools trained about a quarter of a million young women in the use of mortars, heavy and light machineguns, and automatic rifles. The first separate Women's Reserve Rifle Regiment, formed in 1942, produced 5,200 women soldiers. A Central Sniper Training Center for Women was established in May 1943 and turned out about 150 skilled shooters every few months. The 122d Air Group graduated 600 pilots who served in three women's regiments.

Medical personnel served under combat conditions throughout the war, and a large number of them were women. Women accounted for 43% of military surgeons (with postmedical school specialized training), 41% of frontline doctors (with 6 years of medical school), 43% of paramedics, 100% of nurses, and 40% of aides and orderlies. Women were active in the partisans also. There were 26,707 women among the 287,453 partisans operating in January 1944. Although the accounts of numbers of women vary, most offer the following summary of the number of women who served in the Soviet armed forces in World War II: About 1 million women actually fought in the war, including partisan and irregular war; of these, 800,000 were uniformed troops in the Red Army, and 500,000 actually served at the front either in combat or support roles. This means that women constituted 8% of the Soviet combatants in Russia during the war (there were 12 million men).

By 1943, Soviet women had entered all the services and assumed all the roles they would play until the war's end: infantry, anti-aircraft defense, armor (all jobs in tank operations), artillery, transportation, communications, air, nursing, and partisan (naval participation was light and almost undocumented). Among the partisans women were engaged in fighting German troops, derailling trains, disrupting communications, and blowing up ammunition dumps. Almost every detachment had some women. Most performed medical work, communication functions, and domestic chores, but all were armed and many fought.

The relative effectiveness of Soviet women in World War II is hard to measure. By the end of the war, women trained by the Central Sniper Training Center had killed 11,280 enemy troops. Women in the anti-aircraft batteries actually fired the guns and were reported by one German source to have been quite good. Soviet writers claim that women were effective in tank operations. The three women's combat aviation regiments were active throughout the war zone. The interceptor regiment is reported to have downed 38 enemy planes. The short-range bombers strafed and bombed enemy positions and small supply depots from Stalingrad to East Prussia. By the time the night bombers were operating in Poland, they were flying 300 sorties a night.

Female units developed their own cohesiveness and a kind of female subculture in which their tasks were done more casually and in a warmer context than that found in all-male units. Most women, however, served in mixed units, and there is little documentation of any problems of integration. On the other hand, Soviet sources reported women having trouble with tasks involving upper-body strength, e.g., in climbing and in throwing grenades (there were many cases of self-inflicted grenade deaths among women). A German account tells of tearful women pressed into artillery service and of men who were contemptuous of them. There is no way to balance the conflicting impressions in any scientific way. The only conclusive thing that can be said without fear of contradiction is that Soviet women participated in war in greater

numbers and in a greater variety of roles than women had ever done anywhere before.

Postwar Experience. After the war, the Soviets quickly demobilized most women. The regime apparently believed that in peacetime it is easier to run an all-male army backed by a small core of female specialists. An estimated 10,000 women now serve in the Soviet armed forces. Medical or engineering specialists can be drafted. Generally, the women are in noncombat jobs. Women are barred from serving on combat ships and planes and even from guarding any but women's barracks. However, in those areas in which they serve they are treated equally with men in such matters as pay, allowances, pensions, and promotions.

### Yugoslavia

Introduction. The Yugoslav experience with women at war in 1941-45 parallels the Soviet experience in several ways: the invasion and occupation of the homeland by enemy forces; a Communist ideology and leadership of the struggle; and large-scale participation of women, especially in partisan war. There were differences as well: In Yugoslavia the occupation was complete; the Communist-led government (AVNOJ) was actually a resistance movement constantly on the move; Communists had not been in power prior to the invasion, and their program for the equal utilization of women in many walks of life was just beginning.

World War II. Official statistics set the total number of Yugoslavians mobilized to fight during World War II at 1 million, of which women numbered 100,000. The civilian population was also mobilized, and 2 million women were engaged in administration, provisioning, and maintenance of the Anti-Fascist Front for Women. The women in the Anti-Fascist Front took the place of men behind the lines. They ran local governments; organized procurement; planted the fields; sewed clothes; carried out espionage activities behind the lines; operated printing presses to promote the revolution; and managed propaganda and educational schools, orphanages, and hospitals. These women were, however, never part of the army. Those who were in the army were used to make bombs, administer first aid, and serve in coding and decoding units and in artillery units. In the partisan units women were used as medics, telegraphers, artillerywomen, and cipher officers. Some also served as cooks, seamstresses, and typists.

The general picture that emerges from an overall view of Yugoslav women's involvement in World War II is that of large-scale dedication to resolve the conflicts which, within Yugoslavia, constituted that war. Thirty-one percent of the women in the "civilian" service died, and 25% of the women in military service died. Although a smaller percentage of the military women died, document after document attests to their exploits. Many women threw bombs under enemy tanks, evacuated wounded under heavy fire, and joined men in fighting to break out from German encirclement. In all this, however, many men held traditional views toward the role of women, and these views prevailed after the war.

Women in the Yugoslav Military Today. Today women are in the professional army only in the medical corps and in a few service corps. There are women in

the Territorial Defense Forces, which has been expanded since the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968, and which is an organization regional in character but somewhat integrated with the professional army. Clearly, if Yugoslavia is invaded, women will take part in the defense of the homeland. There have been two women generals in the Territorial Defense Force, but little other information about the numbers and jobs of women is available. A new law passed in 1979 opened professional military service to Yugoslav women on a voluntary basis, but no data are available on the response to that law.

## Germany

Introduction. Among the major twentieth-century powers investigated in this study, Germany was the least receptive to the use of women in war in anything but a civilian capacity. In both world wars, the Germans invoked cultural values ("Germanic" traditions in 1914, Nazi ideology in 1939) that were almost totally hostile to the use of women in warfare in any capacity except as industrial workers and quasi-servants and clerical people.

World War I. The vast majority of German women who contributed to the war effort in 1914-18 were those (some 700,000) who worked in war industries, thus releasing men for the front. Several hundred women were hired and employed in rear-army garrisons, and by the end of the war about 500 women were in communications or had completed communications training. They never saw service. About 100,000 nurses served in rear-area hospitals in France and Belgium and at home. None had military status. Women also worked as civilian paid laborers in supply and ammunition depots, veterinarian hospitals, and offices.

World War II. The Nazi revolution did not bring about the fundamental reordering of society and of values that the Russian Revolution and Communism brought in Russia. Nazi ideology was traditionalist on the matter of women in the family, in the professions, and at work. Military matters were strictly the domain of the male sex. All the deep strains of German conservatism in this matter were reinforced by the National Socialist teaching of Volk, race, and martial virility. When they came to power, the Nazis even called for a return of women from industry to the home so that male unemployment might be eliminated. But by 1936, 3 years before the war began, full employment had been reached, and the full-scale military economy showed signs of labor shortage. By the start of the war, the German army employed about 140,000 women as clerical workers and unskilled laborers. These were all civilians. Women were also used, as in World War I, as signal auxiliaries, numbering 8,000 by 1942 and remaining at that strength until the end. About 12,500 staff auxiliary women served with the army by the end of 1942, and this number also remained constant until the end. The German air force had 15,000 women in the Women's Anti-aircraft Auxiliary and 10,000 (by 1945) in the Air Force Women's Auxiliary. The navy organized and used 20,000 women, and the Waffen SS--a military arm of the SS Nazi elite guard and security force--used about 5,000.

The army women performed principally clerical work. The signal auxiliaries were switchboard, telegraph, and radio operators. They served on all foreign fronts and German-occupied areas except those zones in Russia where partisan activity was high. (Thus the Germans unwittingly prevented the most likely case in World War II in which women would have killed other women in military

action.) Air force women auxiliaries also served largely in clerical and communications roles. The only ones who bordered on being in an indirect combat situation were the women in the anti-aircraft auxiliary. They were assigned to searchlight, barrage balloon, and radar batteries, though even here the batteries were mixed in a 3:2 women-men ratio in order to keep male personnel in them. In the last days of the war, a plan to create a women's combat battalion never materialized.

Peacetime Use. The traditional German pattern of resisting the employment of women in the armed forces in anything but a marginal, preferably civilian, capacity was reaffirmed in 1956 when the Federal Republic of Germany constituted its new armed forces. Of the 180,093 civilians employed by the armed forces in 1979, only 28% are women. The only women admitted into the service as military personnel have been medical officers, 47 having been commissioned as of 1979.

### Britain

Introduction. The British case falls between the Soviet Russian and the German. Unlike the Germans in both wars, the British used a large number of women in all kinds of auxiliary and semimilitary functions short of combat, in uniform and in women's units designated as military. Unlike the Russians in both wars, the British designated their women combatants and denied them the use of, or training in, combat weapons.

World War I. Three kinds of women's units participated in World War I: civilian volunteers, nurses, and military units. The use of volunteers and nurses dated from before the war. The first units were purely civilian. The Women's Emergency Corps was formed in 1914 to serve as a clearinghouse for women who wished to engage in war work; the Women's Volunteer Reserve ran canteens for servicemen but dressed and drilled in a military manner; and the Women's Signallers' Territorial Corps organized women radio personnel to replace signallers on the home front. The first paid volunteer unit was the Women's Legion, whose members were largely cooks and drivers for the army. Nursing provided the entering wedge for women to move from civilian medicine to combat battlefield nursing. It was a difficult transition. Early nurses associated with the British army were with the Red Cross or had private, local, or religious affiliations. The two prewar nursing units associated with the military, the Queen Alexandra Imperial Military Nursing Service and the Territorial Forces Nursing Service, had only about 2,600 women before the war; by 1918, the number had grown to more than 18,000. Voluntary Aid Despatchment and First Aid Nursing Yeomanry, Red Cross units from before the war, were eventually deployed abroad; the former comprised largely lower class women paid by the army; the latter was a more elite (formerly private) unit of women ambulance drivers and nurses. By the war's end, separate women's units had their own nursing elements as well. The other major auxiliary work which was near combat was transport.

The creation of units of military women, paid, controlled, and uniformed by the armed services, was a tortuous process. In 1915, the Women's Branch of the National Service Department was created to facilitate recruitment and placement of women into war industry and auxiliary military roles. There was much resistance to going beyond this, but there were factors working in the



other direction as well: persistent demand to serve on the part of women's groups, the presence of nurses already in all three services, and the need for women's services to replace men and at the same time avoid trade union problems. Halfway through the war, in May 1916--after brutal losses of men at the front--the War Office experienced a conscription crisis and at one point considered the drafting of 50-year-old men. By early 1917, the army was ready to use women to replace soldiers going to the front, and the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps (WAAC) was formed in January and February: About 12,000 women were sent to rear echelons (the Line of Communications) in France and 14,000 served in England. The first to go abroad were 14 cooks from the Women's Legion. In April conscription of women was discussed but never implemented. At the end of the year, the Women's Royal Navy Service (WRNS) was formed to support the Royal Navy on shore duty only; early in 1918, with the separate formation of the Royal Air Force, the Women's Royal Air Force (WRAF) was established. About 80,000 women served in these three branches by the end of hostilities in November 1918. Thus during World War I women served in three basic capacities: as civilian, paid or voluntary, in various support functions; in women's military units (auxiliaries), WAAC, WRNS, and WRAF; and as nurses.

Women in the women's military units were uniformed, billeted, and paid by the military and were sent abroad. However, distinctions were maintained between the women's units and the "regular" units. In fact, the status of women was ambiguous: They were taken into the army but recruited by the Ministry of Labour and by women's organizations; they were subjected to different disciplinary codes; and they were described simultaneously as having military designation and as civilian employees. The major impediment to integration was the conflict of gender roles between males and females. Many officers resented the presence of women in war on general principles, and this attitude was adopted by men in the ranks. In one episode, male cooks being replaced by females in order to be sent to the front vented their hostility on the women. There was also public anxiety about sexual promiscuity. The records show that pregnancy rates among the WAACs was only 3 per 1,000, lower than the civilian rate. The military took strict measures on movement, dress, comportment, and billeting to mollify public opinion on this issue. In spite of initial suspicion about the use of women in World War I, overall assessments of their performance were favorable, though not enthusiastic.

World War II. Almost all women were demobilized after World War I, but as World War II approached, the number of women in the voluntary civilian organizations increased. In April 1941, a year and a half after the onset of hostilities, the three women's military units were given complete military status, and in December 1941 conscription of women was introduced because of critical manpower shortages. The designation WRNS was retained; WAAC was renamed Auxiliary Territorial Services (ATS); and WRAF was renamed Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF). In April 1942, the first recruits were called up under conscription. In December 1940, there were only 36,400 women in ATS; by December 1943, a peak figure of 207,500 was reached. Most of these served in anti-aircraft work: fire control, searchlight operation, hit confirmation, gunnery teams (or assistants), and so forth. A typical battery had 189 men and 299 women. Men did the firing. In the WAAF, women operated air defense barrage balloons on British soil. They did not fly, although there were women who served as pilots in the civilian Air Transport Service (1 out of 8 were women, and 15 of the 173 pilots killed were women). Except

for a few females who served in partisan, resistance, and espionage work behind German lines in occupied France, no British women bore arms or served in combat in this war. Thus the British, unlike the Germans, drew large numbers of women into the service: in uniform, in their own units, doing auxiliary work in a military milieu. Unlike the Russians, the British did not deploy women in combat except insofar as service on batteries and at medical points as nurses brought them near the arena of combat.

There was still some opposition to women in the service in World War II, but less than in the previous war. Women's absenteeism and their ability to resign at will were particularly resented. Public fear of sexual commingling diminished by the 1940s; the rate of pregnancy among women in the service was still lower than in civilian life (overall, 21.8% per 1,000; slightly higher in the ATS). There was more integration of the sexes in World War II, though most women still served in all-women units and were paid on a different scale. Women were again designated strictly as noncombatants. Because of the increase in the complex technology of war, women in World War II performed a wider variety of functions away from the field of battle. No scientific surveys were organized about the effectiveness of women compared with men in these or any other jobs, nor were any studies undertaken about the impact of the war service on the women.

Peacetime Service. Most women were demobilized after the war. In February 1949, the ATS was reorganized under the name Women's Royal Army Corps (WRAC); later the WAAF was renamed WRAF (Women's Royal Air Force). As of 1981, the estimated force of each unit was as follows: WRAC, 5,900; WRAF, 5,000; and WRNS, 3,600. WRAC has about 900 officers, and the unit is commanded by a female brigadier. Most of the troops serve in integrated units. Discipline of female soldiers is carried out by female officers. The roles of women have expanded with the growth and specialization of warfare and technology (as of 1977, about 35 specialized trades in WRAC). Most of these jobs are in domestic, clerical, transportation, technical, and medical services. The only women who have come close to a combat environment are those of the Ulster Defense Regiment (UDA) in Northern Ireland. They search female members of the Irish Republican Army and other suspects at road checks, accompany patrols, and serve in radio operations. The issue of future combat roles and combat training for women in the British armed forces came up in the 1970s but has yet to be fully resolved.

## Israel

Introduction. The historical background for the participation of Israeli women in the War of Independence of 1947 helps explain the special nature of this case. After Jews began settling in Palestine (then a province of the Ottoman Empire) at the beginning of the century, defense units have appeared in which women have played a role. The first of these, Hashomer (1909) had 105 members, 24 of whom were women. During the complex struggles of the Jewish settlers to transform Palestine into a Jewish national state, these units were used against hostile Arabs during the first four decades of the twentieth century and briefly against the British occupying forces (established in 1918) during World War II. Women served as guards of outlying communities, soldiers, and officers in the British ATS, and as fighters for the Palmach, the most recent combat organization of the Jewish Zionist forces. Their numbers were



small (1,000 in the Palmach at peak) and their roles varied, but most were supportive. The few who engaged in spectacular deeds of combat tended to inflate the image of the actual role of women in the preindependence phase.

The War of Independence, 1947. In November 1947, the British mandate over Palestine was terminated and the Jewish state of Israel was established. The existing guerilla forces were transformed into a regular full-time army as the Arabs mobilized to attack the new state. At this moment there were about 10,000 women in the military service of a force of 50,000. By October 1948, a peak strength of 12,000 women in a force of 108,000 was reached. Most women played support roles in this war: nursing, signal, and convoy escort. But a few--exact figures and functions are not available--served in the tank corps armor, artillery, and infantry units. Others were directly involved in guerilla warfare, street fighting, sniping, and ambush. As the tide of war changed and the Israelis went on the offensive, women were removed from direct fighting roles and remained with their units as nurses, clerks, runners, and signal personnel. Women were apparently seen to have been effective in both these capacities, yet some people claimed that women were a distraction in that they caused men to worry about the safety of the women.

After the War of Independence. When the war was over, a women's training unit was formed, called CHEN (or HEN), indicating a distinct organizational demotion and a shift in attitude back to tradition (the word chen/hen in Hebrew also means "charm"). Although removed from combat units, women were trained in armed self-defense. In 1949, women were made liable to conscription but on a basis different from that of men. Many classes of women were exempted (mothers, for example, and later on those who claimed a religious objection); only about 50% to 60% of women of draft age were actually taken in. The length of their service was shorter than men's; their training was lighter; and women were released from reserve status once they married. During the three later wars (in 1956, 1967, and 1973), there was an upsurge of women's participation in or near battle but again in tiny numbers and under exceptional conditions. According to official policy, women were not allowed to be at the front.

Since the last war with the Arab states, women have entered into many new technical specialties, as in Britain, but their status is defined as non-combatant or, in official terminology, "indirect reinforcement of the Israeli Defense Forces' combat forces." All females who serve in male combat units are volunteers, and in the event of war they are to be removed from these units. Evidence reported by Israeli fighting men at war and outside observers indicates a resistance to the use of women in or near combat and some difficulties that Israeli women have had in handling certain weapons.

#### Sweden and Denmark

Introduction. Sweden and Denmark are examples of multiparty, industrialized democracies, where women as volunteers have played significant roles in auxiliary organizations. Women's roles, however, have been incorporated into the regular armed forces only since 1970, even though both countries have been among the most advanced in developing sexual equality in employment. These countries provide interesting control cases because they were not combatants in either world war. Sweden was an armed neutral in both wars, while occupied Denmark had a resistance movement during World War II.

Nevertheless, the development of their armed forces has paralleled that of other advanced democracies.

Sweden Before World War II. Swedish women began their participation in the military within the context of the expansion of the volunteer Home Guard--a national association for training officers--after 1912. The inspiration for the organization of Swedish women, however, came from Finland, where Swedish-Finnish women had organized Lotta Svard Associations to give logistical aid to their men fighting in the Finnish Civil War of 1917-18. Lotta Svard had been a heroic sutler during the Swedish-Finnish war against Russia in 1809, and subsequently twentieth-century women's military organizations in Scandinavia have often been called "Lotta Corps." Sweden's Lotta Corps were founded in 1924 and comprised 99 local associations. By 1929, 13,041 women belonged to the corps and by 1939 it had grown to 26,637 members.

The function of the Lotta Corps was to raise money for the voluntary officers' training, provide moral support to the men in overall training, and to serve coffee and hot food to the soldiers in the training fields and camps. Cooking for the troops became the most important task, augmented by nursing, mending, and other domestic services, for which special courses were added. It is significant that these voluntary peacetime functions were very close to the traditional work that women camp followers had done for armies before the nineteenth century, services which were crucial to the health and morale of the soldiers. This was the first step in the utilization of women to support Sweden's military forces. The next step was taken during World War II.

Sweden During World War II. During World War II, Sweden maintained extensive military preparedness in order to preserve her neutrality. Given Sweden's relatively small population (7 million) and the size of her neighbors (Germany and Russia), Sweden had to mobilize one-eighth of her population to be taken seriously, and this necessarily entailed the mobilization of women. By 1943, the Lotta Corps had reached 110,000 women and had formed separate organizations to support the army, navy, and air force. By the end of the war, 150,000 women were involved in the corps and in other defense-related organizations, and women from the working and farming classes had joined their middle class "sisters" in the defense effort.

The policy for utilizing women expanded from the prewar years. Women now were used to replace men in such jobs as office work, telephone service, air defense (reporting aircraft sightings), communications and signal service, air defense control, marine defense control, equipment service and repair, and transport. Women, however, were not given weapons training and were not considered by the government to have been militarized.

Denmark During World War II. Hitler's speedy occupation of Denmark prevented her from becoming a belligerent, but she did produce a resistance movement numbering about 10,000. As in other countries a number of the resistance activists were women--3% of those in Danish prisons and 10% of those sent to German prison camps. As in the case of other resistance movements, it is difficult to distinguish between combatant and noncombatant status, since all activities entail risking one's life. Among the tasks performed by Danish women in the underground were publication and distribution of illegal literature, courier service, receiving weapons dropped by the RAF, and sabotage.

The evidence indicates that although the percentage of women willing to engage in dangerous underground activities was much lower than that for men, the performance level of both sexes was on a par. That the resistance, however, did not view women as combatants is clear since women were not members of the military groups established during the occupation to preserve law and order after the liberation.

Postwar Sweden. No change occurred in the utilization of women in Sweden's defense organization after World War II until the 1970s. During the 1970s, the Lotta Corps changed from a purely voluntary organization to one which hired its members (volunteers were still accepted). Also, women no longer served the forces only as domestic servants or substitutes for men. Shortages of men led to women performing the same jobs as men, both as officers and as enlisted persons. All officers' positions that did not involve combat were opened to women. In 1980, women officers were interjected into the air force, and in 1983 they will be accepted into the army and the navy. In principle, women are to be considered eligible for any officers' position for which they qualify. Positions involving combat, such as service in the infantry, in airplanes, and in submarines, will be opened to women only after more study has been made concerning their ability to serve in the more traditional combat areas and upon the decision of the commander-in-chief.

Sweden's expanding use of women in the armed forces can be attributed to three factors present in the postwar industrial democracies: domestic pressure on the part of women to gain the opportunity to perform the same functions as men in national defense; the removal of some of the special laws that protect and hence restrict the use of women in employment; and the example of other nations. The last factor has also served as a brake upon the admittance of women into combat functions. The immediate cause of the greater utilization of women and their greater opportunities in the military has been a shortage of personnel in the most technological of all the branches, the air force.

Postwar Denmark. Women entered the Danish military only with the establishment of volunteer Home Guard Associations in 1946. These associations were composed of both men and women and by 1948 had been placed under the Department of Defense. Denmark has Women's Naval and Air Force Home Guards in addition to the Army's "Lottekorps." The number of women in the Home Guards has grown from 8,400 of 63,500 (15%) in 1957 to 10,700 of 72,900 (17%) in 1979.

Legislative acts of 1962 and 1969 opened the military to women, and since 1972 women have actually joined the armed forces. By 1979, however, the military contained only 470 women, of whom 53 were noncommissioned officers and 15 were full officers. They are being used in administration, education, transportation, communications, aircraft and ship control, and logistics. The work of the women in the Home Guard is broader and includes work in administration, medicine, maintenance of radio equipment, chemical-biological-radiological support services, aircraft and ship control, logistical service, and catering. The highest percentage of women officers within the Home Guard is in the Air Force.

The Issue of Combat. Women cannot legally be assigned to combat operations or be given combat training in either country. This law, however, is being challenged, and both countries are undertaking studies concerning the

feasibility of utilizing women for combat. Public opinion on this subject is somewhat mixed. A poll taken in 1976 in Sweden gave the following results concerning the use of women in combat positions:

	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
For	36%	44%
Against	54%	43%
No Opinion	10%	13%

In Denmark, moreover, it is generally assumed that women may be assigned to units with combat tasks and that they would engage in actual combat if their units or barracks were attacked.

#### COMPARATIVE HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

##### What Historical Circumstances Led to Women Joining the Armed Forces?

In preindustrial Europe, women formed a crucial part of the camp followers, were indispensable to the physical and moral health of the troops, and were counted among the army's "mouths" to be fed. Women fought only in dire or extraordinary circumstances. Industrial society, on the other hand, has broken down much of the traditional division of labor between the sexes, and the entry of women into more and more of the same occupations as men in the civilian economy has been paralleled by the entry of women into more and more military occupations as the military becomes more technologically complex. The mobilization and volunteer activities of Russian women in the two world wars and in the Civil War of 1918-21, of Yugoslav and other women in the resistance movements during World War II, and of Israeli women during the War of Independence all can be seen as falling under the rubric of "dire or extraordinary circumstances." The general utilization of women in support and sometimes quasi-combat roles by the British in both world wars should be seen as Britain's adaptation to twentieth-century technology. Germany's failure to utilize so many women in military functions, on the other hand, may be seen as a result of the force of traditional values toward women within both the German empire and the Nazi regime, in spite of Germany's splendid organization and mastery of twentieth-century technologies.

##### When and Why Did Women Come into the Armed Forces at War?

The answer is that in most cases women were taken into the armed forces when the government perceived a manpower shortage. This was the case for Russia, Britain, and Germany in World War II--all three faced severe military crises and decided to conscript women, though for various purposes. The resistance movement in Yugoslavia possessed moral rather than legal authority, and its mobilization of women took the form of patriotic appeals that were reinforced by German atrocities. In World War I, no nation except Russia felt the need to deploy women on the battlefield. Also short of troops, the tsarist authorities (1914-17) simply permitted individual women to assume combat roles and accepted a large number of auxiliaries. The provisional government was faced with invasion of its territory and an army of peasants disintegrating under the impact of pacifist propaganda and disgusted with 3 years of

bloodletting. Women's combat battalions were primarily designed to shame the men and set an example, not to substitute Russian women for Russian men on the field of battle. The Bolshevik regime (Communist), which succeeded the provisional government, merely extended the logic of the past use of women in the revolutionary movement and brought them into the Civil War against the Whites.

Britain, in 1917, a time of severe manpower losses, dramatically raised the number of women in the services. In the face of a deadlier attack, Britain repeated the process on a larger scale in 1941. The Soviet Union in 1942, combining its ideological position on women's equality with the massive invasion by the Germans, conscripted women on a massive scale. The Yugoslav experience and motivation was almost identical, except that the resistance movement (AVNOJ, the partisans) had to rely more upon moral authority and patriotic appeal than on law or coercion. The Germans clung to their deep hostility to the use of women in the regular services--to say nothing of combat--until the very end (when a women's unit was planned but never formed). Israel, like the Russians and the Yugoslavs, drew on a decade-old tradition of fighting women (in the Palestine struggles and in World War II). Like the British, the Israelis tried to keep women away from direct combat. Motivation and timing in the utilization of women, either as auxiliaries or in combat, are clearly rooted in national traditions and in the military circumstances of each war.

#### How Many Women Served in the Armed Forces?

In World War I, only a few hundred women served in the tsarist army until the Revolution of 1917. Some 5,000 served in the women's battalions in the summer of 1917 for the provisional government. About 30,000 women served in the Russian Civil War on the Red (Bolshevik) side; no figures are available for the Whites (the lack of evidence suggests that few women served). In Britain, 41,000 women were in the services at the peak of enrollment, which was near the end of the war (perhaps twice that number served altogether). In World War II, there were 196,000 women in the British armed services in December 1944. The Germans used 145,000 women in that war; the Yugoslavs used 100,000. About 12,000 served in the Israeli forces during the War of Independence in 1947. The Soviets estimate that 800,000 women served in uniform between 1941 and 1945, with 200,000 more in partisan units. Only a fraction of all these women played a combat role. At the same time 150,000 women served in auxiliary units in nonbelligerent Sweden.

#### What Did Women Actually Do in the Armed Services?

The vast majority of women in all wars and all nations played an auxiliary role: as nurses, paramedics, doctors, signal, transport, supply, and clerical personnel and other noncombatant positions. This pattern is common to all the samples in this study as well as others examined. If we leave aside such semilegendary examples as those of the Amazons, the present century is the only time in history when a large number of women participated in war. In the two major wars of the century and the related revolutionary liberation struggles, women in combat have been the exception not the rule. In Russia

during World War I, women disguised themselves as riflemen and participated in battle; this was clearly a minor, if curious, phenomenon. Their use by the provisional government, however, in all-female outfits trained for war was a concrete example of putting women into combat. And yet it is clear from the sources that the government had no intention of replacing men as the chief warriors. The Russian women's battalions used at a later stage of the same war fought in combat on at least two occasions, assaulting with weapons, in infantry formations, and closing with the enemy. A small number of Soviet women fought on the Red side in direct combat against the Whites. In the most important example, World War II, women fought as combat soldiers, snipers, partisans, tankers, and pilots--a broad range of functions, but in all these cases women in combat were a minority among women in the services, and women were a distinct minority among men. Nursing, clerical, food preparation, and other backup functions clearly predominated for women in the Russian and the Soviet armed forces. Furthermore, in the partisan groups where opportunity for combat was greater, women in Russia were far more important in the less glamorous functions of feeders and shelterers, armorers and servants, and even in some cases as camp followers, in the traditional sense of that term.

The Yugoslav case, with minor variations, presents a similar picture, resembling the Russian partisan experience in the relation between combat and support functions, although Yugoslav women seem to have been more active numerically in actual combat than Soviet partisan women. Yugoslavia's war of resistance against the German and other occupiers in reality compares to the Russian Civil War of 1918-21 in that women were used on a very large scale as political propagandists, spies, and mobilizers of the civilian population. The Germans, laboring under a conservative ideology of Volk and tradition, denied women any combat roles, using them only as nurses and signal and clerical personnel. The British in both wars used women in all kinds of auxiliary services and, like the Russians who were also assaulted from the air, found them especially useful in anti-aircraft batteries. However, the British, like the Germans, tried to deny women any role in combat (no firing of any weapon). Russians whose women were fighting in a variety of capacities had no problem on this point and so could transfer male gunners to other roles. Israeli women in the War of Independence of 1947 acted chiefly as auxiliaries; a few of them assumed active combat roles with skills learned from years of armed defense in a hostile Arab environment in the preindependence period. This produced a few fighting heroines and one platoon of women, but the bulk of the fighting was done by men.

There is no evidence in any of the historical cases examined here, or in two others examined separately (Algeria and Vietnam), that either the women of these societies or those in authority wished to use women in combat on a parity with men. The type of utilization of women in combat or otherwise was dictated by national traditions, perceived needs, and the circumstances of the war itself. In the wars of the twentieth century, women fought in combat when their nations were threatened with extinction by occupying forces.

#### How Well Did Women Perform in Combat?

This is a difficult question to answer. In all wars, commanders, civilians, and women combatants themselves have praised the exploits of women



soldiers. Some of this praise was surely justified, and there can be no question of numerous examples of bravery, valor, endurance, and kill-performance among female individuals and units. But it is also obvious from source analysis that the pious praise heaped upon fighting women is the result of appreciation for what was perceived as performance beyond the call of duty (or of nature), praise that the unusual often evokes. There is also an understandable national wartime propaganda, which tends to inflate individual exploits and unusual heroism. Russian women in the tsarist army performed some acts of heroism, chiefly rescuing wounded men under enemy fire. Those in the women's battalions were said to have outfought men in adjacent units in the summer of 1917; but this must be set against the fact that the men, under the influence of revolutionary antiwar propaganda, had lost their desire to fight, illustrated grimly in their attacks upon women soldiers of their own army who were prolonging the war. The Civil War offers nothing but the most fleeting impressions of partisan women here and there fighting beside the men and showing grim determination. World War II certainly offers a wealth of examples of women in combat of various kinds. In three particularly difficult forms of combat--armor, sniping, and flying--women engaged and distinguished themselves in a few stated cases. Examples of failure and disaster are not given in the Soviet sources. Enemy sources (German prisoners and witnesses) occasionally praised the skill and valor of women (anti-aircraft gunners) but also scorned their performance and described one unit as a tearful bunch dragooned into war against their will. No firm conclusion can be extracted by this kind of evidence.

The other cases, in widely differing circumstances, offer no conclusive evidence and no better clarity on this extremely evasive and most fundamental question. In Yugoslavia women were almost always integrated into male units organized for partisan war. Much of this integration took the form of ambush from concealed and/or superior positions, sabotage, and terror--all of which demand skills of combat but not necessarily skills of conventional units of battlefield combat, such as positional warfare, sustained bombardment, advance and assault, and hand-to-hand combat. There is no example in any of the literature examined of a balanced fire fight between evenly matched units of men on one side and women on the other. And even in such a controlled situation, variables in arms and equipment, combat experience, familiarity with terrain, training level, and so on would have to be taken into account. In Germany and Britain, where women were used on searchlight and radar batteries and anti-aircraft units, a ratio of two men to three women indicated that to the commanders, at least, in marginal and near-combat situations women were not to be fully trusted on their own, unlike in Soviet Russia. Britain and most other nations at war chose not to put women into combat at all, despite grievous manpower losses. During the 1947 War of Independence in Israel, men admitted that the few women who served in combat were brave but also lamented the fact that their presence in battle was distracting to the men and hence somewhat counterproductive.

Although there is no firm basis on which to measure the fighting worth of women when they have fought in combat in this century, it cannot be doubted that their performance in noncombatant roles was measurably important. In all the examples cited, and several others as well, women, by performing essential noncombatant functions competently and without impairing morale, were able to release a large number of males who were designated as the fighting gender of the armed forces.

### What Physiological Problems Did Women Have in the Armed Forces?

It seems remarkable that no tests were administered in the cases cited of the comparative strengths and durability of men and women--or that such tests either have not survived or do not appear in the literature. Of the four Russian cases, only two offer some clues. In 1917, women of the battalions seemed to have marched and fought in a way similar to that of men, although their battlefield experience was too short and too specialized to permit any generalizations. We hear of female hysterics both in World War I and World War II, although no one has offered any comparisons with male combat fatigue or shell-shock. In World War II, women were able to manage the heavy controls of the big Soviet tanks, apparently with success, certainly an impressive physical accomplishment. More impressive are the flight histories of women in bomber, fighter, and reconnaissance air force units. Flying a combat aircraft, or being part of its crew, is an extraordinarily stressful military experience, and there is no evidence that women were defeated by it in the Russian case, though again only their positive accomplishments are highlighted in the literature. The Swedish government has recently singled out aircraft flight as the one area of military activity that ought to be prohibited to women, so great is the physical stress and endurance capacity associated with flying modern jet craft. Women in Britain, it should be noted, also piloted planes but only in the civilian air transport service. Soviet riflemen and female snipers were reported in sources that usually praised their combat capacity to have had trouble climbing trees for concealment and difficulty in throwing grenades. Combat accidents involving women that were recorded as examples of valor also suggest physical ineptitude or insufficient training as the cause. Partisan experience in Russia, Yugoslavia, Algeria, Israel, and Vietnam indicated that women were capable of great endurance for forced marches, mountain climbing, transport of weapons, and so on.

Another major class of physiological problems are those connected with the female organism: menstruation and pregnancy. There was no reference in the literature to problems of menstruation and only a bare indication in the British documents that the rate of pregnancy increased from World War I to World War II, although in both cases pregnancy rates were lower than those of comparable civilian women.

### What Sociopsychological Problems Did Women Have in the Armed Forces?

As with most of the other questions, the evidence here is mixed and inconclusive. In the matter of relations between men and women we find acceptance as well as suspicion and hostility in all the wars. The women's battalions in Russia were organized and trained and encouraged by male officers, but men in the ranks in neighboring units vented their hostility on the women to the point of physical violence in 1917, though it is hard to say where hostility to them as women began. In the Civil War, the Communist authorities officially endorsed the widespread use of women, even in combat, but evidence of a nonreceptive attitude of the men abounded. It appears from the sources on World War II in Russia that a higher level of integration was achieved, particularly after an initial period of resistance. This success was perhaps attributable to the perceived nature of the menace that faced the Soviet state in the early years of the war and to the obvious help given by women serving



in the war. It is not clear from the sources whether the success of integration was conditioned more by the regime's official ideology of sexual equality (an ideology not achieved in practice anywhere in Soviet life) or by the village-dominated mentality of most soldiers in which women performing heavy labor was a familiar sight.

In Yugoslavia there existed the same combination of an ideology (communism) that taught sexual equality, particularly in struggle, and of a traditional village ethos (a man would ride a donkey followed by his woman on foot). In all the cases of Communist partisan wars, these factors and the perceived presence of occupying forces seemed to create or promote what the Communists called a "comradely" relation between men and women soldiers that was not as apparent in the regular military forces. In both Yugoslavia and Russia, however, there is ample evidence of the use of women partisans as sexual partners and camp followers, but no evidence of how this affected combat performance of either sex. In Israel the distraction mentioned above of having women around was not described as a sexual distraction but rather as an anxiety of having women exposed to physical danger. In Britain the presence of women in the armed forces caused considerable perturbation among some soldiers and officers; there was resentment on the part of men cooks when women replaced them in France so that the men could go into battle. When young women were matched with middle-aged men on anti-aircraft batteries, there was friction until the older men were replaced by younger ones. The British tried to segregate men and women as far as possible in units, billeting, and places of work. The Germans, true to traditional form, maintained almost complete segregation of the sexes.

Relations among the women themselves were harder to document, since the sources were largely mute on this subject. Scattered memoirs and observations spoke of a special female morale, a kind of bonding or sisterhood, especially among fliers of the Soviet Union in World War II, but there is no conclusive evidence of this as a general phenomenon and nothing about what exactly is meant in terms of effectiveness.

#### What Effect Did Combat Have on Women?

No tests of women combatants that may have been taken during or after any of the wars discussed here, and that deal with the impact of wartime service experience on women's personalities, psychology, or physical conditions, have been reported in the literature. Nor have there been studies of the problems of postwar adjustment to civilian life. The only specific effect on women for which we have information is the casualty rate. The highest casualty rates were in those countries with the greatest involvement of women, both in the service and in combat: the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. All other figures are very low and indicate the marginality of their wartime roles.

#### What Were the Attitudes of the Governments, the Military, and the Public on the Participation of Women in War?

Attitudes of governments about the participation of women in war tell us nothing about the participation itself but much about a key ingredient in making war: official attitudes and decision making. The tsarist government

had no policy concerning the scores of women who were going in the army in 1914-17. The provisional government that succeeded it was led first by the liberals under Milyukov and the Kadets, and then by Kerensky, a moderate socialist. Both these political groups wished to keep Russia in the war and saw the women's battalions as a device--not a military solution--to bolster up the fighting elan of the disintegrating armed forces. Even after this tactic failed in the summer of 1917, the women were kept around, some of them to defend the provisional government headquarters in October when the Bolsheviks seized power. The Communists under Lenin in the Civil War and under Stalin in World War II favored the participation of women in a wide variety of roles, not on a basis of parity or equality with men, but only to supplement men's efforts. When this function turned into combat, there was no official resistance to it and much encouragement by official media that were government controlled. Coverage of the war and women's role in it was performed by governmental and Communist party newspapers and correspondents who worked for them. For this reason alone there was hardly anything in the press that would reflect poorly on the performance of any significant group in the services.

The Yugoslav resistance movement, led by AVNOJ--the anti-Fascist council--officially proclaimed equality of the sexes in their responsibility to repel and evict the Fascist and German occupiers. In neither of these cases--or in others where women fought in Communist-led wars of liberation or resistance--was there anything like a public debate over the issue. At the other extreme, the German government and the Nazi party were opposed to the use of women in combat or to the extensive use of women in anything but a civilly deployed support sector, although there was a continuous, if muffled, debate about the burdens of economic mobilization of women. The British were ambivalent throughout both wars. The ambivalence stemmed from a traditional belief that war was the business of men set against the reality of hideous manpower losses (as perceived by the regime) in both wars and the need to replace men in combat with women in support roles. The debate was reflected in the documents of the time and shows a reasonably refined understanding of the major issues and a desire not to offend the military or to scandalize the civilian population. Israel possessed a similar, if less disturbing, ambivalence: The religious side of the Zionist impulse was rooted in traditional scripture, which relegated the women to the home and the fields; but the politically radical element of Zionism contained an egalitarian ingredient as well which saw women as struggling comrades in defense of the land.

In the Soviet Union, in the Yugoslav AVNOJ, and in Nazi Germany, the military had little in the way of an independent voice on any major issue--although there were some exceptions to this general state of affairs. In England there was some dialogue between the civilian ministry and other branches of the government on the one hand and the armed services on the other. Differences vis-a-vis the question of utilizing women were ironed out through compromise, particularly in World War II. Open public opinion scarcely existed in wars and revolutions of the Communist regimes (only in pre-Communist Russia in the summer of 1917 was there a full and free debate in the press and even on the streets about the appropriateness of the women's battalions). In Britain both wars saw two kinds of organized public opinion that impinged on the issue: the moralist and the feminist. In World War I, government and military authorities had to consider the objections of moralists who feared that the mixing of the sexes might result in a rash of

extramarital sex, pregnancies, and illegitimate children. This is one of the reasons that the military adopted segregation and desexualized the appearance of female soldiers. The feminists on occasion tried to tie the participation of women in war to their general rights in society. In World War II, both kinds of pressures diminished.

What Factors Contributed to the Use of Women in Near-Combat Roles in the Postwar Periods?

There are three basic reasons why women have been retained in or added to the armed forces of the countries under study in the postwar (peacetime) epoch. First, there was the legacy itself of the wartime military, where women were used on a large scale and in a variety of capacities. In Great Britain, for example, the structures of women's forces remained intact as the British military did not fully demobilize after the war, and these structures served as the basis for the expanded scope of women's participation in the armed forces. Second, in such variegated cases as the Soviet war against Germany, the Yugoslav partisan war, the Swedish armed neutrality, and Israel's War of Independence, it was recognized that sheer survival required mobilization of women to some extent, and military planners could not avoid the recognition of this fact even if they were not inclined to utilize women in combat. Israel's continued training and mobilization of women and Yugoslavia's move after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia to prepare for mobilization of women into territorial defense units demonstrate the relevance of this historical experience. Third, the technological complexity of industrial civilization has led somewhat to a breakdown of the traditional division of labor between the sexes. This fact is reflected in the growing number of military jobs that are essentially those of the technician or engineer; these are often well-paid positions in the civilian economy, and hence military manpower shortages have occurred, for example, in the Swedish Air Force, as well as in the United States.

This third factor requires a degree of elaboration. The postwar era has witnessed a growing civilianization of military life as military functions approximate their counterparts in the civilian economy (similar to the analogy between the medieval hunt and cavalry warfare); thus more women enter the military to perform typically women's as well as traditionally men's work. Another aspect of postwar life, especially evident during and after, but not necessarily as a result of, the U.S. participation in the Vietnamese War, is the growing pressure for volunteer armies--another reason for manpower shortages and hence a need for women volunteers. Related to this fact is the general drive for equality of women's employment opportunities and the support of women's groups for women's entry into all positions in the military, including combat positions. Some analysts believe that in certain cases, for example in Denmark, it has been the women's movement and the example of other countries, rather than manpower needs, that have opened the doors of opportunity to women in the military. Finally, some contemporary analyses of warfare indicate a further blurring of the line between what is combatant and what is not, in the light of the combatant aspects of logistics and support and the ability of missiles to hit almost any desired target. Again we have the case of Danish military planners who are aware that supposedly non-combatant women may in fact be forced to assume combatant stances.

What Factors Have Inhibited the Use of Women in Near-Combat Roles Since World War II?

There are three basic reasons why women have not been permitted or have been restricted in combat and near-combat roles in the postwar period. First, in places where women did see combat--Soviet Russia, Yugoslavia, and Israel--a desire to return to what was understood as normalcy prevailed. This represented a combination of traditional male self-esteem and protective attitudes, as well as a feeling that if women serve in the military, their role is to provide logistical support, care of domestic and hygienic needs, and warmth and nurturing for combatants and convalescents. The great paradox here is that the countries where the women's role in combat was most vital--the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia--virtually excluded women from the military after the war, while Western countries expanded the use of women. A second factor, however, is the continuation of older attitudes toward women in those Western countries where women did serve in various noncombatant functions (in the case of Britain, as far back as World War I). The general policy in countries such as Britain and Sweden, which had mobilized women before 1945, and countries such as Denmark and West Germany, which had hardly done so, has been to exclude women from combat roles. Public opinion in Denmark, one of the leaders in granting equality to women in the civilian sector, shows that although women are equally divided about the desirability of being allowed to serve in combat positions, 60% of the men oppose the idea of women in combat. A third key factor contributing to the exclusion of women from such roles is an assessment, based in part on older prejudices but also on objective analysis, that women are not fit for certain combat roles, especially those that require strength in the arms and upper torso. A pertinent analysis is that of the modern police, for which a series of studies have shown reluctance by both male and female officers to have women perform dangerous duties. The research in progress today in several Western countries will probably determine which combat roles should continue to be reserved exclusively for men.

RUSSIAN AND SOVIET WOMEN IN WAR AND PEACE

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on

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## APPENDIX A

### RUSSIAN AND SOVIET WOMEN IN WAR AND PEACE

#### Abstract

Russian women participated as nurses in early wars before 1914 and in combat, intelligence, support, and auxiliary roles in World War I, the Civil War (on the Red side), and World War II. There was also a parallel tradition of large numbers of women fighting in the revolutionary movement from the 1870s until 1917.

The industrial revolution and the social reorganization of the country launched by Stalin in the 1930s drew massive numbers of women into the workforce and into technical, scientific, and medical fields. When World War II began, the regime stressed the sexual division of labor by calling all men into the service and replacing them at the bench and in the field with women. About a year later, women began entering the services as volunteers and as callups organized by the Komsomol and other Soviet mass organizations. Women fought in every service, fired every weapon, and performed almost every kind of military mission, combat as well as support. The largest numbers served as anti-aircraft gunners, but women were also navigators, pilots, bombardiers, tankers, gunners, riflemen, and small arms soldiers. Although there were a few all-women units, most women served in integrated forces. Male leaders were unreceptive at first but later paid tribute to women's work in battle. A few German sources indicate that women fired anti-aircraft guns with great skill and fought ferociously, but the consensus was that the fighting quality was low. Captured documents indicate tensions between the sexes and morale problems for some women. Official figures cite 1 million Soviet women serving in the armed forces, including partisan or irregular warfare (the execution of female partisans by the Germans allowed the official Soviet press to create a mythos of the heroic Soviet fighting woman).

After the war, women were demobilized, and few serve actively now, although most educated women received some training in military medicine.

The large-scale participation of Soviet women in World War II was closely related to (a) the occupational policies of the enemy; (b) the traditions of female participation in revolutionary work; and (c) the high level of technical training of Soviet women begun in the 1930s.

#### Introduction

War and revolution are two of the major themes of Russian history in this century. The female population has been involved in both, and one cannot really be understood without the other, because Russia's present military condition is linked closely with its past wars and the social transformation caused by the revolution. Women participated sporadically and minimally in Russia's nineteenth-century wars (as peasant partisans against the French in 1812 and as nurses

since the Crimean War)<sup>1</sup> and steadily and importantly, in the Russian revolutionary tradition, from the 1870s through the Civil War. As almost everywhere else in Europe, women played no real role in war until 1914. Women then appeared in a variety of roles in the context of three separate historical episodes. In World War I, until the fall of the monarchy in February 1917, women entered individually as volunteers and fought in combat; during the 8 months of the provisional government, which succeeded the monarchy in 1917, they served in regularly constituted women's battalions; after the Bolshevik or Communist revolution of October 25, 1917, women fought against counterrevolutionaries in the Civil War (1918-20). Then followed 20 years of peace and the virtual absence of women (1920-41); their massive involvement in World War II (called by the Soviets the Great Patriotic War), 1941-45; and then again demobilization. In the last 60 years of Soviet power, the Communists have developed a political, economic, and military style that makes their utilization of women dramatically different from that found among the Western, democratic, and industrial states.

Women's role in the revolutionary struggle against the tsarist regime though numerically small--several thousand at the most--had great symbolic and psychological significance. Radical men of the 1860s had made a cult of sexual equality, and women were invited to join the movement as equal partners, even though men usually made operational and tactical decisions. When the struggle gained momentum in the 1870s, women conducted propaganda, maintained conspiratorial apartments, kept secrets when interrogated, performed espionage work, smuggled inflammatory literature and weapons beneath their skirts, and handled explosives. Many women engaged directly in violence. Vera Zasulich inaugurated the "era of terror" in 1878 by shooting a prison official; Sofya Perovskaya (the daughter of a general) led the assault team that assassinated Tsar Alexander II in 1881 (for which she was hanged). There were many others, largely of the educated upper classes, often the daughters of military officers.<sup>2</sup>

Most radical parties endorsed the full equality of the sexes, and when the Bolsheviks (the militant branch of Russian Marxism) came to power in 1917, they proclaimed full emancipation of women and invited women to assume their rightful role in defending the regime and in joining the political and economic processes connected with building socialism. Alexandra Kollontai (daughter of a general, ex-wife of a colonel, then wife of the Bolshevik naval commissar) seemed to symbolize the new role of women when she became a government minister and an active propagandist during the Civil War. When Stalin consolidated his power in the early 1930s, much of the early Bolshevik feminism was muted, and women were subjected to the manipulative style of the new Soviet order, whose focus was on mobilization and coercion rather than on liberation. But both the facts and the myths of women's emancipation in Soviet Russia remained alive in the popular mind.

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<sup>1</sup>On women partisans in 1812, see Bychkov, L. Partizanskoe Dvizhenie v Otechestvennoi Voine 1812 Goda. Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1941, p. 13; and Zhenskoe Delo. August 15, 1912, p. 5. For women nurses at war, see Stites, R. The women's liberation movement in Russia. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978, pp. 30-31 & 86.

<sup>2</sup>For women in the revolutionary movement, with documentation, see Stites, R. (see note 1 above), chapters 4, 5, and 8.

The historiography of Russian and Soviet women in military roles is still in its infancy. Only in the last decade have serious non-Soviet works begun to appear on any aspect of women's history in Soviet Russia.<sup>3</sup> The military sphere of Russia's past is particularly difficult for Western scholars to enter because the sensitivity of the Soviet regime leads it to deny such scholars access to the necessary archives. Therefore, Western treatments of the subject must rely on the less-than-satisfactory printed sources and Soviet monographs on the subject. The printed sources are difficult to acquire in the quantities needed to create a full picture. Furthermore, even those that are readily available tend to be personal reminiscences and contemporary press reports that are impressionistic, vague, pious, overdramatized, and informed by the spirit of one-sided wartime propaganda. This fault is shared by the sources of other nations, to be sure, but it was especially acute in the reticent and tendentious press of the Stalin years. The best monographic work done since the war is that of Vera Semenovna Murmantseva, a former political officer in World War II and a competent military historian.<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately her work is marred by vagueness about numbers, distribution, rank, and other key items that scholars would like to know more about. She also skirts some of the interesting issues of sexual and institutional integration, and her accounts are riddled with pieties. Other Soviet writers are even less satisfactory in these respects. This writer tried to fill in some of the gaps with information and impressions gained in talking to scores of women veterans of World War II during his visits to Soviet Russia since 1967--both about their wartime experiences and feelings and about current modes of training and service for women.

#### World War I

Scope of Activity. The women of the upper classes, the educated, and the feminists generally supported the war, as did a number of socialist women. Many radical socialist women and urban factory hands did not, and it was rioting by the latter that ushered in the Russian Revolution of February 1917. Feminists launched a war of words urging women to support the nation in return for which they would get the vote (which they received only after the revolution). Aristocratic women opened bandage points and hospital trains for their favorite regiments. Women workers poured into the factories, making up about half of the industrial labor force by 1917. A network of volunteer effort and charity was created by public-spirited citizens, and women were drawn into this also.<sup>5</sup>

Women entered the services and even went into combat but in a most peculiar and irregular way. As far as is known, the government did not even consider the issue of women in uniform, except for nursing, which had a tradition going back to 1855. As early as 1915, Russian and Western press stories began telling of female soldiers who sometimes disguised themselves as men in infantry

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<sup>3</sup> See, for example, the works of Atkinson, Lapidus, and Stites in these notes.

<sup>4</sup> Murmantseva's works are cited in notes 14, 15, and 34.

<sup>5</sup> For women's response to World War I, see Stites, R. (see note 1), chapter 9, section 1.



units and served in combat. The response of the government was ambivalent: The practice was never legalized under the tsar, but some women were actually decorated for valor. Some were well-born, but most were of the working class. A group of Moscow school girls, in their mid-teens, said they wanted to "see the war and ourselves kill Germans."<sup>6</sup> Enemy troops were astonished and terrified when they encountered Russian women in uniform. Eighteen-year-old Mariya Golubyova had this to say about her feelings toward taking human life: "I had no sensation except to rid my country of an enemy. There was no sentimentality. We were trying to kill them and they were trying to kill us--that is all. Any Russian girl or any American girl in the same position would have the same feeling."<sup>7</sup>

The most famous of the women combat soldiers was Mariya Bochkareva, the daughter of a former serf. "My country called me," she wrote later, "and an irresistible force from within pulled me."<sup>8</sup> Personal motivations (including social or marital woe), patriotism, and the army's lax attitude seem to have been the dominant factors in bringing women into a combat role. Bochkareva carried a gun, but she specialized in dragging wounded soldiers from under enemy fire. When the revolution erupted in early 1917, the army became honeycombed with elected committees, which produced military democracy and desertion on a mass scale. Disgusted with the performance of male soldiers, Bochkareva received permission from the new provisional government to organize a women's shock battalion, or "Battalion of Death," to stiffen the back of the army and to shame deserting men. It was certainly the first instance in modern history in which women were used in all-female fighting units as models of military valor and performance to check desertion and fraternization with the enemy. When the unit was formed in May, 2,000 women volunteered, but Bochkareva's harsh and rigid mode of discipline reduced this number to about 300. Socialist and other antiwar elements ridiculed the women's battalion; feminists, government officials, and prowar elements applauded it. The visiting British feminist, Emmeline Pankhurst, praised the unit and attended its farewell service. Bochkareva's women's battalion saw action on the Russian western front in June 1917. Many were killed in action, and when mass desertion again set in, some of the male soldiers assaulted and killed a number of the women soldiers. The unit was disbanded by its commander at the end of the summer. Similar outfits appeared in Moscow, Odessa, Ekaterinodar, and Perm, though only the last and Bochkareva's unit saw action. Eventually a women's military union was formed and a congress was held, but the October Revolution of the Bolsheviks, pledged to immediate peace, put an end to this movement.<sup>9</sup>

The last act of the women's military movement of the World War came on October 25, 1917, when a detachment of a Petrograd women's battalion helped

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<sup>6</sup> Young girls fighting on the Russian front. Current History, May 1916, p. 366.

<sup>7</sup> Those Russian Women. Literary Digest, September 29, 1917, p. 48. See also Warrior Women. Literary Digest, June 19, 1915, p. 1460. For Russian press accounts, see Stites, R. (see note 1), pp. 279-280.

<sup>8</sup> Botshkareva, M., & Levine, I. D. Yashka: My life as peasant, officer, and exile. New York: Stokes, 1919, p. 66.

<sup>9</sup> Full documentation on the battalions is in Stites, R. (see note 1), pp. 295-300.

defend the provisional government against the Bolshevik storming of the Winter Palace. On the other side of the barricades were Bolshevik women who had joined the proletarian paramilitary units known as Red Guards, shock troops of the Bolshevik revolution. When the Civil War between Reds and Whites (anti-Bolsheviks) began, the skills of Bolshevik women were utilized on a grander scale: feeding, providing sanitary services, building fortifications, and digging trenches in beleaguered cities; as well as propaganda, psychological warfare, espionage, guerilla action, and conventional combat. All this was encouraged and coordinated by the Bolshevik (renamed Communist) regime itself, with the special aid of the women's section of the Communist party (Zhenotdel). Nurses were trained in large numbers for this war, as for previous wars. The main difference was that Red Army nurses received rifle training and political indoctrination, and some of them became political commissars in army hospitals. In regular combat, women fought on every front (geographically, this was the most dispersed land war in history since the Mongols), from Siberia to the Crimea, from the Baltic to Central Asia. They served as riflemen, armored train commanders, gunners, and demolition troops; they served in mostly integrated troops but also in small all-female units of 300 or so. Women partisans, scouts, and spies played a special role in combat, subversion, and intelligence gathering--often fraternizing with foreign interventionist troops to undermine their sense of purpose. Most important, women served in the Politotdel, the agency of political propaganda, an area in which the Communists far outshone their White enemies. The agitation department of this operation was headed by a woman, Vera Kasparova, a veteran Communist revolutionary.<sup>10</sup>

Problems of Integration. It is instructive to discuss World War I and the Civil War together precisely because of the vast differences between them. One was an international war against Germany and the other central powers, fought in the traditional ways; the other was an internal political war between successful revolutionaries and unsuccessful counterrevolutionaries. Problems of integration apparently never were discussed in tsarist military circles. The appearance of women in certain units was fortuitous and unplanned, and the main policy seems to have been one of turning official eyes the other way. The easiest way to "integrate" for some women and in some units was simply to pose as men, which some were able to do for a remarkably long time before being discovered. When the women were discovered, some were dismissed, but others were kept on because of the impression they had already made in the guise of men. Like many other things in Russian history, this episode is redolent of fairy tales or of Hollywood movie scripts. There is no record of how decisions were made. Those who joined in groups (like the high school runaways from Moscow) were allowed to stay together for mutual moral support; however, individual enlistees lived among the men. If the men treated them as comrades in arms, it was not because of egalitarian ideology, but because of the peasant ethos (the vast majority of soldiers were peasants) in which women always had been seen as doing hard physical labor. Bochkareva's battalion movement introduced the notion of separate units, with short-haired, sexless-looking women, bivouacked and trained apart from men. Bochkareva was severely hostile to male-female contact on two counts: One was sexual,

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<sup>10</sup> Stites, R. (see note 1), pp. 305-306 & 317-322. The fullest account of women in the Civil War in English is Johnson, R. The role of women in the Russian Civil War (1917-1921), Conflict, 2(2), pp. 201-217.

and the other was a fear of infection by Bolshevik antiwar agitation. At one point she actually bayoneted a female soldier in the act of fornication.

When we turn to the Civil War, we see an entirely different political culture emerging, one which, for example, proclaimed the complete equality of the sexes (though very little was done about realizing this equality aside from legislation, proclamations, and the demands for work and service from both sexes). The Zhenotdel set out consciously to introduce women into every aspect of military life and work. Prominent Bolshevik women (such as Alexandra Kollontai and Roza Zemlyachka--former professional revolutionaries) paraded their determination to be accepted as equals in the struggle. Posters exalted the male-female team as the unit of struggle and liberation in contrast to the pastels of tearful sisters of mercy that had been the stock in trade of previous wartime propaganda. Men were expected, officially, to accept women in combat as a matter of course, without sexist resistance or pious welcome speeches. The reality, of course, did not always match the slogans and the aspirations of the regime. In the new Red Army, proletarian elements tended to be more sympathetic to women's participation, but the army also contained masses of peasants whose world outlook had been but lightly penetrated by Communist ideals. Zemlyachka recalled how she had to assert her right to operate as a purely military person and not as a woman (one commander contemptuously explained to her that he had no side-saddle for her). Yet Zemlyachka was notorious for her violence and cruelty in action. Less prominent women must have fared even worse, although Soviet sources (almost the only available ones) tend to minimize this.

Most women served individually in male units. Large all-women units (auxiliary, as in Britain, or combat, as with the women's battalions in Russia) did not catch on. The largest female units were company-size, semi-independent detachments, such as the Communist Women's Combat Detachment or the Communist Women's Special Purpose Detachment; the latter was employed in police, security, combat, and execution missions. At least one assault company of female infantry served in the Polish War of 1920. Integration was apparently easier in the partisan units that roamed the Urals, Siberia, and the Ukraine. According to the faint impressions we have from belles lettres, the men and women of forest, horse, and saber worked in a more flexible and socially democratic milieu than that of the regular forces. Love and sex were not abolished by any means in such units, and Soviet public opinion--at least official public opinion--was hardly concerned about such matters. Another interesting feature of the man-woman relation in the war was the role of women as teachers of men. The Whites did not use women for propaganda; in contrast, the Reds used them widely (as well as using talented ethnic groups, such as Jews and artistic figures). It is impossible to say how the men in the ranks reacted to the spectacle of a matter-of-fact Bolshevik woman regaling them with Marxist revolutionary slogans from the flat-car of an agit-train, but it certainly showed that the Bolsheviks were trying every resource at their disposal to reach the hearts and minds of the masses. One more point: Women of the Red side, when captured by Whites, were usually treated as equals in the ultimate way--execution.

Observations. The only estimate of totals of women who fought in the battalions in World War I is 5,000.<sup>11</sup> To this one must add no more than

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<sup>11</sup> Beatty, B. Red heart of Russia. New York: Century, 1919, p. 112.

1,000 individual and small group volunteers in the period before the battalions (1914 through May 1917). Approximately 80,000 women fought in the Civil War, but this figure included medical personnel. There are really no reliable comparative figures. In the tsarist period, numbers were small but functions were many (even women aviators were mentioned, the Russian air arm having been established with a handful of biplanes around 1910). In Bochkareva's time, the numbers blossomed, all-female units predominated, and the function was largely unit combat (machinegun companies and communications units were also mentioned in connection with the battalion movement). In the Civil War, these two styles were combined and expanded. Little is known of the social origin of women soldiers of the World War I period, although lower classes seem to have predominated in all three periods. In the Civil War, the ranks were mostly factory workers; the officers were educated women and professional revolutionaries with underground experience. Women in the Civil War held middle rather than low or high ranks, staff rather than line positions, and, in spite of the visibility in combat, the largest part of them served in support functions. Perhaps the most remarkable thing about pre-October is the method by which women entered the armed forces and the stated purpose of the women's battalions to shame the men. In the Civil War it was labor conscription that fell on members of both sexes and set the atmosphere for "the nation at war" mentality that was to be invoked in World War II.

One could hardly find a starker comparison to Britain's wartime experience with women. Once again we see that the determining forces were political and geopolitical as well as ideological and social. There were no debates in the Russian parliament (Duma) about utilization of women. The front was so vast and mobile (from Riga to the Carpathians to the Black Sea), the situation so desperate, and the scene so chaotic that resistance to the presence of women was perhaps considered not worthy of the time required. Fears of sexual contact in Russia were less acute than in Britain (for example, dressing and undressing in front of another sex was by no means uncommon among the Russian lower classes). Russia was seen as being invaded, with its very existence menaced, in both 1914 and 1919; voluntary patriotism in 1914 and ideological mobilization in 1918 did the rest. Zhenotdel, founded in 1919, was somewhat analogous to the British Women's Emergency Corps (WEC): Both organizations served as clearinghouses for women who wished to enter war industries and volunteer work. Neither had much power or many resources, but the WEC was more like a private club, whereas Zhenotdel, a party organ, was more like an instrument of the state (the government in Soviet Russia being almost coterminous with the top party leadership). In one respect there was near identity: When hostilities were over, women in both societies were eased out of the service; British upper class women to their families and hobbies, working class women to their mills; and all Russian women to the fearsome task of reconstruction and laying the foundations of socialism. The shock of readjustment to peacetime life, in the Russian case at least, has been depicted in Alexandra Kollontai's "Vasilisa Mal'ygina" (1923)<sup>12</sup> and in Fedor Gladkov's Cement (1925).

What happened to Soviet women between the wars? For one thing, they, along with all other Soviet people, went through the triple trauma of forced

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<sup>12</sup> Kollontai, A. [Love of worker bees.] (Porter, C., trans.). London: 1977, pp. 21-181 (originally published, 1923).

collectivization, rapid industrialization, and the blood purge of Stalin in the 1930s. One of the byproducts of massive industrialization, urbanization, and forced social mobility was the recruitment of women in unprecedented numbers into the ranks of industry. Hundreds of thousands were brought into the economy and given technical education. Certain professions, such as medicine, became feminized. Women, though still burdened with home and family concerns, moved steadily into middle and sometimes high levels of industry, science, engineering, and technical work. Huge reserves of technical talent among women were present when war began in 1941. Women also participated in paramilitary activities. Sport and gun clubs offered sharpshooter training, and young women joined Osoaviakhim (Society for the Furthering of Defense, Aviation, and Chemical Warfare), founded in 1927. This accounted for the few thousand women who had military training at the onset of war. It gave paramilitary exercises; coordinated mass calisthenics; and trained air raid wardens, drivers, parachutists, machinegunners, snipers, and technical workers. It was, in the words of an American scholar, "a significant factor in making the Soviet population both machine-minded and war-minded."<sup>13</sup> Along with the still officially held doctrine of equality of the sexes, however, arose a kind of conservative reaction in the Stalinist 1930s to actual equality of the sexes and especially to sexual freedom (such as that of abortion). Pronatalist, sexist, and suspicious of spontaneity, Stalinism assured that the Russian high command would have a deeply ambivalent attitude to the participation of women in the next war.<sup>14</sup>

## World War II

Scope of Activity. When the Germans invaded in June 1941, the initial response of the government in regard to women was to stress the already growing theme of separation of functions: men to the front; women to replace them at the bench and on the farm. This was the major public theme in the early months of the war. In the years 1932-37, 87% of the newly employed were women, and they comprised 40% of the industrial labor force. In Leningrad, 24,000 of the 76,000 engineers were women. The regime wanted to utilize these skills in rear-area work. Women were also permitted into heavy and dangerous occupations (such as mining). By 1942, 60% of the defense industry workers were women. Those not directly employed were mobilized into building fortifications and digging trenches. Only a handful of women (no figures available) were already in the service when the war broke out. These remained in, but there was resistance to augmenting their numbers during the first year.

<sup>13</sup>Fainsod, M. How Russia is ruled. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1953, p. 104.

<sup>14</sup>For the larger context, see Stites, R. The women's liberation movement in Russia, chapters 9-12; Atkinson, D. et al. (Eds.), Women in Russia. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1977; Dodge, N. Women in the Soviet economy. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1966; and Lapidus, G. Women in Soviet society. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978. For more details on prewar training, see Chechneva, M. Boevye podrugii foi: kniga vtoraya. Moscow: DOSAAF, 1968, p. 131; Sovetskaya voennaya entsiklopediya, III, p. 332 (to be cited as SVE); Women flyers. Soviet Life, May 1975; Murmantseva, V. S. Zhenshchiny v soldatskikh shinelyaku. Moscow: Voenizdatz, 1971, p. 110; and Serebrennikov, G. The position of women in the USSR. London: Collancz, 1937, passim.

There were a few volunteers in 1941, but they were usually channeled into support, not combat, roles.<sup>15</sup>

By 1942, the manpower losses were so enormous that the policy of resistance gave way to outright mobilization. Most of this was done by Komsomol units (Young Communists); eventually all childless women not engaged in war work were eligible for callup. Grief and loss of loved ones seemed to account for the motivation of a large number of individual cases that we know of; and the regime also geared its propaganda machine to the exploiting of (very real) German atrocities, particularly those against women and children.<sup>16</sup>

By 1943, Soviet women had entered all the services and had assumed all the roles that they would play until the war's end: in infantry, anti-aircraft defense, armor, artillery, transportation, communications, air, nursing, and partisan warfare (participation in the navy was minuscule and is almost undocumented). The Komsomol schools trained about a quarter of a million young women in weapons as mortarwomen, heavy machinegunners, light machinegunners, automatic riflemen, snipers, and riflemen. A Central Sniper Training Center for Women was established in May 1943. Every few months it turned out about 150 skilled shooters; by the end of the war these shooters had killed 11,280 enemy troops. Snipers performed well and kept their own kill-books, but they seemed to have trouble throwing grenades (there were many cases of self-inflicted grenade deaths among women, not all heroic) and climbing trees. Nona Solovei killed an entire German company in 25 days, according to Soviet sources, a remarkable achievement. The First Separate Women's Reserve Rifle Regiment, formed in February 1942, was another infantry training outfit that produced 5,200 women soldiers.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>For policies, moods, and data in the early stages of the war, see The diary of Nina Kosterina (Ginsburg, M., trans.). New York: Avon, 1968; Popov, K. Zhenshchiny na rukovodyashchei rabote. Pravda, September 16, 1941, p. 3; Atkinson, D. (see note 14), p. 125; Dodge, N. (see note 14), pp. 51 & 67; Domashnie khozyaiki idut na predpriyatiya, Izvestiya, September 19, 1941, p. 1; Murmantseva, V. Sovetskie zhenshchiny v velikoi otechestvennoi voine. Moscow: Mysl, 1974, pp. 22, 45-46, 49, 60, 65, & 218; and Moats, A. Russian women at war, Colliers, October 18, 1941, p. 50.

<sup>16</sup>For recruiting and motivation, see Moats, A. (see note 15), p. 51; Murmantseva, V. (see note 15), p. 149; O mexhdunarodnom kommunisticheskom zhenskom dne--8--ow marta. Rabotnitsa, March 1943, p. 2; Binkin, M. & Bach, S. Women in the military. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1977, p. 9; Serebrennikov, G. (see note 14), p. 61; Chechneva, M. (see note 14), pp. 134-140; and see also Cottam, K. J. Soviet women in combat in World War II: The ground-air defence forces. In T. Yedlin (Ed.), Women in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. New York: Praeger, 1980, pp. 115-127.

<sup>17</sup>For infantry roles, see Murmantseva, V. (see note 15), pp. 127-133 and (see note 14), pp. 98-105, 111, & 116; Truby, J. D. Women at war: A deadly species. Boulder, n.d.; Rabotnitsa, October-November 1944, p. 10; Krasnoarmeets, August 1943, p. 4; Serebrennikov, G. (see note 14), pp. 57-58; Ogonek, February 1, 1942, and June 28, 1942, p. 6; SVE, III (see note 14), p. 332; Geroini. (2 vols.). Moscow: Izdatelstvo Politicheskoi Literatury, 1969, II, pp. 95-101 (a useful collection of episodes and memoirs); Soviet Military Review, March 1971, pp. 62-66, and March 1974, p. 19.

Anti-aircraft (AA) became virtually a feminized military specialty, with its own female officers and its hundreds of thousands of AA women. Unlike their British counterparts, they also fired the guns. How good were they? According to one German pilot, a veteran of the African campaign, they were very good indeed. "I would rather fly ten times over the skies of Tobruk than to pass once through the fire of Russian flak sent up by female gunners."<sup>18</sup> "Armor dislikes the weak," said one Soviet writer on military affairs.<sup>19</sup> Yet women served as tankers in all capacities. Mariya Oktyabrskaya, after her tanker husband perished in the fighting, purchased her own tank, named it "Frontline Female Comrade," and drove into battle. She was killed near Vitebsk in 1944. Women served in the auto transport service (accounting for 75% of its personnel), and the KMS train had 50,000 women communications workers.<sup>20</sup>

In the air, women were less numerous but very visible and dramatic. Women fliers who had trained in Osoviakhim, air clubs, and civil aviation in the 1930s were on hand to serve when the war began. One of these fliers, Marina Raskova, heroine of a spectacular all-female flight to the Soviet Far East, received letters from female aviators asking to enlist. As a member of the Supreme Soviet, she was able to put her request before the Ministry of Defense, which granted her permission to form three women's combat aviation regiments. Under her direction, the 122d Air Group was formed as a training unit near Saratov on the Volga, far from German lines. It eventually graduated about 600 pilots who served in the three women's regiments. The 586th Interceptor Regiment, flying in Yaks (Yakovlev fighters), flew missions against German Stuka bombers and the Messerschmidt fighter convoys on all fronts and downed 38 enemy planes (their own losses are not given). The 587th Short-Range Bomber Regiment was a tactical bomber unit that strafed and bombed enemy positions and small supply depots; its range of combat was also great--from Stalin-grad to East Prussia. The most famous of the three was the 588th Night Bomber Regiment, which started in the Northern Caucasus with sporadic night bombing raids in light canvas biplanes, and ended up in Poland flying as many as 300 sorties a night. It is the only regiment for which we have figures: 4,376 members, which included 237 officers, 862 NCOs, 1,125 enlisted, and 2,117 "volunteers" (an undefined category). Individual female pilots served in male units as well. The composite picture suggested by the sources--even when allowing for the piousness and hyperbole--is one of several thousand dedicated and brave women risking their lives daily and having a tactical,

<sup>18</sup> Murmantseva, V. (see note 15), p. 140.

<sup>19</sup> Murmantseva, V. (see note 15), p. 136.

<sup>20</sup> For armor and other branches, see Danysh, R. Women in Combat. U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washington, D.C., 1978, pp. 33, 39, & 41; Murmantseva, V. (see note 15), pp. 129, 136, & 140-143 and (see note 14), pp. 45, 120-122 & 63-73; Terchikov, P. V. Boevye destviya tankov, n.p., n.d., p. 2; SVE, III (see note 14), p. 332; Rabotnitsa, January 1945 and April 1945; Ogonek, January 1944, back cover and September-October 1945, p. 2; Krasnoarmeets, May 1943; Geroini, I, 318-326; Binkin, M. & Bach, S. (see note 16), p. 9; Geroi i Podvigi. (2 vols.) Moscow: 1958, II, p. 74; Serebrennikov, G. (see note 14), p. 57; and National Archives, T 580, Roll 665, Order 447, Auszuge aus Kgf. Vernehmungen. June 28, 1943, deposition of a Soviet prisoner of war in a captured German document.



if not strategic, significance out of proportion to their numbers. It was another vindication of the Soviet program of technical education for women since 1930.<sup>21</sup>

Medical personnel deserve to be treated along with combat personnel for a number of reasons. the huge numbers, the presence of female doctors as well as nurses and orderlies, and the conditions under which they served. Women accounted for 43% of military surgeons (with postmedical school specialized training), 41% of frontline doctors (with 6 years of medical school), 43% of feldshers (with 4 years of paramedical training), 100% of nurses, and 40% of sanitarkas (aides and orderlies). Women ran and staffed sanitation trains, which brought medicine, beds, showers, and delousing equipment to the fronts, and they served and ran bandage points, medical stations, and base hospitals. Women were exceptionally visible in military medicine, although less so than in civilian medicine, where they dominated the profession numerically (but not administratively). Medical courses were set up all over Russia, even in the factories. Medical women were also combatants and bore arms. Dr. Sofya Klitinova carried 20 Red Army men out from under enemy fire; nurse Zinaida Usnolobova-Marchenko performed a similar feat and was wounded so severely herself that she lost both arms and legs at the age of 23. Elena Kovalchuk led an infantry assault after the male unit commander had been wounded. The line between medicine and combat almost disappeared near the front lines; women fought, carried arms, and died in action. Over the past 13 years, this writer has talked informally to scores of Soviet women doctors and nurses in Russia who served in World War II. The most striking thing about their reminiscences and observations was their toughness, their matter-of-fact descriptions of hair-raising experiences, and their near universal assurance that all women and all Soviet people would fight if there is another major war on Soviet territory.<sup>22</sup>

Figures for partisans in general and partisan women in particular come in wildly divergent estimates. The best and most cautious figure seems to

<sup>21</sup> The literature on airwomen is huge, but uneven. In English, see Boyd, A. The Soviet air force since 1918. London: Macdonald and Jane's, 1977, pp. 4-10 & 165n; Soviet Military Review, March 1969, pp. 20-22, March 1977, pp. 61-62, March 1972, pp. 46-48. and March 1976, pp. 11-13; Soviet Life, May 1975; Soviet Aerospace Handbook, May 1978, p. 170; Danys' A. (see note 20), pp. 24-32; Truby, J. D. (see note 17), p. 31; Flight International, December 27, 1962, pp. 1019-1020; Colliers, October 18, 1941, pp. 18 & 49-51; and Chuikov, V. Battle for Stalingrad. New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1964, p. 222. Some of these are Soviet sources. In Russian, see Murmantseva, V. (see note 15), pp. 122, 133-137, & 144-146 and (see note 14), pp. 2-8, 47, & 83-94; Ogonek, August 1941, May 17, 1942, p. 8, January 17, 1943, p. 7, April 20, 1943, and July 10, 1943, p. 4; Rabotnitsa, June-July 1944, p. 12, and October 1944, p. 1, April 1945, p. 11, and January 1943; SVE, III (see note 14), p. 332; Geroini, II, pp. 329-333; Zvezdy nemerkhushche slavy. Simferopol 1967, passim; Krestyanka, September 1943, p. 16.

<sup>22</sup> Moats, A. (see note 15), p. 51; Soviet Military Review, September 1968, pp. 41-43, and March 1974, p. 19; Serebrennikov, G. (see note 14), pp. 55-56; Murmantseva, V. (see note 14), pp. 33-34; Krestyanka, February-March 1944, p. 12; Ogonek, November 10, 1943, p. 2; Geroi i Podvigi. (2 vols.). Moscow: 1958, I, passim.



be that given by Murmantseva, the major historian of women at war: 26,707 women out of the 287,453 partisans were operating in January 1944.<sup>23</sup> However, this does not account for the tremendous fluidity and localism of the partisan movement, which, by its very nature, drew in and then released thousands of men and women depending on the geography of the front and rear at any given moment. In the forests of Belorussia, the scene of greatest partisan density, women made up 16% (about 7,000) of the irregular forces. Women entered this mode of warfare almost at once. In June 1941, Stalin invited women to join the partisans; in July, Marshal Budenny (who had seen many women fight in the Civil War) urged men and women in the occupied areas to "join guerilla detachments. Create new ones. Annihilate German troops, exterminate them like mad dogs. Derail trains. Disrupt communications. Blow up ammunition dumps."<sup>24</sup> Women did these things and many others. Some were drawn into the forests by the very danger posed by German occupiers (who had orders to execute certain categories of Soviet citizens, including Communist party members and Jews); others were drawn, perhaps, by the less formal structure and the looser structure of partisan life. Almost every detachment had some women. Most performed medical, communications, and domestic chores, but all were armed, and many fought and performed sabotage missions. At the central partisan schools alone (there were numerous local training camps), 1,262 women took military training. Disguised as peasant women, they moved behind German lines for reconnaissance and sabotage missions.

The most famous individual partizanka was Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya, alias "Tanya," who was captured in an act of sabotage, tortured, hanged, and left swinging from a tree for the local villagers to observe. A virtual media cult grew up around her name, although she was only one of many who suffered terrible deaths at the hands of the invaders. Even more spectacular, but less publicized, was the case of Elena Mazanik, a waitress and Young Communist of Minsk. Elena made her way into the quarters of Wilhelm Kube, the particularly savage governor of German-occupied Belorussia, and put a bomb under his bed and killed him. As in the Civil War, townswomen created networks and used their jobs as shopkeepers and service personnel to gather intelligence about the occupiers and pass it on to the mobile forces in the woods. Also on record are cases of women who were reluctantly pressed into partisan service. At least one Russian woman composed a pro-German leaflet that was dropped from German planes into Russian-held territory.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Murmantseva, V. (see note 15), p. 217.

<sup>24</sup> Anderson, N. J. Guerilla warfare. Command and General Staff School Military Review, April 1942, p. 43.

<sup>25</sup> The literature on partisan warfare is also extensive. In addition to the works by Anderson, Serebrennikov, and Murmantseva cited above, see the following titles: Kosmodemyanskaya, L. T. The story of Zoya and Shura. Moscow: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1953 (written by Zoya's mother); Lidov, P. The story of a heroic Russian partisan. Moscow: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1942; Rabotnitsa, March 1943, p. 8; Ogonek, February 1942, p. 10, June 1942, p. 6, and September 1942, p. 13; Binkin, M. & Bach, S. (see note 16), p. 9; V groznye gody. Petrazavodsk: Kareliya, 1964, pp. 29-31; Vinogradskaya, K. A woman behind the German lines. London: Soviet War News, 1944; Kuzin, I. Notes. of a guerilla fighter. Moscow: 1942; Bochkareva, E. et al., Svetlyi put. Moscow: Izdatelstvo Politicheskoi Literatury, 1967, p. 218; (continued)

Problems of Integration. The sexual problem does not seem to have loomed so large in the Russian case for reasons of culture, as previously mentioned, and of traditions of sexual equality. But there is plenty of evidence that some military men, as in all previous Russian wars, were initially skeptical or hostile about women in the service, especially in combat roles. This seems to have given way to acceptance and even admiration after the women had proved themselves. Since few officers or soldiers had read much history of this phenomenon, they had to learn this acceptance all over again. Conversely, women in largely all-female units (the air regiments, the rifle training outfits, the AA units) seem to have developed a kind of military female subculture in which things were done more casually and in a warmer context.<sup>26</sup> Most women served in mixed units, and there is little documentation about problems of integration. One interesting feature of the Soviet situation is the husband and wife teams who fought together. Aleksandra and Ivan Boiko--she was an officer and tank commander, and he was her driver mechanic--formed such a combat team; both survived the war.<sup>27</sup> Women often replaced lost husbands or brothers and were accepted, judging from the Soviet sources, exactly as such. The sources always speak of greater equality of the sexes among partisans; they did indeed share incredible hardships, they took the awesome partisan oath, and they sometimes wore uniforms. But the equality is clearly romanticized, along with much else about partisan life and military style. The rosy Soviet memoirs are somewhat balanced by John Armstrong's study that stresses the mistrust of women for hard missions, their unequal treatment, and the occasional "camp follower" situations, although his account seems to exaggerate in the other direction. There is evidence of in-combat marriage and cohabitation, but there is also evidence of harsh rules against sexual contact between troops.<sup>28</sup>

Patterns of integration are hard to find in the Soviet case. Men served in the 596th and 587th Women's Air Combat Regiments but not in the 588th. Women pilots and other airwomen were used in all-male units, sometimes as "wingmen" for famous male aces. There were no all-women services or even large units in the ground forces comparable to ATS or WAAC in Britain. But there were all-female training outfits and units of platoon, company, and battalion size. In the women's sniper units, about 30% of the officers were

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<sup>25</sup> (continued) Werth, A. Russia at war. New York: Avon, 1964, p. 656. The most negative view is to be found in Armstrong, J. Soviet partisans in World War II. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1964. See also the captured German files in Selected Soviet sources in the World War II partisan movement. Maxwell Air Force Base, 1954, p. 155; and in National Archives, T 313/3838672305 (the pro-German pamphlet).

<sup>26</sup> Murmantseva, V. S. Zhenshchiny v soldatskikh zhinelyaku. Moscow: 1971, pp. 44-57.

<sup>27</sup> V sobstvennom tanke. Rabotnitsa, April 1945.

<sup>28</sup> Armstrong, J. (see note 25), passim; Auszüge (see note 20).

men (although the NCOs were all women).<sup>29</sup> Training for infantrywomen could not have been as rigorous as that of the men; yet, in order to simulate battlefield conditions, women were required in basic training to march 20 to 25 kilometers a day, with equipment. Women were usually depicted in press stories and memoirs as self-reliant and hard. But a German document, based on the deposition of a captured Russian soldier, tells of tearful women pressed into service with an artillery unit and of men who were contemptuous of them.<sup>30</sup> In the partisan movement, where one could expect--and perhaps even get--more equality between the sexes, there was nonetheless a clear division of labor whenever labor was being consciously divided (women, for example, clandestinely distributed behind enemy lines leaflets that were written by the men). In other words, exactly as in the revolutionary movement of 70 years earlier, women proved of equal competence in those few moments when a fluid situation and the force of circumstances placed them in a central role, but since this was not taken as proof of permanent or universal ability, they were rarely forced into these roles.

Some Observations. The sources on the number of women who served in the Soviet armed forces in World War II are distressingly vague. Most accounts offer the following numbers: about a million women actually fought in the war, a figure that includes partisan and irregular war; about 800,000 of these were uniformed troops in the Red Army, a titanic figure by any standard of measure; and about 500,000 of these actually served at the front either in combat or support roles (support elements very frequently being subject to actual combat conditions, however, as we have seen). There is as yet no scientific way to test these figures because the Soviet regime simply issues the flat aggregates without adequate explanation of the numbers. If they are close to accurate, this means that women constituted 8% of the combatants in Russia during the war (there were 12 million men, and the Soviet Union claims that it lost 20 million in the war, a figure exceeding by far the combined figures of killed in all the other belligerents on both sides). The Komsomol, in its five major mobilization drives, pulled in 500,000 women, 200,000 of whom were Komsomol members and 70% of whom saw active service.<sup>31</sup>

What about rank, age, and nationality? Unfortunately, we have only the faintest of impressions from available sources. In female sniper units, only 30% of the officers were women, although almost all the NCOs were. Of the 5,175 graduates of the 1st Separate Women's Reserve Rifle Regiment, 297 were officers, 986 were NCOs, and 3,892 were in the ranks--a fairly typical distribution for any group of trainees. Captains and lieutenants were in command

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<sup>29</sup> Murmantseva, V. Sovetskie zhenshchiny v velikoi otechestvennoi voine. Moscow: Mysl, 1974, pp. 131-132; Krivich, G. Zhenshchiny-snaipery Leningrada. Leningrad: n.p., 1966, pp. 36-37.

<sup>30</sup> Auszuge (see note 20).

<sup>31</sup> For Soviet figures, see Sovetskaya voennaya entsiklopediya, III, p. 332 and Murmantseva, V. (see note 29), pp. 120-129. See Leibst, M. Women in the Soviet armed forces. (DDI-109-76, 1976), p. 1; Danysh, R. (see note 20), p. 22; Participation of Soviet Women in World War II. (Undated, DIA Information Paper), p. 1; Information paper: DAMI-FII (January 20, 1978), p. 1.

of regiments, units normally headed by a colonel. But individual rank for women tells us very little. And we have no real data on numbers in each rank. Ages ranged from 15 to 51, although most who served seemed to have been very young.<sup>32</sup>

As to national origin of women fighters, we are again without precise figures. Some names indicate national origins, and we can be sure that Russian, Ukrainian, Belorussian, Chuvash, Moldavian, Karelian, Mordvian, Jewish, Georgian, Tatar, Armenian, and Central Asian women fought in the war. But names are also sometimes misleading: For example, the female pilot, Osipenko (a pure Ukrainian name), was a Tadzhik. Women of ethnic minorities were often mentioned as such in the press in order to underline the dual novelty of a woman and a person of a national minority defending the motherland. According to Murmantseva, 6,000 women of Uzbekistan (she calls them "daughters of the Uzbek people") defended their country in the armed forces. One thousand female medical workers were trained for the war in Turkmenia; half went to the front, and the rest went to interior hospitals. Nearly 2,000 women and girls from Kirgizia fought in the war. Except for the figure on medical workers, no indication is given of how these women of the Eastern republics served--or how their service and experience compared with those of, say, European Russia. Also, since many volunteers were party or Komsomol members everywhere, a significant number of these women were probably Russian (or Slavic) women who lived in the Central Asian republics at the time of the war, since party organs there tended to be dominated by the European, i.e., Slavic nationalities. A small sample of 145 sniper instructors is shown below:

Russian	120
Ukrainian	15
Belorussian	3
Chuvash	3
Mordvinian	3
Jewish	1

These figures hint that the distributions of nationalities among women fighters were probably not very different from the ratios in the population at large.<sup>33</sup>

If performance were measured by number and kinds of awards received, women would not come off very well. Some 7 million soldiers were decorated during the war, but only about 100,000 to 150,000 were women. The Hero of the Soviet Union medal, the highest award for military valor, was given to more than 11,000 men and 91 women (the highest estimate). Thus, while women made up possibly as much as 8% of the active forces, they received only 4% of the military awards. Figures for other awards are comparable. But this flat picture needs to be modified. Decoration for valor almost always occurs

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<sup>32</sup> See note 29.

<sup>33</sup> Murmantseva, V. (see note 29), pp. 126 & 131.

in a frontline combat situation, and the majority of women--in spite of exceptions--did not serve in direct combat.<sup>34</sup>

How well did women perform? To answer this question one must be ready to weigh such conflicting evidence as a mass of hyperbolic and patriotic press accounts and memoirs against the few contemptuous remarks found in German documents about the inability or unwillingness of women to fight (although even these can be matched by praise of Russian women fighters by captured German military men). Did women help win the war for Russia? Women's role in the armed forces was a variable that cannot be detached and measured according to its effectiveness in the total picture. It is like trying to assess the performance of all junior officers, all artillerymen, all Ukrainians, or all imported American vehicles in the overall war effort. The evidence assembled here should be sufficient to convince anyone that women played an important role in World War II, far in excess of all other belligerents. And that is all that one can say with assurance.

In assessing the impact of the war on women--and vice versa--it seems reasonable to isolate the historical, ideological, and social aspects of this relationship. The historical aspect is the national myth of female valor, the capacity for struggle, violence, and self-sacrifice, a myth that was printed on the Russian national consciousness by the role of women in the revolutionary movement over three generations. The fact that women were not given complete equality in Soviet life as a reward for this self-sacrifice is no argument against the potency of the myth itself. Women's gains after the revolution were sufficiently visible, particularly to the urban population (from which it is almost certain that the major component of female combatants were drawn) to make the regime's slogans of equality believable even if far from true. The revolutionary tradition of female activism, although muffled under Stalin until the war, remained well known and was probably internalized by a large number of educated women. Underground agent Zoya Rukhadze invoked Vera Figner's name as she stood before a German firing squad.<sup>35</sup> Countless others seemed to yearn for the heroic activism denied to women since the Civil War in their grim round of factory or office work in purge-ridden Russia. The fact that a martyrology of famous heroines of the past stood ready to be used made it easy for the regime--and the women themselves--to see widespread participation of women in the fight for Mother Russia as an inherent national tradition. Few countries could evoke this sort of legend.

The ideological message of the regime during the war also helped to recruit and to inspire feats of sacrifice among women. What was this message? It was Russian nationalism in its most old-fashioned and unadulterated form. Marxism-Leninism, class struggle, the evils of capitalism--the dreams of a Communist society were emphatically muted soon after the war began. Stalin realized instinctively that Russians were far readier to fight for Russia than for Communism. The Church was given honored treatment for the first time since 1917; ancient names of Russian national military heroes like

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<sup>34</sup> For figures and lists of decorated women, see Murmantseva, V. (see note 29), pp. 264-271 and Velikaya otechestvennaya voyna Sovetskogo Soyuza, 1941-45: kratkaya istoriya. Moscow: Voenizdat, 1970, pp. 525-527.

<sup>35</sup> Figner, V. V borbe. Leningrad: Detskaya Literatura, 1966, p. 226.

Alexander Nevsky, Suvorov, Kutuzov, and Dmitry Donskoi were now exalted; the Comintern was abolished; and Pravda's masthead device "Proletarians of all Countries, Unite" (from Marx) was replaced by "Death to the Fascist Invaders!" Women responded--as did, of course, many patriotic men--to this line of propaganda with greater ease than they would have to didactic appeals for Marxist ideology. Women and men were defending land and home and family and preserving the national keepsake for their children, not laying down the foundations for some distant arcadia of Communist egalitarianism or social justice--although many in the Komsomol clearly fought for this ideal as well as for Mother Russia.<sup>36</sup>

Both nationalism and historical self-consciousness had been at work in the military voluntarism of Russian women during World War I, but relatively few women actually served, compared to the experience of 1941-45. Why? First, millions more women were now engaged in productive work--in factories, offices, and laboratories. Stalin's revolution from above, in addition to the vast social misery it had inflicted upon the population--women included--had also pulled huge numbers of females into the industrial work force and had introduced them to the rigors of machinery, industrial discipline, and "modern" notions of order, routine, punctuality, and responsibility (at great psychological cost to be sure). Second, the revolution had educated hundreds of thousands of women in science, industrial management, economy, and technology, producing whole new components of women engineers, scientists, and doctors. In contrast to Germany, for example, the Soviets had promulgated the rule of equal pay for equal work in industry. Although the revolution did not bring equality to women in education or industrial life, it nevertheless created a work force and a body of technicians who were utilized to great effect during World War II. Finally, by covering the country with a network of mobilizational organs, such as the Communist party, the police, the Komsomol, and other mass organizations, Stalin's revolution was able to reach, to preach to, and to infect huge numbers of people with its political and military imperatives, and, in some cases, to coerce and order women into active service.

How much of all this change--historical, ideological, and sociological--would have counted had the Soviet Union not been physically occupied by the German army and the armies of its Finnish, Hungarian, Romanian, and other allies? It seems clear that the invasion, the desolation of the land, and the gratuitous atrocities of the German occupiers deepened the determination of many women to destroy or expel the invader. Russian women never heard the famous words of Heinrich Himmler, who said that he did not care if 10,000 Russian women dropped dead digging tank traps for the German army as long as the ditches were dug. But Russian women in many parts of the country saw evidence enough of the German willingness to starve, burn out, or execute women and children as well as defenseless men. Rarely in modern times have enemy forces visited such wholesale destruction upon a civilian population as did the Germans in Russia. The only recent parallel in Soviet memory was Stalin's own murder of millions of Russians. But the Russian case either was not understood or was vaguely endorsed by a politically unsophisticated population. The German menace was, by contrast, crystal clear. Even so, many Soviet men and women collaborated with the Germans until it became

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<sup>36</sup> The most detailed description of the wartime mood and the ideological tone of the regime is Werth, Russia at war.

obvious that German policy was fundamentally genocidal. If entire families are slaughtered, entire families can also resist and repel. Although much partisan activity was carefully orchestrated, much of it was spontaneous--the first spontaneous partisan action of women since the last great occupation of Russia proper in 1812.<sup>37</sup>

Neither the United States nor Germany used female personnel, in combat or in support, on the scale of Soviet Russia. America was never invaded; Germany was invaded only after it was far too late to mount anything like a national conscription of women. Women responded to the war effort in America, Leila Rupp tells us, because of patriotism, a desire to act, loneliness, a fairly decent incentive of economic rewards offered by American industry, and in response to skillful commercial advertising campaigns. Women also joined the armed forces, but except for the few cases of women drawn into combat accidentally, they did not fight at the fronts or perform genuine combat operations. German women, much more incited ideologically by the vaunted propaganda machine of Joseph Goebbels, responded in a way that could only be called listless. Nazism offered neither a national myth of female equality nor the incentive of good wages in industry. However, Nazism continued to stress hearth and motherhood and the sanctity of German womanliness in a wholly traditional way. Russia--painfully beleaguered for 2-1/2 years, lacking the military-industrial might of the initial German war machine as well as the economic and productive sinew of the United States--threw into the war its greatest resources: human materials and organization.<sup>38</sup>

Even more apt and illustrative comparisons of the Russian experience are with Yugoslavia, China, and Vietnam. Each of these societies was faced with foreign invasion, occupation, or the presence of foreign armies: Yugoslavia, 1941-45, by the Germans, Italians, Hungarians, and others; China, 1937-45, by the Japanese; and Vietnam, 1941-75, by the Japanese, then by the French, then the United States. In two, China and Yugoslavia, there was a triangular struggle between radical national resistance (the Chinese Communists, the Yugoslav partisans), more traditional national resistance (the Kuomintang, the Chetniks), and the invaders. Like the Whites in the Russian Civil War, the Kuomintang and the Chetniks tended to avoid using women as active fighters; however, the radical movements used them profusely. All the movements invoked the Russian precedent as well as their own national experiences. In the Communist campaign for power, Chinese women acted as workers, auxiliaries, guerilla fighters, and straight combat personnel. In Vietnam, the participation was far more complete on the part of North Vietnam than in China or Russia (millions are said to have participated). In Yugoslavia, we have the figure of 100,000 women, one-fourth of whom were killed or executed by occupation forces and indigenous antipartisans.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> For the general setting, the best work is Dallin, A. German rule in Russia 1941-1945. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1957.

<sup>38</sup> A superb treatment of German and American women at war is Rupp, L. Mobilizing women for war: German and American propaganda 1939-1945. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978.

<sup>39</sup> See Stites, R. Women and Communist revolutions: A comparative perspective. In Studies in Comparative Communism.



In all these cases, as in Russia, it was the element of national emergency, the occupation of the homeland by hated foreigners, and the use of national symbols and slogans to tap the deepest wells of love of country that seems to have most affected the mass participation of women, as well as of men. However, occupation alone does not guarantee large-scale popular resistance by either sex. Those who try to predict the future participation of women in warfare will have, therefore, to account for the unusual factors inherent in any military situation, such as opportunities for popular combat (topography for example); historical traditions; the power of ideological and national symbols; the social role, status, and education level of women; the organizational power of the regime; and, most important, the precise geopolitical circumstances of the given war. Since the last factor is the most difficult to foresee, and yet one of the most crucial in determining the possible role of women in defense, students must exercise great modesty in making such predictions.

#### The Peacetime Period

The years immediately following the war were extremely difficult ones for all Soviet people. Grieving women were expected to support, both emotionally and financially, the returning demobilized and often demoralized soldiers. Women were congratulated collectively for their wartime efforts, both military and otherwise, while men received recognition as individuals. Although 91 women received the highly esteemed Hero of the Soviet Union medal, more than half of these awards were delivered posthumously and only once; the vast majority of men receiving the award were alive and were often second- or third-time recipients.

Soon after the war, a decree demobilized all women in the ranks except for "those women-specialists who desired to remain in the Red Army at their war posts."<sup>40</sup> Strenuous jobs, which had been opened to women only in the war years, such as mining, remained open to them simply because there were no men to occupy their places. For the most part, public recognition of women's sacrifices and experiences in war was not emphasized.<sup>41</sup> What were stressed in the postwar years were the new crucial roles for women, i.e., motherhood and the labor force. Combat experience had not been for Soviet women a path leading to greater recognition and equality in the public male sphere, but rather a temporary stop-gap measure used by a desperate regime pushed to its ultimate resource, which it did not hesitate to exploit. Women were rarely referred to in these wartime years without a hyphenated role added to the word woman: women-specialists, women-fighters, women-workers.

Since the war, recruitment and training of women for military service in the Soviet Union has been espoused in theory but has been an afterthought in practice. In contrast to mandatory recruitment of all men, Soviet policy toward women presents military service as an opportunity and not as a

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<sup>40</sup> Ogonek, October 14, 1945, p. 1.

<sup>41</sup> Chuikov, V. Battle for Stalingrad. New York: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, 1964, p. 222. See also Dodge, N. Women in the Soviet economy. Baltimore: 1966, p. 67.



responsibility unless the woman possesses certain special skills of value in wartime. Training and recruitment of women demonstrates a World War II hindsight, which calls for training women as a potential reserve force to provide backup of the men, if needed, and not as equally capable and well-trained comrades in combat. Thus, despite the varied and vital contribution of Soviet women to the last war effort, their status is relatively unchanged from the prewar era.

An estimated 10,000 women are in the Soviet armed forces. Unmarried or childless women between the ages of 19 and 25 who are physically fit and have at least 8 years of education may volunteer for active duty. They enlist for a 2-year term, which may be extended for 2 years, after which time they automatically become part of the reserves until the age of 40 (50 for men). Women aged 19 to 40, with special training, such as medical or engineering, can be drafted in peacetime, called up for training, or volunteer for duty; in war they may be drafted for auxiliary or special service. Thus women who have performed military service, or who possess special skills, must serve in the reserves after active duty.

Komsomol, DOSAFF (Volunteer Society for the Support of Army, Navy, and Air Force, successor to Osoaviakhim), and other civil defense training at the preinduction level is widespread among women. However, actual recruitment preference is given to women specialists by draft boards; otherwise female applicants enlist on their own initiative. Training of women is less intense and rigorous than for men. Women are housed separately from men and receive separate classes in politics, physical training, and armed forces regulations. They can be assigned only to those positions set aside especially for them; such positions are limited in type and number. Most involve noncombat duties, because women are forbidden to serve on combat ships and planes, or even to serve as guards for any but women's barracks. Women also cannot be commissioned for officers' school, which greatly reduces their chances of becoming officers except in services where they are specially skilled in the first place, such as medical units. No active duty is permitted for women during or after pregnancy.<sup>42</sup>

The Soviet military forces make no effort to lure any but the most skilled women into their ranks, underlining the fact that female military personnel are still viewed today as an auxiliary, potential reserve force, to be exploited for combat use only if necessary, since more efficient use can be made of them in administrative and other backup duties. Women veterans of World War II have most often put their skills to use either in teaching or in technical fields, such as engineering. The famous Zhukov Military Academy has on its faculty two women teachers who were former navigators of fighter planes in the war. The Tambov Higher Military Aviation School for Pilots was named for another woman navigator of a bomber regiment. In administrative roles women are distinguishing themselves in small numbers. The first woman sea captain was appointed in May 1979. The new appointee,

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<sup>42</sup> Leibst, M. Women in the Soviet Armed Forces. (DDI-109-76, 1976), pp. 4-12.

Alevtina Borisovna Aleksandrova, had served at sea for 17 years prior to her most recent promotion.<sup>43</sup>

In terms of benefits and punishments, women in the Soviet military forces are treated either equal to or better than men. Women receive the same pay, allowances, pensions, and promotions as male career personnel. Promotions are given according to qualifications and the availability of positions. Theoretically, any rank in the armed forces is open to a woman. After 25 or more years of service, women receive pensions, as do men, of 50% of their pay plus another 3% for each additional year of service over 25, the total not exceeding 75% of pay. If they leave the service after 20 to 24 years, for reasons of health or reduction in force, they may also receive pensions, provided they are at least 40 years of age.

Women are disciplined more leniently than are men in the military. They are not subject to such things as arrest, confinement, restriction to the unit area, or assignment to extra details. They are subject instead to receiving a reprimand, admonition, deprivation of insignia, reduction in military rank, and transfer.<sup>44</sup> Such favored treatment reveals an ingrained feeling that women are not equal to men, but that they must be pampered or protected. This ultimately stems from the still-prevailing Soviet attitude that women are less capable and less able to handle power and leadership than are men. This is also reflected in the training that boys and girls receive in school: At about age 15, they are both introduced to military familiarization, assembly and disassembly of small arms, field first aid, and civilian defense procedures (hardly more than air raid drills and gas mask exercises). After that, boys are exposed to a much greater amount of strictly military training even before they go into the service.<sup>45</sup>

Does this indicate that the Soviet Union has not learned from the last war that their female population offered great military potential? Not at all. They apparently believe that in peacetime it is easier to run an all-male army, backed up by a small core of women specialists. In case of war--and always depending on what kind of war--they are fully prepared by experience, organization, national expectations, and training programs to bring into service as many women as they might possibly need, and in whatever capacity, including the most violent kinds of combat. Who can doubt that Soviet women will respond?

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<sup>43</sup> Scott, H. Soviet women in uniform. Air Force Magazine, March 1976; Weekly economic report. Summary of world broadcasts, July 6, 1979, p. A18.

<sup>44</sup> Leibst, M. (see note 42).

<sup>45</sup> Scott, H., & Scott, W. Armed Forces of the USSR. Boulder, Colo.: 1979, p. 316; personal information.

WOMEN IN THE YUGOSLAV MILITARY

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on

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## APPENDIX B

### WOMEN IN THE YUGOSLAV MILITARY

#### Abstract

This paper examines the role of women in the Yugoslavian National Liberation Army during World War II, and it also discusses the present status of women in the Yugoslav military, focusing on developments that could bring about change in that status.

Sources used for the World War II period are official Yugoslav publications. These documents do not provide a complete picture but a representative picture from the Communist perspective of women's participation in the war.

Findings indicate that Yugoslav women, with bravery and determination, filled combat positions during World War II. They experienced the same war conditions at the front as did their male counterparts. The woman fighter became the symbol of socialist Yugoslavia. On the battlefield, Yugoslav women won equality with men, and many documents give testimony of their bravery under fire. For example, women are described as jumping from cover to throw bombs under advancing enemy tanks. Indeed, so noteworthy was the Yugoslav woman's courage that Djilas (a Yugoslav army commander) wrote, 30 years later, that women partisans performed more bravely than men. However, the war experience did not truly offer women equal participation with men in military service. Although many did engage in new occupations generally unavailable to them in prewar Yugoslavia, these jobs were largely support functions usually identified as feminine military roles. Thus the author does not agree with the official claim that women enjoyed full and equal status with men in the army, although many women participated at the front.

To explain women's inclusion in World War II and exclusion from the military in the postwar period, the author concludes that war, particularly a war that encompasses an entire country, is a great leveler. The Communist leadership needed women in order to organize the rear, to fill the depleted front ranks, and to promote actively, not just tolerate, the Communist call to revolution. In such wartime conditions, traditional conservative practices were held in abeyance. Once peace returned, however, the old attitudes resurfaced to find expression in official policy on the role of women in the new Yugoslav army.

#### Introduction

The subject of this paper is the role of women in the Yugoslav military. At first glance, the subject might be easily dismissed in one sentence. There are no women in Yugoslavia's professional army today, except for those in the medical and other service units. However, this statement completely overlooks the history of the women armed fighters in Yugoslavia, women's present participation in the territorial forces of the Yugoslav unified defense system, and the debate now in progress in Yugoslavia about the future role of women in the Yugoslav military.



This paper proposes to examine the relationship between women and the Yugoslav military from a historical perspective with the aim of drawing some implications from past experience for the future of women in the Yugoslav armed forces. The proposition advanced is that at no time in national history, not even during World War II, did women achieve full and equal participation with men in the Yugoslav military. Although Yugoslav women may have distinguished themselves in military performances from most women (and most men) in the armed services in most other countries of the world, the military roles they filled were feminized roles. Not even in death were women equal with men, for they gave up their lives in proportionately greater numbers than did men. In war as well as in peace, Yugoslav women have been assigned an identifiable "woman's place" in the defense of their country.

To develop this proposition, we will first look briefly at the tradition of the woman fighter as found in the national histories of the constituent republics of Yugoslavia and at woman's participation in the Marxist labor movement from 1880-1941 in what is now Yugoslavia. We will then explore in much greater depth and detail the role of women in the National Liberation Army (NOV) during World War II. Finally, we will discuss the present status of women in the Yugoslav armed forces, focusing on developments that could bring about a change in that status. By far the greatest emphasis will be placed on the role of women in NOV. All accounts agree that women's mobilization both within and outside the partisan units was a decisive factor in the Communists' ability to broaden the social base of the war and achieve eventual victory. More important from our point of view, the record of women in the Yugoslav National Liberation Movement (NOP) constitutes one of the most complete records we have on the performance of women as fighters and combat soldiers on active duty.

At the outset, a few words should be said about sources. A selected list is given in the reference list. Virtually all of the sources relating to the role of women in NOP are official Yugoslav publications. The Yugoslavs are justifiably proud of the achievements of the partisans and particularly of the women fighters. Most of the documents reflect this pride. The representation of problems is kept to a minimum, and difficulties are depicted as obstacles that are faced and overcome rather than as permanent or intrinsic characteristics of the wartime situation. Reports of heroic acts predominate for the Yugoslav side as accounts of atrocities multiply on the enemy side. No overt recognition of the existence of sexual harassment or rape within the partisan forces is found, but there is graphic documentation of the enemy's proclivities in this area.

The primary source data were, for the most part, collected during World War II in the middle of a violent struggle for national survival. They cannot be expected to be systematic, but they do reflect the uncertainties and developments of the time. Serbian documents may use different terminology for army units than do Croatian sources. The number of women in a list of members of a particular division or brigade may not tally with the number of women whose biographical sketches follow the list. The size of army units varied in different parts of the country, depending on recruitment and combat casualties; therefore, it is difficult to compare women's participation across army units.

Finally, since these are Communist sources, the researcher is faced with an overemphasis on women involved in political work. Information on women with ties to the party and politics is almost invariably fuller than that on women with no such connections. Indeed, the selection of women given short bibliographies in the Slovenian, Croatian, and Serbian series documenting women's role in NOP appears to be based primarily on the degree of commitment of the entree to the National Liberation (Communist) cause and secondarily on the personal knowledge of the data collector.

What the documents give us, then, is not a complete picture but a representative picture from the official Communist perspective. It would be impossible to have it otherwise. Within this limitation, however, the researcher is afforded the unique opportunity to study the performance of women in combat in one of the most ruthless and bloody theaters of World War II.

#### The Tradition of the Woman Fighter and Woman Activist in Yugoslavia

Yugoslavia was formed after World War I from the independent states of Serbia (including Serbian Macedonia) and Montenegro and the Austro-Hungarian provinces of Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Serbia and Montenegro gained their independence from the Ottoman Empire in the course of the nineteenth century. The two states were far less developed than the former Imperial provinces, which had experienced considerable industrialization under the dual monarchy, especially Croatia and Slovenia. The fight for independence encouraged the tradition of the patriotic fighting woman in the southern states, while economic development spawned the Marxist and feminist movements promoting the woman activist.

Montenegro prides itself on the traditional respect accorded to women because of its kult majke (cult of motherhood). This cult permitted women a large degree of authority in the home, allowed them to dress in men's clothes, and let them go to war. Widows, in particular, constituted the largest segment of women among the soldiers. As war depleted the male ranks, the widowed woman could achieve respect and fame by joining in the fight. A battalion of women is reported to have taken part in a battle between the Turks and Montenegrans in 1858, while a Russian journalist named Alexandrov reported his amazement at the bravery and devotion of Montenegrin women fighters. Women are recorded engaging in anti-Austro-Hungarian activities during the Austrian occupation of 1916-18, and 37 women are said to have died in Austrian camps.<sup>1</sup>

In Macedonia, many women have become legendary figures, celebrated for their military prowess against the Turks. Perhaps the most famous woman is the seventeenth-century Kira from Capri. Women were also honored for their role in the nationalist movement as teachers and founders of schools to foster nationalism in Macedonian children. The best known of these is Slavka Dinkova, founder of the first Macedonian national school. Women were members of the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (VMRO), both as terrorists and teachers, and were active in the underground during the Balkan Wars (1912-14).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kovačević, D. (Ed.). Borbeni put žena Jugoslavije. Belgrade: Kelsikografski zavod Svezjanje, 1972, pp. 76-77.

<sup>2</sup> Kovačević, D. (see note 1), pp. 154-155.

Serbia also has its share of women heroes. Among these is the Countess Milice, who, in 1389, after the Serbian defeat in the Battle of Kossovo Field, negotiated an agreement with the Turks that guaranteed Serbia tributary status under the Turks while retaining titular independence within the Byzantine Empire until complete Turkish annexation in 1459. Women are reported to have become enthusiastic and loyal camp followers of their men in the struggle for Serbian independence. In the February uprising of 1804, women took part in active combat and are reported to have captured an enemy cannon barehanded.<sup>3</sup>

The tradition of the woman fighter from the southern territories of Yugoslavia was not matched by a comparable tradition from the North. However, in the 1870s, both parts of the country, particularly Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia, saw the growth of Marxist and feminist movements that encouraged women publicly to oppose the existing system and to speak out for women's rights. In 1909, a group of women in Macedonia formed around the socialist Rosa Plaveva to form the first Montenegrin women's socialist group. Plaveva entered into correspondence with Rosa Luxembourg, bringing the outside world into the experience of the women in her group.<sup>4</sup> Similar groups developed in other parts of what was to become the Yugoslav Republic in 1919.

During the interwar period, the non-Communist women's movements centered around national and religious affiliations. These included the national unions of Serbian, Croatian, and Slovenian women; the Union of the Slavic Women, affiliated with the International Women's Congress; and the Feminist Alliance. The non-Communist feminists either endorsed the existing regime, or like the Feminist Alliance adopted a neutral stand. While women in these organizations did get out into the rural areas, they discouraged political activism, concentrating instead on the teaching of traditional skills, such as sewing and embroidery.<sup>5</sup>

Only the Communist party adopted a coherent policy of women's rights, which it consistently fought to implement. At the founding of the Yugoslav Communist Party (CPY) in 1919, a parallel women's organization dedicated to the mobilization of women to the cause of revolution was organized. This organization persisted with only a few interruptions to agitate among women, especially in the urban areas, where women were employed in factories, particularly in the textile mills.

As World War II approached and the military dictatorship in Yugoslavia became more oppressive, labor unrest increased. The number of strikes rose from 17 in 1931 to 400 in 1936. Women participated in these strikes, and in those industries where they predominated, such as the textile industry, they outnumbered the male strikers. Communist women actively spread political propaganda among these strikers, as well as among university students. At the height of the Spanish Civil War, Communist women organized promotional drives

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<sup>3</sup> Kovačević, D. (see note 1), p. 223.

<sup>4</sup> Kovačević, D. (see note 1), p. 155.

<sup>5</sup> For a discussion of the non-Communist women's organizations in Yugoslavia during the interwar period, see Albala, P. Yugoslav women fight for freedom. New York: The Yugoslav Information Center, 1943.

to get money for the war and some volunteered to go to Spain to fight. Such promotional drives also brought money for the Yugoslav Communist cause as well. In 1939, the Communists supported a large-scale campaign for women's right to vote, which attracted wide-scale participation.<sup>6</sup>

It must be remembered, however, that government persecution had severely crippled Communist membership during the early 1930s. By 1939, Tito had succeeded in bringing the membership back to 6,500. But at the Fifth National Conference of that year, there were only 390 women Communists.<sup>7</sup> Hence, when we speak of women activists before World War II, we are referring to a very small segment of women. This segment provided the nucleus of leadership for the mobilization of women during NOF, as well as the tradition of activism in the cause of equal rights.

#### Women's Participation in the Two Aspects of the National Liberation Movement

The two Yugoslav traditions of the woman fighter and the woman activist are important if one is to understand the participation of women in the National Liberation Struggle (NOB), as World War II is called by the Yugoslavs. In fact, the war was not one war but three in Yugoslavia: It was a war against the invaders, German, Italian, and Bulgarian; it was a war among the Yugoslav nationalities, Croat, Serb, Slovene, and others; and it was a war between the old and the new Yugoslavia. This last war turned into the political war between the Communists fighting for a Soviet-style revolution and those who sought to restore partially or wholly the old order.<sup>8</sup> Research indicates that among the many reasons that could be cited as to why women opted for the Communist cause, the following were principal ones: (a) the Communists were the only organized force in Yugoslavia capable of issuing a transnational patriotic appeal in the nation's defense; and (b) the Communists coupled their call to national liberation with their call for this new political order in which women would have equal rights and equal opportunities with men. As was the case then with virtually all of those who fought on the partisan side, women were fighting on both a military and a political front. It is important to understand that the line between these two fronts was at no time clearly delineated. Rather, like two sides of the same coin, they complemented each other.

Chinese Maoist experience notwithstanding, the Yugoslavs credit Tito with having developed a new form of warfare during World War II. The "all people's war," as they call it, is a war fought by all the people against the invader and any perceived or actual supporters of the invader within the country, such

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<sup>6</sup> Kovačević, D. Women of Yugoslavia in the National Liberation War. Belgrade: Yugoslovenski pregled, 1977, pp. 9-26.

<sup>7</sup> Tito, J. B. [Statistics cited by Tito.] Najlepši spomenik ženiučesniko naše revolucionarne borbe jeste dosledno ostvarivanje ideala, za koje su se nesebično, herojski borile. Žena danas: 1975-Trideset godina nad fašizom međunarodna godina žena oun, 1975, 39(275), 65.

<sup>8</sup> See Rusinow, D. The Yugoslav experiment, 1948-1974. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978, pp. 3-7.



as the Chetniks. The all-people's war is at once a war of liberation and a social revolution in which the people are mobilized not just to fight for their country but to fight for a new form of government. Tito was both commander-in-chief of the army and first secretary of the Communist party. In these capacities, he directed all military and political operations. Although military strategy demanded that he flirt with the idea of a non-Communist Yugoslavia during 1944 in order to placate the Western allies, in fact by the end of 1944 the Communists had conquered Yugoslavia and had routed the enemy. To every area the partisan forces liberated, they brought the Communist system of National Liberation Councils, the first of which was organized in the first liberated areas in 1942. The councils were unified under the Anti-Fascist Council of the People's Liberation of Yugoslavia (AVNOJ).

The participation of women in both political and military endeavors was critical to the process of social revolution and the emergence of a Communist Yugoslavia at the end of the war. Yugoslav sources set the number of people mobilized in NOP at 3,741,000. The number of male dead was about 1.1 million, of which approximately 400,000 were in the partisan army.<sup>9</sup> Although NOV numbered only around 80,000 in 1941, it had grown to over 800,000 organized into five armies by 1945.<sup>10</sup> By contrast, Yugoslav sources set the total number of women involved in the partisan side at 2 million, only 100,000 of whom were recruited into the National Liberation Army and partisan units.<sup>11</sup> Approximately 1 in 10, and later, 1 in 8, soldiers were women. The rest were organized into the Anti-Fascist Front of Women (AFŽ). As can be seen from the statistics, the bulk of the civilian population mobilized to serve in the rear were women serving in this organization.

AFŽ was the successor to the Communist women's movement during the inter-war period. At first the party established AFŽ units on an ad hoc basis on the country or local level. As areas were liberated, these units made contact organizationally. Gradually regional units were established, and in 1942 a national AFŽ conference was held that officially set up a nationwide women's organization under one central council. To refer once more to the figures just given, women in this movement clearly took the place of men behind the lines. They ran the local governments, organized procurement, planted the fields, spun cloth and sewed clothes, carried out espionage activities behind the enemy lines, operated the printing presses so vital to the promotion of the revolution, and managed the propaganda and educational schools, the orphanages, and the hospitals.

When the enemy overran a village, these women became the front line and suffered accordingly. Their acts of heroism in saving the wounded, evacuating the children, and withstanding enemy torture are movingly recorded in the documentary materials. Many were captured by the Italians and sent to Italian

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<sup>9</sup> Figures taken from The Second World War. Belgrade: The Military Historical Institute, 1970, p. 512.

<sup>10</sup> Tito, J. B. The struggle and development of the CPY between the two wars: Letters in Kumrovec. Belgrade: STP-Socialist Thought and Practice: Communist, 1977, p. 94.

<sup>11</sup> Tito, J. B. (see note 7), p. 6.

prisoner of war camps. When Italy capitulated, they returned to their country to carry on the fight anew. The early days of the war in Croatia saw the commission of some of the worst atrocities against civilians by the Ustashe. Women were frequently the targets. Hence, women who escaped from the Ustashe camps immediately went to join the partisans. In one sense, everyone who participated and fought on the partisan side considered himself a soldier, since the war was fought not on any particular front but all over the country. Yet the 2 million women who were mobilized into AFŽ are generally not considered military in the strict sense of the word. They did not enter the army.

While this study focuses on those who did enter the army, the vital role played by the many women who supported the partisans in the villages and cities should not be overlooked. Many of their functions were ones that women perform in professional armies today, and more will be said about these functions later. Women's contribution was especially important as the war took an increasingly higher toll of the male population. Women became essential to the maintenance of the military support system as well as to the development of the new civilian order.<sup>12</sup> The sacrifices made by Yugoslav women mobilized into NOP are realized by the fact that from 1941 to 1945, 8.5% of the total female population of Yugoslavia was killed or died (many from diseases such as typhus); 31% of those who joined the NOP died; and 25% of the women recruited into NOV died. Clearly, the toll on the "civilian" women was substantially higher than on the women in the military and many times higher than that for the female population as a whole.<sup>13</sup>

#### Women in the National Liberation Army (NOV)

It is useful to divide this discussion into five parts: recruitment, training, sexism in the army, women's military roles, and women's military rank.

Recruitment. All the documents indicate that women joined the army willingly and enthusiastically. Indeed, they were among the first to enlist when the partisan detachments were initially organized. For example, 30 girls from the Bosnian village of Dvar enlisted in the spring of 1941, and the first woman national hero was from Dvar.<sup>14</sup> In the July 1941 uprising in Montenegro, women actively participated on an irregular basis, providing first aid and bringing food and munitions.<sup>15</sup> Two women were among the first to join the partisan detachments in Macedonia in August 1941.<sup>16</sup> In Slovenia, three women

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<sup>12</sup>For a longer account of the involvement of Yugoslav women in AFŽ, see Jancar, B. Women in the Yugoslav National Liberation Movement. (Unpublished paper presented at the Midwest Slavic Conference, 1977), pp. 15-19.

<sup>13</sup>Percentages based on Yugoslav population figures for 1939 and information in Tito, J. B. (see note 7), p. 16.

<sup>14</sup>Kovačević, D. (Ed.). Borbeni put žena Jugoslavije. Belgrade: Kelsikografski zavod Svezjanje, 1972, p. 52.

<sup>15</sup>Kovačević, D. (see note 14), p. 86.

<sup>16</sup>Kovačević, D. (see note 14), p. 161.

were members of the first partisan unit formed in June 1941, and all these women were among the first to lose their lives.<sup>17</sup> Fifty women were in the first partisan detachments formed in Serbia; the majority of these women came from Belgrade and Zemun.<sup>18</sup>

Some indication of the growth in the number of women attracted into NOV may be seen from Croatian statistics. In 1941, there were only 12 women in NOV; in 1942, 479; in 1943, 1,211; and in 1944, 6,610 women.<sup>19</sup> Dedijer, in his diary, recalls that women were so eager to join that he saw them shaking and on tenterhooks lest they be rejected.<sup>20</sup> Mary Reed, in her research, notes that there was such enthusiasm among women to join that they were bitterly disappointed when they were assigned jobs in the rear or sent to organize supplies and do menial tasks.<sup>21</sup>

The documents do not suggest any one reason for women's interest in NOV. However, the data offer several possible explanations: (a) Partisan life appears to have been particularly attractive to young women, even more so than to young men. The biographical data show that most of the women recruits were in their late teens or early twenties. Partisan experience opened a whole new world and gave them a sense of camaraderie.<sup>22</sup> The professional entertainers gave theatrical and musical performances. Brigades would compete in song fests.<sup>23</sup> The dangers of war brought closeness and a sense of togetherness and purpose. (b) Partisan life opened educational opportunities for women. One of the most frequent comments found in the biographical entries is, "She learned to read and write among the Partisans." Perhaps the second most frequent comment is, "She took a first aid course, a radio telegrapher course, a course in codes." Most of the women medics (bolničarki) trained during the war returned to civilian life to staff the new Yugoslavia's hospitals, an opportunity that would have been far beyond the reach of most village women in prewar Yugoslavia. (c) A third and final reason for women's

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<sup>17</sup> Kovačević, D. (see note 14), p. 195.

<sup>18</sup> Kovačević, D. (see note 14), p. 232.

<sup>19</sup> Kovačević, D. (see note 14), p. 127.

<sup>20</sup> Dedijer, V. With Tito through the war. London: Alexander Hamilton, 1951, p. 121.

<sup>21</sup> Reed, M. E. Emergence of the political woman in the partisan resistance in Croatia, 1941-1945. (Unpublished paper presented at the International Conference in Women's History: Women and power: Dimensions of women's historical experience, sponsored by the Conference Groups in Women's History, Center of Adult Education, University of Maryland, November 16-18, 1977), p. 10.

<sup>22</sup> Soljan, M. (Ed.). [Letter from comrade in camp.] Zene hrvatske u narodnooslobodilačkoj borbi (Vol. I). Zagreb: Izdanje Glavnog odbora Saveza ženskih društava Hrvatske, 1955, pp. 210-211. A young woman recruit describes her first experience in the army in terms of the newfound friendships and support of her unit and unit head.

<sup>23</sup> Dedijer, V. (see note 20), pp. 234-235.

enthusiasm to join NOV was the fact that women fighters came to stand as the symbol of socialist Yugoslavia. On the battlefield, Yugoslav women won equality with men, as document after document gives testimony of their bravery and fortitude under fire. Women are described as jumping from cover to throw bombs under advancing enemy tanks. Women risked their lives to evacuate wounded under heavy enemy fire. Women marched shoulder to shoulder with men in the breakouts from German encirclement. Indeed, so noteworthy was women's courage that Djilas wrote, 30 years later, that women partisans performed more bravely than did men.<sup>24</sup>

It cannot be stressed too much that fighting for the partisans constituted a political act in favor of a socialist postwar Yugoslavia. Early in the struggle, the Communists confirmed their commitment to women's liberation. In July 1941, the provisional Supreme Command of the National Liberation Troops of Montenegro, Boka, and Sandžak issued a communique to the effect that the right to vote and to be elected "shall be exercised by all citizens 18 years of age and over, men and women."<sup>25</sup> Although relatively few in number, women were elected to the first national liberation councils. Their political and social emancipation thus went hand in hand with the military campaign. One of the central tasks of the AFŽ was to propagandize the political advantages accruing to women if they joined NOP, particularly if they joined the army. By contrast, the AFŽ was ordered by the party to do everything possible to discourage women from working for the enemy or from being drawn into the enemy orbit.<sup>26</sup> Personal freedom and opportunity thus went hand in hand with patriotism for the women who joined the National Liberation Army.

Training. The documents provide little evidence of special training for women in the army. It appears that women as well as men were given 1 month's introduction to war and then sent to the front if they were ordinary soldiers (borac). For example, there are fr t references to 1-month "political-military courses" in which both young men and young women were trained for the "tasks" imposed by NOP.<sup>27</sup> In 1942, a service for the fabrication of bombs was formed in Dvar, where 25 older workers supervised between 50 and 60 women in the making and using of bombs.<sup>28</sup> The army also offered other training courses, such as first aid, coding and decoding, and artillery. None of these was specifically oriented toward women, and nothing in the documents suggests that women trained in any way differently than men.

The sparse references to training suggest that the courses were probably rudimentary at best. The higher mortality rate of women to men in the NOV (25% compared with 11%) could be indicative of greater inexperience on the part

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<sup>24</sup> Djilas, M. Wartime. M. B. Petrovich, trans. New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977, p. 210.

<sup>25</sup> Kovačević, D. (see note 14), pp. 63-64.

<sup>26</sup> Soljan, M. (see note 22), Document 37, p. 57.

<sup>27</sup> Kovačević, D. (see note 14), p. 128.

<sup>28</sup> Kovačević, D. (see note 14), p. 52.

of women;<sup>29</sup> this suggests that women might have benefited from additional special training to develop their survival skills. Or women simply may have been more "gutsy" in the defense of their home than the men. The biographical material found in the documents is full of trenchant statements to the effect that "she joined NOV in 1943, died the same year." Or, "she joined in 1942, died in 1943." We must remember that each entry represents a real individual.

By far the most frequent, and perhaps the most necessary, courses listed in the documents as taken by women were in first aid. Apparently the courses varied in difficulty and complexity depending on the army unit to which the trainee was to be assigned. In February, March, and April 1942, for example, first aid courses were organized in Croatia for medics at the squad level. In May 1942, a 15-day advanced course was organized under the direction of a medical doctor for medics at the battalion level.<sup>30</sup> Courses such as these continued throughout the war years, and classes apparently were kept small. As a rule, the number of participants was about 30. While open to all, the majority of students were women.

The AFŽ played a major role in providing administrative and training personnel for the paramilitary courses. In addition to the literacy courses, the AFŽ also organized courses in first aid, radiotelegraphy, codes, telephone electronics, and mechanics. Because of their support function behind the lines, the AFŽ committees even gave instruction on such guerilla warfare techniques as the destruction of telephone lines, rail cutting, and the destruction of roads and bridges.<sup>31</sup> The AFŽ committees were primarily responsible for the political training of both soldiers and civilians. Significantly, a first course offered by the AFŽ organization in Lika in 1942 addressed the topic, "The aims of NOV and the tasks of AFŽ in it."<sup>32</sup>

Sexism in NOV. Reference to sexism in the Yugoslav partisan units is totally absent from the Communist sources. Officially, the strictest moral code and discipline were enjoined on party members and on the military. In his wartime speeches, Tito makes constant mention of the party's high moral code. Doubtless the immediate application of social and coercive sanctions were strong inhibitors of rape and other sexual offenses, when they were detected. However, given the nature of armies, one can be sure that incidents occurred that were not detected. It is interesting, for example, that in his recently published memoirs of the period, Djilas seems to take a certain perverse pleasure in revealing how many in the party leadership failed to live up to the Communist moral code.<sup>33</sup> Such comments indicate that sexism was more widespread than the party and headquarters would have liked to admit, and that it was sanctioned in some degree by the party leaders.

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<sup>29</sup> Second World War (see note 9), p. 512.

<sup>30</sup> Kovačević, D. (see note 14), pp. 128-129.

<sup>31</sup> Tsvetich, B. (Ed.). Žhene srbije u NOB. See also Šoljan, M. (see note 22), Document 74, p. 107.

<sup>32</sup> Šoljan, M. (see note 22), Document 96, pp. 136-37.

<sup>33</sup> Djilas, M. (see note 24), passim.

The party and the Supreme Military Command also officially endorsed the position that women were equal to men in military action. Order and directives notwithstanding, however, the evidence shows that there was male resistance to the full participation of women in military action. An editorial published in the organ of the Central Committee of the Yugoslav Communist Party (CPY) Proletar (March-April 1942) commented:

Many of our Party members hold some outdated and unworthy views that women cannot bear arms in the struggle, that they should not perform various functions in the army headquarters, etc. These are the views of the fifth column, which wants to prevent the active participation of women in the war.<sup>34</sup>

To buttress its position and make sure that women were not discriminated against, the Supreme Headquarters demanded that the list of persons subject to military conscription must include the names of women who had volunteered to fight.

The party further attempted to ensure a nonsexist attitude among the population at large. Civilians were censored for maintaining traditional sexist attitudes or for viewing a woman partisan or AFŽ organizer as a prostitute. The frequency of party proclamations regarding the equality of women and their valiant contribution to the war effort in the basic documents suggests that the authorities had an uphill road in this regard.

By comparison, the enemy, including the Chetniks and the Ustashe, were always depicted as humiliating and degrading women. The AFŽ was urged to publicize every known act of terrorism, rape, or other humiliation visited on women by the enemy. One story of particular horror concerned the Nazi camp at Staroj Gradiski. In their need of workers, the Nazis loaded women and children onto trucks and hauled them to the camp and then away. Some 1,000 women were taken to the camp and raped on Christmas Eve, 1942.<sup>35</sup>

The aim of partisan propaganda clearly was to make the enemy so terrifying and the partisan side so bright that women would volunteer to work for NOP. Dediđer enthusiastically writes that women were completely liberated in NOP, and that there was no differentiation between male and female partisans. "Not a single man, even among the old peasants was against the position of women in the war."<sup>36</sup>

If enthusiasm for the woman fighter existed to the degree described by Dediđer, the question inevitably arises as to why the male high command decided to exclude women from the regular military service immediately after the war. One answer must be sought in the highly conservative attitudes of the

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<sup>34</sup> As quoted in Kovačević, D. (see note 14), p. 52.

<sup>35</sup> Soljan, M. (see note 22), Document 71, pp. 100-101.

<sup>36</sup> Dediđer, V. (see note 20), pp. 234-235.

party leadership.<sup>37</sup> It is difficult to accept the proposition that the party and headquarters wholeheartedly embraced the ideal of women's liberation during the war and then callously rejected it afterward. A more plausible explanation lies in the fact that war, particularly a war that encompasses an entire country, is a great leveler. The Communist leadership needed women in order to organize the rear, to fill the depleted front ranks, and to promote actively, not just tolerate, the Communist call to revolution. In such war-time conditions, traditional conservative attitudes were held in abeyance. Once peace returned, however, the old attitudes resurfaced to find expression in official policy on the role of women in the new Yugoslav army.

Women's Military Roles. The unsystematic nature of the data has made it difficult to obtain a precise picture of the distribution of women in military roles throughout the National Liberation Army because of incompleteness of available records. The first partisan detachments were organized on an ad hoc basis, generally at the local or country level. Official records of these groups, which might number anywhere from 10 to 100 people, may be available somewhere but were not available to the author. The first transnational proletarian brigade was organized in December 1941. Immediately afterward, the order went out from Supreme Headquarters to all the districts involved in the fighting "to form units of the best workers and peasant elements, which can, at any given moment, join the proletarian brigades."<sup>38</sup> Again, records of these units were not available to this researcher. The proletarian brigade was the nucleus of the National Liberation Army, which officially came into being November 4, 1942. During 1943, the partisan units were reformed into army units resulting in the emergence of six corps by 1944. These six corps were subsequently reformed into five armies. By 1945, the Yugoslav army had assumed its present form.

The public documents listing the positions of women in the various military units for the most part date from 1943, no doubt because the reorganization of the army from a guerilla force required documentation on personnel. Little information was found on the roles filled by women prior to 1943.

The materials consulted did not provide a comprehensive listing of women by brigade and division. Serbian Women in NOP tended to give biographies of women by place of origin. Kovačević's national study, Borbeni put žena Jugoslavie, identified only women who distinguished themselves by their bravery. The one source that gave the names of women recruits by brigade and/or division was Croatian Women in NOV, the second volume of which contains some 300 pages listing women fighters by military unit with accompanying biographical material.

In an effort to gain a more realistic idea of the types of functions women were performing in NOV, I chose to study the women in the Dalmatian units circa 1943 in detail. The results of the statistical count are shown

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<sup>37</sup> The postwar conservative attitudes of the party leadership have been well documented in Barton, A. H., Denitch, B., & Kadushin, C. Opinion-making elites in Yugoslavia. New York: Praeger, 1973, particularly Chapters 2 and 3.

<sup>38</sup> Donlagic, A., Atanackovic, Z., & Flenca, D. Yugoslavia in the Second World War. Belgrade: Interpress, 1967, p. 78.

in Table 1. It must be stressed that the women listed were selective, and the table does not include all the women in the Dalmatian units. However, certain generalizations may be drawn from the table and integrated with a more cursory inspection of the data on women in the other Croatian divisions.

A high percentage of women served as medics (bolničarka) or fighter-medics (borac-bolničarka); the percentage of plain soldiers (borac) exceeds that of the medics by just a few points. A much lower percentage of women served as military specialists, such as radiotelegraphers, artillerywomen, or cipher officers. However, there is no doubt that women did serve in these capacities. Few women held political positions, only 6% of the sample, and even fewer are identified as service workers doing traditional feminine jobs, such as cooks, seamstresses, and typists. This finding is not surprising. Noted earlier, the AFŽ had the task of organizing procurement and providing food and clothing for the army. An army recruit then would be mainly entrusted with the fighting. The table also indicates that women were given responsible positions at the lower military echelons. Noncommissioned officers comprised 11% of the total sample, while 8% of the total sample were commissioned officers at the lowest ranks. No woman in the sample held a commission higher than captain, and there were only three of these. In the total Croatian data, only three women were listed as majors. Finally, the table suggests a very high mortality rate (around 30%).

The picture of the typical woman partisan that emerges from the table and the other Croatian data is of a young girl in her late teens or early twenties, fresh from a village with little education or experience, who some time in late 1942 or early 1943 enlists in NOV. If she survives the first 6 months, or first year and a half, she may take a first aid or other course. Eventually she may be put in charge of her platoon (vod) or her first aid unit (referent sanitet). Rarely does she rise higher in the ranks. Those who enlist with more education appear to become the politkomisars, squad delegates, youth leaders, and AFŽ council members. The data do not reveal how or why a woman becomes a captain. In one instance the woman is a medical doctor, but in the others there is no reference to formal education in the biographical sketch.

Table 2, based on a sample from one Dalmatian division, provides a little more information on mortality, as well as information on promotion to a commission. As can be seen, 50% of the commissioned women officers in this division were recruited from the chief medics in charge of a first aid unit. A rank woman soldier had a higher mortality rate than a medic, but in general it could be expected that in 1943 at least one out of every three women who volunteered for NOV would be killed in action. As women continued to be recruited, and the severity of fighting leveled off, the mortality rate fell to an average of one out of every four, which is still far higher than that for men.

The two tables suggest a definite pattern of sexism in the distribution of military functions. Clearly, the role of medic became feminized during World War II in the Yugoslav army. Men were the fighters, but if there was a single woman in the ceta or vod, she would be designated the medic. We do not know whether the role came to her by choice or because women were the traditional nurturers in the village, and thus it was viewed as natural that women take care of the sick. However, it must be remembered that in interwar Yugoslavia hospital nurses were trained nuns. Although nursing may be considered a woman's occupation from its very origins, Yugoslav women did not enter



Table 1

## Distribution of Women in World War II Dalmatian Army Units, 1943

By job position	Cited documents						Σ.n.	Σ.n. %
	(Doc. 369 <sup>a</sup>		Doc. 370 <sup>b</sup>		Doc. 368 <sup>b</sup> 371-377)			
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Bolnicarka (medical corpsmen)	171	72	13	18	295	33	479	40
Ref. saniteta (chief medic)	11	4	6	8	53	6	70	6
Borac (fighter)	12	5	47	63	451	50	510	42
Borac <sup>c</sup> (specialists)	16	7	3	4	34	4	53	4
Pol. komesar <sup>d</sup> (commissar)	18	6	5	7	49	5	72	6
Service personnel <sup>e</sup>	14	6	-	-	16	2	30	2
	242	100	74	100	898	100	1,214	100
Noncommissioned officers	35	14	7	9	69	8	111	9
Commissioned officers	7	3	7	9	57	6	71	6
Died	18	6	27	36	295 <sup>f</sup>	33	340 <sup>f</sup>	28
Cited	18	6	-	-	-	-	-	-
Medals	7	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Doc. 368, n.d.	1st and 2d Dalmation Workers Brigade							
Doc. 369, Oct. 27, 1944	IX Division							
Doc. 370, n.d.	IX Division, 4th Split Brigade							
Doc. 371-374, Oct. 31, 1943	XIX Division							
Doc. 375, n.d.	XX Division							
Doc. 376, n.d.	XXVI Division, 11th Dalmation Brigade							
Doc. 377, n.d.	Various Dalmatian Units, including partisan detachments							

Note. From Šoljan, M. (Ed.). Žene hrvatske u narodnooslobodilačkoj borbi (Vol. II). Zagreb: Izdanje Glavnog odbora Saveza ženskih društava Hrvatske, 1955, pp. 104-172.

<sup>a</sup>Summary statistics tallied in the document itself.

<sup>b</sup>All other summary statistics in the table tallied from the raw personnel entries on the pages cited.

<sup>c</sup>Specialists include artillery, tank, radio/telegraph/cipher.

<sup>d</sup>Includes youth league (SKOJ) leaders.

<sup>e</sup>Includes typists, cooks.

<sup>f</sup>These figures are underinflated since in some cases mortality information was not included.

nursing on a large scale until World War II. Hence, while one must agree that the assumption by women of medic roles is evidence of sexism, the force of the allegation is modified by the fact that training in first aid provided the women an opportunity to escape from their traditional village roles into the modern world. Moreover, nursing under guerilla warfare conditions forced the woman to be at once medic and soldier, whose chances of survival differed little from that of the ordinary soldier.

Table 2

Distribution of Casualties and Officers Among Job Descriptions from Data Document 377

Type of job	N	%	Sum %	% Living	Officers	
					Comm.	Noncomm.
Soldier	160	51	54	79	3	1
Soldier specialist	10	3				4
Soldier casualties	88	28	32	2		
Medic casualties	12	4				
Medics	18	6	9	13	6	
Chief medics	10	3				
Political personnel	15	5	6	8	3	
Service personnel	3	1				
	316	101	101	100	12 (4%)	5 (2%)

Soldier casualties (soldiers + soldier specialists + soldier casualties) =  
88/170 = 34%

Medic casualties (medics + chief medics + medic casualties) = 12/40 = 30%

Note. From Šoljan, M. (Ed.). Žene hrvatske v narodnooslobodilačkoj borbi (Vol. II). Zagreb: Izdanje Glavnog odbora Saveza ženskih društava Hrvatske, 1955, pp. 157-172.

The distinction between sexes comes out more clearly in the comparison of the numbers of men and women serving in NOV. Official statistics set the total number mobilized at 1 million, of which women number only 100,000. There is no doubt that men bore the brunt of the fighting; however, as was pointed out earlier, there were 2 million women not in NOV engaged in administration, food provision, and maintenance in the organizations of AFŽ. These 2 million represented the overwhelming majority of the mobilized civilian population. If we include support functions carried out by AFŽ in the military effort, as we did not do so earlier, then there were more women in service than men,

but only one woman in 20 was actually in the front line. The rest were providing support in the rear.

Modern armies view support functions as "woman's place" in the military, and combat is considered exclusively the male prerogative. Viewed from this standpoint, the distribution of the total number of women mobilized in NOV reflects the current attitudes of armed forces that permit women in their ranks. However, once again, in the case of Yugoslavia in World War II, the support functions cannot be considered traditionally female. Food provisioning and sewing were indeed part of woman's work in the village, but direct participation in administration and guerilla warfare engagements were not.

What must be concluded from the available data is that World War II offered Yugoslav women the opportunity to escape from their traditional feminine roles to assume a "woman's place" in the modern industrial world. Participation in both the National Liberation Movement and the army was indeed a liberating experience for the traditional village woman. But to a large degree that liberation prepared her for complementary feminine roles in the larger society. One cannot agree with the official claim that women enjoyed full and equal participation with men in NOV. The typical woman partisan was assigned what clearly became identified as the feminine position providing the support functions.

Military Rank. Table 3 compares the commissioned ranks held by women with those of men in some of the Croatian military units.

Two thousand women were made officers during the National Liberation War. While the table represents only a small sample of the total divisions and partisan detachments in NOV, it shows that there were about 30% more male partisan officers per capita than there were female partisan officers per capita over all the units. The table further shows that there was a wider variation in the percentage of officers to the total among the male partisans than among the women fighters.

The indication is that men had greater opportunities for promotion than women, and even that women were deliberately discriminated against in favor of men. As suggested earlier, the data indicate that women officers of superior rank generally possessed nonmilitary skills, particularly in medicine. Given the fact that the majority of both male and female recruits came from peasant backgrounds and had little formal education, we are forced to refute the official Yugoslav claim of equal participation of women with men in NOV.

#### Women in the Yugoslav Military Today

After World War II, women were gradually eased out of the professional army; today they remain only in the medical corps and a few service corps. A letter to Belgrade went unanswered, and I was unable to ascertain the precise number of women currently in service in the Yugoslav's People's Army (YPA). Women are not subject to the draft, nor must they serve the 12 or 15 months of military service required by law for all men upon completion of secondary education.

Table 3

Ratio of Staff Officers to Total Numbers in Unit by Sex  
in Six Croatian Partisan Units, 1941-45

Name of unit	Ratio of staff officers to total numbers in unit			
	Males		Females	
	n/N	%	n/N	%
VIII division, 1 corps of the Croatian National Liberation Army (NOV)	36/1,557	2.31	4/194	2.06
X division, 1 corps, Croatian NOV	62/2,511	2.47	2/262	0.76
XIII division, 1 corps, Croatian NOV	22/5,220	0.42	1/139	0.72
XII Proletarian stock brigade	23/1,277	1.80	1/136	0.74
XIII Proletarian brigade	56/3,451	1.62	1/128	0.78
XVIII Croatian brigade	19/227	8.37	2/70	2.86
Ratio of officers to total	220/14,243	1.54	11/929	1.18

Note. From Šoljan, M. (Ed.). Žene hrvatske v narodnooslobodilačkoj borbi (Vol. II). Zagreb: Izdanje Glavnog odbora Saveza ženskih društava Hrvatske, 1955, pp. 220, 241, 268, 294, 295, and 317.

Women do serve in the Territorial Defense Forces (TDF). These forces came into existence after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, when the whole system of national defense came under review and the concept of the all-people's war was revived as the most effective means of deterring and repelling the invader. At its inception, the TDF had a distinctly regional character, although its command posts were staffed by YPA reserve personnel. However, the command structure went directly from the supreme commander to the republican commands, bypassing the YPA general staff. In 1972, the TDF was made more subordinate to the YPA, commands were passed through the general staff, and the integration of the two defense organizations was achieved under what was called a "unified defense system."<sup>39</sup> Two women were made generals in the reorganized TDF.

Since 1968, all able-bodied citizens--men, women, and children--are required to undergo paramilitary training at their schools or workplaces. All

<sup>39</sup> For two discussions of the Yugoslav unified defense system, see Johnson, A. R. The Yugoslav doctrine of total national defense. Santa Monica, Calif.: The Rand Corporation, 1971; and Ljubičić, N. Total national defense: Strategy of peace. Belgrade: STP-Socialist Thought and Practice, 1977.

are assigned a specific post and function for which they are responsible in the event of enemy attack. Girls as well as boys attend military science classes in school and learn to fire guns. However, a cursory review of Yugoslav material on the People's Defense System found no pictures or discussions of women undergoing artillery or military specialist training. The pictures of women in TDF portrayed them in their best-remembered NOP roles as medics.

The role of women in the military is currently under severe scrutiny in Yugoslavia. One question of particular urgency is whether to require the draft of all women. A bill presented to the Yugoslav Federal Assembly in December 1979 urged greater participation of women in the YPA but stopped just short of requiring the draft. The bill noted that

. . . contrary to the People's Liberation War, when women, on a mass scale, on an equal footing with men, took part in almost all military special duties, in fighting and in the rear, in commands and grew into leading personnel of our people's liberation army, . . . today there are very few women in the armed forces or in service in them--or they are only symbolically present and represented. . . .

One reason advanced for the absence of women was that there were previously enough trained men to do the job. However, the bill went on to say that "it is good and correct" that the opportunities be open to women, both in terms of the national interest and for women themselves. It is suggested that women not be subject immediately to compulsory military service but that "provisions be made for such opportunities when necessary." Provisions also should be made for women reserve officers, whose promotion requires that they undergo a minimal program of military training in the YPA.<sup>40</sup>

The new law will open professional military service to Yugoslav women but will leave enlistment on a voluntary basis. There is no indication that enlistment will lead to combat duty or training. The present inequality of men and women in the army is continued with the recognition that there are many jobs in the army not of a combat nature that women can perform as well as or better than men, just as women did in World War II. Despite the record of women's heroism, and their record of combat duty during NOB, the Yugoslav leadership is farther from giving women full and equal participation with men in the present professional army than it was during World War II.

#### Summary of Findings

The Yugoslav cultural tradition of the woman fighter, as well as the party tradition of the woman activist, might be thought to have been strong enough to undermine the "bourgeois" feminine ideal that has captured the minds of the twentieth-century leadership in support of strong female presence in the modern Yugoslav army.

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<sup>40</sup> The foregoing was cited and condensed from Col. Gen. Branislav Joksovic, Member of the Committee for National Defense of the Federal Chamber of the Assembly of the SFRY, Borba, December 23, 1979, p. 14.

Yugoslav women, in lesser numbers, admittedly, but with equal or greater bravery and determination, filled combat positions during World War II. They experienced the same war conditions at the front as did their male counterparts, and they engaged in many new occupations generally unavailable to them in prewar Yugoslavia, including administration. However, most of these new occupations represented "woman's place" in the civilian world of postwar Yugoslavia. The war experience did not truly offer women equal participation with men in military service. Women's second-class status during NOB was given tacit recognition in the exclusion of women from the professional army and in their exemption from the draft after World War II. Thirty years after the war, in which women unequivocally were equal to men in the military, the question of full participation has at last come once more to the fore.

The summary is sobering for anyone who supports the draft for women as well as the principle of equal opportunity in the armed forces. The conclusion is inescapable. The prevailing Yugoslav cultural and social image of women is conservative where the military is concerned, and this image tends to outweigh the combined logic of national tradition and experience. Even the presentation of the historical record cannot escape sexist overtones. The biographies of the women who fought in NOV contained in the sources take pains to show how feminine these women were when they were not engaged in desperate deeds of heroism. Women are depicted as bringing compassion and mercy to the war effort. Their role in NOB was to defend the motherland--not to practice aggression. Women and combat still are perceived as total opposites.

Attitudinal change comes slowly. The new law may be the first step in Yugoslavia's acceptance of the woman fighter on a professional basis.

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THE UTILIZATION OF WOMEN IN COMBAT

THE GERMANS

PAST PRACTICE, PERSPECTIVE, AND PROSPECTS

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Inter-University Seminar  
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## APPENDIX C

### THE UTILIZATION OF WOMEN IN COMBAT

#### Abstract

The Germans have the reputation of being perhaps the best soldiers in the world. In the two world wars, they faced staggering odds and severe manpower shortages. Nevertheless, they have been consistently reluctant to make full use of women in the military. In spite of the example of their adversaries and the pressing extent of their manpower needs, they have traditionally reserved the military for men. The reasons appear to be rooted deep in German history and culture.

Under extreme duress, the Germans did employ women in paramilitary roles in both world wars. However, they did not consider them soldiers. Rather, they carefully maintained women's status as unarmed civilians serving with, rather than in, the German armed forces. Women's auxiliaries were never trained in the use of weapons and were, in fact, specifically forbidden to use weapons under all circumstances. Yet women contributed much to German military operations in World War II. They served with distinction as uniformed auxiliaries from 1940 until the end of the war, both within Germany and in all theaters where German forces were engaged. By the end of the war, their numbers had risen to over 300,000.

Even though they were not granted full military status, their actual duties and responsibilities were much the same as those of the female soldiers in the military services of the United States and Great Britain. German women auxiliaries most closely approached combat employment in the Luftwaffe. In that service large numbers of women were employed in searchlight, radar, and barrage balloon batteries.

Women were first allowed to enlist in the East German army in 1956, and small numbers continue to hold full military status in the Volksarmee in non-combat assignments. The first women to enter the Bundeswehr did so only in 1975 as physicians. Only 47 were on the rolls at the end of 1979.

The Germans have, in the past, been ultraconservative in their practices regarding women in the military. However, the combination of fixed defense manpower requirements and declining numbers of draft-eligible males may act to liberalize German practice in the coming decade. Nevertheless, the likelihood that the Germans will allow women to serve in combat units is extremely remote.

#### Introduction

Historical documentation on the German people goes back to the pre-Christian era. Julius Caesar chronicled the manner of warfare of numerous

Germanic tribes during 57 to 51 B.C.<sup>1</sup> From that day to the present, there is no record of German women being employed in actual combat operations. Indeed, the Germans have been consistently ultraconservative in their employment of women in paramilitary roles as well. This conservatism is reflected by the fact that it was only in 1975 that the first woman ever was accepted into the Bundeswehr with full military status.<sup>2</sup> This paper examines the history of the paramilitary employment of women in the twentieth century in an attempt to explain the basis of recent German practice and to predict that of the future.

### Twentieth-Century Background

Trevor Depuy has chronicled the rebirth of German military excellence in his book, A Genius for War.<sup>3</sup> In the course of this rebuilding, a strong bias in favor of manning the officer corps with members of the German nobility was maintained. During the last half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth, the Royal Prussian Army in particular and the Royal Bavarian, Saxon, and Wuerttemberg armies were molded by men who adhered to the Junker ethic.<sup>4</sup> The Junker tradition was one that extolled the honor and glory of war and, parenthetically, exclusively reserved warfare for men. During the same period, Germany's European neighbors were turning to a less traditional officer recruitment model, which reflected increasing democratization of the countries involved.<sup>5</sup>

The period from 1850 to 1914 appears to have been one of slow but steady progress in the area of expanding women's rights in society. To the extent that this progress was true in France, the United Kingdom, and the United States, it was equally true in Germany.<sup>6</sup> The sex roles did not vary greatly among the Western industrialized nations on the eve of World War I. None of those nations' armies included women.

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<sup>1</sup>Caesar, J. [The battle for Gaul.] (Wiseman, A., & Wiseman, P., trans.). Boston: David R. Godine, 1980.

<sup>2</sup>Seidler, F. W. Frauen zu den Waffen--Marketenderinnen·Helferinnen·Soldatinnen. Koblenz/Bonn, Germany: Wehr & Wissen, 1978, p. 395.

<sup>3</sup>Depuy, T. N. A genius for war, The German army and general staff, 1807-1945. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1977.

<sup>4</sup>Bald, D. The German officer corps: Caste or class? Armed Forces and Society, 1973, 5, 642-647.

<sup>5</sup>See note 4 above.

<sup>6</sup>Stephenson, J. Women in Nazi society. New York: Harper and Row, Inc., Barnes and Noble Import Division, 1975, pp. 13-17.

## World War I

Neither the Germans nor their adversaries foresaw the scope, intensity, or duration of World War I. The European wars of the latter half of the nineteenth century had been characterized by extensive maneuver followed by decisive victory in set piece engagements, which led to early cessation of hostilities. This was, in turn, followed by the imposition of limited demands upon the defeated state. Demands on the civil economy tended to be slight because the wars were concluded quickly and because the large materiel and munitions expenditure rates made possible by advances in weaponry had not yet been experienced. Indeed, the Germans' Schlieffen plan, which opened the war, was well designed to produce a quick victory. Except for a failure of nerve on the part of its executors, it probably would have done so.<sup>7</sup>

There was to be no quick and glorious war, concluded before the home economies were disturbed. Instead, Germany and Austria on the one hand and France, the United Kingdom, Russia, and Italy on the other hand found themselves locked in a long and enormously expensive war of manpower and materiel attrition. It was precisely the type of war Germany could not afford to fight. Germany had no populous and productive overseas possessions from which to draw manpower and resources; France and the United Kingdom did. In any case, the British navy controlled the seas. Thus, Germany was forced to make large demands on its industrial workforce. Moreover, this came at a time when the men in the workforce were being conscripted in ever-increasing numbers to replace the losses sustained in a protracted, two-front war.

Women were increasingly drawn into the German industrial workforce but not in numbers sufficient to offset the numbers and skills of the men conscripted for the Imperial army. By 1916, the manpower situation caused Field Marshal Hindenburg to ask the government to enact mandatory labor service laws that would cover women as well as men.<sup>8</sup> This proposal was distinctly unpalatable to Chancellor Bethman-Hollweg and the Reichstag (German National Assembly). The measure was opposed by the male trade unions as well as the majority of women's organizations. Thus, instead of a forced labor law that included women, Hindenburg got the Vaterlandisches Hilfsdienstgesetz (National Auxiliary Service Act) of December 5, 1916. This law subjected men between 17 and 60 years of age to compulsory labor but excluded women from its provisions.

When it became clear that legislative measures to increase the number of female workers in war industry would fail, the German War Office established Women's Work Centers (Frauenarbeitstellen) to recruit and distribute female workers to war industries. Seidler reports that, at the end of the war, 700,000 women were at work in the armaments industries under the Work Centers' auspices.<sup>9</sup> Continuing manpower shortages caused the German general staff, in the spring of 1917, to undertake more radical measures. Through appeals in the German press, women were asked to accept paid jobs in the army rear-area support establishment and, thus, relieve soldiers for the front. To the

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<sup>7</sup>Depuy, T. N. (see note 3), p. 140.

<sup>8</sup>Seidler, F. W. (see note 2), pp. 25-26.

<sup>9</sup>See note 8.

considerable surprise of its managers, the Etappenhelferinnen (Rear-Area Women's Auxiliary) program proved to be quite popular. Several hundred women were hired and employed in rear-area garrisons as laborers in supply and ammunition depots, in veterinary hospitals, in various related laborer positions, and as clerical workers in military staff offices. Most of these women were drawn from the working class.

The Etappenhelferinnen were quartered in separate billets. They did not wear uniforms, nor was there a rank structure. They were not considered to be "in" the army. Rather, they were civilian women employed "by" the army. The question of arms training or other military training was not even considered. Nevertheless, they did perform tasks previously performed by soldiers.

These successes encouraged the general staff to start a parallel but more highly structured program to train female volunteers to replace army signal corps soldiers in rear-area and zone-of-the-interior telecommunications functions. The first volunteers began training in May 1918. At the time of the Armistice the following November, approximately 500 women were in communications training or had completed it and were awaiting assignment. Because the Armistice intervened, none of these members of the Women's Signal Corps (Weibliches Nachrichtenkorps) were actually deployed. As with the Rear-Area Women's Auxiliaries, there was no thought of arms training, and the women were considered to be employed by, but not in, the army.

The largest group of women to provide support to the Imperial army was the approximately 100,000 nurses who served both within Germany and in rear areas in France and Belgium and other theaters. The United States and Great Britain had accorded military status to its nurses following the Civil War and the Crimean War, respectively.<sup>10</sup> In World War I, the Germans adhered to the more traditional pattern of employing civilian nurses who served without military status. About 90% of the nurses were provided by the German Red Cross, and the rest were nursing sisters from religious orders.

From all the above, we can begin to discern a pattern. The Germans of the Great War era were reluctant to employ women in war-related activities. When that employment became necessary due to severe manpower shortages, the Germans were quite careful to employ, not enlist, women. "Soldiering" remained the province of the German male. Women might serve but never soldier.

#### The Weimar Period

The end of World War I ushered in a decade of economic recovery and prosperity. During this period, women in the industrialized countries enjoyed steady, if not spectacular, gains in economic and social status. Enfranchisement of all German women over 20 years of age quickly followed the removal of the kaiser in 1918. In 1933, there were 35 female deputies in the German

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<sup>10</sup> Goldman, N. The utilization of women in the armed forces of industrialized countries, Sociological Symposium, Spring 1977. Blacksburg, Va.: Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 1977, p. 3.

National Assembly (Reichstag).<sup>11</sup> (In the same year, there were 15 female members in the British House of Commons.) Women who had left their homes to serve the fatherland by working in industry in many cases retained their jobs and the independence that the jobs conveyed. Not surprisingly, this improvement in women's status was not universally applauded. It ran counter to traditional German values embodied in the old Imperial Civil Code, which still had the force of law. Similar suspicion and discomfort were being experienced by the more conservative elements throughout western Europe, as well as in the United States.

During the Weimar period, perhaps the most vociferous opponent of women's increasing emancipation was the growing National Socialist German Worker's Party (NSDAP, but better known as the Nazi party). The Nazis, led by Adolf Hitler, constructed their own model of what a German woman should be. This construct derived from a rather strange mix of nostalgia for the mythic past and Hitler's fanatic racial beliefs. Highly simplified, the position was that the "Aryan race" was all-important and its expansion and growth were of paramount importance. Because women were the "mothers of the Volk," their central role was that of motherhood and homemaking. Man's world was the state, woman's was the home. Men were the warriors; women were the producers of warriors.

The Nazi view of a woman's role was proclaimed loudly and repeatedly both before and after their assumption of power in 1933. The Nazi position was strengthened as a result of the worldwide depression of the 1930s. With millions of German men jobless, the Nazis called for a return of women to the home so that men might work. They were particularly desirous of rooting out Doppelverdienern, female workers who were married to working men, thus needlessly displacing men. Unmarried women were encouraged to get married, quit their jobs, and bear Aryan children. These views were not translated systematically into fully enforced policies even after the Nazi rise to power. Nevertheless, the underlying beliefs were deeply held and strongly influenced German policy until the fall of the Third Reich.

#### Prewar Germany Under the National Socialists

In 1933, the Nazi party came to power (the Machtergreifung).<sup>1</sup> Two years before, the Reichstag had enacted a voluntary labor service law. In May and June 1935, the Nazi-controlled Reichstag passed two important laws. The first was the Compulsory Military Service Act.<sup>12</sup> This law specifically empowered conscription of males for military service, but its general section called on all German men and women to serve in case of war.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, in theory at least, authority to conscript women for military service existed from 1935 until the end of the Third Reich.

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<sup>11</sup> Stephenson, J. (see note 6), p. 3.

<sup>12</sup> Seidler, F. W. (see note 2), p. 44.

<sup>13</sup> See note 12. The specific clause, contained in the opening section of the act, read, "In addition to military service every male and female German will be liable to compulsory service in any other form for the Fatherland in time of war."

In June 1935, the National Labor Service Law (Reichsarbeitsdienstgesetz) was passed.<sup>14</sup> This law made all German youth liable for a compulsory 6-month term of labor service (later increased to 1 year). German men were conscripted quickly into this program. However, labor service for women was made voluntary and remained so until 1939.<sup>15</sup> Even then, despite Germany's pressing need for labor later in the war years, the total number of young women serving at one time never exceeded 150,000.

In 1931, Germany was suffering from unemployment.<sup>16</sup> By 1936, Germany was employed fully and suffering the initial effects of a labor shortage. The Nazis thus were placed in an awkward position: They either had to change their ideological position on the role of women, or they had to accept a severe labor shortage. When war came, the ideological problem became more severe.

## World War II

On the eve of World War II, the various elements of the German armed forces occupied military garrisons throughout Germany. Substantial numbers of male and female civilian personnel were employed by the units in garrison, particularly the higher level headquarters and supply units. When mobilized and deployed, the formations were required to replace their civilian employees with soldiers. Deployment of civilian personnel with the field army was specifically prohibited.<sup>17</sup> The prohibition applied both to troop units and staff and supply echelons. At the start of the war, approximately 140,000 women were employed by the German army alone. Of these, about one-third were clerical workers and the remainder were unskilled laborers.<sup>18</sup>

Initially, there was neither plan nor intention to employ civilians with the deployed forces of the field army. However, the quick victories of 1938 and 1940 left the Wehrmacht with large occupation, administrative, and logistic tasks in the occupied, annexed, and allied countries across Europe. It quickly became apparent that the static nature of these organizations and their distance from active combat theaters made the resumption of the employment of women possible. For menial labor, local civilians were hired. For staff, clerical, and administrative work, the dictates of security ruled out the use of local nationals.

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<sup>14</sup> Rupp, L. Mobilizing women for war: German and American propaganda, 1939-1945. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978, pp. 80-81.

<sup>15</sup> See note 14.

<sup>16</sup> Stephenson, J. (see note 6), pp. 103-105.

<sup>17</sup> Reinhardt, H. Personnel and administration project 28, part VI: German women in war service during World War II. (H. Heitman, Ed. and trans.). HQS, European Command, Historical Division (MS#P-027) Koenigstein, 16 May 1949, pp. 51-52.

<sup>18</sup> von Gersdorff, U. Frauen im Kriegsdienst, 1914-1945. Deutsche Verlag-Anstalt, 1969, p. 74.

After the fall of France, considerable numbers of German females began to appear in field army units even though their presence was not authorized. Wives, girlfriends, and assorted female relatives and acquaintances arrived on the army's heels at an alarming rate. This caused the command authorities in France to hastily develop and promulgate regulations restricting and regulating the employment of civilians. At the same time, it caused the resurrection of the World War I women's auxiliary concept.

#### The Women's Auxiliary Services

The Army. At the start of the war, the Army Signal Corps numbered 128,000 soldiers. By 1943, that number had risen to 220,000 men. Many were assigned to static telephone and teletype exchanges. The capability of women to discharge these duties did not escape army manpower authorities. Indeed, garrison telephone switchboards and teletype centrals in Germany for years had been populated by female employees. In their early efforts to free soldiers for combat assignments, the army quite naturally turned to the concept of the Women's Signal Auxiliary, which had been created but not employed in 1918. Although no prewar plans had been made to do so, the Nachrichtenhelferinnen was reactivated starting in late 1940. Apparently, the idea of transferring civilian communications employees from the replacement army was considered first but was rejected because the employees were needed where they were, and many were married and tied to their homes. Additionally, younger women were considered more suitable for foreign service.

In any case, the army turned to the German Red Cross for its womanpower needs. This was possible because, in 1938, Hermann Göring, in his position as commissioner for the Four-Year Plan, had issued a decree requiring that all single women work one "duty year" (Pflichtjahr).<sup>19</sup> Only after they had done their duty year did single German women become eligible for employment of their choice. The duty year employment had to be as an agriculture worker, houseworker, nurses' aide for 2 years, kindergarten teacher, or welfare worker. The prospect of heavy farm labor or menial housework made the other options very attractive, particularly that of nursing. Thus, in 1940, the Red Cross had a considerable surplus of female nurses' aides serving their 2-year Pflichtjahr.

The Army High Command approached the German Red Cross, which agreed to transfer suitable women from their nurses' aide reserves to the army for communications training and assignment to the Women's Signal Auxiliary. The Red Cross furnished the initial contingent and almost all the subsequent signal auxiliaries.<sup>20</sup> Note that most of these women had volunteered for the Red Cross in order to satisfy their duty year requirement. They were subsequently transferred to the army and assigned paramilitary duties. Therefore, in effect, they were conscripted indirectly. However, the signal auxiliary service was quite popular and most nurses' aides did volunteer.

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<sup>19</sup>Rupp, L. (see note 14), pp. 81-82.

<sup>20</sup>Reinhardt, H. (see note 17), pp. 134-135.



The women selected had to meet stiff medical, moral, and security standards. All were between ages 18 and 24. The army reserved the right to reject anyone found unsuitable. After selection, preliminary training, and indoctrination at local military district headquarters, they went to the Women's Signal Auxiliary School at Giessen, where they lived in barracks while training as telephone switchboard, telegraph, or radio operators. The Giessen signal school acted as the central headquarters and depot for all signal auxiliaries.

The uniform problem was solved quite simply: The standard gray Red Cross women's uniform was issued. The Red Cross badges were replaced with the army's national emblem worn, embroidered in silver, on the right breast of overcoat, jacket, and blouse. The standard army field cap was substituted for the nurse's cap. A gold lightning flash was worn on the left sleeve and was the distinctive emblem of the Women's Signal Auxiliary.

By agreement between the army and the Red Cross, pay scales and living conditions were held as close as possible to those applying to Red Cross nurses serving in military hospitals.

The signal auxiliaries had a rank structure equivalent to that of the army, as follows:

<u>Signal Auxiliary</u>	<u>U.S. Army Equivalent (approximate)</u>
<u>Nachrichtenvorhelferin</u>	Recruit
<u>Nachrichtenhauptshelferin</u>	Private
<u>Nachrichtenerhelferin</u>	Private First Class
<u>Nachrichtenunterfueherin</u>	Sergeant
<u>Nachrichtenstabsfueherin</u>	Sergeant First Class
<u>Nachrichtenhauptfueherin</u>	Master Sergeant
<u>Nachrichtenerfueherin</u>	Lieutenant

Special badges of rank were worn on the sleeve; however, these ranks were not official military ranks. (The German army private was a gefreiter, not an erhelferin.) The signal auxiliary ranks conferred limited supervisory authority over other auxiliaries only and no command authority.

Women's Signal Auxiliaries always were employed in closed groups, never mixed with soldiers performing similar duties. Regulations also required that they work in groups of not less than five under female supervisors. They were billeted together. When serving in occupied territories, they were forbidden to leave their quarters except in pairs or in larger groups. Medical care was provided by military doctors. Seidler reports that duty time lost due to sickness was substantially higher for women than for men.<sup>21</sup> However, one army source reports sickness among the signal auxiliaries as quite rare.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup>Seidler, F. W. Frauen zu den Waffen--Marketenderinnen-Helferinnen-Soldatinnen. Koblenz/Bonn, Germany: Wehr & Wissen, 1978, p. 113.

<sup>22</sup>Reinhardt, H. (see note 17), pp. 146-147.

Organized in the late 1940s, signal auxiliaries serving with the field army numbered 8,000 in 1942 and stabilized at that number for the remainder of the war. The women served in all countries in which the German army was stationed, from Greece to Finland. However, they were restricted from areas in Russia in which partisan activity was high.

Stabsshelferinnen. Shortly after the formation of the signal auxiliary, the staff auxiliary was organized. Women were recruited from the ranks of civilian employees of the replacement army garrisons in Germany; in this way, ad hoc recruitment of sweethearts was prevented. Assignment was for not less than 1 nor more than 2 years; married women could not serve in the same territory in which their husbands served, and the minimum age was 19. All were subjected to rigorous medical exams and security checks.

Uniforms similar to those of the signal auxiliary's were provided. Post exchange privileges were authorized, as was military medical treatment. Annual home leave was provided. Staff auxiliaries were billeted together and employed together in groups of not less than five. About one-third of the higher staff clerical jobs in occupied western Europe were filled in this way by German women. Although authority existed to require such service abroad under the National Service Decree, it proved unnecessary to make involuntary assignments, as ample volunteers were forthcoming. There were approximately 12,500 staff auxiliaries serving in all foreign territories by the end of 1942, and this number remained fairly constant for the remainder of the war.

Air Force Auxiliaries. The Luftwaffe was the most intensive employer of women, and it was in the German air force that German women came closest to performing combat service. The Luftwaffe began the war with large numbers of female civilian employees. They were particularly numerous in the communications elements and in the ranks of aircraft spotters and in weather stations.

The German conquest of Europe was followed by a requirement to defend the new territories from air attack. This produced a very large manpower bill at a time when men were in increasingly short supply. Like the army, the air force turned to women, organizing the Air Force Women's Auxiliary (Luftwaffenshelferinnen). These women were raised, trained, and managed along lines similar to the army auxiliaries. The majority were employed in clerical and communications duties. However, a substantial number were assigned to duties that bordered on being indirect combat positions.

Specifically, large numbers of the auxiliaries served as Flakwaffenshelferinnen (anti-aircraft auxiliaries). In this service they were assigned to searchlight batteries, barrage balloon batteries, and radar batteries. There they replaced soldiers, generally on a three-for-two basis. By the end of the war, 350 searchlight batteries were manned by women's auxiliaries. Each battery had 44 Helferinnen. They lived a rigorous outdoor life. Others, later in the war, were trained as aircraft mechanics and were assigned to air force bases throughout Germany. By the end of 1941, there were 35,000 Luftwaffenshelferinnen, and that number exceeded 100,000 by 1945. It is clear that these women were critical to the functioning of the German air force in World War II.

Navy and Other Auxiliaries. The German navy organized and employed approximately 20,000 navy auxiliaries in clerical and communications duties.

The Waffen SS organized its own SS Helferinnen and maintained its strength at about 5,000.

Military Status. The Germans were extremely careful throughout the war to maintain the essential nonmilitary status of the various service auxiliary organizations. Women's auxiliaries were not trained in the use of arms, nor were they allowed, under any conditions, to use them. Early in the war, the Germans had captured well over 100,000 Russian female soldiers who held full combatant status. This apparently horrified the Germans, who referred to the Soviet female soldiers as Flintenweib, a pejorative which translates to "musket-women" in English. The Helferinnen were cautioned constantly against letting themselves become such musketwomen. In 1943, the Armed Forces High Command published an order specifically for auxiliaries directing their conduct if capture was imminent and if captured.<sup>23</sup> Its first two clauses strongly cautioned against using firearms, even as a last resort.

The Germans did not consider their female auxiliaries to be soldiers. They consistently described them as "civilians serving with the Armed Forces." In all cases, they carefully preserved this legal relationship. (It is interesting to note, however, that the order that forbade use of arms to prevent capture mentioned above is, in all other respects, almost identical to the standing order for soldiers upon capture. For instance, captured auxiliaries were allowed to give only name, rank, serial number, and date and place of birth.)

All of the above notwithstanding, the distinction between the Helferinnen and the military women of other armies appears to have been technical at best. The auxiliaries of the German armed forces were, in fact, performing duties performed by WAACs in the U.S. Army. Moreover, they were in uniform, subject to military discipline and to the military justice system.

Götterdämmerung. By late 1943, the tide had turned against the Third Reich. Even the millions of forced labor workers from throughout Europe and the prisoners of war could not satisfy the manpower demands of the German war economy. At the same time, battle losses had to be replaced. Manpower planners began to turn to more radical schemes to substitute women for both soldiers and male workers. At each step, however, Nazi ideological resistance prevented the direct conscription of women. Moreover, both Hitler and Göring remained opposed to the employment of women in more military, less feminine positions. Late in 1944, Hitler did agree to allow somewhat wider employment of female auxiliaries. However, prohibitions against conscription or the use of arms were continued.

In February 1945, all the women's auxiliary organizations were amalgamated into the Armed Services Women's Auxiliary Corps (Wehrmachthelferinnenkorp). Concurrently, auxiliaries began to perform additional, more labor-oriented tasks, such as truck driving, and the total numbers increased substantially.

Late in 1944, the "People's Army" (Volksturm) had been organized with the mission of last-ditch defense of Germany. In March 1945, Hitler reluctantly

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<sup>23</sup> Seidler, F. W. (see note 21), p. 170.

acceded to requests by Bormann and Himmler and authorized the creation of a women's combat battalion on a trial basis. The Werwolf plan called for a guerrilla organization to be composed of both men and women. Neither the women's battalion of the Volksturm nor the Werwolf guerilla groups were organized before the collapse of the Third Reich. Thus, no German women served in combat in World War II.

Inevitably, large numbers of women's auxiliaries were captured at the end of the war. Those captured by the western Allies appear to have been treated as prisoners of war. With the exception of some of the SS Helferinnen, they were interned briefly in POW camps and then released. Some of the SS Helferinnen auxiliaries were held for up to 2 years pending investigation of their wartime activities. In almost all cases where capture was by the Allies, treatment of the women appears to have been proper and humane. Fate was much less kind to those captured in the East. Many reportedly were abused and/or executed. Many others spent years in Eastern bloc labor camps. The horror stories told of them still circulate in Germany today. They no doubt influenced current German views on women in the military.

#### The Postwar Era

From 1945 until 1956, there were no West German military forces. The creation of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) returned sovereignty to the West Germans. In May 1956, the armed forces of the FRG (Bundeswehr) were organized. The creation of the Bundeswehr was preceded by prolonged, detailed, and frequently heated debate in the FRG parliament (Bundestag). While there was much controversy, total agreement was reached on the subject of the composition of the force: The Bundeswehr would be all male. A conscious (and unanimous) decision was made not to emulate the British or American practice of admitting women to the armed forces. Moreover, the framers of the FRG's constitution (Grundgesetz) reinforced the decision by including article 12(a), which states that women ". . . may not under any circumstances render service involving the use of arms."

However, there were provisions for female civilian employees as there had been in prewar years. Women are now employed by the armed services throughout West Germany in considerable numbers. The government white paper on FRG armed forces published in September 1979 reports that, in that year, 180,093 civilian workers were employed by various elements of the Bundeswehr.<sup>24</sup> Military units directly employed 83,000. The Federal Territorial Armed Forces Administration employed 71,500. The armaments sector employed 19,700, and the remainder were in various schools and in the Federal Ministry of Defense. Of the total, 28% were women.

For 20 years after its creation, the question of allowing women to enter the Bundeswehr as soldiers lay dormant. The issue resurfaced in 1975 because of medical officer recruiting and retention problems. The FRG draft was sufficient to bring in short-tour physicians. However, consistent retention

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<sup>24</sup> Ministry of Defense. The security of the Federal Republic of Germany and the development of the federal armed forces. Bonn, Germany, September 1979, p. 243.

problems over the years eroded the career medical establishment to dangerously low levels by 1975. Career military doctors who did remain were aging, and few younger physicians were available to replace them. Various retention incentives had failed to improve the situation. It was against this backdrop that the Bundestag acted, after prolonged debate, in 1975 to admit the first women to full membership in the Bundeswehr. However, the program was limited to female medical doctors. The first five were admitted in October 1975.

The issue of arming the female physicians was particularly difficult and was resolved only after heated public debate. In the end, it was decided to finesse the problem. Under international law, medical officers are noncombatants but are permitted to use weapons to defend their patients or themselves. The FRG Ministry of Defense requires male medical officers to defend their patients, if necessary. Therefore, all male medical officers are armed and given weapons training. Female medical officers are permitted, but not required, to defend themselves or their patients. Thus, female medical officers are offered pistols and training in their use but are not required to take either. The point may very well remain essentially moot because female medical officers are restricted from serving in forward-area field hospitals. Neither are they allowed to serve aboard naval combatant vessels.

The first admission of female officer physicians came in 1975. At the end of 1979, there were 47 commissioned female medical officers in the Bundeswehr. From this number, one can see that although the military sex barrier has been overcome, the military role allocated to women remains limited. There apparently is no intention to militarize the nursing services. The Germans have had good service from their nonmilitary Red Cross and other nurses in two world wars, and they apparently see no need for change.

East Germany. The preceding discussion on postwar military practice dealt solely with West Germany. The postwar history of East Germany has, of course, been quite different. The earliest postwar military organizations in East Germany were the factory battle groups (Betriebskampfgruppen), which were organized in 1953. Both men and women were included, and all were trained in the use of infantry small arms.

There was considerable propaganda during the formation of the German Democratic Republic's "National Peoples' Army" (Nationalen Volksarmee--NVA) about its enlistment of women and their full equality with men in the NVA. Actual performance has been much less dramatic. The East Germans require premilitary training of all youth and provide this training both in the schools and through official youth organizations such as the Socialist party's Freie Deutsche Jugend. Small-arms training is provided to both males and females.

Women are allowed to volunteer for the NVA. The number of spaces open to women is quite small, and they are restricted to rear-area, higher staff positions. No women serve in combat units, but they are given rigorous basic training and are trained in marksmanship. They wear the NVA uniform and are "in" the army, not merely employed by it. The precise number of female soldiers is not known but is thought not to exceed 6,000. It seems clear that the East Germans have gone much further than their FRG counterparts in admitting women into the military. It is equally clear from the numbers of women actually admitted and combat unit restrictions that the basic German conservatism regarding female soldiers lingers on.

### Future Prospects

The preceding pages have outlined the historic refusal of the Germans to fully employ their women as combat soldiers. Indeed, they have consistently refused to admit them to membership in the military profession even with a combat exclusion. Only quite recently has this taboo been overcome. On this basis, the prospects for the expanded enlistment of women for the Bundeswehr would appear to be exceedingly slim. However, this is not the case, for it is likely that demographics may overturn German conservatism. This is because the annual draft-eligible pool of 18-year-old males is declining steadily in both East and West Germany. In West Germany, the number of qualified and available draft-age males in 1988 will be substantially less than the total needed to maintain the Bundeswehr at its authorized and treaty-commitment level for that year. Thereafter, the shortfall will continue to worsen until the end of the century. In 1990, a male conscript shortfall of 50,000 is expected. By 1999, the annual male draftee yield will number 150,000 against an annual requirement for 250,000.<sup>25</sup>

It is, of course, impossible to retroactively change the birthrates of the 1960s. The Germans, therefore, will soon be faced with very difficult military manpower decisions. Because the problem is quite clear, the debate on solutions has already begun in West Germany. Solutions being discussed range from drafting foreign aliens working in Germany to accepting a smaller force. Other concepts include the increase in draftee tour lengths from the current 15 months to 24 months or the employment of more civilians to offset the soldier shortfall. Naturally, the possibility of turning to women also is being discussed. In the end, a combination of these solutions is most likely. However, the path will be difficult because of the conservative aspect of German military institutions.

Nevertheless, the looming male manpower shortage is so large that it seems almost inevitable that the West Germans will, in the end, turn to women to maintain Bundeswehr strength. The East Germans will probably increase the currently small female contingent of the NVA. At the same time, the likelihood of the employment of female soldiers in combat operations by either Germany is quite remote. Most probable is a continuation of World War II practices in which women are, with some exceptions, employed in more traditional roles.

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<sup>25</sup> Ministry of Defense (see note 24), p. 226.

BRITISH WOMEN IN TWO WORLD WARS--AND AFTER

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## APPENDIX D

### BRITISH WOMEN IN TWO WORLD WARS--AND AFTER

#### Abstract

During World War I, about 80,000 women had served in the three combat branches of the British armed forces by the end of the war--but not in combat per se. Drawing on earlier traditions of volunteer service in a public-minded society, the authorities allowed a larger number of nurses and other auxiliary female personnel to serve in three main capacities: as civilians, paid or voluntary, in various support functions; in women's military units (auxiliaries); and as nurses. Because of some difficulties in integration, the authorities were very careful to launch a campaign to assuage the anxieties of the public about possible immorality in the armed forces, and they were successful in this. All female military units were dissolved after the war.

In World War II, some of the earlier units were revived and new ones created; about a half million females entered the service during this war. Their functions were still restricted to noncombat roles: Women were not permitted to bear or to fire weapons or to be carried on combat vehicles (tanks, warplanes, etc.). Although their presence was much greater, and the problems of sexual integration less severe, there was no fundamental change in the mode of utilization of women.

In contrast to 1918, the postwar authorities in the late 1940s decided to retain small elements of the female military, which gradually expanded in numbers and roles in the 1960s and 1970s. In December 1980, the defense secretary announced the planned introduction of compulsory training for Women's Royal Army Corps members in the use of pistols, rifles, and automatic guns. Army women with "genuine objections" will be exempted. Women in the Women's Royal Air Force will have the option of such training, but members of the Women's Royal Navy will not. It was stressed that this training is strictly for personal and base defense and not a move toward bearing of arms or combat roles for women.

Women have their own services and will receive training with small weapons for purposes of defense, but the major debate--the role of women in combat--continues. The biggest discernible shift in the problem of women in the armed forces seems to have been away from sexual fears and into economic aspirations and family complexities, as well as the addition of the arguments of feminists on the role of women in combat.

#### Introduction

When examining British women's service in wartime, one is struck by a number of comparisons. The first is how much has changed in the past 80 years; the second, how little some things have changed. Britain was not a "military" society in the nineteenth century. It had seen no major wars since the time of Napoleon. Britain's empire was won by small contingents of soldiers that were propelled around the globe by a magnificent fleet, and it was held together



by active commerce, the cooptation of natives into military operations, and superb organization. Although the navy and the colonial service possessed a kind of national mystique, the armed forces as such--especially the army--enjoyed no role or status in society comparable, for example, to that in continental kingdoms such as Prussia-Germany and Russia. Women, when thought of at all in connection with the military, were seen as colonial wives, adornments of officers' societies, and--still rarely before 1881--as nurses. The image of Florence Nightingale of the Crimean War in English fantasy, fiction, and film was a misleading one. She and her nurses remained in Turkey, far from the field of action, whereas Russian nurses (whose role is almost unknown to historians) served directly on the battlefields in the Crimean Peninsula.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, Nightingale so gripped the imagination of the Victorians that a women's nursing service became permanent after 1881. A generation later, it spawned new units bearing a variety of designations: Queen Alexandra Imperial Military Nursing Service (QUAIMS) in 1902, Territorial Forces Nursing Service (TFNS) in 1906, Women's Convoy Corps (WCC) in 1907, and First Aid Nursing Yeomanry (FANY) in 1909. (See Table 1 for a list of all abbreviations used in this study.) The major shift in women's roles took place in World War I from purely nursing into other support functions.

Table 1

Abbreviations of Women's Organizations

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AA	Anti-aircraft defense (or Ack-Ack)
ATA	Air Transport Auxiliary
ATS	Auxiliary Territorial Services (1938) (successor to WAAC-QMAAC)
CNR	Civilian Nursing Reserve
FANY	First Aid Nursing Yeomanry (1909)
NSD	National Service Department, Women's Branch (1915)
QUAIMS	Queen Alexandra Imperial Military Nursing Service (1902)
QMAAC	Queen Mary Auxiliary Army Corps (1918-38)
RAFNS	Royal Air Force Nursing Service (1918)
TFNS	Territorial Forces Nursing Service (1906)
VAD	Voluntary Aid Despatchment (1909) (GSVAD 1917)
WAAC	Women's Auxiliary Army Corps (1917)
WRAC	Women's Royal Army Corps (1949)
WCC	Women's Convoy Corps (1907)
WEC	Women's Emergency Corps (1914)
WLMTS	Women's Legion Motor Transport Section
WL	Women's Legion
WRAF	Women's Royal Air Force (1918) (renamed WAAF in World War II)
WRNS	Women's Royal Navy Service (1917)
WSTC	Women's Signallers' Territorial Corps
WUDR	Women of the Ulster Defence Regiment (1975)
WVR	Women's Volunteer Reserve (1914)

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<sup>1</sup>Curtiss, J. S. Russian sisters of mercy in the Crimea, 1855-1856. Slavic Review, March 1966, pp. 84-100.

In the 1980s, 35 years after Britain's last major war, women are now a legitimate and proper source of personnel in the permanent armed forces. They have their own units and commanders; they wear the uniform, salute, live in barracks, and obey women officers. Their function has broadened from 1900 as nurses into a wide range of technical jobs. Their self-image is no longer the sweetly pious one of angels of mercy administering to the flower of British manhood for the sacred cause of Britain, with quasi-religious costumes, nomenclatures, and ethos. The new image is a far more matter-of-fact one of economic (and partly social) opportunity. Service for women has become a job rather than an exalted mission. The halos of female heroism have given way to wrinkles of concern over pay scales, promotion schedules, and mobility. From another perspective, however, women are still seen as distinctly ancillary elements in the British armed services, not only by some military authorities who resist further integration and utilization, but also by public opinion and by some of the women themselves. And beyond the persistent image is the reality that women are still confined to "support" functions--many of a sophisticated nature to be sure, but outside armed combat and direct fighting roles, and often of a domestic, logistical, or clerical kind. In some ways, military society resembles civilian society in Britain--but civilian society of a generation back.

The sources concerning British women in the armed forces are very rich in official documents, particularly Commons debates and army and other service statements. These are supplemented in later times by polls and opinion sampling. We thus know a good deal about what the government and certain sectors of the public thought about the problems and facts of female participation in service. But because the existing corpus of personal memoirs and biographies of military women themselves has not yet been systematically researched and interpreted, we know much less about how women felt and even acted in the two world wars. In comparing this situation to the Russian scene, the one we have chosen for comparison, we see almost the opposite situation. The literature on Soviet women in the wars bulges with reference to personal experience from memoirs, newspaper interviews, cameo closeups at the front with women, and so on. Much of this material is pious in tone and sometimes overly ideological and/or patrioteering. These materials nevertheless give us unmistakable impressions of the heroism, ardor, agony, and toughness of Soviet women who fought in the revolutionary and international wars of this century. On the other hand, official Soviet sources of military history are almost mute on details of the decision-making process, of the actual numbers and roles and social background of the women, and of many other things we would like to know. Independent public opinion surveys are nonexistent in Russia, and the human drama of conflict, integration, adjustment, sexual tensions, and all the rest must be projected, extrapolated, and often conjectured about from the fragmentary data we have. All in all, what one British writer says about his own case, that "the historical development of the nonmedical services is remarkably poorly documented."<sup>2</sup> applies with equal vigor to Russia--and probably to most other cases. Until serious and extensive historical monographs appear on this still novel subject of study, we must be content with preliminary summaries such as this.

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<sup>2</sup> Glaister, G. Servicewomen in the British army. Unpublished paper, prepared for Gwyn Harries-Jenkins Research Project, Royal Military College of Science, 1977. The Role of Women in Armed Forces. CMRI Panel. (ERO Grant #DAERO 77-G-092), n. 2, p. 19.

What of the relationship of political culture to the utilization of women? Since women in Britain have their own services, and since it is a democratic or free society, and since the Soviet Union is different on both counts, one might be tempted to make a correlation between democracy, women's own aspirations, and the incidence of women's participation. It is infinitely more complicated than that. British women have the vote now, had it at the time of World War II, and were (in the form of the suffragist and suffragette movements) vociferously pushing for it at the time of World War I. But their participation was hardly a reflection of this. Women dropped their feminist militancy in 1914 and promised to support the war effort. They did so--but pretty much in the way they were told to do by the War Office and other organs of authority. Women did not shape the nature of their participation in any significant way except to say that they were willing and ready to help. Ironically, the most independent units were those made up largely of upper class women who could purchase their own uniforms, emblems, and vehicles (FANY). Since then, British women have lobbied successfully for further participation, but their possession of the vote does not seem to have been used to further any women's military cause. In Russia, it was women's economic experience, educational level, and technical skills, as well as the regime's determination to use women in any capacity it could, and the relative absence of a belief in the delicacy or fragility of women that determined the kind of massive and direct role that they played in World War II. Women were mobilized but used in a severely limited way in a democratic society like Britain; mobilized and heavily used in a nondemocratic society (Russia); and hardly mobilized or used at all in another nondemocratic society (Nazi Germany).

#### World War I

Scope of Activity. Even a brief glance at the nomenclature and the dates of formation of the women's units in the World War I period (see Table 1) indicates clearly that their formation was unplanned, that there was considerable overlap and intersection, and that there was lack of agreement and clarity about roles of women in war. This was in keeping both with the British tradition of policy making and with the ambiguous--even tense--status of women at that particular moment. It also reflected service rivalries and traditions of various services and combat arms (for example, at least seven units in this list explicitly dealt with nursing duties). The formation dates of the units closest to combat--mostly 1917 and 1918--also show the great reluctance of the military to use women for anything more than a support force. The laborious unfolding of the story of how, and under what difficulties and discussions these units emerged, has been related elsewhere. The first units were purely civilians in the service of the military (as opposed to the later pure auxiliaries). The Women's Emergency Corps (WEC) was formed in 1914 to serve as a clearinghouse for women who wished to engage in war work; the Women's Volunteer Reserve (WVR)--like the American USO of later times--ran canteens for servicemen but dressed and drilled in a military manner; the Women's Signallers' Territorial Corps (WSTC) organized women radio personnel to replace signallers on the home front. The first paid volunteer unit was the Women's Legion, whose members were largely cooks and drivers for the army.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup>The literature on volunteer and war work is large: see Great Britain, Parliament. Report of the Great Britain war cabinet on women in industry....: Parliamentary Papers (Commons), Session 4, February 1919-23 December 1919, (continued)

Nursing, as in previous wars and in other lands, provided the transitional wedge for women to move from civilian medicine to combat battlefield nursing. It was a difficult transition. Early nurses associated with the British army were either Red Cross or of private, local, or religious provenance. A unit of Scottish nurses, for example, was not permitted in the British zones, and so they went to Macedonia on the Serbian front, served in all medical roles, and moved in battlefield conditions. British Red Cross nurses in Belgium were rejected by their own, but they worked for the Belgians and the French. The British nurse, Edith Cavell, who was executed by the Germans for espionage, had been serving in Belgium since before the war. At home, the numbers of nurses in the two prewar nursing services associated with the military, the QUAIM and the TFNS, had a total of only about 2,600; by 1918, the number had grown to more than 18,000. The Voluntary Aid Despatchment (VAD) and FANY, Red Cross affiliates from before the war, blossomed and eventually were deployed abroad--the former largely lower class women paid by the army and the latter a more elite (formerly private) unit of ambulance drivers and nurses with a taste for adventure. By the war's end, separate women's units had their own nursing elements as well. The other major auxiliary work that was near combat was transport--mostly driving. The motor transport section of the Women's Legion (about 1,000 drivers) was notorious for its independent-minded and self-sufficient women members.<sup>4</sup>

The creation of units of military women (i.e., paid, controlled, and uniformed by the armed services, in contrast to the civilians and volunteers and to the nurses who were somewhat in between) was a tortuous and reluctant process. In 1915, the National Service Department (NSD) was created with a women's branch to facilitate recruitment and placement of women into war industry and auxiliary military roles. There was much resistance to going beyond this, for historical and social reasons. But there were factors working in the other direction as well: persistent demand to serve on the part of

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<sup>3</sup>(continued) vol. 31 (Reports, vol. 24) Cmd. 167; Fraser, H. Women and war work. New York: G. Arnold Shaw, 1918; Bell, E. British Women's Emergency Corps. Survey, October 1914, p. 64; Abbott, E. The war and women's work in England. Journal of Political Economy, July 1917, pp. 641-678; Webster, N. H. Britain's call to arms: An appeal to our women. London: Rees, 1914. A sample of contemporary rhetoric: Osborne, H. M. Women's work in war time: A handbook of employments. London: T. Werner Laurie, 1917; and Women's work in the war. In History of the war. London: The London Times, 1915.

<sup>4</sup>For nursing in wartime, see Thurstan, V. Field hospital and flying column. London: G. P. Putnam, 1915; women doctors' wonderful work amid war's horrors. Literary Digest, February 1918, pp. 40-41; Haldane, E. The British nurse in peace and war. London: J. Murray, 1923; Nicholson, Sr. M. My experience on three fronts. London: Allen and Unwin, 1916; Knocker, E. B. Dr. Hector Munro's Ambulance Corps; Diary Pevsye, Sept. 1914-Jan. 1915. Unpublished manuscript, Imperial War Museum; T'Serclaes, & Chisholm, M. The cellar house of Pevsye. London: A & C Black, 1917; Stobart, St. C. The flaming sword in Serbia and elsewhere. New York: Doran, 1916; The First World War papers of Nurse E. Bertram at the Scottish Women's Hospital. Unpublished manuscript, Imperial War Museum; Miss Cavell's execution. Review of Reviews, December 1916, pp. 659-660. The figures are from Great Britain, War Office. Statistics of the military effort of the British Empire during the Great War 1914-1920. London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1922.

women's groups, the presence of nurses already in all three services, and the need for women's services to replace men without going through trade union problems. Halfway through the war, in May 1916--after brutal losses of men at the front--the War Office went through a conscription crisis, at one point considering the drafting of 50-year-old men. By early 1917, the army was ready to use women to replace soldiers going to the front, and the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps (WAAC) was formed in January-February; about 12,000 women were sent to rear echelons (the line of communications) in France and about 14,000 served in England. The first to go abroad were 14 cooks from the Women's Legion. In April, conscription of women was discussed, but it was never implemented. At the end of the year, the Women's Royal Navy Service (WRNS) was formed to support the Royal Navy on shore duty only, and early in 1918, with the separate formation of the Royal Air Force, the WRAF was established. About 80,000 women served in these three branches by the end of hostilities in November 1918. Thus during World War I, women served in three basic capacities: as civilians, paid or voluntary, in various support functions; in women's military units (auxiliaries), WAAC, WRNS, and Women's Royal Air Force (WRAF); and as nurses.<sup>5</sup>

Problems of Integration. Wars are in many ways like revolutions: They set up problems and conditions that radically alter the previous status of certain elements in society. In terms of both the social-sexual mores of Edwardian England and the country's venerable and rigid service traditions, the presence of women in the military represented revolutionary behavior. The two major levels of integration of women into the services were social and institutional. The first had to do almost entirely with gender roles and problems. Many officers resented the presence of women in war on general principles: "Conservative Englishmen deem them a nuisance," as one observer put it concisely.<sup>6</sup> Many soldiers--as often happens--emulated their superiors in their contempt for women. Other enlisted personnel had more concrete reasons for hating the women who came to replace them. When cooks from the WL arrived to replace males who were then sent to the front, the latter jammed the burners of the stoves; one of them is reported to have told the women that they were sending men to their deaths.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Data on units, debates, and figures may be found in: War Office (see note 4); Public Record Office, War Office, Files 162 (31, 33, 34, 42, 60, 65 and Adjutant General's papers); see also Air Historical Branch, 1917-18, File Air 1 and WRAF General File, 1917-18. Books and articles include McLaren, B. Women of the war. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1917; Gower, P. Women with wings. London: J. Long, 1938; Cowper, H. M. A short history of Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps. London: Women's Royal Army Corps Assoc., 1967; Leslie, J. H. An historical roll with portraits of those women of the British Empire to whom the military medal has been awarded during the war. Sheffield: W. C. Long, 1919-20; British women in war service. Current History Magazine, May 1917, pp. 351-352; Jesse, F. T. The sword of Deborah: First-hand impressions of the British women's army in France. London: Heinemann, 1918, one of the major accounts; Patulo, G. The Tommy WAACS. Saturday Evening Post, December 1917, pp. 6-7; and Jones, H. A. The war in the air. Oxford: Clarendon, 1937.

<sup>6</sup> Gleason, A. Golden lads. New York: Century, 1916, pp. 72-74.

<sup>7</sup> For other anti-women episodes, see Patulo, G. (see note 5), p. 6.

Sexual anxiety loomed large in the opposition of some elements of British society to the appearance of women in the military (in whatever capacity). How much actual sexual contact took place is, of course, impossible to say. The pregnancy rate among the WAACs was 3 per 1,000, lower than the civilian rate. But the fact remained that middle class women, sheltered at home, now mingled not only with men but also with women of lower class backgrounds who were considered (with some justification) to have more "open" moral standards and wider experience with men. "They are mostly girls of a class that knows few restrictions, who, with the exception of those previously in domestic service, have always had what they call their 'evenings' when they roamed the street or went to the cinemas with their 'boys'," wrote a contemporary observer in 1919.<sup>8</sup> The intermix of classes posed a menace to social values as much as did the proximity of the sexes. Added to this was the widely known "virile" image of the Tommy, who--like the doughboy, the poilu, and the frontovik in other lands--was projected in barracks culture and in popular media as brave and tough and a great lover. Rumors began to spread at once about immoral behavior in the services: high pregnancy rates, drinking and fraternization with men, and the army as an organized brothel system (reinforced by still-fresh images of camp followers and nineteenth-century attempts to organize and inspect prostitutes for service in navy towns) Mothers were concerned about their daughters being stationed far from home and free of parental supervision, working in the company of the military, who were thought to be sexually starved.

The authorities took some interesting measures to arrest or diminish these rumors.<sup>9</sup> Strict rules of movement, dress, and comportment were widely publicized. The female uniforms were partly defeminized (e.g., removing the breast pocket that was thought to emphasize excessively the bust).<sup>10</sup> The salute and other military symbols were introduced for women in order to reduce the external sex differences. The classical relation of rich-man/poor-girl in British class-ridden society was prevented from being reenacted in the service by extending the prohibition of fraternization of officers and enlisted men to officers and women of the ranks. On the other hand, organized, supervised--and very proper--activities involving both sexes were encouraged and touted as the norm (many marriages, indeed, arose out of wartime experience). Most effective of all, the government constantly publicized the wholesomeness of the military milieu and refuted the recurring rumors. The records of the Ministry of Labour and other organs concerned with image and rumor-quashing must make fascinating reading for present-day military authorities faced with similar problems. The capstone of government policy was having Queen Mary assume the honorific title of commandant-in-chief of the corps, and they had it renamed after her (Queen Mary Auxiliary Army Corps) in April 1918.<sup>11</sup> After this, according to some sources, the rumors perceptibly subsided. Who, after all, would dare to sully an organization under so august a patronage?

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<sup>8</sup> Jesse, F. T. (see note 5), p. 53.

<sup>9</sup> See the discussion in War Office, File 162 (42) (see note 5).

<sup>10</sup> Izzard, M. A heroine in her time: A life of Dame Helen Gwynne-Vaughan 1879-1967. London: Macmillan, 1969, p. 351.

<sup>11</sup> War Office (see note 4), p. 205.

Institutional integration--how "military" would the women's military organizations become--overlapped in some ways with the problem of sexual integration. The male military decision makers who pushed for greater integration seem to have done so for two main reasons: to diminish the visible sexual differences and thus allay the rumors; and, in the words of an adjutant general's office statement of April 1917, "to secure the continuity of labour and control of women."<sup>12</sup> Those who opposed the trend were less articulate but almost as effective. Thus women were uniformed, billeted, and paid by the military and were sent abroad, and thus were more "military" than VAD or WL or other civilian formations. But commanders successfully resisted identical uniforms and insignia and discouraged the female use of the salute. Women enrolled instead of enlisted, had no parallel ranks and titles equivalent to those of the males, and had officials instead of officers. These were called controllers and administrators or (for NCO levels) forewomen. In fact, the status of military women was wholly (and no doubt deliberately) ambiguous: They were taken into the army but recruited by the Ministry of Labour and by women's organizations; they were subjected--depending upon the offense and the location--to different disciplinary codes; and they were described simultaneously as having military designation but as being civilian employees. Since most women in these units seem to have been grateful for even partial integration, and the units were created very late in the war, there seems to have been little resistance to the ambiguity among the recruits themselves, although much discussion occurred among the organizers and the authorities. The tension remained unresolved: Treating the women like females meant invoking the "sexual problem"; treating them like soldiers meant treading upon the traditional preserve of the male gender.

Observations. The three major attitudinal perspectives on the question of female service in the war were public opinion (the most elusive), military opinion, and feminist opinion. The military was perfectly happy to have the services of women (particularly in war work), but not enthralled about having women in service. Public opinion was more fluid and complex. Aside from moral concerns, there was a clear undercurrent of generalized opposition to the expansion of women's visibility (some of this surely inherited from the backlash against the militant suffragettes, who had employed physical violence in the years immediately preceding the war).<sup>13</sup> "We in England," wrote F. T. Jesse, "grew so tired in the early days of the war, of the fancy uniforms that burst upon women. Every other girl one met had an attack of khakiitis, was spotted as the pard with badges, and striped as the zebra." By the end of the war, the seriousness of women, their uniformity and organizational strictness, and official patronage had somewhat eroded this hostility. The participation of women in war, again in Jesse's words, "had become regular, ordered, disciplined, and worthy of respect."<sup>14</sup> Feminists, while ceasing their militant agitation of recent years and pouring their energies into the war effort, did so

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<sup>12</sup> War Office, File 162 (34) (see note 5).

<sup>13</sup> Two fine treatments of the relationship between society and women at war are Marwick, A. The deluge: A study of British society and the First World War. London: Bodby Head, 1965; and Marwick, A. Women at war 1914-1918. London: Fontana, 1977, the best concise history of the problem.

<sup>14</sup> Jesse, F. T. (see note 5), p. 8.



in the hope that this would serve their cause. It did. Many women engaged in war service for feminist reasons: to show their worth, their special skills, and their organizational ability. Such work helped also to erode some lingering resistance to "work" among women of certain social strata. The war industries helped expand enormously the industrial roles of the female half of the population. And, at the end of the war, women did get the vote.

What impact did women's participation have on the armed services? About 80,000 English women served in the military units (see note 5). This was greater than the number of Russian women in the same war (1914-17) and about the same as Russian women in the Civil War (1918-20). But in both the Russian wars, women served in direct combat and in the Civil War in a very wide variety of military and political roles. British women in the WAAC were very restricted: Their functions were organized as clerical, transportation, quartermaster, and communications. The WRAF had a similar organization of functions, and women did not fly, travel aboard ships, or fire weapons in any service. On the other hand, women were killed and wounded by shell fire and in raids from aircraft, and they were cited for valor on a few occasions for their conduct in perilous situations. But their worth must be judged on their performance of the limited support functions that they were assigned; these they carried out efficiently and well. Their camps were self-contained and enmeshed in a strict regimen of order, discipline, and rigid morality. Leaders were women of the upper class (the two major WAAC commanders were the daughter of an officer of a good family with organizational experience and a woman physician of similar social origin). Thus the women's military community emulated both the male military sphere and British society as a whole in terms of its class-education division of labor. The result, according to contemporary accounts, was good management, high morale, and effective performance.<sup>15</sup> Thus, although British women did not yet serve "as" armed forces, they moved from a position of serving exclusively "for" to a position of serving "with" those forces.

All the military units of women were dissolved in the few years after the armistice of 1919 (the WAAC in 1921); some WRAF personnel served with occupation troops in Germany for a while. The volunteers--FANY, the Women's Legion Motor Transport Section (WLMTS), and VAD--were kept intact (because their existence had predated the war). Interorganizational rivalry, plus the apparent lack of any major incentive to increase women's military role between the wars, prevented these somewhat related bodies from unifying. With the growing diplomatic crises of the late 1930s--German rearmament, the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, the Spanish War, and the rest--a new organization, the Emergency Service (ES), was formed in 1936. It was in effect a women's reserve officers' training corps, which became the training echelon for the revived services after 1939. In 1938--the year of the Munich crisis--WL and VAD were merged, with FANY retaining a separate but attached status. Its strength was about 16,000 enlisted and 914 officers. In the same year, Auxiliary Territorial Services (ATS) was organized to unify and coordinate the previous functions of ES; WAAC-QMAAC and WRAF were subsumed under it (the WRAF was later detached,

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<sup>15</sup> Nolan, E. Management of women in the British army. Unpublished manuscript, 1978, pp. 1-2.



and ATS became the successor of WAAC only).<sup>16</sup> When Hitler invaded Poland in September 1939, a new stage in the history of British military women began.

## World War II

Scope of Activity. As might be expected, the scope of women's participation in World War II was much greater than in World War I. The civilian groups such as FANY and MTS still retained their basically independent and upper class tone (FANY women wore silk stockings, for example; titled women tended to gravitate to MTS), but a few of their members branched out into more spectacular and romantic roles as saboteurs and spies in occupied France.<sup>17</sup> The various nursing units also increased in size and--because of the higher technological level of this war--were more exposed to danger from various kinds of enemy fire. The Royal Air Force Nursing Service (RAFNS) had 21,300 nurses as compared to 130 in the earlier war.<sup>18</sup> The biggest change, however, came in the redefinition and vast expansion of the three military women's units: ATS, WRAF, and WRNS. In April 1941 (2½ years after hostility began), the former two were given "complete military status" on paper. In December 1941, conscription was introduced, after much debate, in the face of critical manpower shortages. It became effective in early 1942. By September 1943, more than 450,000 women were in service (9.39% of the armed forces). Volunteers always greatly outnumbered conscripts during the war. Twenty-two recruitment centers were set up nationwide, and two officer training centers for women were established at Edinburgh and Windsor. Commissions were given to women for the first time, and they were brought under regular military disciplinary law (see Table 2).<sup>19</sup>

The revived version of WAAC was initially called WADS--a designation that the women opposed for obvious semantic reasons (cotton wadding was a traditional

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<sup>16</sup> Great Britain, Parliament. Parliamentary Debates, November 1941-November 1942b, p. 4; Bidwell, S. The Women's Royal Army Corps. London: Leo Cooper, 1977, p. 51.

<sup>17</sup> Braddon, R. Nancy Wake. London: Cassell, 1956, the account of a general's wife who joined FANY and underwent combat and espionage training.

<sup>18</sup> Wadge, D. C. (Ed.). Women in uniform. London: S. Low, Marston, 1947, p. 29. For various treatments of the general role of women and of nurses and support work by women, see: Ward, I. FANY invicta. London: Hutchinson, 1955; Scott, P. British women in war. London: Collins, 1940; Priestly, J. B. British women go to war. London: Collins, 1943; Macdonald, Y. Red tape notwithstanding. London: Hutchinson, 1941; Myers, B. Captured. London, New York: D. Appleton Century, 1942; British Information Services, Women's war work in Britain. New York: British Information Services, 1943; Drummond, J. Blue for a girl. London: W. H. Allen, 1960; Bigland, E. Story of the WRNS. London: Nicholson and Watson, 1946.

<sup>19</sup> General works on women in the armed services include Birdwell, R. Women in battle dress. New York: Five Editions, 1942; Anderson, M. British women at war. London: J. Murray and Pilot Press, 1941; Bently, P. British women in the forces. Britain, January 1943, pp. 9-15; Ewing, E. Women in uniform. London: Balford, 1975.

Table 2

Number and Percentage of Women Utilized by the Armed Forces of Great Britain by Service and Year: 1939-45

Date	No. WRNS	Percentage Navy	No. ATS	Percentage Army	No. WAAF	Percentage Air Force	Total in 3 services	Percentage in services
Dec. 1939	3,400	1.56	23,900	2.08	8,800	3.93	36,100	2.27
Dec. 1940	10,000	2.92	36,400	1.72	20,500	4.01	66,900	2.26
Dec. 1941	21,600	4.59	85,100	3.51	98,400	10.80	205,100	5.39
Dec. 1942	39,300	6.49	180,700	6.58	166,000	15.06	386,000	8.67
Mar. 1943	45,000	6.87	195,300	6.92	180,100	15.96	420,400	9.13
June 1943	53,300	7.47	210,300	7.29	181,600	15.81	445,200	9.38
Sept. 1943	60,400	7.84	212,500	7.35	180,300	15.51	453,200	9.39
Dec. 1943	64,800	7.89	207,500	7.19	176,800	15.04	449,100	9.19
Mar. 1944	68,600	8.20	206,200	7.14	175,700	14.94	450,500	9.20
Dec. 1944	73,400	8.60	196,400	6.64	166,200	14.44	436,000	8.79
June 1945	72,000	8.42	190,800	6.13	153,000	13.87	415,800	8.20

Note. From Great Britain, Central Statistical Office. Statistical digest of the war. London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1951. (Table 10)

means of menstrual stoppage; female soldiers at drill had been described as "waddling"). It was renamed ATS in 1938. It was the first, the largest, and the least popular among women volunteers for military service of the three units. Among the 200,000 or so serving in 1943 in at least 80 different military specialties ("trades" in British; MOS in American terminology) were, among the skilled division, about 3,000 clerical, 9,000 technical, 3,000 communications, and 4,000 cooks. In the nonskilled categories were, among others, 30,000 orderlies and 15,000 drivers. Approximately 57,000 ATS members were used in AA (air defense or anti-aircraft) work: fire control, searchlight operators, targeting, hit confirmation, and other aspects of AA operations. A typical battery had 189 men and 299 women, with the men doing all the firing and the women most of the accompanying functions. Thus the most combat-oriented segment of the largest military unit for women did not fire guns but worked on subsidiary operations.<sup>20</sup>

The most popular branches were the WAAF (the new name of WRAF), and the WRNS. The WAAF had 57 different specialties in transport, mechanics, repair, communications, code work, parachute repair, cooking, photography, radar, and others. Women also dominated the operation of air defense barrage balloons on British soil. But they did not fly. Ironically, women of the civilian ATA served as pilots (100 of the 800 were women), flew transport missions, and were shot down (15 of the 173 killed in action). The glamor of the air force, the legendary reputation of RAF fliers, the conditions of work, and the fact that the WAAF was designated as having military status must have accounted for the great popularity of the WAAF among women. Navy women were even more remote from combat (it was second in popularity among volunteers). WRNS women not only lacked military status, but about one-third of them lived at home and commuted to their work as drivers, clerks, housekeepers, and communication and technical specialists, just like women in the civilian economy. Few ever served aboard ship.<sup>21</sup>

Problems of Integration. Opinion surveys that were more extensive than those of the 1914 war indicated that both civilian and military men still opposed women in service as a general rule. A sampling of ATS women, themselves questioned during the war, indicated that they too thought they had a poor image among the public.<sup>22</sup> Some of the opposition in the military was to the

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<sup>20</sup> For accounts of ATS, see Gwynne-Vaughan, H. Service with the army. London: Hutchinson, 1942; Cotterell, A. She walks in battle dress. London: Christophers, 1942; Bigland, E. Britain's other army: The story of the ATS. London: Nicholson and Watson, 1946; Norman, S. Camp with the ATS. Spectator, August 1939, pp. 212-213; Pile, F. Ack-Ack. London: George Harrap, 1949, by the air defense commander; Barker, M. Freddie Pile's popsies. Unpublished manuscript, Imperial War Museum, 1972.

<sup>21</sup> Contemporary accounts are too numerous to cite; for postwar treatments, see, among many others: Settle, M. All the brave promises. New York: Delacorte, 1966; King, A. Golden wings. London: Pearson: 1956, about the ATA; Knapp, S. E. New wings for women. Oxford: Crowell, 1946; Baker, E. WAAF adventure. London: Lonsdale, 1948.

<sup>22</sup> Great Britain, Ministry of Information. The social survey of ATS. Unpublished report, Imperial War Museum.

relatively high level of absenteeism and wastage--women resigning at will at various stages of their training. There was no way to enforce desertion laws against women, even though they were recruited by the draft. The sexual question also asserted itself. In the first place, pregnancy was a bigger problem. The rate was still lower than among unmarried civilian women of a comparable age group (21.8 per 1,000). In ATS it was 15.4 per 1,000 at the first counting, but it jumped to double that figure in 1943, and these figures were higher than comparable ones of World War I. The apparently larger number of women who were asserting their sexual freedom were given "paragraph elevens"--a compassionate discharge. It was generally agreed that army life was no place for a pregnant woman, married or not. The problems of transporting pregnant women, of detecting pregnancy early (still difficult to do in these days), and the still rather rigid perceptions of pregnant women in visible positions all conspired to make the army very careful to screen out pregnant women as soon as possible.<sup>23</sup>

Since the pregnancy rate was higher, perhaps there was good reason for traditional mothers to fear for their daughters' virtue. Parental concern continued to be a public relations issue for the high command. In the AA, for example, the army experimented with mixed batteries composed of young women and middle-aged men (it did not work for generational reasons, not sexual tensions). Members of Parliament, on the other hand, seemed to be more alive to the perils of women being corrupted on "the wilder shores of love," i.e., in overseas commands among non-British peoples. "There are dangers," warned a House of Commons speaker, "not dangers of the battlefield, but where the moral standards do not perhaps compare favorably with those of this country."<sup>24</sup> But when the war ended, the authorities very much favored the idea of sending British servicewomen to Germany in order to diminish the incidence of fraternization with local German women--a distinctly manipulative device.<sup>25</sup>

There was a higher level of institutional integration of women in the armed forces in World War II--but not much higher. Not because integration did not work well where it was tried, but because the commanders kept it in check. For example, women were now commissioned as officers, not officials. Recruitment bodies used intelligence tests and even personal references in some outfits. Women tended to flow into the branch that they preferred. Reports were issued from time to time that the valor of women under fire boosted male morale, and the morale of women--according to a few impressionistic observations--was higher in the zones nearest combat. In the most common "combat" situation--the AA batteries--teams of both sexes worked very well (especially after young women were teamed up with men their own age). "Far from resenting

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<sup>23</sup> Figures: Parliament (see note 16), p. 231. Commentary: Settle, M. (see note 21), p. 63.

<sup>24</sup> Great Britain, Parliament. Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 5th Series, vol. 407, p. 858. For additional debates in Parliament vis-a-vis women in the service, see identical titles for the following years: 1941, vol. 370, pp. 1699-1700; 1943a, vol. 389, pp. 598-599; 1943b, vol. 391, pp. 2111-2201; 1944a, vol. 396, pp. 157-158; 1944b, vol. 397, pp. 1320-1321; 1944c, vol. 398, p. 1227; 1944d, vol. 406, pp. 1957-1964; and 1945, vol. 407, pp. 841-906.

<sup>25</sup> Great Britain, Parliament (see note 24), 1945, vol. 407, p. 862.

the ATS the men in the mixed batteries show a very real pride in the girls' work and are the first to defend them against their critics."<sup>26</sup>

On the other hand, women did not mix well in some situations; radar crews were a case in point, although there is no precise evidence as to why. More important, women were paid unequally to men, and, in spite of the "military" designation, they remained separate in all important ways, as in World War I. The major reason for this, in addition to the still widespread opposition to the whole phenomenon, was the strict adherence to the definition of women soldiers, sailors, and airwomen as "noncombatant." Added to this was the familiar problem of all "detailed" units, namely that women often came under dual and overlapping jurisdiction, which occasionally created friction between the women's command structure and the men's.

Observations. When comparing British women's participation in World War II with that of World War I, the growth seems impressive indeed, both in numbers (see Table 3) and range of specialties (although the proliferation of technical occupational terms tends to obscure some basic similarities between 1914 and 1939 military roles). Another way to look at the problem is to compare it with female participation in the Soviet Union in the same war. In both cases, the regime wanted to stress economic utilization of women, although here the Russians were far in advance because of the massive industrialization drives of the 1930s. Both resisted bringing women into war; both succumbed to perceptions of manpower needs and introduced forms of conscription (in Britain, 2 years after the war began in 1939; in Russia informally, soon after June 22, 1941). In Russia, there was a much larger contingent of university and technical school women graduates. Compulsory assignment of British women to overseas theaters was paralleled by Soviet disbursement of women to all major geographical fronts in the huge state. We have little data on what motivated British women to go to war, but the heavy Soviet motif of hatred and vengeance against alien occupiers was certainly missing. The main organizational difference was that British women formed into all-female branches: ATS, WAAF, and WRNS. The Soviets had no counterparts to these; women served either in small all-female units or were intermixed, depending on the situation. Soviet women also had more prewar preparation for service in a number of paramilitary organizations that were popular among women and stressed military virtues.

The British debate about "combat" status for women shows how ambivalent the military and the civilian authorities still were on this issue. Given the new military technology of World War II, it was clear that many noncombatant functions of the earlier war were very close to combat situations and exposed to danger. Long-range guns that could reach rear-support elements and hospitals were examples often invoked by those who thought that being in service was almost equivalent to being in combat (although logically, one could

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<sup>26</sup>Great Britain, Ministry of Information. Roof over Britain: The official story of Britain's anti-aircraft defences 1939-1943. London, 1943, p. 59. See also Pile, F. (see note 20); and O'Connor, H. Women man the guns. American Magazine, October 1941, pp. 14-15, 73.

<sup>27</sup>Quotation: Parliament, 1943b, vol. 391 (see note 24), p. 2114; see also 1944c, vol. 398, p. 1227 and 1945, vol. 407, p. 842; Bidwell, S. (see note 16), p. 74; and Pile, F. (see note 20), pp. 189-194.

Table 3

## Women in the Army, World Wars I and II, by Number and Year

Date	No. WAAC	Date	No. ATS
Aug. 1917	2,377	Dec. 1939	23,900
Sept.	3,095	Dec. 1940	36,400
Oct.	5,240	Dec. 1941	85,100 <sup>a</sup>
Nov.	16,228	Dec. 1942	180,700 <sup>b</sup>
Dec.	20,198	Dec. 1943	207,500
Jan. 1918	22,470	Dec. 1944	196,400
Mar.	33,026		
Apr.	35,553		
May	33,471		
June	35,230		
July	36,260		
Aug.	37,147		
Sept.	38,463		
Oct.	39,733		
Nov.	40,850		
Dec.	39,742		
Jan. 1919	37,993		
Feb.	35,632		
Mar.	32,208		
Apr.	29,740		
May	27,129		

Note. From the War Office (1920, p. 206); Great Britain, Central Statistical Office. Statistics of the military effort of the British Empire during the great world war, 1914-1920. London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1951. p. 9.

<sup>a</sup>April 21, 1941--new military status for WAAF and ATS announced.

June 19, 1941--ATS and WAAF granted new military status by Army Council instruction.

Dec. 4, 1941--National Service Act (No. 2) passed, making women liable for conscription.

<sup>b</sup>April 23, 1942--first recruits called up under conscription.

have argued that the development of the long-range bomber and later the V-2 rockets made all civilians "combatant" in the sense of exposure to fire). Referring to AA service, an MP said that "it cannot be argued that it is not 'combatant' work. I am quite sure that the enemy would not scruple to bomb a gun site because women were manning the guns . . . ." <sup>27</sup> The government, in any case, adhered to the "noncombatant" definition. Women were not to bear arms, serve in assault units, in frontline battle, aboard ships, in tanks, or in fighting planes. By this definition, then, women were not eligible to receive combat decorations, although they were granted other military honors. The casualty figures for the three services were as follows: 624 killed, 98 missing, 744 wounded, and 20 captured. Of these women, 751 belonged to the ATS, 611 to the WAAF, and 124 to the WRNS. <sup>28</sup> Soviet women, by comparison, fired every weapon and served in almost every type of unit and combat situation (as snipers, riflewomen, machinegunners, tankers, mortarwomen, pilots, bombardiers, navigators, artillerymen, and others). Tens of thousands served as partisans in the Ukrainian and Belorussian forests, while only a handful of British women were dropped in eastern France to serve in the Maquis resistance movement there. The Russian partizanka became a wartime media figure. There was nothing on the British scene comparable to this.

A vivid way of contrasting the numbers and impact of British and Soviet women at war is in the AA services. The British women, although called "Gunner Girls," did not fire the guns and worked in mixed crews with men doing the actual firing. Soviet women were said to have replaced over 300,000 men in these occupations and as gunners. Women dominated many AA positions in Moscow, Leningrad, and other major cities; they had their own officers and worked most often in all-women units.

Soviet sources liked to depict their women soldiers as brave and martial; the sexual element was almost always downplayed except to invoke wifely or maternal virtues. There was no public discussion of morals or of pregnancy problems as in the British sources. British sexual vagrancy was not severely punished; Soviet soldiers who violated the segregation orders and impregnated a female soldier could be put in prison for 10 years. There was initial hostility in both armed forces to women, and in both cases apparently it eroded, at least partially, as women became more visible and useful. But the Soviets had a much more fluid deployment of women in small units and interspersed in male units. British women almost always served under their own officers, and the British officer was reputed to be reluctant to order or discipline a female subordinate. Soviet male officers do not seem to have had such problems. This perhaps reflected the different natures of the two societies. In Russia, women were already familiar, not only as workers and professionals, but also as fighters in the revolutionary movement and in the Civil War of 1918-20. Nevertheless, in spite of the muteness of Soviet materials on tensions and problems of integration, there are sufficient hints in the literature that the Soviets also had problems of integration.

Comparison of numbers deployed do not tell us very much, because the Soviet figures are so flat and vague. About a million women are said to have fought in the war, about 800,000 of them in the armed forces (the rest

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<sup>28</sup> Great Britain, Central Statistical Office. Statistical digest of the war. London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1951, p. 13.

presumably as partisans). This compares to the peak British figure of about 450,000 halfway through the war. Thus British women constituted 9% to 10% of the total armed forces as compared to 8% for Russian women. But of these, a half million are described as "serving at the front" in the Soviet Union--an obviously broad definition of frontline activity. The British equivalent was minuscule. This is hardly surprising or even very revealing. The British women had no revolutionary tradition of female participation on a large scale, no mobilization organs to press women into service in mass numbers, and no presence of foreign and brutal invaders on their own soil.

### The Peacetime Services

The climate of military opinion in 1945 was different from that of 1918. No rosy dawn of goodwill and permanent peace brightened the postwar landscape as it had seemed to do after World War I. Demobilization was necessary, of course, but the War Department had decided to retain a women's element in the peacetime army. It had shown its worth. It took 3 years to construct the legislation and pass it through the Parliament. In the meantime, a small nucleus of women remained in ATS and some of the other arms. In February 1949, the Women's Royal Army Corps (WRAC) was established--a direct revival of ATS. Jobs were few in the postwar years, and the operation was modest, a situation that enabled slow and stable growth. Since then, the history of WRAC has been one of slow expansion of jobs and of numbers and the gradual raising of status, particularly for officers. Each decade has seen the debate between budget trimmers and those who wish to expand the service. The women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s clearly had an influence in raising the public awareness of women; grim unemployment figures have also sent many girls and young women into the services in search of a career. WAAF, renamed WRAF, was revived under the same bill; the navy, clinging to its own traditions of separateness, established the Women's Royal Navy Service (WRNS).<sup>29</sup>

The WRAC is the biggest of the women's services (6,500 as compared with 5,400 in the WAAF and 3,900 in the WRNS)<sup>30</sup> and therefore best illustrates the realities and problems of everyday military life for women in the coming decade. It retains its administrative autonomy with parallel organization, which is financially costly but valuable in giving women command experience. The WRAC director is a brigadier, still the highest rank a woman can achieve. Women officers serve in many advisory functions at various high echelons in the army. There were only 900 officers as of January 1980. Their examinations for promotion are the same as for men. Women officers tend to have slightly better school records than men, but they still cannot attend the highest level of the military educational establishment, the Royal College for Defence Studies, though they have penetrated most others. Women officers serve in all-male units in a variety of capacities, often specialized (welfare, counseling); they also command women's units. Enlisted men, since 1974, now have the choice of inspecting the actual job opportunities and requesting a particular job before being inducted,

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<sup>29</sup> A brief account of the reemergence of the services is in Bidwell, S. The Women's Royal Army Corps. London: Leo Cooper, 1977, pp. 135-141.

<sup>30</sup> Based on official estimate for April 1981. In January 1980, the actual number of women in the military totaled 15,800 or 4.9% of the force.



a reform that has helped in recruitment and reduced wastage and job turbulence. The WRAC trades as of 1977 are as follows:

Administrative Assistant	Mess Caterer
Analyst (Special Intelligence)	Mess Steward
Artificer (Instrument)	Movement Operator
Artificer (Telecommunications)	Military Policewoman--Provost
Bandswoman	Military Policewoman (Special Investigation Branch)
Combat Radioman	Operator (Electronic Warfare)
Clerk	Operator Intelligence and Security
Clerk (Assistant Programmer)	Postal and Courier Operator
Clerk (Royal Army Pay Corps)	Physical Training Instructor
Clerk (Shorthand Writer)	Radio Telegraphist
Communication Centre Operator	Radar Operator (Light Air Defence)
Cooks (two groups)	Rider/Groom
Data Telegraphist	Stewardess
Driver	Storewoman (Royal Army Ordnance Corps)
Experimental Assistant (Gunnery)	Switchboard Operator
Hairdresser	Technical Clerk
Kennelmaid	
Medical Orderly	

WRAC women are required to live on base. There are a few independent all-female units (headquarters companies in London and in Germany performing paper functions); most are in integrated units. Disciplining of women soldiers is still done only by women officers. Roles are widening all the time, but not very dramatically or rapidly. Women are still mostly engaged in domestic, clerical, transport, and other menial work, although some get into MP or even intelligence roles.<sup>31</sup> The closest women have come to a wartime situation is in Northern Ireland. About 600 women serve in the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR) in communications, road duty, and border patrols (all unarmed). The women of the UDR, called "greenfinches" because of their high-pitched voices on the radio, are interesting on at least two major counts. In the first place, they are the closest thing to women in combat. Ironically, one of the reasons for the formation of the WUDR, the name of their unit, is the fact that female terrorists of the IRA and other groups were being utilized to conceal weapons and explosives in their garments. Women of the Ulster Defence Regiment (WUDR) were recruited locally to search females, to set up road checks, to accompany night patrols, to operate radios, and to man operations rooms. In a way, it is one of the rare examples of using women in a military situation against other women. The other interesting aspect of the "greenfinches" is that they were locally recruited and put directly into a British regiment, instead of being detailed from the WRAC. It is the first case of complete integration of males and females in a British military unit. Commentators are already pointing to it as

<sup>31</sup> Official figures cited in Defence in the 1980s: Statement on the defence estimates, 1980, (Vol. II). Defence Statistics. London, 1980, Cmd. 7826-II, p. 31. On military trades and other information: Bidwell, S. (see note 29), pp. 138-140; Glascer, G. Servicewomen in the British Army. Unpublished paper, prepared for Gwyn Harries-Jenkins Research Project, Royal Military College of Science, 1977. The Role of Women in Armed Forces. CMRI Panel. (ERO Grant #DAERO 77-G-092), n. 2, p. 19; Nolan, E. Management of women in the British army. Unpublished manuscript, 1978, pp. 1-2.

a possible model for future units along the road to complete male-female integration of the armed forces.<sup>32</sup> The most fascinating sociological research on women and the British armed forces are the surveys of background, motivation, and personality conducted among selected volunteers. Two recent studies show a large proportion of women to be consciously committed and not casual about enlistment; often connected to the military through family; ages 16 to 20 when making the decision; and of lower class or working class families with rarely more than a high school education (seeing the army as a "second chance" for schooling). Culturally, the sample appears to be nonintellectual, not joiners of local or teenage activity groups, with passive leisure habits (TV watching, disco, cheap fiction, pop music) rather than creative ones. Traditionally feminine and somewhat authoritarian (in conformity with an English working class background), the young women appear to have low hopes for success or fulfillment in their own hometowns or locales and thus see the service as a broadening and enriching milieu with sufficient structure to deal with insecurity; with sufficient variety to prompt a hope for association and perhaps adventure; and sufficient texture to provide a kind of surrogate family or community that they seemed to feel was missing at home. Students of social processes and systems might well see the impact of the new army upon English society, and particularly upon lower class females, to be at least as important a human question as the impact of women upon the army. It also seems to show that the army seems to draw those who literally have not much better to do in their own milieu.<sup>33</sup>

The problems of women adjusting to a peacetime military career--and of the army adjusting to women--are many and complex. In a mid-1970s survey of women's complaints and problems, many respondents felt that the basic training phase was too severe, too restrictive of movement and behavior, and also "unreal" in terms of their future activities. When asked about job preference, the responses seemed to point to driver, "phys-ed" instructor, and military police as the high-status jobs; to clerk and domestic chores as the low-status jobs; and to cooking as something in between (requiring a skill and perhaps relating to role perception for the future). Responses indicated that excessive social distance and aloofness between female officers and enlisted women was not seen as a major problem, which may indicate that "newer" institutions may be open to a more democratic kind of ethos, or even--although this is very speculative--that there might exist a kind of female democratic style (there is at least a hint of it in the Soviet wartime experience of one female unit). Most women in the service are young: In this sampling, 50% were 20 or younger, and 36% were 20 to 24, with the officers only a little older on the average. This also might account for a somewhat looser and less caste-like relationship between officers and nonofficers.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Women of the UDR. British Army Review, December 1975, pp. 30-32. WRACS have also served recently in Rhodesia: Defence in the 1980s, I, Cmd. 7626-I (see note 31), p. 61.

<sup>33</sup>The samples were taken in 1969 and 1975-76. See Glaister, G. (see note 31), pp. 9-11.

<sup>34</sup>Glaister, G. (see note 31), pp. 12-14.

Respondents indicated in general that greater satisfaction in the military was directly related to greater job opportunities. But the average service term for a female was 2.55 years as compared with 4.9 for the male. There exists a kind of vicious circle, similar to that of any civilian society. Employers (in this case the military) are reluctant to offer a variety of better jobs for a group that will use its training and then leave. Women leave because of the perceived limitations of job opportunity, movement, promotion, flexibility, and the rest. Some observers have suggested that the lack of a sufficient number of role models (female career officers and senior enlisted) accounts for the high turnover (or "job turbulence" as it is called). But this itself is part of the vicious circle. Most women separate from service (more than half) at the end of their enlistment period ("engagement" in British usage). After getting married, 21.8% separate from service voluntarily. Marriage is still difficult to combine with a military career for a woman. "At the moment," one English recruit commented, "the Army is not a career for women, it is a career for spinsters." The majority of servicewomen want what men want: good jobs, rapid promotion, a chance for travel or mobility (or to choose place of service, including at home), and flexibility. Those who perceive these benefits as not sufficiently available tend to resign after their initial enlistment, and so the army has become a kind of stopping-off place for many women, from which they have no doubt gained much. But the army must pay the bill for the constant training and retraining. It wishes to attract and keep women and realize a suitable return on its investment in them. But the army is also faced with a dilemma: If it offers jobs and promotions at the desired rate, women will be competing with men even more than now and in a more visible way. One of the best ideas for alleviating the problem of married soldiers is to offer more flexibility--for example, posting spouses together or giving the woman an unpaid leave until she can be posted with her husband. No one has yet produced a solution for the problem of pregnant servicewomen, who are still forced to terminate service after pregnancy becomes known.<sup>35</sup>

What is the future likely to hold? We can only judge by the kinds of debates that are currently engaging the minds of military authorities of both sexes. Chief among these are the following: updating and reassessing (and perhaps renaming) the services; providing self-defense weapons training for women (which might lead into conventional combat training); training pilots for the WAAF; and affording higher or equalized pay for women (though this would be difficult to defend given the special status and the greater freedom and safety of women in the services).<sup>36</sup> Also being discussed are a wider range of jobs and ranks (perhaps even at the top, beyond brigadier, currently the senior rank for women); coeducation at all officer's training institutions and military educational institutions (for example Sandhurst, the best-known officer training academy); and liability of women to military discipline from male officers (the reverse is already possible). One thing that emerges from all these suggestions and debates is that British writers on the subject are very much aware of what is being done in other societies, particularly in the United States, which is seen not only as its major ally, but also as a model

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<sup>35</sup> Glaister, G. (see note 31), pp. 14-19 (quotation, 19). Ethnic problems are not mentioned in the sources, although there are Black women in the service.

<sup>36</sup> Equal pay for both sexes was introduced in 1975 except for the extra increment (the "X factor"), given men in light of their additional burdens.

that might be emulated, at least in some respects. Concerning the ultimate decision for total integration that some people have suggested, Brigadier Eileen Nolan, former commander of the WRAC, recently commented that "the road towards complete integration [must be] taken slowly, steadily and firmly. Only then can we be completely sure that women will take their full part in the army of the future."<sup>37</sup>

The issue that seems to generate the most heat is combat training and combat roles for women in the future.<sup>38</sup> At one end of the spectrum are those who are called "militants" or "amazons" by their opponents and are accused of being inspired by exaggerated notions of "women's liberation" and of total equality. (In fact, the United States, which does not yet have an Equal Rights Amendment, has greater roles for women in the military than does Britain, which has the Sex Discrimination Act.) Arguments against this position range from those who say that women cannot perform in combat to those who say that women in Britain do not want to perform in combat. Given the experience of Soviet, Yugoslav, and Israeli women, among others, the first argument is weak indeed. But the second seems to have great force. Judging by impression of interviews and conference speeches, those who have spoken out on the issue seem to belong to the anticombat side, and this certainly seems to be the majority opinion among women in the service, not to mention British society at large. But like almost everything else involved with the role of women today, this is subject to change--and change at perhaps a faster pace than most people expect. The expanding numbers of women in the service means the increasing exposure to battle of some sort in a future war; with this comes the need for some sort of defensive weapons training; and from this--given the difficulty in the heat of combat to distinguish offensive from defensive action--comes the escalation of women into combat operations. On another note, some authorities are concerned that in the future, since international law does not identify women ipso facto as noncombatant, women, even those in truly noncombat jobs, might be labeled and treated as combatants.<sup>39</sup>

It should be clear from the preceding pages that two different but related social problems have emerged in British society since 1914: one, the problem of integrating women into a wartime situation, which the British faced in 1914 and in 1939; the other, the gradual and permanent introduction of women into a military society (the peacetime services). Concerning wartime experience,

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<sup>37</sup> Nolan, E. (see note 31), p. 14, Women in the United Kingdom Forces: Annex N to minutes of 1977 conference dated 11 November 1977. (Typed manuscript); and Owen, C. (Ed.). The future of women in the armed services. London, 1977.

<sup>38</sup> In December 1980, the defense secretary announced that compulsory training for WRAC members in the use of pistols, rifles, and automatic guns would be introduced shortly. Army women with "genuine objections" will be exempted. WRAF women will have the option of such training, but WRNS will not. It was stressed that this was strictly for personal and base defense and not a move toward bearing of arms or combat roles for women. Daily Telegraph, December 3, 1980.

<sup>39</sup> Lifesplan arts. Undated Sunday supplement, 1977. A description of training conditions and some of the debates and opinions; Owen, C. (see note 37), passim; and Nolan, E. (see note 37), p. 2.

it is clear that the role of women in the services was limited but useful (how useful is impossible to say). In combat their impact was virtually nonexistent. Unless England were to be invaded, it is hard to imagine any major difference in the utilization of women in any future war involving Britain. If peacetime problems of integration are solved, then one can at least expect greater and better participation of women in the various support services because of the permanent existence of cadres and recruits. Integration problems arose in both wars but were never approached systematically. Problems were dealt with on an ad hoc basis in the midst of very grave disasters; it could hardly have been otherwise. Nowadays, in tranquil times, the army--and women themselves--are freer to experiment, to plan, to assemble data, to analyze and discuss, and to try to correct major difficulties in the man-woman relationship in the armed forces. The biggest discernible shift seems to have been away from sexual fears and into economic aspirations and family complexities. In other words, the "woman question" in the British armed forces is resembling more and more the "woman question" in society at large. Both the civilian and the military social planners and opinion makers are confronting the problem of women's roles, the nature of her mobility and equality, and the complexities that family life introduces into the bigger problem. No one as yet seems close to any definitive solution, but the answers--as well as the questions asked--seem to become more realistic with each passing year.

WOMEN AND DEFENSE IN SWEDEN

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## APPENDIX E

### WOMEN AND DEFENSE IN SWEDEN

#### Abstract

The role of women in Swedish defense forces has changed markedly during the past 60 years. In the development of the utilization of Swedish women as military personnel, we can discern three steps. The first one was taken just after World War I, when a number of women voluntarily started to provide soldiers who were in voluntary officers' training with domestic service, mainly cooking, during their field exercises.

The next step was taken during World War II, when Swedish women became voluntary substitutes for soldiers in the regular defense forces so that the men could be used for other military assignments.

The third step is a recent development that has taken place during the past decade. It has involved the integration of women in the regular defense forces by giving them an opportunity to become regular officers doing the same job as the male ones.

In this paper I have tried to depict these three steps, to trace the time for different changes, and to explain why these changes occurred.

#### Introduction

The history of women at war is long but disconnected. Between the Amazons of the ancient world and the modern women in the defense forces, only a few female figures are known to have taken part in military activities. In Britain, Boadicea, a queen, who after her husband's death in A.D. 60 led a revolt against the Romans, appears to have been the only woman to have led armies into battle.<sup>1</sup> In Sweden, according to medieval legend, Blända of Varend led a female crowd in cutting hostile Danish troops to pieces after a feast, which she had arranged.<sup>2</sup> And in 1520, after her husband's death, Kristina Gyllenstierna took over the defense of Stockholm against the Danes.<sup>3</sup> Joan of Arc seems, however, to have been more religious than martial, and Florence Nightingale was more domestic than destructive. Actually, until the emancipation of women in the twentieth century, women in Sweden, as in the rest of the world, rarely made any contribution to war and military defense.

During the last century this has changed. In Sweden today women have a clear-cut role to play in the defense forces. The relations of women to these

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<sup>1</sup>Encyclopaedia Britannica (Vol. 3). Chicago: 1973, p. 820.

<sup>2</sup>Bonniers Lexikon (Vol. 2). Stockholm: 1966, p. 560.

<sup>3</sup>(See note 2) (Vol. 6). P. 564.

forces have changed tremendously during the past 60 years. This is quite remarkable, as Sweden has not been at war since 1813.

Thus, the change in Swedish women's relations to the defense forces cannot be the result of a need to utilize women as military personnel during war. So why has this change occurred? There are, of course, many reasons. Even though Sweden itself has not been in war, it was not untouched by World War I and World War II. There might also be reasons other than war for utilizing women as military personnel. And, as no country is an isolated island, the change might also in part be due to the influence of other nations that have recently utilized women as military personnel. Also, society has changed tremendously during the past 60 years, and the women's role in society, family, and work life has also changed. So why should not women's role in military activities change? Perhaps the change just mirrors the social change during this period.

In the development of the utilization of Swedish women as military personnel, we can discern three steps. The first started just after World War I and consisted of providing domestic service during exercises to soldiers who were in voluntary officers' training. The next step was taken during World War II, when Swedish women became voluntary substitutes for soldiers in the regular defense forces. The third step is a recent development that has taken place during the past decade. It has been the integration of women in the regular defense forces, employed to do the same jobs as men. In this paper I will try to depict these three steps, to trace the time for different changes, and to explain why these changes occurred.

#### Voluntary Domestic Service to Soldiers in Voluntary Officers' Training

In 1901, the army reserve, which was the older group in the conscript army, was transformed into a Home Guard. But it was an organization on paper only because trained officers were not provided. Instead, persons within the Home Guard without officers' training were selected as commanders. Because these people were worried about their ability to act as commanders, the idea of voluntary officers' training was born, and the training started in local areas. In 1912, when international tension began to increase, a national organization of regional associations was founded for the purpose of voluntary officers' training.<sup>4</sup>

In 1914, the government gave this organization financial support, but the grant was not sufficient. Individual contributions had to be added. After World War I, when the myth of the League of Nations as a guarantor of eternal peace had become common, the Swedish government decided in 1921 to drop the grant. The result for the Home Guard was financial difficulties that could not be completely remedied by individual contributions and national fundraising.

It was against this background that the Swedish women's organization for the support of the voluntary training of officers was founded in 1924. In

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<sup>4</sup>Lindström, G. Bakgrunden, Svensk Lottarörelse 1924-49. Stockholm: Riks förbundet Sveriges Lottakårer, 1949, p. 8.



1925, this new organization was recognized by the government and given a small grant. This recognition contributed to a rapid growth of local associations, and a new popular movement was born.<sup>5</sup>

The idea for this movement came from Finland. During the Finnish Civil War in 1918, some women started to aid their men in the defense corps by carrying weapons, food, and other supplies. In 1918, several female committees were founded in Nyland in southwest Finland. They organized themselves into associations called Lotta Svärd. By 1920, every district in Nyland had its own Lotta Svärd association.<sup>6</sup>

Lotta Svärd was a soldier's widow and a sutler in the Finnish war in 1808-09 when Sweden lost Finland to Russia. She is commemorated in a famous poem by the Finnish-Swedish poet Ludvig Runeberg. She gave the soldiers not only material aid but also moral support. Lotta Svärd became a symbol for the Finnish women in their support of their fighting men.

Lotta Svärd also became a symbol for the Swedish women in their support of the voluntary officers' training. Inspired by their Finnish sisters, some Swedish women founded a similar association in Stockholm in 1924. Soon the Lotta movement spread to a number of other places.

The Lotta women supported the soldiers in three main areas. They started out by giving financial support to voluntary officers' training. First, through the years, the Lotta women raised a substantial amount of money, but they did much more than that. Second, the Lotta women, by spirit and service, gave moral support to the men. Their organization became an important instrument for the formation of public opinion and the dissemination of information about defense matters, particularly among women. Third, the women started to serve coffee and hot food to the soldiers in the training fields and camps. They continued by training in the use of military field kitchens and cooking for the men on military exercises and in training courses. Soon cooking for the soldiers and officers in training became the most important task for the Lotta women. The soldiers and officers were most grateful not to have to peel the potatoes, cook the food, and wash the dishes when they returned tired from their field training. Later the Lotta associations began courses in nursing, mending, and other domestic services in order to serve the soldiers in these areas.

Thus the Swedish women began their integration in the military service by leaving their kitchens, homes, and families and moving into the training fields and military camps to provide the soldiers and officers, who often were their husbands, fathers, or brothers, with traditional domestic services.

The Lotta women did not receive military training in the use of weapons. But on exercises they performed the same cooking duties as the military male cooks. They were given a common dress and were trained in making formation in line and in marching in parade; however, they were not a military reserve

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<sup>5</sup>Lindström, G. (see note 4), p. 9.

<sup>6</sup>Skyddskårister och lottor i svenska Nyland. Helsingfors: Nylands södra skyddskårsdistrikt, 1944, p. 287.

and did not belong to the Home Guard. The Lotta women were a kind of voluntary military personnel. There was and is no conscription of women in Sweden.

By 1929, 13,041 women were members of the Lotta movement, which was organized in 99 local associations. In 1939, 26,223 members belonged to 169 local associations. During this period, the members were recruited mainly among middle class and upper class women.

#### Voluntary Substitutes for Soldiers in the Regular Defense Forces

During World War II, Sweden maintained extensive military preparedness in order to preserve its neutrality. Many more Swedish women became involved in activities related to military service and in more fields than before. New organizations of women serving the defense forces in various ways were founded, and the women became more closely related to the forces.

While the old activities with field kitchens continued to be of great importance, women began to replace soldiers in several functions within the forces. Also, in civilian life women replaced men who were called up for military service. Thus, many Swedish women voluntarily became substitutes for men, both in military and civilian occupations. They proved they could perform well in many jobs that earlier had been reserved for men. This period, therefore, was important for Swedish women in the development of equality between the sexes both in civil life and in the forces.

Sweden's Lotta Corps increased its membership more than four times during the war: from 26,223 members in 169 local associations in 1939 to about 110,000 in 500 associations in 1943. The organization mainly served the army, but during the war, a number of sister organizations developed. The Marine Lotta Corps was established in 1939,<sup>7</sup> the Air Force Lotta Corps was founded in 1943,<sup>8</sup> and the Home Guard Lotta Corps was founded in 1940.<sup>9</sup> Many of the women serving the Home Guard were working or farming class people, and during the war the other Lotta Corps began to recruit members not only from the middle or upper classes but also from the working and farming classes. In 1942-43, Sweden's Lotta Corps separated from the Voluntary Officers' Training Organization and became an independent national organization. It changed its name to the National Organization of Sweden's Lotta Corps (Riksförbundet Sveriges Lottakårer).<sup>10</sup>

The women in the Lotta Corps were trained in many more fields than before. Besides the traditional kitchen service, mending, and nursing, many new fields were opened for women. Some of these fields, such as office work and telephone service, were similar to women's civilian jobs, but some fields were quite new. These included air defense service, which involved looking for hostile

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<sup>7</sup>Lindström, G. (see note 4), p. 45.

<sup>8</sup>Björkman, S. M. H:son (Ed.). Sveriges kvinnliga beredskap. Stockholm: Spectator, 1942, p. 40; Lindström, G. (see note 4), p. 54.

<sup>9</sup>Lindström, G. (see note 4), p. 38.

<sup>10</sup>Lindström, G. (see note 4), pp. 43-44.

airplanes and coordinating the reports in central places, communication and signal service in the field, service in the tactical and air defense control system to direct airplanes in fights, the marine defense control system to direct military ships in fights, and equipment service. In all these services, the women replaced male soldiers, who were then free for other military duties. In many of these services, the women had no experience from their civilian lives but had to be trained within the defense forces.<sup>11</sup>

Many of the women in the Lotta Corps were more closely connected with the defense forces through contracts. A system was organized in which the Lotta woman could sign either an A or a B contract. The Lotta woman with an A contract bound herself for permanent service in the defense forces during wartime: She signed a contract with a military authority and was drafted. The Lotta woman with a B contract bound herself for temporary defense work and signed a contract with her own Lotta Corps. The contracts were for 4 years; for Lotta women with an A contract they extended to 55 years of age, and for those with a B contract they extended up to 65 years of age. About 20% of the Lotta women had A contracts, and about 25% had B contracts. Still, they did not belong to the military authority or to any Home Guard; they were members of a voluntary female defense organization.

There were other female defense organizations of importance. One is Sweden's National Federation of Female Motorcar Corps, founded during the war. The members are trained in transport and motorcar service.<sup>12</sup> The women in this voluntary organization served as drivers in the defense forces, thereby releasing a number of soldiers for other military duties.

Another female defense organization is the Swedish Blue Star, the main purpose of which is animal care and animal medical care during war and peace. It was originally founded in 1917 as an offshoot of the international "Étoile Rouge," founded in Geneva in 1914. The Swedish organization changed its name from the Swedish Red Star to the Swedish Blue Star in 1941. During the war-preparedness period, many star sisters served in the defense forces in horse medical care and dog care.<sup>13</sup>

Many women in other female organizations served both in civilian and military work to replace men for duties in the defense forces. During the war-preparedness period, Swedish women were able to demonstrate their abilities in many new occupations in industry, transport, farming, and the defense forces; these positions earlier had been filled or dominated by men. They proved to be very good in these new occupations, much better than expected. The Lotta women took care of the telephone service much better than did the male operators, and they were also very ambitious. Many women went straight from their office work in the daytime to serve for several hours at night in the underground telephone centrals. Because of the shortage of trained nurses, the Lotta women were asked to fill in. In spite of short training, they performed very well.

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<sup>11</sup>Lindström, G. (see note 4), pp. 55-59, Militär lottautbildning.

<sup>12</sup>Björkman, S. M. (see note 8), p. 99.

<sup>13</sup>Björkman, S. M. (see note 8), pp. 68-69.

As women were utilized as substitutes for men in military occupations, they became much more integrated than earlier defense forces. Still, the women belonged to voluntary organizations; they were not a part of the Home Guard. They did not learn to fire guns, although there were female associations for weapons training. The government did not consider militarizing the women serving the defense forces, not even those who had signed an A contract.

These female defense organizations cannot be compared with other volunteer occupations for women of the leisure class. In the women's military associations, the work was much harder and more training was needed. In the beginning, the women were mainly recruited from the middle and upper classes, but during the war the recruiting was broadened to include women from the working and farming classes. During the war, about 150,000 women were utilized in the defense forces, which should be compared to the total number of soldiers in the defense forces, about 700,000.

The use of women in the Swedish defense forces during World War II was also greatly influenced by the way in which some nations in war utilized women for defense purposes, such as Great Britain and the United States.<sup>14</sup>

#### Employment of Women in the Defense Forces To Do the Same Jobs as Men

The third step in the development toward the integration of women in the Swedish defense forces started in the 1970s. It meant that women would no longer serve the forces only in domestic service or as substitutes for male soldiers but would, in some instances, do the same jobs as men.

The discussion about the role of women in the defense forces had intensified in the 1960s in connection with the problem of female compulsory military service. Three factors precipitated this discussion of women's role in the defense forces. First, the movement toward equality called for women to fulfill the same defense duty as men. This movement also called for reforms to counteract the division of men and women in different professional categories. Second, to forward the equality between the sexes, the special laws protecting women were removed. These laws had led to recruiting based on sex instead of individual qualifications and thus had become a barrier to women's opportunities for advancement. Third, women are employed as military personnel in the armed forces of other countries. The problem of affording enhanced tasks in the defense forces, therefore, became an issue of increased importance.

The starting point was the proposal by the chief of the air force in March 1969 asking permission to employ women in military and civil-military positions within the air force. There were two reasons for this proposal. One was the shortage within the air force of employed personnel, although not of conscripts. This shortage occurred because of the unpopularity of military jobs in the late 1960s as a result of the antisocial and antimilitary attitudes that developed during the Vietnam War, the student protests, and the strong

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<sup>14</sup> The W.A.A.F. in action. London: A & C Black, 1944. Treadwell, M. E. The Women's Army Corps. Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1954. Goldman, N. L. The utilization of women in combat: The armed forces of Great Britain, World War I and World War II. Working draft, October 13, 1978.

left-wing trend. The other reason was that equality between the sexes had become a more prominent issue than earlier. To get a broader and better foundation for recruiting, the air force chief wanted to give men and women a chance to compete on equal terms for those officers' positions that were considered fit for women. The chief, therefore, suggested that all officers' positions that did not involve fighting be opened to women, but women could not be pilots with fighting tasks in wartime or heads of fighting ground forces.<sup>15</sup>

The proposal was referred for consideration to various military and civil authorities, most of whom were positive toward the principal issue of employment of women in military positions. It was also discussed in the Parliament, which referred the issue to the Committee for Compulsory Military Service of 1972. In its report of 1973, the committee stressed the importance of equal training or education for men and women in military professions. It recommended a review of the current conditions and instructions for recruiting and training women in military and civil-military positions.

This report was also referred to military and civil authorities for consideration. In 1975, the Parliament once more dealt with the problem. The result was that the government, in March 1975, appointed a special committee on women in the defense forces to work toward enabling women to be employed in the defense forces. This committee is called "Beredningen för det fortsatta arbetet om kvinnan i försvaret" (drafting committee for further work concerning women in the defense forces).

The report of the committee was delivered in 1977. It contained recommendations about basic principles for employment of women as officers, detailed suggestions for employment of women as officers within the air force and certain personnel corps common to the defense forces (that is, medical, administrative, and messing functions), suggestions for employment of women in fiscal and catering work, for practice service, for employment in the Emergency Troops of United Nations, and for recruiting women to the industrial defense service of the Home Guard. The issue of female compulsory military service was not dealt with by the committee. There was no need for so many new soldiers in Sweden's army organization, and these costs could not be covered by the allowance assigned to the Defense Department by the Parliament.

Nor did the committee deal with the issue of employing women in fighting positions, a difficult problem because there is sometimes no clear-cut difference between fighting and nonfighting positions. Since no other Western industrial country has opened fighting positions to women, many people did not think Sweden should do it. To accept women as officers but not in fighting positions is, in my opinion, illogical and unsatisfactory. But the development should be considered as a step-by-step process toward a long-range goal.

The principal recommendation by the committee is that women be placed under the general orders and the basic demands that are in force for men. They should be integrated into the peace and war organization as chiefs, professionals, and instructors in a lifetime profession in the same way as men. Those who are going to be employed as regular officers should pass admissions

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<sup>15</sup> Statens offentliga utredningar (SOU) 1977:26. Kvinnan och försvarets yrken. Stockholm: Liber Förlag, 1977, pp. 12-13.

tests, basic training equivalent to the training for compulsory military training, and regular officers' schools. Women who have passed the regular officers' training must be able to be used as instructors and leaders of large units. Demands that are not necessary and that are unfair to women should be eliminated.

When working to improve women's opportunities to develop within the defense forces, one must start from the principle of equality laid down by the government and the Parliament about everybody's right to work and personal development. One does not aim at employing a certain number of women. Rather, women and men will compete on equal terms for those positions that are suitable for both. The aim must not be to employ women in order to release men for other tasks; women should not be considered as manpower in reserve. The aim is not to increase the number of positions but to keep the employment of women within the financial frame of the defense forces.

Military service could not be said to be particularly popular among women, and the right to serve in the military has not been sought by many women. However, serving as officers in the defense forces is a logical result of the work to increase equality between the sexes.

In order to get the public's view of women in the defense forces, the Swedish Board of Psychological Defense Planning (Beredskapsnämnden för psykologiskt försvar) took an opinion poll in the fall of 1976. When asked how important employment of women in the defense forces was to increasing equality between sexes, 58% (men 60%, women 56%) considered it important. The positive attitude was most common (71%) in the youngest age group, 18 to 24 years of age. When asked if they thought that certain positions for officers could be opened to women, 62% (men 60%, women 64%) said yes. Approximately 80% (men 80%, women 81%) were of the opinion that male and female officers should have the same promotion system, and 79% (men 75%, women 82%) believed that women as officers should be in command of both men and women. Only 40% (men 36%, women 44%) were of the opinion that female officers also should hold fighting positions; however, 49% (men 54%, women 43%) did not agree. On these last two issues, women were positive to a larger extent than men, but otherwise there was no significant difference between men and women. This opinion poll indicates that the committee's suggestions are in line with existing opinion about female roles in the military today. Thus, opportunities seem to exist to institute changes in women's roles.<sup>16</sup>

The committee studied different positions within the air force and found that some of these could be considered fit for women. All positions as air force technicians and master mechanics are recommended to be opened for women. Positions as officers of tactical and air defense control systems and of communications services are also considered suitable for women, if they do not require pilot training and experience. Positions as air traffic control leaders, aeronautical engineers, and meteorologists are also suggested for women. Aeronautical engineers are trained along two different lines, the air line and the ground line. The aeromedical factors that should be considered on the air line are not yet clear enough for a judgment about positions as aeronautical

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<sup>16</sup> Törnqvist, K. Kvinnor och försvaret. Stockholm: Beredskapsnämnden för psykologiskt försvar, 1977.

engineers on the air line. The positions also include pilot training, which is another hindrance.

Positions as troop instructors and as pilots with fighting tasks are at present not considered suitable for women. In reaching the decision about the pilot position, not only aeromedical reasons but also ergonomical problems were considered. Among other things, the seat in the cabin is constructed to suit only men.

On the basis of this report, the Parliament in the fall of 1978 decided that in 1980 opportunities should be opened for women to become regular officers within the air force. In order to give information to young women interested in these professions, the army and the air force arranged summer training camps in 1979. February 4, 1980 was a notable day in the history of the Swedish defense forces because the first women officers' candidates enrolled for admission tests at the enlistment center in Solna outside Stockholm. Eighty girls started an enrollment test that took 3 days. Out of these 80 girls, 25 to 30 were to be admitted. It is exactly the same test the boys must undergo. The girls will compete with the boys on the same terms for the 2-year officers' course at the officers' school. They will first have to take a basic training course for 1 year at the air force regiment in Uppsala. The first such course started in June 1980.

This development will continue. The government gave, in spring 1978, new instructions to the committee for further work. The starting point for stage two is that all officers' positions within the army and the navy in the long run should be opened to women. Individual fitness should be the only criterion for selecting and recruiting regular officers.<sup>17</sup>

#### Why Did This Development Happen?

What are the causes for these changes? There are, of course, many. There are sometimes certain events that instigate activities in the military field. In the first step, there were World War I, the War of Independence in Finland, and the change of government policy about grants to voluntary military training. In the second step, there was World War II. In the third step, there was no such dramatic event relating directly to Sweden, but the Vietnam War played a role.

Then there is the general social change from 1920 to 1980. The changing role of women in the defense forces is in a certain sense a mirror of that social change. As society changed, so the role of women in home and society changed. The emancipation of women continued at a slow but steady pace as more women received better education. Many women entered the labor market and invaded traditionally male trades and professions. Gradually they received the same rights as men in society and in the labor market, and the efforts toward equality between sexes became stronger and stronger.

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<sup>17</sup> Ekman, K. Beredningen Kvinnan i Försvaret (BKF). Bilkårlisten, June 1979, Nr 2, p. 15.

At the same time, war changed the character of the military technique, and the military professions changed accordingly. In many military jobs, strong physical capability was no longer needed; however, more educational, technical, and professional skills were. And in many cases, military defense could be carried out at a distance with the aid of technical gadgets and communication aids.

Then there were examples from other countries where women already were utilized in military professions. Being a country in the forefront of development, Sweden could not neglect the experiences of other countries in their use of women in defense forces. What triggered the development of female manpower in the end was the shortage of personnel in the air force.

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#### Some Notes on the Sources

The sources used for this paper may be classified into three groups with regard to reliability and limitations. In the first category are sources of scientific value with great reliability. Three sources can be placed in this group:



- Goldman, N. L. The utilization of women in combat: The armed forces of Great Britain. World War I and World War II.
- Treadwell, M. E. The Women's Army Corps.
- Törnqvist, K. Kvinnor i försvaret.

In the second category we place governmental reports and reports from governmental investigations. These sources have good reliability, but they are not scientific reports. One limitation is that these reports do not give references to their sources in footnotes. In this group we place the following sources:

- Statens offentliga utredningar (SOU) 1977:26. Kvinnan och försvarets yrken.
- Ekman, K. Beredningen Kvinnan i Försvaret (BKF).

In the third category we place the rest of the sources. These are mainly written by people who are not scientists, but who have worked in the different organizations in responsible positions for a long time and therefore know the structure, work, and development of the organizations very well. The reliability of these sources, therefore, is not bad, but there are certain limitations. Even though their articles often are built on reports of proceedings and other written material, they are in part also founded on memories and impressions.

DANISH WOMEN IN MILITARY UNITS

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Inter-University Seminar

on

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## APPENDIX F

### DANISH WOMEN IN MILITARY UNITS

#### Abstract

The utilization of women in the Danish armed forces reflects the trends in most NATO countries toward greater use of women and toward a volunteer rather than a conscript force. However, the historical background in Denmark is different from that of the English-speaking NATO nations and the Netherlands and France in that Denmark did not use women during World War II.

Historically, the Danish armed forces have been composed of male conscripts; women have not been subject to conscription. A role for women in the Danish forces began in World War II when women were active in the resistance movement; since then, the role of women has grown. In 1946, they served in the newly formed Home Guard Associations, which in 1948 were reestablished as the official Home Guard Corps under the Department of Defense. Since that time, the duties of the women members of the Home Guard have become progressively more military.

Women were first enlisted in the regular Danish armed forces in 1972, but women's utilization has been restricted because they cannot, by law, be assigned to units that have combat as their primary task.

The rather modest number of women in the armed forces--440, or 1.5%--is not a sufficient picture of the number of women in military organizations in general. To this number should be added the Ground Observer Corps of 1,800 women and the 2,770 women designated to the armed forces from the Women's Home Guard. This designation of women from the Home Guard helps to meet the needs of the armed forces for personnel. The figures show not only that the armed forces undoubtedly could utilize more women, but also that the Women's Home Guard constitutes an important base of resources for the armed forces. This recruitment procedure can be explained by the severe cutback in the armed forces budget combined with the greater willingness of political leaders to support the Home Guard. These two facts seem to be of greater importance to the number of women in the armed forces in Denmark than the type of armed force, all-volunteer or enlistment; or the type of party system, one party or multiparty.

Generally, women are employed in the armed forces of a country for two reasons: Either they are the only labor force available, a reason of quantity; or they are the best personnel available, a reason of quality. However, it is the author's opinion that these reasons are not sufficient to explain the employment of women in the Danish armed forces. This paper concludes that the introduction of women soldiers in Denmark in 1972 was the result of forces outside the military.

## Introduction

The utilization of women in the Danish armed forces reflects the trends in most NATO countries toward greater use of women and toward a volunteer rather than a conscript force. However, the historical background in Denmark is different from that of the English-speaking NATO nations and the Netherlands and France in that Denmark did not use women during World War II.

Historically, the Danish armed forces have been composed of male conscripts; women have not been subject to conscription. A role for women in the Danish forces began in World War II when women were active in the resistance movement; since then, the role of women has grown.<sup>1</sup> In 1946, Home Guard Associations, composed of men and women, were founded as private, volunteer organizations. In 1948, these private organizations were disbanded and reorganized as the established, official Home Guard Corps under the Department of Defense. Since that time, the duties of the women members of the Home Guard have become progressively more military.

Women were first enlisted in the regular Danish armed forces in 1972; Denmark was the first NATO country of those that did not have women in their military during World War II to do so. In the following year, a decision was made to have the standing army composed entirely of volunteers. The standing force was to be largely devoted to combat assignments, a fact that has restricted the utilization of women, since women cannot, by law, be assigned to units that have combat as their primary task. Compulsory national service was retained for men only, but the term of service was reduced to only 9 months. After completion of their compulsory service, the conscripts entered the mobilization force, which had few women, in part because of its origin.

## The Resistance Movement

Women played an active part in the Danish resistance movement.<sup>2</sup> They were involved in illegal information activity, such as publishing and distributing illegal pamphlets and books; in sabotage activities; in receiving weapons dropped by the British Royal Air Force (RAF); in performing courier services;<sup>3</sup> and in providing transportation, which helped more than 6,000 Jews to escape. The only resistance activity in which women were not involved was membership in military

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<sup>1</sup>The increased utilization of women in Denmark is found in other countries; see Goldman, N. Women in NATO and armed forces. Military Review, 1974, 72-82; Goldman, N. The utilization of women in the armed forces of industrialized nations. Sociological Symposium, Spring 1977, 1-23; and Klick, J. A. Utilization of women in the NATO Alliance. Armed Forces and Society, 1978, 4, 673-678.

<sup>2</sup>Besaettelsens Hven Hvad Hvor. Kobenhavn: Politikens-Forlag, 1966, p. 368.

<sup>3</sup>Barfoed, J. Personal communication, July 17, 1979. As manager of Freedom Museum, Kobenhavn, Barfoed stressed the courier service of the women as an important contribution.

groups. Women seldom headed a resistance group; they served as secretaries or couriers for resistance leaders.<sup>4</sup>

Exact figures for the number of persons, men or women, in the Danish underground force are unknown, because the resistance movement was illegal.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, it is possible to estimate the number of women in the military units of the resistance movement. The total number of active freedom fighters has been suggested to be 10,000.<sup>6</sup> From this total number, two methods can be used to estimate the number of women. First, I counted the number of Danish men and women registered in the indexes of books on the resistance movement.<sup>7</sup> According to this procedure, the resistance movement consisted of between 1% and 7% women. Second, I compared female to male prisoners.<sup>8</sup> Of 6,000 Danes deported to German KZ camps and prisons, 60 were women interned at Ravensbrück and Stutthof. In the Danish KZ camp at Froslev, 5,000 persons were prisoners, of whom about 150 were women.<sup>9</sup> Accordingly, 10% of the deported Danes and 3% of those interned were women. If these figures reflect the numbers of women in the resistance movement, between 100 and 700 women were active. It must be admitted that more than half of the number of women were interned for reasons other than being active resistance partisans, but this is also true of the male prisoners.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>4</sup>For an example of a local resistance movement leader, see Fleron, K. Kvinder i modstandskampen [Women in the resistance movement] (2nd ed.), Odense: Sirius, Risskov, 1964, pp. 56-71; 80-86. See also Jacobsen, F. I Danmarks Frihedsråd, bd I og II. Kobenhavn: Gyldendal, 1975, pp. 115; 219; Thomas, J. O. The giant-killers: The Danish resistance movement 1940-45. London: Michael Joseph, 1975, pp. 70-80.

<sup>5</sup>For further literature on the recruitment of persons into the resistance movement, see Dickmeiss, O. En redegørelse for modstandsorganisationen "Holger Danske" s opståen, malsaetning og udvikling indtil maj 1945. Historisk Institute, Kovenhavns Universitet, request no. 123; Møller, L. En kritisk undersøgelse af rekrutteringen til den aktive modstand mod den tyske besaettelsoeg det dansk-tyske samarbejde 1940-45, med saerligt henblik på at belyse sammenhaengen mellem den almene okonomisk/sociale udvikling og rekrutteringen, 1976. Kobenhavn: Institut for Historie og Samfundsvidenskab, Odense Universitet, request no. 5; and Petersen, I. D. Modeliten, Traek af den danske modstandsbevaegelses opstaen og udvikling 1940-45, Institute of the Social Sciences, University of Copenhagen, Laerebog 2, 1978.

<sup>6</sup>See note 3.

<sup>7</sup>Besaettelsens Hven Hvad Hvor (see note 2), pp. 385-476, counts 152 Danes, of whom 2 were women; the index, pp. 480-488, names 406 Danes, including 6 women. See also Thomas, J. O. (see note 4); its index lists 367 men and 28 women or 6.6%.

<sup>8</sup>Besaettelsens (see note 2), p. 275; 6,000 Danes were deported, 600 died; p. 271, 35 women were in Ravensbrück, 7 at Stutthof.

<sup>9</sup>Fleron (see note 4), p. 151. Between 50 and 150 women were at Froslev.

<sup>10</sup>Fleron, K. Kvinder i Frøslev. In Magård, J. Fanger i Frøslev 1944-45 (Kobenhavn: Nationalmuseet, 1974), p. 171. Fleron, K. (see note 4), p. 167; "According to information in October 1945, 26 Danish women died in German concentration camps and prisons. Of 20 women the Office for Special Affairs (continued)

## The Women's Home Guard

The Danish Home Guard is composed of men and women, who are organized separately. It is a voluntary, civilian organization, and the training and activities of the members are conducted on weekends and in the evenings.

The foundations of the Women's Home Guard were laid in 1946 with the establishment of the private, volunteer Women's Home Guard Associations, the backbone of which were members of the resistance movement and women who had fled to Sweden and organized themselves in the Danish Brigade. In 1948, the private male and female Home Guard Associations were dissolved by the Home Guard Act, which stated that all private defense contributions should be organized in the established official Home Guard Corps under the Department of Defense. The Women's Home Guard is organized into three sections: the Women's Army Home Guard, Danmarks Lottekorps (DLK) (named "Lotte" pursuant to a Scandinavian tradition); the Women's Naval Home Guard, Kvindeligt Marinekorps (KMK); and the Women's Air Force Home Guard, Kvindeligt Flyvekorps (KFK).

The number of women enlisted in the Home Guard has fluctuated over time. Following its foundation in 1949, the number of women enrolled increased, went through a period of little or no change, and then, in the latter part of the last decade, began to increase again (Table 1).

Table 1  
The Number of Women and Men in the Home Guard

	1957	1967	1979
Men	55,100	60,700	62,200 <sup>a</sup>
Women	8,400	8,840	10,700
Total	63,500	69,540	72,900
Women (%)	15	14	17

<sup>a</sup>This figure includes the 1,500 women of the Ground Observer Corps as of January 1, 1980.

Note. Elaborated from Wissum, S., & Borup-Nielsen, S., Level of manpower. The Danish Home Guard. Paper, 1975; Heegaard-Poulsen, P. A. Hjemmeværnet [The Home Guard], København, 1978; and an interview with Colonel Gurli Vidø, the Women's Navy Home Guard Corps; and Colonel Bodil Westerholm, the Women's Army Home Guard Corps, January 1980.

<sup>10</sup>(continued) does miss information." Eighteen women of the resistance movement on "active duty" were interviewed in 1945 shortly after the German surrender. These figures compared give a female death rate of about 7%.

The percentage of female officers to female enlisted personnel and NCOs differs for each of the three services. The officer rate of the Women's Army Home Guard is decreasing, from 7% in 1957 to 3% in 1979, a reduction of more than 50%. The Women's Navy Home Guard has experienced an even more drastic reduction in percentage of officers, from 10% in 1957 to 3% in 1979. This reduction resulted from a reorganization of these two services to conform to the organizational pattern of the male Home Guard Corps. The percentage of officers in the Women's Air Force Home Guard has remained fairly constant, 10% in 1957, 11% in 1967, and 12% in 1979 (see Table 2). The rate for the male Home Guard units has been constant at 6%.

Members of the Women's Home Guard may be designated to the armed forces. This designation of women helps to meet the needs of the armed forces for personnel. The Women's Home Guard constitutes an important base of resources for the armed forces. Without this system of designation from the Home Guard Corps, the regular Danish forces would need to enlist many more women. Members of the Women's Home Guard decide for themselves whether to serve in the Home Guard or to be designated to the armed forces. This recruitment procedure cuts down on the armed forces budget, an important consideration given the reluctance to increase the budget for the armed forces. The Home Guard enjoys substantial support from political leaders who are willing to finance the increased volunteer accessions to the guard.

The principles of performance of women in the Women's Home Guard are stated in the "Home Guard Regulations nr. 270-10, March 1978" and correspond to the female functions in the armed forces. Within this framework, the functions of women designated from the Home Guard to the armed forces are determined by the armed forces unit commander (see Table 3).

The designation of members of the Women's Home Guard to the armed forces has resulted in the higher officer rate of the Women's Air Force Home Guard: Air Force officers have evaluated the importance of the functions of the Women's Air Force Home Guard Corps so highly that their positions have been classified as equivalent to officer rank.

The overall trend has been for the three Women's Home Guard Corps to become oriented more toward military tasks. This evaluation can be supported by the high designation rate, especially for the Women's Air Force Home Guard. Moreover, it can be found in the increased integration of the Women's Army and Navy Home Guards with the male Home Guard and consequently with more direct military tasks. Furthermore, the proclaimed aims of the Women's Army Home Guard have changed. In 1946, three functions were stated: first, social and humanitarian work; second, assistance in emergency and catastrophic situations; and third, military support to the armed forces. The Civil Defense Act of 1949 excluded the civil emergency assistance function, and the social and humanitarian efforts have decreased over time, leaving military support to the armed forces as the central task.<sup>11</sup> In 1951, the minister of defense became the commander of the Home Guard.

On the other hand, the integration of the Women's Army and Navy Home Guards with the male Home Guard pattern reduced the actual number of female

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<sup>11</sup> DLK, "Tjen dit land," Jubilaeumsudgave 1946-1956, pp. 8, 13.

officers with military assignments since the number of officer slots was reduced. Moreover, the number of Women's Army Home Guard personnel designated to the armed forces has been reduced drastically, because the army is not organized operationally toward combat roles, which are closed to women. This means fewer educational and designational possibilities.

Table 2  
The Number of Women in the Women's Home Guard

	DLK (Army)	KMK (Navy)	KFK (Air Force)	Ground Observer Corps	Total
<u>1957</u>					
Enlisted (A)	5,420	750	695		6,865
NCO (B)	833	73	52		960
Officer (C)	437	84	69		580
Officer rate (%) (C/(A + B))	7	10	10		(8,405)
<u>1967</u>					
Enlisted (D)	5,456	839	1,069		7,364
NCO (E)	783	85	161		929
Officer (F)	347	61	141		549
Officer rate (%) (F/(D + E))	5	6	11		(8,840)
<u>1979</u>					
Enlisted (G)	6,400	1,250	1,250	(1,500)	8,900
NCO <sup>a</sup> (H)	850	200	250		1,300
Officer <sup>a</sup> (K)	250	50	200		500
Officer rate (%) (K/(G + H))	3	3	12		(10,700)
Designation rate (L) (%)	15	50	95		

Note. Elaborated from Wissum, S., & Borup-Nielsen, S., Level of manpower. The Danish Home Guard. Paper, 1975.

<sup>a</sup>The majority of officers and NCOs in the Home Guard are men and women holding military ranks in addition to their civilian jobs. For instance, of the 500 female officers in 1979, only about 30 had full-time employment in the Home Guard as officers.



Table 3

## Types of Functions for Women in the Armed Forces and the Women's Home Guard

	1946 Women's Home Guard			1972 The Armed Forces		
	Army	Navy	Air Force	Army	Navy	Air Force
Military production (radio equipment)	X	X				
Adm. staff communication	X	X	X	X	X	X
Medicine, medical care, nursery	X	X	X		X	
NBC-Service <sup>a</sup>	X	X	X			
Catering	X	X	X			
Education, weapon instructors				X	X	X
Transport	X	X	X	X		
Radiotelephony, teleprinter			X	X	X	
Control of ship-ping, airplanes (weather service)		X	X	X	X	X
Logistic		X				X

<sup>a</sup>Nuclear, biological, and chemical warfare service.

Note. Based on Braemer, J., An introduction to enlisted women in the Danish armed forces. Paper presented at the 13th International Symposium of Applied Psychology, Lahr, Germany, April 1977.

#### Women in the Armed Forces

The legislative basis for employing women in the armed forces is an act concerning military personnel of the armed forces that was passed in 1962 and renewed by the act of 1969. This legislative provision was not exploited until 1971, when the Department of Defense laid down further regulations governing the enlistment and employment of women in the armed forces. Table 4 shows the growth in the number of women in the Danish armed forces. Related to the total strength of the regular forces, women were 1.4% in 1972 and 1.5% in 1979.

Table 4

## Development in the Number of Women in Military Units in the Armed Forces

	Army	Air Force	Navy	Total
<u>Oct. 1972-74</u>				
Enlisted	94	94	25	313
NCO	12	1	0	13
Officer <sup>a</sup>	0	0	0	0
<u>April 1977</u>				
Enlisted	276	118	30	424
NCO	28	7	5	40
Officer <sup>a</sup>	0	0	0	0
<u>May 1979<sup>b</sup></u>				
Enlisted	176	102	26	404
NCO	42	8	3	53
Officer: B <sup>c</sup>	6	2	1	9
A	4	1	1	6

<sup>a</sup>Including officer cadets.

<sup>b</sup>Excluding professional volunteers, named "konstabler."

<sup>c</sup>A-branch officers have academic training, including the ranks from first lieutenant to general/admiral. B-branch officers have a shorter training and have tasks related specifically to the company. They have ranks from second lieutenant to major.

As a main principle, enlisted women have the same obligations and conditions as corresponding male personnel. This principle applies to enlistment education, employment, training, payment, and so on. There are, however, certain limitations to this principle explained in part by the fact that women, unlike men, are not subject to compulsory national service or, as conscientious objectors, to service in the unarmed civil defense. As a consequence, the Department of Defense has applied to the Equal Position Council for a dispensation from the Equal Treatment Act passed in 1978 in order to maintain the status quo.<sup>12</sup> The Equal Position Council, waiting for further information, has not made a decision.

<sup>12</sup>The "Act of Equal Treatment of Men and Women Regarding Their Occupation" was passed in 1978. A short introduction to the act and its implications was delivered by Thorbal, K. Juristen, July 1, 1979, pp. 303-397, together with a critique of the act for encouraging legalized hypocrisy, given by Carlsen, H. G. Juristen, pp. 308-311.

In Denmark, the armed forces do not classify jobs in the same way as do the U.S. armed forces. In principle, all jobs are open to men and women on an equal basis according to the "Law nr 174 of May 16, 1962," which was renewed in 1971. The only restriction is that women will normally not serve in military units with specific combat tasks, or, formulated more officially, "Female military personnel will not be used in positions which imply the possibility of direct utilization in combat activities."<sup>13</sup>

In practice, two modifications can be noticed. Women can be assigned to military units that perform mainly combat tasks but not to combat positions. However, women in these situations serve rather closely to the military and combat functions. Another exception to the overall restriction of women from combat functions is an attack upon a unit or barracks with female personnel. In this situation, it is generally accepted that the women would participate directly in the fighting.

A final decision on where, how, and in what numbers women should be functioning in the armed forces has not been made. The years since the introduction of women in 1972 are regarded as a period of gaining experience. Therefore, an exact and specific listing of which jobs women may perform does not exist.<sup>14</sup> The overall principle is, however, that women enlist and are educated and placed--except for the above-mentioned limitations--under the same rules as men (see Table 3).

Female soldiers of the three services--army, navy, and air force--are employed in more varied functions than their female colleagues in the Women's Home Guard. Two main functions seem, however, common for all female personnel of the three services: staff and headquarters service and work as instructors for both men and women. This staff service for the women may, to some extent, cause inconvenience for the job rotation of the men.

Since women have been accepted into the armed forces, they have been promoted successively. In 1972, there were no women officers; in 1979, the number of female officers, including officer-cadets, was 15 (see Table 4). Relatively, there are more female officers to other female enlisted personnel (3%) than male officers to male personnel, draftees, enlistees, and NCOs (1.7%). The higher rate of female officers does not reflect equality in elite positions, however. On the contrary, the highest rank for a female officer is lieutenant.

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<sup>13</sup>PIT 358.286/PIT 19562 from the defense command to my inquiry of July 11, 1979.

<sup>14</sup>See Arbogast, K. A. Women in the armed forces: A rediscovered resource. In J. E. Endicott & R. W. Stafford (Eds.), American defense policy. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977, pp. 489-495. Arbogast discusses women in the armed forces--their relative strength, function, etc. Many former all-male bastions were opened in 1972 for women, and the first female general officer was promoted. See also Assistant Secretary of Defense, Use of women in the military. Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 1977; More jobs now for women in the military, U.S. News and World Report, 197, 51; Women: The recruiter's last resort, Recon, Philadelphia, September 1974; Skirts for 20%. Interview with Congressman Otis Pike, Armed Forces Journal, 110.

The enlistment of women in 1972 was, of course, a shift toward a new employment policy for the armed forces. But as far as I see, the roles and functions of women have not changed greatly. The increasing numbers of women are employed mostly in traditional female positions as clerks and communicators.<sup>15</sup> A real change in the function of women in the armed forces would be their designation to combat units.<sup>16</sup>

#### Attitudes Toward Women in the Armed Forces

Repeated surveys<sup>17</sup> show that three-quarters of the Danish population believe that it is "desirable that we have women in the armed forces."<sup>18</sup> These data were collected in 1976 and 1977, some years after the introduction of female soldiers, but the rate of about 75% has, however, been constant for many years with or without women in the armed forces.

One research study on the attitudes toward female soldiers has been conducted. A representative portion of the personnel in seven military units in the army and the air force in which women were serving were interviewed to illuminate some consequences for leadership and cooperation stemming from women's employment. In November and December 1974, 188 men (111 enlisted, 45 NCOs, and 32 officers) and 71 women (67 enlisted and 4 NCOs) were interviewed. The research showed that no changes in leadership or cooperation rules were needed.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, a key point in explaining different attitudes among military male and female personnel seems to be the type of leadership. Leadership units that indicated good or excellent agreement with the progressive principles of leadership established by the services had a positive attitude toward women's service--they believed that women improved efficiency, created a friendlier climate, and strengthened cooperation. In leadership units that could be characterized only as "fair" in their agreement with progressive principles, women were to some

<sup>15</sup> See Goldman, N. The utilization of women in the military. Annals, March 1973, pp. 107-116. Goldman, N. The changing role of women in the armed forces, American Journal of Sociology, 1973, 78, 92-911; and Lemmon, M. K. The unchanged role of women. (ERIC paper).

<sup>16</sup> See Feld, M. D. Arms and the woman: Some general considerations. Armed Forces and Society, 1978, 4, 557-568; "What is actually being debated (women in combat units) is the symbolism of civic culture and the values through which a state mobilizes its social resources."

<sup>17</sup> For the record, this aspect of attitude is confined only to the armed force and not to the resistance or the Women's Home Guard. In the United States, the literature on attitudes of women in the U.S. armed forces is comprehensive. More than half the annotated works in Hunter, E. J. et al., Women in the military--An annotated bibliography, Armed Forces and Society, 1978, 4, 695-716, are attitude surveys mostly dealing with attitudes toward women in combat, women's efficiency, satisfaction, and career opportunities.

<sup>18</sup> MPT [Military Psychological Service] 1977 Refolkningens holdning til forsvaret. Arbejdspsykologisk studie af militaere enheder med kvindeligt stampersonel. Unpublished paper, Kobenhavn, 1975, pp. 7; 10; & 79.

extent regarded as a hindrance to the practical performance of the work and as a cause of problems of cooperation between enlisted men and women.<sup>20</sup>

This study also examined whether or not women were treated equally with men<sup>21</sup> and reported two findings. On the one hand, according to the observations of the male enlisted group, the officers and the NCOs, consciously or unconsciously, treated women better than men. On the other hand, the normal procedure of assigning persons to do jobs according to their abilities, i.e., you do not give a heavy machinegun to a small person, was not applied to women. The officers seemed to feel that all enlisted women should be able to do the same work.<sup>22</sup> No effect of these attitudes on the part of the officers was reported.

### Conclusion

The rather modest number of women in the armed forces--440, or 1.5%--is not a sufficient picture of the numbers of women in military organizations in general. To this number should be added the Ground Observer Corps of about 1,500 women and the 2,770 women designated to the armed forces from the Women's Home Guard. This designation of women from the Home Guard helps to meet the needs of the armed forces for personnel. The figures show not only that the armed forces undoubtedly could utilize more women, but also that the Women's Home Guard constitutes an important base of resources for the armed forces. This recruitment procedure can be explained by the severe cutback in the armed forces budget combined with the greater willingness of political leaders to support the Home Guard. These two facts seem to be of greater importance to the number of women in the armed forces in Denmark than the type of armed force--all-volunteer or enlistment--or the type of party system--one-party or multiparty--as Goldman has suggested in "Women in the Armed Forces of Industrialized Nations" (see note 1).

Generally, women are employed in the armed forces of a country for two reasons: either they are the only labor force available, a reason of quantity, or they are the best personnel available, a reason of quality. However, I do not think that these reasons are sufficient to explain the employment of women in the Danish armed forces. Regarding quantity, in 1972 Denmark did not have a recruitment problem.<sup>23</sup> On the contrary, there was a sizable surplus of young men available for the armed forces (see Table 5). In addition, Denmark has

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<sup>20</sup> Braemer, J. Enlisted women in the Danish armed forces. Paper. Kobenhavn, 1976, p. 7.

<sup>21</sup> Braemer, J. (see note 19), p. 78.

<sup>22</sup> Braemer, J. (see note 20), p. 12.

<sup>23</sup> Recruitment problems as a major reason for employing women in the armed forces are generally pointed out. See Arbogast, K. A. (see note 14), p. 489; Goldman, N. (see note 15). The changing role of women in the armed forces; and Goldman, N. The utilization of women in the armed forces of industrialized nations. Sociological Symposium, Spring 1977, 1-23.

experienced unemployment, especially among teenagers. The armed forces could also fill their personnel needs at little cost by the designation of women from the Home Guard. Finally, the most fundamental support for this position is the fact that although the armed forces were allowed legally to enlist women as early as 1962, they did not do so until 1971.

Table 5

The Number of Draftees, the Number Fit for Service,  
and the Number of Conscientious Objectors

Year	Total number of actual draftees for national service	Total number of physically fit for national service	Total number of conscientious objectors
1970	24,700	29,100	2,450
1971	27,000	30,000	4,200
1972	19,700	35,000	3,350
1973	18,500	22,600	4,000
1974	18,200	22,400	4,160
1975	11,300	29,700	3,130
1976	10,800	20,100 <sup>a</sup>	1,480

Note. Borup-Nielsen, S. & Wissum, S. Conscription and conscientious objection in Denmark. Paper, July 1977.

<sup>a</sup>This figure includes only the period of January-June 1976.

Nor do I find quality to be a reason for the enlistment of women in the Danish armed forces. Although the inclusion of women results in positive benefits, such as increased efficiency, the fact that women cannot be attached to combat units limits their usefulness to the armed forces. My conclusion is that the introduction of women soldiers in Denmark in 1972 was the result of forces outside the military.

THE UTILIZATION OF WOMEN IN COMBAT: THE CASE OF ISRAEL

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## APPENDIX G

### THE UTILIZATION OF WOMEN IN COMBAT: THE CASE OF ISRAEL

#### Abstract

This report presents a chronological review of the role of women in Israeli defense organizations prior to the War of Independence, during that war, and in the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) after achievement of statehood. It spans a period of approximately 80 years. A historical approach was dictated by the limited but revealing data. On the basis of this study, two major conclusions are reached. First, many individual women performed valiantly in combat during the War of Independence; however, there is no reason to believe that Israeli women--in general--have played a historically unique role, based on principles of sexual equality, in the course of defending their settlements and their country during the prestatehood period, the War of Independence, or the poststatehood period. The Israeli woman has been consistently valued in the irregular units and in the IDF for freeing men for combat; for sharing her feminine, nurturing qualities; for being able to bring a touch of reality and family atmosphere; and for providing relief from the starkness of military life. Second, given the need for Israeli elected officials to be politically sensitive to the electorate, an important portion of which is opposed to women serving in the military, the expansion of women's roles in the IDF in the 1970s to include direct combat support roles constitutes more substantive egalitarian achievement than was demonstrated by those women who participated on an "unplanned basis" in combat under the duress of external threat during the War of Independence.

The uniqueness of Israeli history, coupled with the lack of any available systematic survey data or performance analysis of mixed-sex units during combat periods, makes it impossible to anticipate how U.S. women would perform in mixed-sex combat units based upon the Israeli experience.

#### Introduction

In the general cross-cultural and historical study of women in combat<sup>1</sup> in the twentieth century, Israel occupies a unique position. It is often cited as a country in which women have served in combat and, by implication, can be looked upon as a model or at least as a source of information to assist today's policy makers who are dealing with the question of women's utilization in combat. A more recent viewpoint, however, almost laments the Israeli women as having "regressed" because they no longer serve in combat, serving instead in an auxiliary role to men. It is the contention of this paper that the opposite of both viewpoints is true, i.e., that the combat use of women in Israel's

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<sup>1</sup>In this paper, combat is defined as the direct use of lethal weapons in opposition to an enemy force. The term "offensive action" is sometimes used to indicate active or direct combat to differentiate it from "defensive action." "Combat support" is defined as activities to aid those engaged in combat that could involve the agent in the line of fire. "Indirect combat support" activities do not involve the agent in the line of fire.



twentieth-century history provides little information of direct applicability to the questions posed by today's policy makers, and that women in the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) have not "regressed" but have gradually expanded their role in the recent past.

The extent to which women have functioned in the defense organizations of Israel since the early 1900s has varied with a number of factors: manpower needs, the dominance of tradition in sex role definition, the status of the military organization (irregular or regular), and the method of raising manpower (volunteer or conscription). The Zionist ideal of sexual equality did not have a major impact on the definition of women's roles in the military organizations, although these ideals did have an indirect and long-term influence. After statehood, the opinions of the political electorate had to be considered when defining the roles of women in the military.

This paper will examine the roles of women in the defense organizations of Israel in terms of the factors cited above. It will highlight the social conditions that gave rise to the use of women in combat, and it will trace the conditions that led to the more common case of their being excluded from combat roles. A chronological approach will be taken viewing women's participation in four periods: the prestatehood period, the War of Independence, the early statehood period (the first 20 years), and the contemporary period.

Official statistical data concerning the utilization of women in the defense organizations during these periods are unavailable. The Israel Defense Forces' (IDF) official policy does not permit disclosure of this information.<sup>2</sup> The data given are, therefore, approximate and obtained largely from the published literature.

There also are no published official histories focusing specifically on women in the Israeli military. Our analysis, therefore, draws largely upon information offered in published histories of the Israeli army and the War of Independence, in biographical material, in recently published and unpublished reports and studies on women in the IDF and in Israeli society, in available official documents, and in informal interviews that we have conducted in the United States with a small sample of men and women who have been associated either with the prestatehood, underground paramilitary groups, or with the IDF within the past 10 years. Every effort has been made to weigh the information obtained from these sources for potential bias and accuracy.

#### Women in Jewish Defense Units Prior to the War of Independence

In Europe we planned and dreamed about our future in Zion; there would be no distinction between men and women.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Official correspondence from the IDF spokesman, December 7, 1978, and March 13, 1978.

<sup>3</sup> Malchin, S. The woman worker in Kinncret. Hapoel Hatzair, nos. 11-12, 1913 (Malchin was a leader of the women's movement in the Jewish community of Palestine). In Maimon, A. Women build a land. New York: Herzl Press, 1962, p. 23. The following four paragraphs are also based on Maimon's book, which (continued)

While Orthodox Judaism placed women in traditional female work roles, which stressed their nurturing attributes and taught that a woman's place was in the home, the Zionists who settled in Palestine had an ideology that admitted of an expanded, more equal role for women in the agrarian social structure that they established. Zionism was a partly secular-sectarian movement that stressed sexual equality, especially with regard to work roles. Many women believed that they had the right to labor exactly as men did and that in so doing they would be emancipated; however, neither in production, agriculture, nor defense did they make great strides in achieving this emancipation. The expansion of woman's role followed an arduous and fluctuating path.

The stereotype of Israeli women, as being equal with men, has its roots in this Zionist social ideology, but although some of the women settlers in Palestine did work in "men's production jobs" as laborers and in agriculture, many did not.

The girls who had the opportunity to work in the fields were . . . few and far between, and even within the pioneering, revolutionary labor movement in the Land of Israel women were relegated to their traditional tasks--housekeeping and particularly kitchen work.<sup>4</sup>

Traditional sex role definition was still in evidence even among those settlers who were most committed to the ideology of Zionism.

During the early years of the kibbutzim (circa 1914), women filled traditional jobs for women (service jobs), while men were involved in production jobs. The male pioneers resisted equality in work opportunities, believing women to be less capable of being "productive" in the field. A shortage of work also contributed to a lack of opportunity for women to work in the fields. In the first kibbutz, Degania, women were not even considered full-fledged members. They served as cooks and laundresses for the kibbutz while the men were paid by the Palestine office for their work in production (farming).

During these early years, prior to World War I, the male population was much larger than the female population. This fact helped to perpetuate a traditional division of labor. Unless men were to share in the kitchen and laundry work, all of the women were needed to do these service jobs. For a time, the growth of the female population was great enough to produce an overflow who could work in the fields. Furthermore, as the kibbutz movement developed, men were sometimes assigned to service jobs on a temporary basis.

Although there were women who wanted to implement the egalitarian ideals of Zionism and wanted to work in agricultural or production jobs, in fact the

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<sup>3</sup>(continued) presents an excellent discussion of the women's movement in this community from 1904 to 1954. Although a chief promoter of the working women's movement there, she presents a view, based on academic research as well as personal experience, of their problems and accomplishments. Chapter XV, Fighting women, provides an overview of women's military roles in Israel since 1929 that was especially useful to my research. Maimon immigrated to Palestine in 1912 at the age of 21 (see Who's Who in Israel).

<sup>4</sup>Maimon, A. (see note 3), p. 24.

percentage of women engaged in agriculture or production decreased with time. For example, a study by Garber-Talmon in 1956 of eight kibbutzim in the Ichud Federation shows that in this group the percentage of women so employed decreased from 50% in the early 1920s to 15.2% in 1948, and to 10.4% in 1954. Concurrent with this decrease was an increase in the percentage of women engaged in service jobs. The demand for services increased, in large part because of an increase in the number of children. Child care was considered to be exclusively a woman's task.<sup>5</sup> In short, the division of labor on the kibbutz for the most part followed traditional male-female lines--a trend that became more pronounced as the years passed.

When it came to the matter of armed defense, the traditional values and ideology of the Jewish society clearly prevailed. The first of the defense organizations formed by the Jews in 1909, the Hashomer (literally meaning the guard) was a small organization of paid, full-time, armed guards hired by the Hashomer Association (also called Shomer) to serve as watchmen and to protect the Jewish settlements from Arabs.<sup>6</sup> Although Sepher Hashomer (The Book of Hashomer) contains the names of 24 women among the total of 105 members,<sup>7</sup> these women were members of the Hashomer Association, not guards in the Hashomer. These women members helped to plan the defense system and hire the male guards. Also, many women may have been listed as members because they were related to male members. Mania Schochet, for example, was a "spokesman" for the Hashomer and was the wife of one of the founders of the Hashomer Association.

Despite the fervor of the early Zionist movement, sex role differentiation was prevalent in the pre-World War I period. Both external and internal pressures fostered this differentiation. According to one authority, the Arabs would have considered the Jews unmanly if they allowed their women to defend the community.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, according to Maimon, those women who did take a turn at guarding their settlement in the absence of a male professional were considered "freakish" by the other women.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Cited in Tiger, L., & Shepherd, J. Women in the kibbutz. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975, pp. 84-86. See this volume for a full discussion of women's roles in the kibbutz based on the authors' extensive research. See, especially, chapter 8, The military service of women in the kibbutz, which includes a brief overview of the historical background of women's military roles.

<sup>6</sup> Described by Yisrael Shochat, founder of that association, in a memorandum dated December 1912 entitled, A proposal for the defense of the Jewish community in the land of Israel, which is included in Toldot Ha-Haganah (Ma'arachot, 1954), I, i, pp. 235-236, and reproduced in Allon, Y. The making of Israel's army. London: Vallentine, Mitchell and Co., 1970, p. 113.

<sup>7</sup> Sepher Hashomer. Tel Aviv: Dvir Co. Ltd., 1936, pp. 475-476.

<sup>8</sup> Cited in Tiger, L., & Shepherd, J. (see note 5), p. 184.

<sup>9</sup> Maimon, A. (see note 3), p. 24. It should be noted that women throughout the prestatehood period "guarded" their settlements. During the mandate period of illegal immigration, they guarded the beaches. During the Battle of the Roads, at the initiation of the War of Independence, they guarded the convoys. "Guarding" did not mean that women were military personnel; they were, in (continued)

The tug-of-war between woman's role according to traditional Jewish values and that role as envisioned in Zionist ideology was not to be found only in the kibbutz. It continued as Jewish women faced the decision of what role to play during World War I. Many members of the women's movement were reluctant to serve in the military during that war. When the Jewish Legion was formed in 1918 to fight with the British, there was no automatic consensus among the members of the Working Women's Council that the women of Palestine should volunteer for service with the legion or, if they did volunteer, should seek the same work roles as men. This was in spite of the fact that the Working Women's Council was composed of women who were seeking equal work roles with men in the Jewish civilian sector. Some members thought that women should stay at home to replace men in any type of job, menial or not, that was vacated as the men volunteered. Some of those who thought women should volunteer for the legion along with the men "went so far as to assert that they should seek the same type of military service as men. Others thought they should assist the Legion by working as cooks, nurses and laundresses."<sup>10</sup> In a speech at the Women Workers' Conference in July 1918, Rachel Katznelson, a leader of the women's movement, discussed this controversy and "emphasized the historic significance of Jewish women fighting shoulder-to-shoulder with their husbands and brothers--an unprecedented development in Jewish history."<sup>11</sup>

Katznelson clearly implied that women had thus far not participated on a shoulder-to-shoulder basis with men in defense. In the end, it was the British who determined the role to be played by women in the Jewish Legion. While 200 women from Palestine volunteered, only those trained in nursing were accepted. This limited role, as well as the roles that the British gave to their own women's auxiliaries during this war, seems to have influenced the defense roles permitted to Israeli women after the war.

In the 1920s, following the establishment of the mandate government in Israel, the Arabs conducted bitter attacks against the growing Jewish community. In response to these attacks, a people's defense organization, the Hagana (meaning defense) was organized clandestinely to replace the Hashomer guards. The Hagana was forced to be clandestine because the British forbade the Jews to bear arms. At the same time, the British provided inadequate defense of the Israeli settlements. Unlike the paid, full-time, professional guards of the Hashomer, the Hagana was composed entirely of part-time volunteers. They received just enough training to guard the community during Arab attacks. During the early period of its existence, the Hagana was loosely organized and was designed for localized self-defense of the many isolated Jewish settlements against the Arab attacks of 1920, 1921, and 1929.

With the Arab terrorist attacks in 1929, which were much more severe than earlier attacks, the Hagana began to plan for defense on a "national" scale. It began to form a centralized organization. During the crisis period of 1936 to 1939, the Arab threat reached an unprecedented level. The Arabs' aims

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<sup>9</sup> (continued) effect, civilians engaged in home guard duty--civil defense. They primarily performed watch or patrol duties and were often armed.

<sup>10</sup> Maimon, A. (see note 3), p. 57.

<sup>11</sup> Maimon, A. (see note 3), p. 60.

were to destroy as many Jewish settlements as possible, to prevent the development of new settlements, and to prevent Jews from establishing an independent state. It was during this period that the Hagana began to prepare for offensive military actions and to recognize the need for a permanently established military force instead of the semiautonomous local home guard groups. The Hagana became a centrally controlled militia consisting of all able citizens willing to volunteer.

At this critical time the British military failed to provide adequate defense for the Jews. The British mandatory administration proved to be an additional obstacle to Jewish ambitions for an independent homeland. Although the Nazi party had come to power in Germany in 1933, and many Jews wished to emigrate, the British issued a white paper that restricted immigration and effectively revoked the Balfour Declaration that had allowed for the establishment of a homeland for all Jews who wished to immigrate. Thus, the Jews in Palestine, in seeking an independent state, identified the British mandatory administration as its enemy along with the Palestinian Arabs. All of these pressures were important in the Hagana's decision to expand and develop from a group of local home guard units into a people's militia--a military force. These factors likewise had their influence on the utilization of women in defense activities.

Yigal Allon, one of the Hagana's first professional soldiers, writes of the situation during this period:

Under the pressure of militant Arab nationalism the Hagana grew in size and strength; its membership included almost every Jew and Jewess working in an appropriate unit.<sup>12</sup>

Maimon, who was also actively involved in the work of the community at this time, indicates that the composition of the Hagana by 1936 included most "citizens" of the Jewish community, including women, who participated in the "passive" methods of territorial defense.

The entire Yishuv, on all levels, stood guard over each settlement; villages were expanded and production increased. In those difficult years, and directly following, new border settlements--'wall and tower' as they were called--were set up all over the country. . . . The numbers joining the Hagana grew steadily. The Yishuv was forced to arm itself, in the face of opposition from the Mandatory Government. . . . Many women belonged to the Hagana, and they too stood guard on the roads along with the men.<sup>13</sup>

This increased utilization of women should not be considered an expansion of their role in defense matters. Since the 1920s, it had been necessary for women in Israel to be able to protect themselves and their children. Most of the women of the kibbutzim, because of the remote locations in which these settlements were built, received some training with shotguns and revolvers from the Hagana. This did not make them military personnel or combat soldiers. They are more accurately described as "armed pioneers"--citizens guarding

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<sup>12</sup>Allon, Y. (see note 6), p. 13.

<sup>13</sup>Maimon, A. (see note 3), p. 157.

their homes. Many were not even registered members of the Hagana. Furthermore, even though the women were trained for armed self-defense, it was usually the men who performed the defense duties.<sup>14</sup>

Of course, some women were more active than others. In 1937, on one kibbutz, women were given roles in all aspects of protective defense, as opposed to offensive roles. In that same year, in another kibbutz, the first training course for women commanders was organized. Its title, "coursa," which means "armchair," indicates both the passive character of the course, compared to the training given to men, and the attitude of the male commanders toward the appropriate role for women.<sup>15</sup>

Some women were commanders of mixed groups, although usually as instructors. In one case, a woman was appointed post commander of her kibbutz in preparation for Arab invasions. Her job was to instruct immigrants, teenage youths, and some of the women in rifle practice. This was but token training, however, because each person was allowed to fire only five shots.<sup>16</sup> There was an extreme shortage of ammunition and weapons at that time.

Thus, membership in the Hagana after 1936 was no longer unusual for women. Indeed, it was invited and expected once the defense organization was forced by serious threats from the Arabs and the British to reorganize and expand.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Larkin, M. The hand of Mordechai. London: Victor Gollancz, 1968, p. 80. This book, a biography of a kibbutz, Yad Mordechai, is based on documents and on the author's interviews with 55 men and women, veterans of the War of Independence, who were members of that kibbutz. The author's field work took place during 1959-60 and provides some insight into the military roles that women played during the War of Independence. Although her research was conducted approximately 10 years after that war--during which time many myths could have become established--her account is similar to that provided by other sources, including interviews that I have conducted. An Israeli official whom I interviewed who lived on Yad Mordechai during this period also confirmed the accuracy of her account. See also Hazleton, L. Israeli women: The reality behind the myth. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1977, p. 20, for a discussion of women's military roles prior to statehood.

<sup>15</sup> Tiger, L., & Shepherd, J. (see note 5), pp. 184-185. Of special use to my research was their documentation of women's roles in the Hagana and Palmach, citing the works edited by Slutsky, Sefer Toldot Ha-Haganah (1972) and Gilad and Meged, Sefer Ha-Palmach (1954).

<sup>16</sup> Larkin, M. (see note 14), p. 79.

<sup>17</sup> The foundations of the Hagana (Haganah Archives), drawn up in 1941 and reproduced in Allon, Y. (see note 6), pp. 117-118, states:

The Hagana is open to all Jews prepared and able to fulfill the duties of national defense. Membership in the Hagana, while both an obligation and a privilege for every Jewish man and woman, is based upon the free and voluntary choice of the individual.

As the Hagana's military policy became more aggressive and preparations began for the Jewish resistance against the mandatory government at the end of World War II, a sharper delineation could be seen between the protective defense roles of women and the offensive assault roles of men. The Hagana in 1940 added a field corps, called HISH, as a permanent, mobile force consisting of part-time volunteers whose function was to carry out offensive operations. A garrison army, HIM, meaning guard corps, was established as a static home guard force consisting of "older men" (over age 25) and women. The women served principally as nurses and signalers.

Most volunteers served in the HIM, the central function of which was to man defensive positions at the borders of each settlement. Girls and boys 14 to 17 years old were expected to train in paramilitary youth groups for service with the HIM if needed. The training they received was similar to that given to women--signals, self-defense, and first aid.

It is a piece of historical irony that as the Hagana developed militant, mobile forces and became less self-restrained, women were used in greater numbers, but the role they played was the same one of static defense that they had been performing as "citizens" without military status. Of course, this appears ironic only if it is assumed that women were eagerly seeking to serve in offensive operations. This was not unanimously the case, as can be seen in their attitude toward active military service in World War II.

Despite the fact that during World War II women were needed for military service, women themselves, even those in the working women's movement, were initially reluctant to volunteer. The dominant attitude was the traditional one that suitable roles for women during wartime were "guarding and all areas of noncombatant defense work at home." This attitude was explicitly spelled out by the Working Women's Council. A memo that was circulated during the war to its members stated:

Women must take an active part in guarding the settlements and in all areas of noncombatant defense work.<sup>18</sup>

In 1942, a proclamation of this council further highlighted the sexual distinction between defense roles: "Let us as women soldiers, assume appropriate tasks."<sup>19</sup>

During the war, increasing numbers of women joined the Hagana for service at home and the British auxiliaries for service abroad. In September 1943, there were 4,511 enlisted women and 245 women officers from the Jewish community of Palestine serving as volunteers with the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS), the British women's auxiliary.<sup>20</sup> They served mainly as drivers, nursing orderlies, switchboard operators, and store women. Most were sent to Egypt and Italy, where they helped with the survivors from the Nazi extermination

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<sup>18</sup> Maimon, A. Women build a land. New York: Herzl Press, 1962, p. 157.

<sup>19</sup> Maimon, A. (see note 18), p. 219.

<sup>20</sup> Bidwell, S. The Women's Royal Army Corps. London: Leo Cooper, Ltd., 1977, pp. 96-100.

camps at the end of the war. Some also served with the Women's Auxiliary Air Force. This military experience was to be extremely influential in the definition of women's roles in the Israeli Defense Force to be formed after the state of Israel was established. Many of the women who stayed in Palestine became actively engaged in its defense, replacing the men who were serving with the British forces. Like the civilian women in Great Britain, women in the Hagana were trained in traditional (civilian) wartime roles for women: civil defense, first aid, and firefighting.

During this period, the Palmach (literally translated, this abbreviation means commando battalions) was formed as the striking arm of the Hagana. In this organization the role of women was, for a while, somewhat different. The Palmach, formed in 1941, was a standing, mobile force of full-time volunteers, women as well as men. Compared to the HISH (the field corps) and the HIM (the garrison army), which were really paramilitary organizations, the Palmach, although part of an irregular army, was a professional military organization with professionally trained, full-time soldiers. It was formed as a standing reserve for mobilization in the event of Arab or German invasion. Initially it cooperated with the British as a means of defense of the Jewish community against German invasion.

The members of the Palmach were, for the most part, Jews born in Palestine. known as Sabras. At least 30% of these Sabras had grown up on the kibbutzim. Compared with the Hagana, which was open to all who volunteered, the Palmach was an elite group of selected members. Although technically under the authority of the Hagana, the Palmach was an autonomous organization that was, in effect, a private army with its own regulations. Although elitist in its selection procedures, the Palmach ideology espoused the egalitarian principles of the Zionist movement.

The establishment of the Palmach, consisting of nine companies of commando troops, marked the beginning of the explicit use of women in Israeli combat units; however, the numbers of women (and men) were small. In 1944, there were 300 women and 1,000 men, plus 400 reservists, mostly men. In the fall of 1947, there were 2,100 active members and 1,000 in the active reserves. A recent news article reported that of the total Palmach membership of 6,000 in the 1948 war, 1,000, or approximately 16%, were women.<sup>21</sup> Although the number of women was small, the approximate proportion of the group represented by women was relatively high compared to that of the regular armies of Great Britain and the United States during World War II.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Schiff, Z. A history of the Israeli army (1870-1974). San Francisco: Straight Arrow Books, 1974, p. 24; Lorch, N. Israel's War of Independence 1947-1949. Hartford, Conn.: Hartmore House, 1961, 1968, p. 30. While no mention is made by the various sources stating the actual number of women in the Hagana in fall 1947, one estimate is that 15% of the fully mobilized group were women. See Sacher, H. Israel: The establishment of a state. London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1952, p. 271; Jerusalem Post, September 25, 1978 (considered by Israeli officials to be a reliable source).

<sup>22</sup>Goldman, N. (Ed.). Symposium on the position of women in combat (forthcoming, 1981) will include information on the percentage of women in irregular military groups in recent wars.



Although women in the Palmach enjoyed equal status with men during the Palmach's early days, this equality was not long-lived. Within 2 years after its formation, sexual polarization had taken place. Even those women who had initially had training identical to the men's were for the most part assigned to the units as secretaries, nurses, and signalers.<sup>23</sup> Some served as guards along the roads and coast and some were commanders of mixed units--but usually not of units engaged in fighting. The traditional Israeli concept of the women's roles was generally in evidence.

In 1943, the Hagana established rules that clearly relegated women to static defense positions. When a woman's unit was engaged in combat, the women were located at headquarters level. The policy established at this time reflected the Hagana officials' attitude toward coeducational training as well. It was stated that training in mixed units resulted in women competing with men--competition believed to be detrimental to their performance.<sup>24</sup>

The Palmach, although in many respects somewhat autonomous from its Hagana parent unit, appeared to share these attitudes about women. Yigal Allon, a founder and later commander of the Palmach, describes women's main contribution to the Palmach as "humanizing":

The presence of women in combat units blurred and decreased the harshness of military life; it lent substance to the Palmach concept of an armed force free of militarism; and it precluded the brutalization of young men thrown into an all-male society for months on end. The mobilization of daughters, sisters, sweethearts, and often wives turned the Palmach into a true people's army. . . .

Allon also writes the following in his history:

The girls stormed at any proposed discrimination, arguing that it ran counter to the spirit of the new society being built in Palestine to restrict women to domestic chores, particularly since they had proven their competence as marksmen and sappers. In the end, the wiser counsel prevailed. The girls were still trained for combat, but placed in units of their own, so that they would not compete physically with men. Whenever possible, they were trained for defensive warfare only.<sup>25</sup>

Coupling these statements with the rules established by the Hagana, it seems reasonable to infer that although egalitarian with regard to sexual equality in principle, in practice the Palmach relegated most women to auxiliary roles, as did the Hagana's HISH and HIM.

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<sup>23</sup>Lorch, N. (see note 21), p. 30.

<sup>24</sup>Slutsky (1972), cited in Tiger, L., & Shepherd, J. Women in the kibbutz. New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975, pp. 185-186.

<sup>25</sup>Both quotations from Allon, Y. The shield of David: The story of Israel's armed forces. London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1970, pp. 129; 128. In this volume, Allon mentions women's roles only on these two pages. Allon served in that unit as a recruit, becoming its commander during the War of Independence.

In spite of the general practice, there were several heroines among the Palmach volunteers, who, during World War II, were involved in secret missions for the Allies. Two women, Hanna Senesh and Haviva Reich, were among 12 Palmach parachutists who were dropped into Yugoslavia. Both were captured and executed. Another heroine was Bracha Fold, who was killed in 1946 while defending Tel Aviv. Several other members of the Palmach became well known for their combat activities during the War of Independence.

In 1945, at the end of World War II, the Palmach ceased its cooperation with the British, became involved in the conflict against the mandatory government, and prepared for eventual war with the Arabs. The Jewish resistance movement began, and violence between the Jews and the British in Palestine ensued.

At the end of the mandate period, the Hagana was still a volunteer and amateur militia. Even though it had expanded to include a mobile field force and commando units, it still had no full-time soldiers except those in the Palmach. The field force (HISH) was composed of part-time soldiers, and the garrison force (HIM), which consisted of the majority of the members of the Hagana, had a minimum of training, if any. Of 30,745 registered members of HIM in 1944, only 4,372, or 14% of the home guard, were considered "trained."<sup>26</sup>

While a few women of the Palmach were reported to have been involved in sabotage activities against British installations, most women during this period (1945-47) were used to aid illegal immigration, to guard the beaches and roads, to nurse, and to operate communications equipment.<sup>27</sup> Other women conducted terrorist activities against the British. These were women associated with Irgun and the Stern Gang, nonsocialist organizations that had split from the Hagana to pursue more aggressive tactics in the struggle against the British. There are no data available indicating the numbers of women in these guerilla bands, or exactly what their roles were prior to the start of the War of Independence in 1947. Neither group was large. It has been estimated that by the end of 1947, at the groups' peak, the Irgun had 2,000 and the Stern Gang had 400 members. They concentrated on terrorism, street fighting, and sabotage. According to one estimate, women accounted for 50% of the membership;<sup>28</sup> however, there is no evidence as to the source or accuracy of this figure.

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<sup>26</sup> Luttwak, E., & Horowitz, D. The Israeli army. London: Allen Lane, 1975, p. 40. This history of the IDF from 1904 through the October War of 1973 documents women's contributions during this period, including their role in the Palmach, Irgun, and Stern Gang. The authors include extensive references to archival sources in Israel.

<sup>27</sup> Maimon, A. (see note 19; p. 218. Goldman's interview with a commander of an Irgun women's unit substantiated Maimon and the fact that women participated in all activities with men except combat missions.

<sup>28</sup> Lorch, N. (see note 21), p. 35; McKay, K. Chen. Army, September 1978, p. 34. McKay's article includes quotations from her interviews with present officers of the Chen, as well as with veterans of the War of Independence. These were particularly useful to me.

Geula Cohen, who was an anti-British revolutionary member of the Stern Gang, has written of her experience with this group from 1943 to 1948. In her memoirs she described her primary job as a radio operator. She was put in jail for illegally possessing a radio transmitter, four revolvers, and 48 rounds of ammunition. She writes that her gun was less a weapon than the radio she operated.<sup>29</sup> From her memoirs it would seem that, although armed, her role was that of a radio operator, not that of a combat soldier.

Although it appears that the majority of women who participated in military activity during this period were given auxiliary roles, the few who did engage in direct combat activities helped to sustain the image of the Israeli liberated women during the pre-statehood period.<sup>30</sup> The civil sector also had its liberated women, as some women engaged in nontraditional work roles, ordinarily defined as male roles.

Thus we have seen that in the period prior to the War of Independence, women generally played a limited, auxiliary role in the Jewish response to military threats, either in the local semiautonomous units or in the Hagana or the Palmach. On the frontier and outlying settlements, women were on occasion involved in armed self-defense, and a few were used for secret missions during World War I and World War II; however, in the main, the Zionist egalitarian principle of sexual equality was not extended to the realm of defense.

#### The Mobilization of Women During the War of Independence

In November 1947, the United Nations voted to terminate, as of May 1, 1948, the British mandate government and establish a Jewish state in Palestine. The Palestinian Arabs protested with full-scale hostilities. By the time the mandate government would be fully dismantled, the Jews knew that they would likely face five additional regular Arab armies in neighboring nations that would surpass them in numbers of men and quality of equipment. The Jews had only the Hagana and the other small irregular guerilla organizations at the onset of these hostilities. In the first stage of the War of Independence (before conscription had mustered enough men and women into the standing army to mount an offensive), fighting was just as it had been during past guerilla wars with the Arabs--ambush, sniping, terrorism, and street fighting.<sup>31</sup> The Hagana's goal was survival for the Jewish state, and with the shock of the Arab attack, the official Hagana policy restricting women to noncombat roles was not enforced. Whether a registered member of the Hagana or not, every able-bodied Jew participated in the defense of the state (excepting the ultra-Orthodox Jews, who were pacifists).

At the outset of hostilities, the Hagana hastened its transformation to a regular, full-time army. Registration began immediately, and all men 17 to

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<sup>29</sup> Cohen, G. Woman of violence, memories of a young terrorist, 1943-1948. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966, pp. 191, 120.

<sup>30</sup> Combat is defined as the direct use of lethal weapons in opposition to an enemy force.

<sup>31</sup> Allon, Y. The making of Israel's army. London: Vallentine, Mitchell and Co., 1970, p. 197.

25 years old were called up for duty. The number of full-time soldiers increased as men left their work to fight for their country.<sup>32</sup>

Most women served in the HIM (the garrison army) in the traditional military roles for the women--nursing and signals--that many had learned in England. The men and women of the HIM guarded the defensive positions at the perimeter of each settlement. Most of the women of the HISH (the mobile force) had served in the British forces during World War II and continued to serve in similar auxiliary capacities.

Women of the Palmach, HISH, Stern Gang, and Irgun were used in armed defense in the first phase of the war, during the "Battle for the Roads." This "battle" took place when the Arabs tried to starve out the Jews by preventing their convoys from transporting supplies on the Jerusalem Road. Women then served as armed escorts for the convoys because, unlike men, they could hide weapons under their clothes where members of the British army and police were not allowed to search. The girls accompanied the convoys disguised as passengers. This role was similar to those of smuggling and guard duty, which they had played previously.

Some women members of these groups were also involved in guerilla warfare: street fighting, sniping, and ambushing. One woman commanded a Palmach guerilla unit (see discussion of heroines below). Throughout the war, however, most women were in support roles as signalers, runners, and nurses. These vital roles subjected them to the dangers of combat but were not, in fact, direct combat roles. Women in the kibbutzim served as guards and defended their settlements against attack, usually as "auxiliaries" to the men. Most of these women were cooks, nurses, and signalers.

Women took their turn with the men, but it was understood that in the case of real trouble the women would remain in the shelter.<sup>33</sup>

The Palmach took the shock of the initial Arab attack in November 1947. Although women had been trained along with men for such a national emergency, their actual mobilization with the Palmach units was more a result of the dire emergency than of an intentional plan. As discussed above, in 1943 military policy had decreed that women were to be restricted from going into battle with their units. They were to be used in "static defense" roles.

In spite of the policy, there is evidence that some women did, in fact, fight along with the men. Yigal Allon, commander of the Palmach during the period, described the activities of some of these women. He wrote that on

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<sup>32</sup> Lorch, N. (see note 21), p. 75.

<sup>33</sup> Larkin, M. The hand of Mordechai. London: Victor Gollancz, 1968, p. 80; Maimon, A. Women build a land. New York: Herzl Press, 1962, p. 222, sums up women's main contribution in Jerusalem:

In those days the women's guard did a great deal for the city. Hundreds of women nursed the wounded in hospitals, feeding those who were incapable of lifting food to their mouths. Women in the Hagana rendered first aid while shells flew over their heads.

April 3, 1948, a company platoon consisting of 10 men in various jobs and 50 women seized a commanding position on the Safad-Ein Zeitim road to ensure the safe crossing of a convoy. A few other heroines were involved in combat missions. One was Netiva Ben-Yehuda, the "Yellow Ghost," as the Arabs called her because of her hair. She was a demolitions expert and commander of a Palmach unit. She reportedly signaled the attack on Safed by detonating an explosive charge. She also set an explosive charge against a wall of an Arab police station while under heavy fire.<sup>34</sup>

Another heroine was Judith Jaharan, "The Black Devil," known also as "the girl in the green skirt." A member of the Irgun, she was said to have served as an infantryman and medic. On one occasion she fired from a rooftop at passing Arabs and killed many of them. Lorch also writes of a woman who, leading a Palmach section, had been instructed to "assault a building and lob in a hand grenade, and break inside."<sup>35</sup> Thus, there clearly were women fighters, but there is no evidence that there were many women in such offensive combat roles. They appear to have been the exception. Even in the Palmach during the first part of the War of Independence most women served in combat support roles. There is no indication in any of the sources of the numbers of women who did in fact engage in either assault or even defensive combat. All sources agree that the great majority of registered women were in the HIM (garrison army) and that the Palmach, Irgun, and Stern Gang were all small groups.

In the meantime, registration and conscription of Jewish men and women were transforming the Hagana from an irregular guerilla group into a regular standing army. The registered membership in the Palmach at the beginning of the war, November 1947, was approximately 2,000 members (300 women); in the HISH, 6,000 to 10,000 members (some women); in the HIM and the youth battalions, approximately 32,000. In total, there were about 50,000 men and 10,000 women serving. By October 1948, the peak strength reportedly reached 120,000, of whom 12,000 were women.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Allon, Y. (see note 31), p. 200; Lorch, N. Israel's War of Independence 1947-1949. Hartford, Conn.: Hartmore House, 1961, 1968, p. 75, and Kurzman, D. Genesis 1948: The first Arab-Israeli war. New York: The World Publishing Co., pp. 167-168; 384; 97. Kurzman, whose book is a historical novel, states accuracy as his objective and indicates that he has used a wide variety of primary sources, including personal interviews with many of those involved in the war. These incidents about which he writes do depict situations referred to in the histories of Allon and Lorch. I believe it is a fairly accurate account.

<sup>35</sup> Lorch, N. (see note 34), p. 59.

<sup>36</sup> Sacher, H. Israel: The establishment of a state. London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1952, p. 271; and Luttwak, E., & Horowitz, D. (see note 26), p. 23; Tiger, L., & Shepherd, J. (see note 24), p. 186; Maimon, A. (see note 33), p. 217; Schiff, Z. A history of the Israeli army (1870-1974). San Francisco: Straight Arrow Books, 1974, p. 121. This semiofficial history includes a chapter, "Women in the Israeli Defense Forces." One section of this chapter, "Fighting Women in History," provides a useful, although brief, overview of the subject.

With this growth in the number of men and a drop in the percentage of women (from 16% to 10%), the Hagana reached a condition that permitted it to embark on offensive operations against the Arabs and enforce its policy concerning women in combat. The women were removed from direct fighting roles and remained with their units as clerks, nurses, runners, and signalers.<sup>37</sup> Many who had been trained in the Palmach were used as teachers of new troops. Some women in the kibbutzim continued their guard duty in cases in which there were insufficient numbers of men. All these roles, while auxiliary, exposed women to grave dangers because the whole country was a battleground. As Shoshana Raziell, a former Irgun officer, stated in an interview,

There was terrible danger in everything that we did. You didn't have to be in combat to fight. You can do as much with a telephone. It is no big deal to put that gun in a violin case and stroll down the street past British officers as though you're just coming from your music lesson.<sup>38</sup>

The restriction of women to noncombat jobs, or jobs of "static defense," was in accord with official Hagana policy set in 1943, but it was also the result of several other concerns. Women were thought to be a distraction, in the sense of a worry to the men, not in a sexual sense.<sup>39</sup> Of particular concern was the fact that the Arabs were especially humiliated by having a woman kill any of their men, and they were known to be particularly brutal in their retaliation. In fact, Netiva Ben-Yehuda had to be moved to a different location because the Arabs were seeking revenge for her attacks.<sup>40</sup> Another women fighter who had been captured by the Arabs had been brutally violated, killed, and mutilated.

The women felt great pressure to prove themselves to the men, but there was reportedly some concern about their performance in battle. In one instance, a woman had been accused of delaying a raid against an Arab community because she did not, as instructed, throw a hand grenade into a building and break in--she had heard a baby crying. There are two interpretations of this event given in the published literature. One indicates that the woman had been explicitly instructed to hit only gang leaders and agitators and, therefore, was following instructions. The other is that, being a woman, she was too soft and could not hurt a baby. She was therefore inadequate to the job.<sup>41</sup> Whichever interpretation is correct, her behavior influenced men's attitudes toward all women in combat.

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<sup>37</sup> Lorch, N. (see note 34), pp. 30, 75.

<sup>38</sup> McKay, K. (see note 28), p. 35. It should be noted that covert activities, such as smuggling, are roles for which women have often been used in wartime.

<sup>39</sup> As revealed to Anne Bloom (a research psychologist studying women in the IDF) in her interviews and confirmed by Goldman's interviews. Also see McKay, K. (see note 28), p. 39.

<sup>40</sup> Lorch, N. (see note 34), p. 75. The fear of rape by the Arabs was prevalent in the "civilian" as well as in the military sector and was discussed and emphasized in many interviews I conducted.

<sup>41</sup> Lorch, N. (see note 34), p. 59; Kurzman, D. (see note 34), p. 65.

Another concern emerged as the Hagana was transformed to a regular standing army. As a regular force, it was in the public eye. Its members were no longer anonymous. Its manpower conscription and utilization policies were public and were to be legislated by the new state. In order to make the conscription of women consonant with the values of a nation with a politically powerful conservative minority, it was important to define women's military roles as clearly noncombatant and similar to those that women held in the civil sector. It is relevant to note that in England during World War II, when women were conscripted, their status was clearly defined as noncombatant, even though many argued that those women serving on the anti-aircraft sites were in fact "gunners."<sup>42</sup>

In summary, some women performed combat tasks in an emergency period; however, during the Hagana's transformation to a regular army, women were removed from such tasks. When those participating in the army were no longer anonymous, when the army came out into the open, when warfare became conventional instead of irregular, when military service was no longer voluntary, and when there were enough men to fulfill the combat missions, women were removed from combat roles and were assigned to support, and later educational, duties.

The dominant attitude toward women's utilization in paramilitary and regular military organizations throughout this whole period was traditionalist. Egalitarian principles did not make substantial inroads into this traditionally male realm of endeavor. In the following sections, it will be shown that political pressures were added to the traditional social pressures to influence the roles of women in the new Israel Defense Forces (IDF).

#### Women's Roles in the Israel Defense Forces: The First Two Decades

The state of Israel was established on May 14, 1948; a state of emergency was declared on May 20; and the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) were organized on May 28, 1948, when Israel Defense Order No. 4 was issued by Israel's provisional government providing the legal framework for the military forces of the state. In September 1949, national conscription for women as well as men was established; however, women were not to serve in integrated units with equal responsibilities in the new IDF. The women's organization was based on the British women's auxiliaries in which many women had served during World War II. The new women's organization was called CHEN, which means charm. An official pamphlet indicates that this was the image that the IDF desired its women's service unit to portray in the contemporary period.<sup>43</sup> Women in the CHEN were trained in self-defense by officers of the Hagana and the Palmach. Eventually the CHEN was to serve only as a training unit. In the 1970s, women were integrated into IDF units after their training.

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<sup>42</sup> Goldman, N., & Stites, R. The utilization of women in combat in the armed forces of Great Britain, World War I through 1980, this report.

<sup>43</sup> Chen is the Hebrew acronym for women's corps. In "Chen," the Women's Corps, an official pamphlet issued by the IDF spokesman in 1977, underlined and capitalized at the top of the first page is "'CHEN' TRANSLATES 'CHARM'."

With statehood, the Israeli government and the armed forces purposefully decided to eliminate women from combat units and, in effect, to implement the policy with regard to the utilization of women set forth by the Hagana in 1943 and informally implemented the month prior to independence, as discussed above. In summary, their combat-related roles became those officially defined as ones of "indirect reinforcement of the IDF's combat forces." Women were limited to a variety of administrative, professional, and service duties to release male soldiers for fighting missions. They were also to be trained for emergency self-defense.<sup>44</sup> Women were removed from combat units. They were taken out of the tank corps, the artillery, and the infantry units in which some had served in the earlier stages of the War of Independence. The Defense Service Law, adopted in 1949, made women between the ages of 18 and 34 liable for conscription for service with the CHEN in peacetime as well as wartime. Conscripts were also required to serve in the reserves after their active duty tour.

The restriction of women's roles to those of indirect combat support clearly separated women's roles from combat functions. This was a political decision to satisfy both certain religious parties, which opposed any military service for women, and the general public, which held conservative attitudes toward suitable roles for women. It was, however, also a decision that was consonant with the attitudes and strategy of the military leadership. The Israeli defense establishment believed that with its forward strategy it could defend the nation without using women in combat roles. There was no immediate manpower requirement for women in such positions. It was decided to use women in a narrow range of specialized tasks that would free men for combat duty.

During the first years of the state of Israel, major demographic changes took place that were to influence the roles for women in the IDF. A large influx of immigrants entered Israel. Between 1948 and 1951, a total of 665,500 immigrants entered the country. This figure exceeded the total population of the country (649,000) at the time of independence.<sup>45</sup> In May 1948, the population consisted of persons largely of European or American heritage. The percentage of immigrants from these areas was 89.6% between 1919 and 1948. Only 10% of the immigrants during this period came from Asia and North Africa; by January 1, 1952, that percentage had reached 27% of the total Jewish population of Israel (1,404,400). In the 1952-66 period, the number of immigrants from Asia and Africa exceeded those of other areas, and it accounted for approximately 43% of all the immigrants to Israel since 1919.<sup>46</sup>

Both the size and cultural background of these immigrant groups affected the utilization of women in the IDF after independence. The position of women in Asian and African societies was more visibly inferior to that of men. Thus, the Afro-Asian immigrants would reinforce the traditional concepts toward women's military roles. Furthermore, most of these newcomers required education

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<sup>44</sup> Israel Defense Forces (see note 43), p. 2.

<sup>45</sup> Statistical abstract of Israel, 1968, p. 9.

<sup>46</sup> American University, Area handbook for Israel. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1970, p. 61.



and help in integrating into Israeli society. Filling this need became important to the IDF in its nation-building function.

Service in CHEN gives the women spiritual and moral assets which find their expression in good citizenship, the awareness of a mission, and a feeling of identification with the State of Israel.<sup>47</sup>

Not only were new immigrant conscripts educated during their service in the IDF, but an important role for some women in the IDF became that of teaching recent civilian immigrants to Israel. One of the three major functions of CHEN is:

Combining security duties with educational activities--by spreading educational and cultural values, particularly among new immigrants and in outlying settlements.<sup>48</sup>

Thus, with the establishment of the state, traditional rather than egalitarian values with regard to women's military roles prevailed. There were many differences in the military service of men and women. To preserve national unity, many concessions were made. In 1953, the government passed a compromise national service law that exempted married women, mothers, pregnant women, and women who observed Christian or Muslim religious practices. In addition, those claiming religious objections to military service could obtain exemption by proving their religious convictions to a board of rabbis or accepting an alternate, nonmilitary form of national service. In addition to reiterating these exemptions, the Defense Service Act of 1959 declared a shorter period of military service for women than for men, different training periods, and different roles. In spite of these exemptions for and concessions to women, the ultra-Orthodox parties (Agudat Israel and Pooley Agudat Israel) continued to voice their objection to women in military service.

Along with the general societal resistance to a nontraditional military role for women, another important factor in the determination of women's non-combatant status was the morale of the male soldier. The Jewish male is raised to be extremely protective of women, and the prospect of a woman being wounded or taken prisoner by the Arabs is believed by the military leadership to be a grave threat to efficient performance of the male in battle. In fact, when rumor spread during the October War that a female soldier had been captured and raped, it was necessary for the mass media to reassure the public and military personnel that this had not been the case.<sup>49</sup> Colonel Dalia Raz, commander of the Israeli Women's Corps, stated that Israeli society would not tolerate

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<sup>47</sup> Israel Defense Forces (see note 43). In Features of Israel, published by the IDF (no date), p. 74.

<sup>48</sup> Israel Defense Forces (see note 47), p. 72. See also IDF (see note 43), p. 2.

<sup>49</sup> Dickerson, V. J. The role of women in the defense force of Israel. Individual Research Project, U.S. Army War College, 1974. Alexandria, Va.: Defense Documentation Center, p. 55. This study was one of the first on this subject. It is an excellent study focusing on women in the IDF. The material taken from her interviews with Chen officials was particularly useful to us.

the idea of women being taken prisoners of war, especially after the tragic experiences that had occurred in previous years.<sup>50</sup>

One function of women in the military is to provide a humanizing influence. The family is a very important institution in Israeli life, and, in some ways, women's function in the Israeli military is analogous to their function in the family. This was evident in the Palmach during the War of Independence. After women were removed from combat duties, one woman stayed with each unit to nurse, cook, and sew.<sup>51</sup> Because the family is of primary importance in Israel, women are expected to marry and have children. A commander of the CHEN has said, "We never disregard the fact that the girls here are going to be married and become mothers. We don't want to impair their femininity in any way."<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, Landrum observes that women in the IDF enjoy being protected and do not want to compete with men.<sup>53</sup>

Thus, a complex set of factors underlies the differences between the conscription and service of men and women. According to Dickerson, the IDF conscripts only the number of women it needs to meet its manpower requirements. When possible, only women with high school degrees are conscripted; however, if more are needed, those with less education are drafted. As a result of the different basis upon which women are drafted, only approximately 50% to 60% of the females see military service, compared with 95% of 18-year-old males. Length of service is also different for men and women. From 1949 until 1963, men ages 18 to 26 were conscripted for only 30 months. Unmarried women ages 18 to 26 were conscripted for only 24 months. In December 1963, because of an increase in the numbers of men and women in the age groups conscripted, the period of service for both men and women was reduced by 4 months. In November 1966, men were again required to serve for 30 months; however, women's service was not increased at that time.<sup>54</sup> Since 1974, women have served for 2 years. Women's reserve obligations also differ. While men are in the reserves until the age of 49, only unmarried women are required to be in the reserves and only until they marry and/or become mothers. Women receive less training than men. The men receive several months of training, whereas women are given only 3½ weeks. Those who volunteer to do their service in the Nahal (Fighting Pioneer Youth

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<sup>50</sup>Raz, D. The future of women in the armed services. Report of a seminar given at RUSI on June 23, 1977, p. 3.

<sup>51</sup>Lorch, N. Israel's War of Independence 1947-1949. Hartford, Conn.: Hartmore House, 1961, 1968, p. 75.

<sup>52</sup>Quoted in Tiger, L., & Shepher, J. Women in the kibbutz. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975, p. 204.

<sup>53</sup>Landrum, C. The Israeli fighting women: Myths and facts. Air University Review, December 1978, p. 70. This article provides insight into women's roles in the IDF of the 1970s. Her discussion of the nontraditional roles that were opened to women in 1977 was particularly useful to our research, as were Landrum's observations based on her field research.

<sup>54</sup>Ramati, S. S. The Israel Defense Forces. Israel Today, no. 4. Tel Aviv: Israel Digest, December 1966, p. 9.

Corps who live on and develop defensive agricultural settlements) receive 8 weeks of training.

According to Landrum, the training given by the CHEN to female conscripts is "basically a transition from freer civilian life to that of the more disciplined military way. The women have no field exercises nor any night training. They do take a short hike, but more for physical fitness than for meeting any requirements. Their use of weapons is at a bare minimum, and the emphasis is put on familiarity rather than use."<sup>55</sup>

The Israeli attitude toward the utilization of women as combatants is dramatized by the fact that women in the IDF, although given some training with weapons, are not expected to use them. The training they receive is limited and is a form of morale building to make them look and feel like soldiers. Landrum concludes that women's arms training serves to familiarize women soldiers with the weapons in the event that those living in isolated areas need to defend themselves or their families. This is an extension of the type of training that women had received in the Hagana. Even though the women of the Nahal carry small arms as a part of their uniform, they are sent to the bunkers in the event of an attack. Tiger, visiting a Nahal unit, commented:

It is pointless for women to try to shoot their weapons; they were too heavy for them and of relatively poor quality, being old Czech rifles, regarded as weapons of last resort. The Commander agreed that the women's activities with weapons were purely symbolic; they were good for their morale and offered them a sense of participation in Nahal's most serious function, the military.<sup>56</sup>

Women are given practice with weapons only once a month. The day Tiger visited, he reported a derisive attitude on the part of men, as well as some women, toward the women's weapons practice taking place at the time. The IDF has been unwilling to give more training to women because most women marry and have children, thereby becoming ineligible for the reserves. In wartime, they cannot be called up. Thus, the IDF does not believe it will receive sufficient return on the money invested in training.

The first decades of the use of women in the IDF were thus a period of no advancement in their egalitarian utilization. Their use in strictly non-combat endeavors was firmly entrenched in response to the conservative attitudes of the men and women in Israeli society--a society whose demographic characteristics had changed dramatically in the two decades following the attainment of statehood and whose attitudes were respected by politically astute, elected officials. As the next section will show, even though elected officials had to be sensitive to the electorate when considering roles for women in the military, manpower needs could force a measure of expansion in women's roles that had not yet been attained in the IDF.

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<sup>55</sup>Landrum, C. (see note 53), p. 71.

<sup>56</sup>Tiger, L., & Shepherd, J. (see note 52), p. 190.

## The Expansion of Women's Roles in the IDF 1967-79

In spite of the official policy to place women only in noncombatant jobs, women had never been totally removed from direct combat support roles. During the Sinai War of 1956 and the Six Day War of 1967, some women served as pilots in reconnaissance squadrons, and at least one woman dropped paratroops over the Mitla Pass in Sinai.<sup>57</sup> During these wars, some women served in communications and as nurses, roles which brought a few onto the frontline. Brigadier General S.L.A. Marshall's field notes in 1956 record that a woman signaler whose radio had been knocked out went in person to instruct the tanks to charge. She "sent forth two platoons of tanks to blast an enemy hill while she herself was under fire."<sup>58</sup> In the October war of 1973, at least three women were killed and many others were injured.<sup>59</sup> One radio operator was killed by Syrian attack, and two were killed by enemy fire in Sinai. Women in Israel, while assigned to noncombatant roles, do sometimes come under fire during hostilities because of their proximity to the frontline, a line that has been increasingly difficult to differentiate in Israel's wars. These women were at the front as exceptions. They were not, according to official policy, supposed to be there.

The official definition of women's roles as ones of "indirect reinforcement of the IDF's combat forces" became increasingly ambiguous in the 1970s as the military leadership opened some nontraditional jobs to women. After the 1967 war, when Israel's borders were expanded to include a large hostile population, and the manpower pool was not large enough to meet the need for men to fulfill additional military duties, the Israeli military leadership chose to extend the range of assignments open to women. This expansion of roles constituted a major change in assignment policy from the nation-building roles to which most women had previously been restricted. Women were once again in military roles after some two decades of largely administrative and teaching functions. Following the 1973 war, when, to meet manpower shortages, recruitment was increased to include handicapped men heretofore exempted, women were utilized in a wider variety of jobs.

In 1977, in order to free additional men for combat assignments and to some extent in response to pressure from civilian women's groups, 18 new non-traditional specialties were opened to women. Among these were weapons technician, fighter aircraft mechanic, communications repairman, radar and telecommunications operator (aboard missile boats), artillery reconnaissance, and combat arms instructor in the infantry, artillery, and armor schools. As reported by the press, women were allowed to serve for the first time as officers

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<sup>57</sup> Schiff, Z. A history of the Israeli army (1870-1974). San Francisco: Straight Arrow Books, 1974, p. 121. The use of women pilots in 1967 was parallel to that of WASPs by the United States in World War II--they were not even considered to be part of the military.

<sup>58</sup> Marshall, S.L.A. Were girls in combat? Army-Navy-Air Force Register, 80, December 20, 1958.

<sup>59</sup> Schiff, Z. (see note 57), p. 119.

on warships. Most, however, were reportedly assigned to naval bases.<sup>60</sup> Women have also been admitted to the Intelligence Corps as intelligence officers. Women in these jobs could come under fire in the event of war. These jobs are clearly ones of direct combat support. But since women are removed from the frontline during war, the IDF is able to continue to define women's service as "indirect reinforcement of the IDF's combat forces."

In 1977, women were also allowed to train as pilots, but the program was discontinued after a short time. Since the IDF trains only fighter pilots, and women were not allowed to be combatants, their expensive training could be used only to fly cargo planes.<sup>61</sup> Until 1956, women were used as noncombatant pilots for troop transport, but they were taken out at that time because their training was considered too expensive for the length of service that they gave. Today, women selecting the nontraditional jobs are required to serve at least an additional year in order to make their training cost-effective. Landrum says that the IDF considered filling 15% of these jobs with women in 1979.<sup>62</sup> In the Israeli air force, 45% of the military jobs recently have been opened to women. Female attrition in these jobs has, however, been higher than expected. Of the jobs, 16% are reserved for men only and 6% for women only.<sup>63</sup> There are no official data on the numbers of women actually in these jobs.

Currently, women in Israel are permitted to serve in Category I combat units (units that actively engage the enemy in combat) but in noncombatant roles only, e.g., administrative or technical specialties. Women are not involuntarily assigned to these units; they must volunteer. If the unit engages in combat, the women are to be evacuated. This policy causes difficulties for the IDF because they must find replacements for these women. Furthermore, women with children do not serve in the reserves, and most women marry and become mothers. Thus it is inconsistent to put women in combat support roles--to meet manpower shortages--when they cannot be mobilized with their unit into the frontline during wartime, the period for which they are most needed and for which they are trained. Despite the persistence of this indirect combat support ideology, women's roles since 1967 have become increasingly military in character and increasingly important to the functioning of the IDF. There has been no alternative for the Israeli military other than to expand women's roles to meet manpower shortages; therefore, despite the ambiguities implied, they have chosen this policy.

Now two counteracting forces affecting women's military service are at work. On one side, the mobilization manpower requirements are impelling the Israeli military leadership to extend the range of assignments open to women. The pressure of the high level of mobilization after the 1973 war increased

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<sup>60</sup> Women's lib wins a war, To the Point, June 23, 1978, p. 16. It has been reported to Goldman by an Israeli official that this experiment has not been a success since women have not sought shipboard roles.

<sup>61</sup> Landrum, C. (see note 53), p. 77.

<sup>62</sup> Landrum, C. (see note 53), p. 76.

<sup>63</sup> Landrum, C. After Action Report, Trip to Israeli Air Force, October 25-31, 1979, Attachment 3.

the manpower requirements of the IDF, but the manpower pool from which to conscript has declined. On the other side, Menachim Begin's party, the Likud, required the votes in the Knesset of the religious political parties that are opposed to military service for women. The result is a contradiction of national proportions. Although there are valid military requirements for more women to fill a broader range of assignments, the ruling coalition passed a new religious exemption law in July 1978, making it even easier for women to be exempt from military service. All that a woman needs to do to avoid military service is to attest before a judge that her religion precludes such service and sign affidavits stating that she observes Jewish dietary laws and does not travel on the Sabbath. The procedures and regulations operate so that women are underutilized for any type of military assignment. The religious exemption has become so easy that military service for women could become, if not controlled, in effect voluntary despite the operation of the universal conscription law. However, according to an Israeli official, since the passage of the exemption law in 1978, the loss of women conscripts for religious reasons has been limited because the conscription law has been strictly enforced. Also, such measures as permitting pregnant women to remain on active duty and lowering the entrance standards have been taken to try to prevent additional loss of women available to the military.<sup>64</sup>

On the other hand, the Committee on the Status of Women, an official fact-finding commission, has suggested that the interest of more women would be sparked if there were a greater variety of jobs available to them. The commission recommended that women be involved in every military function short of active combat.

However, only 210 of the 700 military jobs in the IDF have been opened to women. Of the women conscripted, 50% to 60% are still in secretarial and clerical jobs. The fact is that most women's attitudes reflect the culturally conservative elements of the country. The conservative attitude of Israeli society toward women's roles can be seen from a recent survey. In 1976, Bar-Yosef reported her large-scale survey of 17-year-old girls. She found that the largest proportion (68.8%) ranked motherhood first as very important. The second highest proportion (68.4%) chose wife as a very important role. Only 3.2% chose public activity as very important, and 13.9% chose voluntary action as very important.<sup>65</sup>

Insofar as women actually performing in combat roles is concerned, Landrum and others comment that the small group of women seeking combat roles for women is not supported by the majority of women. Clearly the small but vocal group

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<sup>64</sup> Cale, R. Women soldiers and Jewish Orthodoxy. Baltimore Sun, July 4, 1978. An Israeli journalist describes this situation and quotes the chief of staff of the Israeli army: "By not drafting women the precarious manpower situation will deteriorate further." According to an article in Time magazine, July 24, 1978: Even before the law was passed, there was a 9% rise in exemptions; and a report by the Defense Ministry predicted that 30% of the women due to be drafted in 1978 would claim religious exemptions as compared with the previous average of about 18%.

<sup>65</sup> Hazleton, L. Israeli women. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1977, p. 169.

pushing expanded combat roles for women receives little support from women soldiers themselves.<sup>66</sup>

Women will serve only in jobs that would not involve them directly in fighting if hostilities begin. By regulations, those who are in combat units will be evacuated in the event of war. No pressing military need for women to serve in combat roles in the IDF is acknowledged in the 1980s, nor is there a great demand on the part of women to do so. In an unusual juxtaposition of social forces, it is interesting to find that a noncombatant status for women is vital to making conscription acceptable to the public, and that allowing religious exemptions is vital to making the expansion of women's roles in the IDF possible. ‡

With the opening to them of nontraditional jobs in the 1970s, women are moving into direct combat support roles that could put them in the battlefield during war. The official definition of women's roles as "indirect combat reinforcement" no longer accurately defines many of these jobs, although it helps to perpetuate a stereotype accepted by traditionalist elements in Israeli society in general.

In short, the decade of the 1970s saw a curious balancing act take place in Israeli defense manpower policy. National security needs were balanced against sociopolitical pressures to achieve a compromise. Women now are assigned to support tasks that, by regulations, they will have to evacuate in case of war. What will actually happen is problematic. On balance, the new policy is the most significant substantive egalitarian advance for women in the IDF since its inception.

#### Summary and Conclusion

Israel is, in many ways, an unusual and even unique country with regard to issues of self-defense and likewise with regard to the participation of women in its military organizations. Geopolitically, Israel has been under constant threat of war from the large Arab population that surrounds it. The wars have been fought for sheer survival. For much of the period examined in this study, Israel was not an independent nation; therefore, during this extensive period the military organizations that were formed were paramilitary--often considered illegal.

The utilization of women in the paramilitary and military organizations in the Jewish community from its prestatehood period to the present time reflects varying degrees of divergence from the country's traditional social values that are influenced by their conservative religious foundations. This divergence, sparked both by the secular, egalitarian ideology of Zionism and by manpower requirements, has at times extended so far as to permit some female

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<sup>66</sup> Landrum, C. The Israeli fighting women: Myths and facts. Air University Review, December 1978, p. 70; McKay, K. Chen. Army, September 1978, p. 36; Dickerson, V. J. The role of women in the defense force of Israel. Individual Research Project, U.S. Army War College, 1974. Alexandria, Va.: Defense Documentation Center, p. 13; Schiff, Z. (see note 57), p. 122.

members of a clandestine paramilitary self-defense militia to be armed and trained for emergency self-defense. However, women were not expected to be mobilized in the assault units that were formed.

It was circumstance alone that caused women to be in combat. They fought in the War of Independence because of the emergency situation--survival was the overshadowing objective. It was not a programmed utilization of women who served with men as a result of a policy based on the "egalitarian" principle of sexual equality. These women can best be characterized in nonmilitary terms as "fighting pioneers" with semimilitary status in semimilitary organizations--the Hagana, the Irgun, and the Stern Gang. Furthermore, they were a minority of the female members of these groups. Even at the critical time of the War of Independence, most women were given the support jobs that women have traditionally filled--communications, nursing, and domestic duties. Although often serving under fire, most women were not in direct (offensive) combat operations. What is more, after the immediate military emergency was over in spring 1948, women were removed from the combat units. At the time of statehood, when the military organization became professionalized and formalized as the Israel Defense Forces, women's roles were clearly defined as noncombatant ones and reverted to those dictated by the dominant social traditions of the country.

When the Israel Defense Forces were formed as the legal defense establishment of the state of Israel, women, although conscripted, were organized in a separate women's auxiliary called CHEN, which was later integrated into the IDF. In English, the Hebrew word chen means charm. This was the image of women in the IDF that Israel wished to convey.

Thus, while many individual women performed valiantly in combat, Israeli women have not played an historically unique role (one reflecting a practice of sexual equality) in the course of defending their settlements and their country during the prestatehood period, the War of Independence, or the post-statehood period.<sup>67</sup> They have consistently been valued in the irregular military units and in the IDF for releasing men for active combat operations, for sharing their feminine, nurturing qualities, and for bringing a touch of family atmosphere and of charm into the starkness of military life.

The utilization of women in the IDF represents the outcome of policy decisions linked both to domestic Israeli politics and the requirements of national security. There is a complex and delicate sociopolitical balance among the demands of the religious political parties that oppose military service for women, the majority of Israeli society that holds traditional conservative values with regard to sex role definition, and the unusual military manpower requirements of the IDF. This balance has been strikingly stable since the formation of the IDF in 1948, but in the contemporary period it is undergoing change leading to strain and political fragmentation.

There is conflict between the policies of excluding women from combat and releasing married women and mothers from the reserves and the new practice--

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<sup>67</sup> The military roles played by Israeli women, especially during the War of Independence, are in many respects parallel to those filled by women on the American frontier and during the American Revolution. See DePauw, L. G. Women in the American Revolution, forthcoming in Armed Forces and Society.



resulting largely from manpower needs--of opening to women some technical, non-traditional military jobs in direct combat support fields. These jobs require extra training time and are vital during war. Extra men must be trained to replace these women, and there is a shortage in numbers of men. In addition, with the nature of modern warfare, persons in the second or third lines can find themselves in combat during war. These strains notwithstanding, we would contend that this programmed expansion of women's roles in the IDF over the past 10 years, to include direct combat support roles, constitutes more substantive, egalitarian achievement than was demonstrated by those women who participated on a one-time basis in combat under the duress of external threat.

This study confirms Goldman's observation that advanced industrial democratic nations slowly are expanding the role of women in the military. Such decisions are made gradually and with an element of compromise.<sup>68</sup> It is true that the uniqueness of Israeli history, coupled with the lack of any systematic survey data or performance analysis of mixed-sex units during combat periods, makes it impossible to anticipate how U.S. women would perform in mixed-sex combat units based on the Israeli experience in the War of Independence.

In a more general vein, the investigation of women in combat in Israel suggests a working hypothesis that can be used in looking at other nations. It appears that if a military organization in a country with a multiparty system of government (a country that must be sensitive to an electorate) must conscript women, or utilize a large number of women volunteers in its armed forces to meet manpower requirements, it will define women's military status as "noncombatant," despite the actual nature of the roles.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> See Goldman, N. The utilization of women in the armed forces of industrialized nations. Sociological Symposium, Spring 1977. Also Goldman, N., & Stites, R. The utilization of women in combat in the armed forces of Great Britain, World War I through 1980, this report.

<sup>69</sup> During World War II, the government of Great Britain insisted on defining as noncombatant the roles of women in anti-aircraft units, although these women served in mixed-sex units and did everything except fire the guns; see Goldman, N., & Stites, R. (see note 68). Several thousand American women soldiers received combat pay during the Vietnam war, and today in Korea, U.S. women soldiers are stationed within 2 miles of the DMZ. Although their jobs are noncombat ones, a war between North and South Korea could involve them in combat.

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