AD-782 923

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE DEFENSE FORCE OF ISRAEL

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31 May 1974

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE (When Data Entered)

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE		READ INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE COMPLETING FORM
1. REPORT NUMBER	2. GOVT ACCESSION NO.	3. RECIPIENT'S CATALOG NUMBER AD 782923
4. TITLE (and Subtitle) THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE DEFENSE FORCE OF ISRAEL		5. TYPE OF REPORT & PERIOD COVERED Individual Research Project 6. PERFORMING ORG. REPORT NUMBER
7. AUTHOR(s) COL Verna J. Dickerson, WAC		8. CONTRACT OR GRANT NUMBER(s)
9. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS US Army War College Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013		10. PROGRAM ELEMENT, PROJECT, TASK AREA & WORK UNIT NUMBER
11. CONTROLLING OFFICE NAME AND ADDRESS Same as Item 9.		12. REPORT DATE 31 May 1974 13. NUMBER OF PAGES 82
14. MONITORING AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS(if different from Controlling Office)		15. SECURITY CLASS. (of this report) Unclassified 15a. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE

16. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of this Report)

Approved for public release; distribution unlimited.

17. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of the abstract entered in Block 20, if different from Report)

18. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

19. KEY WORDS (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number)

20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number)

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USAWC MILITARY RESEARCH PROGRAM PAPER

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE DEFENSE FORCE OF ISRAEL

INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH PROJECT

by

Colonel Verna J. Dickerson
Women's Army Corps

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The swiftly expanding role of women in the United States Armed Forces is a subject of great interest today, both inside and outside the military. It is of interest inside the military because there are many decisions yet to be made as to the limits that should (or should not) be set on the degree of integration of women. It is of interest outside the military because the decisions are coming in an era of concern about equal rights and opportunities.

The questions that are being raised are difficult to answer, because there is little hard data to consider. People are asking not only what jobs women can do, but what they should do. There are some who fear that widespread integration of women into jobs formerly reserved for men could seriously weaken the effectiveness of the military. Others have no such reservations and think that women should serve even as combat fighters. These are the extreme views, but there is much debate that revolves around them.

Is there any way to prove who is right in answering any of the questions except by trial? Probably not, but this does not mean that there should be no attempt to discover and weigh relevant factors and make judgments. And, certainly, when new steps are being taken, it is relevant to inquire into the experience of other nations. In particular, it is appropriate and timely to study the policies that have developed in Israel, and to examine the reasons for them.

In the 26 years since Israel gained independence, that nation has never been free of war or the threat of war. The Israel Defense Force (IDF) from its inception always has been in readiness for battle, and it always has been comprised of both men and women. What tasks do the women perform? Is there widespread integration of the women in units, installations and activities? Do they fight in combat? Is there any distinction between men and women in opportunities for advancement? Although the IDF makes no secrets of its policies, they are not generally understood outside the country.

In the United States, there is a common tendency to make false assumptions as to the role of women in the Israel Defense Force. In newspaper and magazine articles about the new era for US military women, it is usual to find at least one quote from an individual drawing a comparison between the tasks performed by US and Israeli women--and it is rare that the statement is true. Unfortunately, when misconceptions become commonplace they sometimes are presented as "known facts" even in discussions among people who can influence policy.

The purpose of this report is twofold. It is intended (1) to clarify misconceptions about the role of women in the Israeli military, and (2) to examine the women's role in some detail, with a view toward developing an understanding of the reasons for IDF policies.

There is no intention here of presenting a thesis that the US military should change or establish any policies so as to follow the

example of the IDF, and there is no attempt by the author either to praise or to criticize IDF practices. It should become readily apparent to any thoughtful reader of this report that the situations are very different in the two countries, dictating different approaches to problems. In point of fact, many of the problems are different.

Virtually all the material in this report has been obtained by personal interviews with the people concerned and personal visits to the sites described during a one-month stay in Israel. Much of the material was written in Israel, so that the principal interviewees could be given an opportunity whenever possible to review and correct errors in fact and implication. In some sections, the material contains viewpoints of individuals critical of official policies; however, there was not one request from the IDF, either officially or unofficially, to eliminate or temper the criticisms.

The report has been organized into chapters that can be read in sequence or as individual "articles." Chapter II presents an overview of the role of women in the Israeli military and gives the reader an in-depth understanding of the other chapters.

The concluding chapter explains the reasons for the expansion of the role of women in the United States Armed Forces and specifically addresses some of the questions that are being raised as to future policies, relating them, as applicable, to the experience and views of the Israel Defense Force.

CHAPTER II

OVERVIEW: UTILIZATION OF WOMEN IN THE ISRAELI MILITARY

Israel is the only country in the world where there is full-scale conscription of women as well as men into the military. The women are neither trained for combat nor assigned to combat roles, but some serve with combat units. In the Six Day War of 1967, and in the October War of 1973 and its aftermath of sporadic hostilities, women have been exposed to artillery fire. One woman was killed and several injured in the October War.

On the surface, then, it would appear that the Israel Defense Force (IDF) is more accepting and more liberal in its assignments of women in its ranks than the United States Armed Forces. In the US military, women have never been drafted, and they cannot be assigned to combat units.

A conclusion that the IDF is ahead of the US military in regard to equality of opportunities for women can only be valid, however, if conscription and proximity to combat are the sole criteria for judgment. In many ways, the US military has a far more liberal outlook in its utilization of women. In fact, some of the more senior women in CHEN, the Women's Corps of IDF, are frankly envious of their counterparts in the US Army, Navy, and Air Force.[1] They would like to see the IDF move in the same direction as that taken

[1]The IDF is a unified force, under one Chief of Staff. All women in the IDF are under the command of the Director of CHEN, who is directly responsible to the Chief of Staff.

by the US military in the last two years, specifically, opening more schools and jobs to women and more opportunities for advancement and status. It must be pointed out that this is not the viewpoint expressed by the Director of CHEN, COL Ruth Muscal. When she discusses the training and assignments that are available to women in the IDF, she acknowledges that they are limited in scope, but she is in complete agreement with the official reasons for the limitations.

In general, Colonel Muscal said the tasks performed by the women of CHEN are administrative, technical, and service duties that require either no specialized training or usually no more than one or two months of specialized training. Most of the enlisted women are assigned to units immediately on completion of their four weeks of basic training, and officers are assigned to duty on completion of officer training. The latter part of officer training is tailored to the future assignments of the graduates. If women enter the service with appropriate education or work experience, their skills are utilized wherever possible; otherwise, most of them are expected to learn their duties on the job. When manpower shortages dictate the need, selected women are given extensive training in certain specialties, such as computer processing, in return for an agreement to extend their term of service.

As Colonel Muscal explained it, the IDF feels that it is not a good investment to give extensive and costly training to women who are conscripted because (1) their compulsory service is only 20 months, as compared to the men's requirement of three years, and

(2) they are automatically released from compulsory service when they marry, even though they may desire to remain in the military. The IDF also is reluctant to make a costly investment in the training of women who enter the regular force after completion of their compulsory service.[2] Women in the regular force are not automatically released because of marriage or pregnancy, but they can be released because of marriage if there is hardship, and they are released upon request if they become pregnant. Because of this, and because women soldiers who are wives and mothers or expectant mothers cannot be rotated in assignments as freely as men, the IDF view is that it cannot rely on the availability of women in its planning for future needs in highly trained personnel.

"Certainly, a woman with children is much less mobile than a man," Colonel Muscal said. "A man can be sent for one year to the Sinai and for one year to the Golan, and he can return home on pass or leave and visit his family. A woman with children cannot be sent to such places."

In training individuals for future needs, the IDF considers both active and reserve requirements. All men and women who are conscripted are assigned to reserve units upon completion of their active duty unless discharged for physical disability or other reasons. Men must remain in the reserve until they are 56 years old. Women are released if their skills are not needed, or when they have children, or when they are 34 years old.

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[2]Because the draft is universal in Israel, virtually all individuals who enter the military service are initially in the conscription force, not the regular force.

"It is important to remember that the IDF is a relatively small force with no money to waste, that it must always be ready for action, and that it depends heavily on its reserve in emergencies," Colonel Muscal said. "Even though I am the Director of CHEN, when it is a question of whether to build up the training of the men or the women, I say the larger investment should go to the men. They are the ones who remain in the service for at least half their lives, whether they wish it or not."

There are about 80 different jobs that women can hold, and they are widely varied within the limitations described. The great majority of enlisted women do all kinds of secretarial and clerical work; serve in communications as telephone, teleprinter, radio and radar operators, and are medical orderlies in clinics and hospitals. Women also are parachute packers, drivers (cars only) and gate guards (always in conjunction with men), and they augment the civil police in their everyday practice of setting up roadblocks on highways to spotcheck foreign vehicles. Enlisted women who volunteer for it may be assigned to relatively non-military work, such as service in the collective settlements known as the kibbutzim, or in the isolated outposts of the Fighting Pioneer Youth, the Nahal, or as teachers in small-town public schools or immigration centers. Women officers serve as commanders over women, or have administrative or service-oriented jobs. They often are assigned as welfare officers in units. Of course, women who enter the service with professional skills, such as engineers, doctors, and nurses, are assigned in their areas of expertise.

The rank of colonel is the highest that has been attained by a woman. The Director of CHEN is always a colonel. Today there are two other colonels, both former directors of CHEN, who are soon to retire. They are COL Stella Levy and COL Dvora Tomer.

According to COL Muscal, there is no legal reason why a woman cannot be advanced to the rank of general, but it has not been done because women have never held positions that called for it. There is little likelihood that it will happen.

"I sit in on conferences at the high policymaking levels, so that I may know what is going on, but I do not participate in them except when I am asked for advice about the utilization of women," she said. "I have neither the training nor the combat experience that would qualify me to make a contribution to the overall policies."[3]

Would she like to be a general?

"No," she said. "I have a husband and two children, and the demands of serving as a general officer would be too costly to my family life. Colonel Tomer has expressed the same feeling. She said that even if she were offered a higher position she would not want it, because her family means more to her."

Colonel Levy, who set something of a record by serving as Director of CHEN for seven years, would have liked advancement to higher rank and responsibilities. She is divorced and has no children.

Although the limitations in the availability of schooling and scope of assignments for women are more stringent in the IDF than in

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[3]Women do not attend any of the IDF schools in tactics or strategic warfare.

the US military, the IDF is, in some ways, decidedly freer in its integration of women in assignments. One example that would be striking to members of the US military is the assignment of a woman as officer-in-charge of the physical education program at a paratrooper base. In addition to supervising the base program, she routinely conducts calisthenics for male officers. The Israeli officers do not think it strange. As one man said, "She is an expert in physical education. Why shouldn't she be a coach?" Asked whether any of the paratroopers objected to supervision by a woman teacher, he shrugged and replied: "That would be petty." Certainly, he said, women do not teach combat subjects. "No one, male or female, should teach subjects in which he or she has no experience."

The assignment of women (and men with low medical profiles) to administrative, clerical, signal, and medical jobs in combat units is an accepted and widespread practice. The women are always assigned in groups of seven or more, have their own CHEN commander, and live in separate quarters. They are assigned at brigade level, but the brigade commander can place them with smaller units at his discretion. In the smaller units, the women have their own noncommissioned officers. They are carefully selected--they must be physically hardy and emotionally steady. Women have the option of declining combat unit assignments, but they rarely exercise the option. On the contrary, Colonel Muscal said they want to be with the combat units. Whenever combat units are moving forward into battle, the women remain behind until the situation is stabilized. If women are in a unit that is subjected to daily shellfire, as occurs now and again

on the Golan Heights at the time of this writing, the nurses and signal specialists remain on the job. All other women are temporarily evacuated.

"The idea of evacuation is not that it is more important to save the girls than the boys, but to save as many lives as possible," Colonel Muscal said. "Administrative and clerical workers are not needed in such circumstances."

All women in the military are given weapons training in their basic course for the purpose of self defense and for guard duty. Outside the metropolitan areas, it is not uncommon to see them carrying their Uzi submachine guns while hitchhiking. (In the small country of Israel, many soldiers either live at home or are within visiting distance of their homes, and the citizenry considers it a moral obligation to give them rides.) In the territory of the West Bank of the Jordan River, which was acquired by the Israelis in 1967, men and women of the IDF are required by orders to carry weapons at all times except when they are in guarded encampments or settlements.

Why are women not trained and assigned in fighting roles in combat units?

"When we had no choice, women were fighters," Colonel Muscal said. "Women fought in the underground movements during the years of British control, and they served together with the men in every way, in combat units with combat tasks, in the War of Independence in 1948. You will never hear us argue that women cannot be good fighters.

"However, once Israel became a state and the IDF was created, it was decided that both men and women would be conscripted but that women would not fight. The fact that girls usually are not physically as strong and well suited as men to the rigors of ground combat is only part of the reason they are not trained to be fighters. More importantly, as I said earlier, we do not want to give extensive training to women because we are very likely to lose them to marriage and motherhood. While basic training for women is only four weeks, for men it is four months, and specialized training in modern technological warfare can require more time than that."[4]

COL Muscal emphasized that the IDF does not question the emotional strength of women to perform any tasks, in or out of combat.

"Our girls who serve with combat units have no higher incidence of emotional reactions than boys. In crises, there is no time to be emotional. Afterward, there may be some cases of shock or hysteria. Sometimes there are boys who react very badly. Sometimes girls are severely shaken, particularly when they are told that friends have been killed."

The IDF feels that it is being "realistic" rather than "prejudiced" in denying women extensive training.

"It is natural for women to want to be married and have families," Colonel Muscal said. "We do think it is important for women to have a share in their country's defense, and it is good for them to mingle

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[4]Until 1956, women were trained as pilots and navigators, and flew troop transports, medical evacuation planes, and in reconnaissance squadrons in the Sinai-Suez campaign. In 1957, new regulations prohibited such training on the grounds that the cost was too great in proportion to the retention rate of women.

and work together in the military with men and women of varied cultural backgrounds. However, the general attitude is that military service, while an important stage in life for young women, is a prelude for most of them to fulfilling their primary social roles as mothers."

Certainly, she said, the women's tasks in the IDF are vital.

"Why should anyone look down on secretaries and clerks and telephone operators? The IDF would be helpless without them. There is no job that is too small to be important."

Colonel Muscal said it should be mentioned that the IDF does give some enlisted women time off to attend school (up to eight hours a week) while in the military, and it gives a few of its best young CHEN officers the opportunity to study full-time at universities.

> We prefer to give the latter opportunity to commanders of CHEN, because they are the ones who do tasks that men cannot do, and they are the ones we want to keep. They receive full pay while attending the universities, and can earn B.A. degrees in subjects of their own choice. They must agree to repay the military with two years of service for every year in school. They have to think it over carefully, and so do we.

There is a very small feminist movement in the country that has voiced objections to the "discrimination" against women in the military, claiming that the women are only a kind of "Kelly girls in uniform." Sulamit Aloni, an avowed feminist and a member of parliament since the 1973 Knesset elections, blames it on "the pervasive influence of the Orthodox religious elements" in government. She says that the religious elements have never really reconciled

themselves to the idea of women in the military, and have only been willing to accept the concept in an increasingly diluted form.

However, even those few senior women in the military who would like to see women have more career opportunities do not agree with the feminists in blaming the Orthodox elements for the limitations. "It is cultural conservatism that holds us back," one officer said. "It is not religion in itself. Our people are from many countries and many backgrounds, but most of them are steeped in tradition. Most of them think that woman's place is in the kitchen."

Indeed, virtually all of the enlisted women and young officers seem to take their subordinated role in the military for granted, even though they are not always satisfied with their assignments.

"It is just as well that we have no significant 'women's lib' movement in Israel, at least in the military," Colonel Muscal said. "In the IDF, we have neither the time nor the money to play around with it. Perhaps in a larger and more affluent country, which is at peace with its neighbors, it is feasible and worthwhile. But not in Israel."

CHAPTER III

CONSCRIPTION AND "SPECIAL TREATMENT" OF WOMEN

In Israel, everyone refers to the women in the defense force affectionately as "girl soldiers." It seems appropriate, for most of them are 18 and 19 years old. Even the lieutenants usually are teenagers. Pert and self-confident in their mini-skirted khaki uniforms, they are a constant reminder that the name of their corps, CHEN, is an acronym that spells the Hebrew word for "charm."

On completion of their compulsory service by the time they are 20, they will set out to look for jobs, or enroll in universities, or get married. And others will take their places. The military does not encourage them to reenlist. Through conscription they are readily replaced, and the new inductees receive less pay. Since most of them do tasks that require a minimum of specialized training, the steady turnover is accomplished with little disturbance.

Conscription is the one big factor that accounts for many of the differences between the Israel Defense Force (IDF) and the US military in their approaches toward training and utilization of women. The US military is not empowered to draft its personnel and therefore it must strive to attract volunteers, and to retain them after their initial enlistment. It has learned that promises of training opportunities are an effective inducement to volunteers, and that job satisfaction is crucial to retention. So it is more inclined to invest time and

money in the training of women and to give them opportunities for advancement. It is, in short, more inclined to encourage women to think of the military as a career.

It is because of conscription that most of the enlisted women and junior officers in CHEN are under 20 years old, or barely 20. At the age of 17, all Israeli Jewish boys and girls in the country are given physical and mental examinations to determine their suitability for military service.[1] If they are qualified, they may enlist before they are 18, with their parents' consent. Otherwise, unless they receive exemptions or deferments, they are drafted at the age of 18.

Even though the draft is "universal," exemptions are granted to girls more readily than boys. A girl who is married is not conscripted. A girl from a "very religious" family, i.e., an Orthodox family, can obtain an exemption without difficulty. (The Orthodox are not opposed to fighting, but many object to the relatively free intermingling of boys and girls in the military.) Also, the number of girls conscripted at any one time depends on the manpower needs of the IDF, and so the education level of girls is a varying factor in determining their eligibility for conscription. Whenever possible, the IDF prefers to draft only girls with high school diplomas or at least two years of high school education. At present, it accepts them without a high school education, providing they have completed elementary school and have been working girls, and not idle and aimless, since school.

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[1]Israeli Arabs are not conscripted.

The girls receive basic training at a military base near Tel Aviv, a large, rambling installation with a curious mixture of very old and very new buildings. The old buildings with curling paint and sometimes sagging frames are remnants of the days of British control. They were built by the British and look much like the old "temporary" barracks that were constructed by the US military during World War II. The Israelis are apologetic about their appearance, and hope to raze and replace them someday, but now they utilize them to the fullest degree possible. In the CHEN training area, a recently completed dormitory for girls has been dubbed "The Hilton."

The Director of CHEN, COL Ruth Muscal, is matter-of-fact in explaining that girl soldiers are given more consideration than men in their billeting. (In the defense headquarters area in Tel Aviv, for instance, there is a girls' dormitory that is new, and equipped with conveniences such as laundry rooms, standing directly alongside an old and weathered barracks for men which is, to say the least, austere.)

"There is no question that we give the girls special treatment when we can," Colonel Muscal said. "Girls can get along under tough conditions, but they have a greater need for privacy than men, and must give more attention to personal hygiene. Besides, we don't want to force them into a life that robs them of their feminity. Girls lend a special quality to the military atmosphere. They soften it, and encourage sensitivity."

In their four-week course of basic training, the girls are busy about 10 hours a day studying subjects such as history and organization of the IDF, military administration, current events, and first aid, and learning to use and take care of rifles and submachine guns. They take physical training, learn to drill, and get a taste of living under field conditions.

"Most important of all, they get used to military discipline and get the feeling of working together," Colonel Muscal said. "Sometimes it is not easy for them. Most of our girls were born in Israel, but many of their parents were immigrants. So they represent the cultures of many lands. The IDF is a great melting pot."

Even the families of the girls share in the melting pot experience, when they converge upon the military base to witness the graduation parade of the basic trainees. As many as 1000 girls may be graduated at any one time, and their families are almost all within easy travel distance to the base. So the parade ground is surrounded by spectators, and the air is festive. The girls are happy and proud. The ceremony is dignified, but punctuated by generous applause, and after it is over the families rush onto the parade ground to hug and kiss their daughters. Whether they are from Argentina, or South Africa, or Russia, or the United States, whether they are educated or illiterate, the mothers and fathers on this day feel very close.

After basic training the girls are given their assignments, based on the needs of the IDF, the recommendations of their CHEN instructors and commanders, and, whenever possible, their own desires. Every

effort is made to place them near their homes, if they want to live with their parents instead of in military quarters. Once they have completed their training, girls may go home every night, even when they are assigned to field units, if the distance is not too great. Men in field units are not accorded the same privilege, because of their combat responsibilities.[2]

Sometimes the girls are dissatisfied when they learn of their assignments, either because they have not been given the branches or jobs they requested, or because their assignments do not seem "important."

"They know that some sel tivity is exercised in the induction process, and this raises their expectations," Colonel Muscal said. "That is why we try to teach them that every job is important in the IDF."

Certainly, there are many girls who are delighted with their prospects. Most go immediately from basic training to their jobs, and learn while they work to be specialists in administrative, technical, and service tasks. It is not felt that they need special courses for many assignments, such as pay clerks, bookkeepers, librarians, or canteen clerks. If they have education and special aptitudes, they may be assigned as draftsmen, photographers, translators, or musicians. Some go to schools, perhaps to learn secretarial skills, or electronics, or to become officers. (They must be high

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[2]A young CHEN officer asked the author to explain how the US military managed to assign its girl soldiers within commuting distance of their homes. "It must be difficult in so large a country," she said.

school graduates to be considered for officer training.) This list is far from complete. It is only representative of the types of work they may do.

Interestingly, there is some question about the advisability of permitting women to be drivers, even though they are limited to driving cars and not trucks. As one CHEN officer explained it, male officers are reluctant to send women drivers on errands into combat areas, or into areas where there may be guerrilla infiltration, particularly at night. Also, as one CHEN officer said: "Whenever war breaks out, we become an army on wheels. It is almost no exaggeration to say that the drivers are called even before the Chief of Staff."

Once a woman is assigned to a branch, the branch assignment is permanent, whether it is to one of the corps of the GHQ such as Para-Infantry, Artillery, or Electronics, or to the GHQ Navy or Air Forces. The women wear the insignia of their branches, along with the insignia of CHEN.

Although assigned to branches, they remain under the control of the Director of CHEN. Colonel Muscal is both an advisor to the Chief of Staff and the commander of all the women in the IDF. She advises the Chief of Staff on all policies concerning women in regard to conscription, training, assignments, promotions, living conditions, uniforms and equipment, medical treatment, and discipline. In each of the various commands of the military, i.e., geographical commands

and specialized commands such as the Nahal, she has subordinate CHEN commanders, down through unit levels. The CHEN troop commanders oversee the work and social life of the girls, and are responsible for their discipline.

CHEN troop command is a career field in itself. In contrast to the traditional practice in the US Women's Army Corps, CHEN officers are not given alternating assignments of troop duty and staff duty. They are either troop officers or administrative officers throughout most of their service. There are exceptions, when necessary.

Colonel Muscal has performed almost all the assignments that a CHEN troop commander can hold. She was drafted in 1955, and by the next year was a CHEN commander of about 200 girls at one base. Next, while still a second lieutenant, she became a commander of several hundred girls in an area that included several camps. As a first lieutenant, she was deputy commander of CHEN in the Northern Command. In 1958, she left the military and went to a university, where she earned a degree in education and Hebrew literature. She returned to the IDF in 1961, as a captain and assistant to the CHEN commander of the Central Command. Then she became a major and served as assistant to the Director of CHEN. Finally, before becoming Director of CHEN, she served several years as a lieutenant colonel and CHEN commander of the Central Command. She was named Director of CHEN in 1973, and probably will serve a 3-year tour before retiring from the military.[3]

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[3]In the IDF, the retirement age is 40, and anyone who has served at least 10 years on active duty is eligible for a pension. The amount of the pension depends on the individual's rank and years of service. Before retirement, an officer may attend a civilian school for one year, in preparation for a career in civilian life, and receive full military pay during that year. If the officer does not desire to attend school, he or she will receive full pay for six months while establishing a career in civilian life.

Colonel Muscal thinks it is very necessary for women to have their own chain of command in the military.

"Women have problems which are best handled by women," she said. "On the one hand, we want to see to it that they do not take advantage of their sex in seeking special treatment, and yet, on the other hand, we do want them to receive special consideration in some matters."

One example of special consideration is in the area of medical care. Girls are provided the option of seeing female doctors instead of male doctors if that is their preference. Although women who are doctors in the military attend to both men and women as patients, they hold sick call for women only during specified hours. Also, the IDF has contractual arrangements with civilian women doctors, and the girls can see them "even if it is only to talk."

"We think this is very important," Colonel Muscal said. "Some girls are shy, and will not take their problems to male doctors. We never want a girl to fail to seek help when she needs it."

There also is a regulation allowing women to have a three-month leave of absence for pregnancy.[4] If they are eligible and desire to remain in the military, they start the leave of absence at the beginning of the ninth month of pregnancy. In addition to the three months allowed, they may take an additional month of normal leave time. They wear civilian maternity clothes, not uniforms, during pregnancy.

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[4]This regulation is in accordance with the law in Israel, which requires all employers to grant leaves of absence to women for pregnancy.

Girls who have problems and are considered unsuitable for military service are discharged, but they are not cast out of the service without concern.

"We always help women who are being discharged because of problems, whatever the reason," Colonel Muscal said. "As you know, some individuals are simply not suitable or adaptable to military life, but that does not mean that they are not important as human beings. We have special groups who work with them, before and after their release from service, and try to help them with their readjustment to civilian life. In some instances, we give them an opportunity to study for a civilian job before they are released from the military."

For the great majority of the girls who are conscripted, Colonel Muscal feels that service in the IDF is a valuable experience.

"It teaches them to be independent; it helps them grow up. And, because they have done their service in the IDF, in later years they are understanding about their husbands' obligations in the reserve, and they are knowledgeable about what happens to their children when they are drafted."

CHAPTER IV

EXAMPLES OF WOMEN AT WORK: PARACHUTE RIGGERS, SCHOOL TEACHERS, AND PIONEER SETTLERS

Most of the women conscripted into the Israel Defense Force fulfill their active duty obligation by serving in specifically military jobs. Some, however, serve in teaching units or in Nahal (Fighting Pioneer Youth) units to meet other needs of the nation. Wearing the IDF uniform, the teachers work in public schools and immigration centers, or teach language and literacy classes for male soldiers; the Nahal girls (and boys) establish border settlements, and work in kibbutzim where there is a shortage of agricultural labor.

The women who serve in strictly military jobs have one purpose: they free men for combat roles. There is no branch of service and no type of ground unit to which they cannot be assigned as non-combat personnel. (Although they are in the Navy and Air Force, they are not permitted to serve on ships or fly aircraft. It is felt that duty on ships would put the women into too close a living relationship with the men, creating a risk of incidents that would draw public disfavor. Duty on aircraft requires highly specialized training, and the IDF does not make costly investments in the training of women.)

The assignment of women to jobs to free men for combat roles is evident at a paratrooper training base near Tel Aviv. Throughout the base, women work at many tasks primarily as administrative and clerical workers and as parachute riggers, and all wear the branch insignia and

red berets of paratroopers. As mentioned in an earlier chapter, a woman officer is in charge of the physical training program at the base.

PARACHUTE RIGGERS

Parachute maintenance, repair, packing, and inspection are jobs "for women only" at the base, and LTC David Ben-David, commander of parachute riggers, says that he would prefer women for the work even if there were no problems in acquiring manpower. He believes they are particularly well suited to tasks that require meticulous attention.

"We are extremely careful in selecting personnel for parachute rigging," he said. "Women can volunteer for it, upon completion of basic training, but we take only about 25 of every 100 who apply."

Colonel Ben-David heads a team that selects the women for the work. The team visits the CHEN training center to interview volunteers, and looks for individuals with "the right attitude" as well as certain mental and physical qualifications.

"We want women who are known to be responsible and hard-working, who are high in self-esteem, and who are well adjusted socially and have good will toward others. In addition, they must have completed at least 11 years of school, and be strong and healthy."

Without a trace of self-consciousness, Colonel Ben-David said he also makes inquiries as to the menstrual history of the volunteers.

"We do not want women who have a history of difficulty with their monthly periods," he said. "If they have unusual discomfort several

days a month, then they may not be alert and attentive in their work. Actually, we find that if the volunteers meet the other criteria, they usually are the type who have few problems with menstruation."

The building in which the parachute riggers work is fully modern, with automated lifts and conveyor belts, so that the women have a minimum of heavy physical tasks. In fact, the only times that they lift parachutes are when they transfer them between carts and work tables.

To set a pleasant atmosphere, the interior walls of the building are decorated with pictures of flowers, and a sound system provides background music. There is a large and comfortably furnished lounge for half-hour coffee breaks in the mornings. The women work only six hours a day, quitting at 3 o'clock.

"This is not the Israeli Army," Colonel Ben-David said, smiling. "Insofar as possible, we try to see to it that no one who works with the parachutes is ever tired, either mentally or physically."

The parachute riggers and the women officers who are assigned to the base are the only women who are allowed to learn to jump. They are not required to do so, but about 80 percent want the training.

"They jump only for sport," Colonel Ben-David said. "It is a kind of reward for their work. We see no reason at all to make jumping a requirement for women, even when they are parachute riggers. Those who fold parachutes know that the men's lives are in their hands."

Like the men, the women who jump wear wings that are larger than the non-jumpers' wings. One woman, who has been with the paratroopers five years, wears an emblem indicating she has jumped 50 times.

A jump instructor remarked that he likes to have women among his trainees.

"If is good for morale," he said. "When women are jumping, I always put them first in line . . . then I know that no man will hesitate to leave the aircraft."

SCHOOL TEACHERS

Perhaps the least "military" of all the jobs that women do in the IDF is that of teaching in public schools and immigration centers in young and growing villages and towns throughout the country. In this work they have no counterparts in the US military. Their assignments are considered vital to the interests of the IDF as well as the country, however.

"In certain regions of the country, particularly where new immigrants are settling, there simply are not enough civilian teachers," said MAJ Judy Greenberger, who is commander of the women in teaching units in the south. "It is important to the IDF that the children get an education, because before long they will be soldiers."

It is important, also, to help immigrants of all ages learn to speak, read and write the Hebrew language, she said, so that they can adjust more easily to life in Israel and become useful and productive

citizens. This service is provided through the military because it is easier and less costly for the government to acquire and organize teachers through conscription than through a civilian program.

The town of Ashdod in the south of Israel, in the sandy Negev region, is a good example of a town that relies heavily on soldier-teachers. It is a young town with more than 20 schools, where 95 percent of the pupils are immigrants. Only eight years ago, all the school teachers were soldiers. Now there are a number of civilian teachers, but not enough to handle the teaching load.

All the solder-teachers are high school graduates, and some are college trained. (Women are allowed temporary draft deferments if they want to study for teaching certificates.) Interestingly, the principal of one elementary school remarked that she prefers the soldier-teachers who have no college training.

"I can tell the young ones how I want them to teach, and they will listen," she said. "In six to 10 months they become very good teachers. The college trained teachers naturally want to apply what they learned in school, even when I advise them to take other approaches."

The reason college training is not always applicable, she said, is that the main thrust of the teaching effort in schools heavily populated by immigrant children is different than that in other schools.

"Our first concern is to impart certain values to the children. The children come from different social backgrounds, and some have no concept of Western ethics. We feel that influencing their outlook on life takes precedence over school subjects."

Women who serve as soldier-teachers are not assigned to jobs near their homes. This is an intentional contradiction of the usual policy of the IDF—ordinarily, every effort is made to assign women near their homes, so that they can live with their families and commute to work.

Major Greenberger explained: "We want the soldier-teachers to become involved in community life. They help organize and operate children's clubs, and they are regarded as consultants by many of the adult immigrants. Even though our girls are young, a mother may come to them to ask what to do about a crying baby. Or they may be asked for information about the rights of immigrants. They are well received in immigrant communities, and highly respected."

PIONEER SETTLERS

The Nahal Gitit is an encampment of box-like buildings high on a rocky mountain, with a spectacular eastward view of the Jordan Valley, the Jordan River, and the Jordanian mountains beyond. It can be reached only by a narrow road that climbs upward 14 kilometers and is at some points scarcely more than a dirt path cleared by a bulldozer.

"Maybe it seems like the end of the world, but it's home to us," a young soldier-settler said, as he extended a greeting.

Nahal settlements are always started in isolated areas, for their purpose is to establish an Israeli presence in the administered Arab territories on the West Bank of the Jordan River and in the north of

Sinai. They are a military project, but they receive financial assistance from the Jewish Agency.

Service in the Nahal is voluntary. Prior to entering the military, boys and girls in youth movements in Israel can form groups with the specific intent of becoming Nahal settlers. They are inducted into the IDF as groups, and spend their first six months of service on kibbutzim, both to help the kibbutzim and to learn about settlement life. Next, they go to basic training, and then to Nahal settlements. Usually there are three or four groups at each settlement.

Life in a border settlement is not easy, and sometimes it is boring, but the young soldiers at the Nahal Gitit said they thought it was "much more normal" than ordinary military life.

"Here we have a community life," one youth said. "The boys work in the vegetable fields and pull guard duty, and the girls cook and do the laundry."

They have a recreation hall, where they have movies about once a week, and where they can have folk dances, meetings, and parties. If they are interested in arts and crafts, the Jewish Agency will furnish supplies.

"In a way, it is like going to summer camp, except it lasts longer," a girl said.

And yet it is not like summer camp. There is a bunker where someone must always stand by the radio telephone to maintain contact with other settlements. There is an arms room well supplied with

rifles, machine guns, and mortars. And there is a constant awareness that many Arabs on the West Bank are hostile to their presence.

It was only a few hours after the conversation described above that tragedy struck the Nahal Gitit. That evening, on April 23, 1974, seven soldiers started down the mountain road in a command car. The car struck a trip wire; it activated a land mine. Five of the youths were killed.

CHAPTER V

THE STORY OF A CHEN OFFICER: MAJOR KARNI KAV

Karni Kav is an alert and good humored young woman major in the Tel Aviv foreign liaison office of the Israel Defense Force (IDF). Everyone calls her by her given name, which means "my ray of sunshine." Although it is no secret, not everyone knows that the name was her mother's underground pseudonym in the days before Israel became an independent nation.

In fact, at the age of 18 months, Karni was a participant in a battle of Jewish underground forces against Arabs in the streets of Jaffa, ancient city on the southern edge of Tel Aviv. She was strapped to the back of her mother, who fought with rifle, pistol, and hand grenades. The battle was won. The Jews overcame the Arabs, who had been shelling them in Tel Aviv from the tops of their towers.

Today, women do not fight alongside their men in Israel, but Karni has served with a combat unit. She was with a brigade of paratroopers that stormed Jerusalem in the Six Day War of 1967. It was her job to keep an account of the casualties, and this meant talking to confused young soldiers with grievous wounds, and searching corpses for identification tags. Karni still wears the red beret of the paratroopers, and she is a devoted admirer of the man who commanded her brigade, Mordechai Gur, now a general and the newly appointed Chief of Staff of the IDF.

To talk to Karni about her family and her experiences is to learn something of the history of the new Israel.

Her parents were born in Poland, and immigrated separately as children to the British-mandated territory of Palestine in the 1930s. Her mother, Hannah Dinarit, immigrated legally as a 12-year-old in the early part of the decade, before the British closed the door to newcomers. Her father, Yehuda Bilu, slipped in illegally at the age of 17 on a coal freighter. It was just before the start of World War II.

"Many Jews were trying to immigrate to Palestine because of conditions in Europe, and because they wanted to help establish a new Israel," Karni said. "The British, however, had decided to limit immigration. They were having their problems with militant nationalists, and didn't want the Jewish element to grow bigger. They also were under pressure from the Arabs to stop immigration."

When Karni's father arrived, along with other youths, he and his friends were received by young people who hid them overnight in synagogues. The next day he was sent to a small village, where he found work. He made contact with the underground movements that were fighting the British, and started learning to speak Hebrew and use weapons.

Bilu became an instructor in the Irgun, a resistance group, and it was in that group during World War II he met the girl he married. Hannah was a student in an officers' course--she already had completed basic training and noncommissioned officers' courses.

There were no separate courses for women. Alongside the men, the women learned to handle weapons, to fight in hand-to-hand combat, and to live in the field. Hannah also became an instructor in the Irgun.

Why did Hannah join the Irgun?

"When World War II broke out, the Jewish people felt they must get ready for any threat from the Germans," Karni explained. "Some joined the resistance movements, others joined the British Army. My mother chose the former."

Karni was born in 1945. The war in Europe had ended, but her parents remained in the resistance group. At the time of Karni's birth, her father was in jail as a terrorist.

"The resistance groups were still necessary," Karni said. "There had been some thought the British would leave after the war, but it became apparent that they would not, and they would not allow even the Jews from the camps in Europe to come as immigrants. In addition, there were Arab uprisings to drive the settled Jews out of the Palestine territory."

Although Karni cannot remember the events of the time, her mother has told her of them.

"People used to come and hide in our home," Karni said. "Once my mother's best girl friend came and hid in the toilet. British troops searched the house, but by some miracle they never opened the door to the toilet. My mother carried me back and forth near the

door, pretending to sing a lullaby in Polish. The soldiers didn't know it, but she was telling her friend what they were doing."

Karni's father never talked about his experiences. He was in and out of jail repeatedly. Whenever he was free, he was active in the underground. He fought in the War of Independence. After the State of Israel was proclaimed, he laid aside his arms. (Today he is a municipal manpower advisor to the mayor of Tel Aviv.)

Life became more settled for the family, but Karni's childhood was anything but tranquil. When she was 9 years old, her father was sent to South Africa to travel and give talks to encourage young people to immigrate to Israel. So Karni lived in Johannesburg for two years. By that time she had a brother, and they went to school, and began to acquire a facility for languages.

When they returned to Tel Aviv, Karni became a member of a movement called "Youth to Youth." Its purpose was social welfare. All through high school, Karni helped young people in the lower income quarters of the city, educating them and their families to healthier living standards, organizing activities for them, putting on shows in hospitals for children. The group also hosted youth from overseas. In the summers and on holidays, Karni worked on kibbutzim (outlying settlements). In 1962, she went with members of the Youth to Youth group on a cultural exchange trip, to give singing and dancing performances in France, Italy and Switzerland.

She was graduated from high school the next year at the age of 18, and the time had come for her to enter the military service. In Israel,

where both men and women are subject to compulsory service, there is no waiting and wondering about being called. Everyone eligible is drafted.

Karni went through basic training and was assigned as a secretary. The assignment was brief, however, because she was offered an opportunity to apply for training as an officer. She took three days of tests, was found to be qualified, and went to the three-month officers' course. She was scarcely 19 years old when she was assigned as commanding officer of about 200 women assigned to various bases throughout the district of the Central Command of the IDF.

"The girls did mostly clerical and communications work, and many of them lived at home with their families. Those who could not live at home stayed on the bases, and I drove and visited them. I listened to the girls' problems, advised them on their social lives, arranged lectures on a variety of topics, and did whatever necessary to try to keep them happy and efficient."

In handling problems, she was sometimes painfully aware of her own youth and inexperience.

"However, whenever I needed advice, I could always turn to my own commander, who was COL Ruth Muscal. She was, and is, an extremely able officer. As you know, today she is the director of CHEN, the women in the IDF."

Karni feels that her year as a young commanding officer helped her become more mature.

"It was a good year, but I would not want to do it again," she said.

On completion of her 20 months of compulsory service, she was released from active duty, and was assigned as the CHEN commander in a reserve paratrooper brigade. She began to make plans for a career in civilian life. She was offered a public relations position with the municipality of Tel Aviv, but she turned it down, choosing, instead, to enroll in Tel Aviv University.

"I wanted to pursue cultural studies," she said. "It was my hope someday to work in the foreign ministry in public relations or in translation."

To pay her way through school, she worked at temporary and part-time jobs as a secretary. All went well for almost two years, and then her university education was interrupted by war. It was 1967.

"When the Six Day War broke out in June, my brigade was called. Things happened very fast. I was told that we were going into combat--into Jerusalem. The paratroopers were going in by buses. At the outset, only the girls who would be useful in a combat environment were to follow, and they were to be brought in by sedans a few hours after the buses. I was to decide which would go."

Karni's assignment was to serve as the staff officer for manpower, to keep a running account of the strength of the brigade, reporting both to the brigade commander and IDF headquarters.

She sent most of the girls home, much to their chagrin. They were told they would be called when needed.

"I selected five or six girls to accompany me. I took those that I thought could take it mentally, physically and spiritually, who were mature and strong, but sensitive and understanding. They were all about 20 years old."

As the men climbed aboard the buses, Karni and the other girls collected last minute postcards and notes they had written to their families, promising to mail them.

"We had bits of paper that we gave to those who had not written, and urged them to 'just take a minute and write something' and many of them did."

The buses left, and the cards and notes were mailed.

"Then we followed in a car, joining in a convoy of military vehicles," Karni said. "We couldn't use the main highway, because it had been shelled by the Jordanians, so we followed mountain paths. It became pitch dark, and it was a rough ride, with many delays. The drive to Jerusalem normally takes about an hour and a half. We left about five o'clock in the evening, and arrived at two o'clock the next morning."

The convoy stopped on the outskirts of Jerusalem. Men from the other vehicles headed into action, which was very close. Karni decided to wait until daylight to search for her unit.

"I told the girls we would stay in the cars and try to get a little sleep. It didn't work out well. I was at the wheel, and when I fell asleep I accidentally sounded the horn. I was so exhausted

it didn't even awaken me. An officer came to the car and shook me awake and advised me that there was an apartment house nearby, with a basement shelter. He mentioned that a shell had fallen nearby and had failed to explode."

Karni and the other girls went to the house and down into the shelter.

"It was impossible to sleep there. It was crammed with women and children, and almost unbearably stuffy. The children were crying. Explosions outside would shake the walls, and we could hear glass shattering.

"As soon as daylight came, I ran outside. Jerusalem is known for its fresh and cool mountain air. It was so fresh that it hurt when I breathed it, but it woke my senses. I saw ambulances going by, sounding their sirens, and cars with casualties, hooting their horns, all heading for the Hadassah Medical Center. It was awful because I knew that I knew many of the men inside."

She found an officer from her brigade and he told her she could start her assignment by going to hospitals and getting the names of the casualties. So she and the other women went to work.

"When I started into the first hospital, I thought, 'I hope I don't collapse.' But somehow there was no problem. When I saw the wounded and the dead, it was as though there was an iron lining in my heart. I saw the wounds with my eyes but I would not let it go farther down. They would bring the boys in on the stretchers and I

would look and say, 'Oh, this one is dead,' and 'Oh, look at that wound,' and I would search their bloody bodies for identification or ask questions of those who were alive and could speak. I knew many of them but sometimes only by their nicknames, and the information had to be accurate. I found that I could not always depend on their answers. Sometimes they were confused, and when I would ask if they belonged to a certain unit, they would say yes, but then I would ask them to name one of their officers and they would give me the name of an officer in another unit."

There were three hospitals that received casualties, and Karni went from one to the other, gathering the data for her daily reports to the brigade commander and the IDF headquarters. In addition to gathering information, she helped in the hospitals, doing whatever she could.

When the brigade broke into the Old City of Jerusalem, the sector that had been controlled by the Jordanians, the commander sent a van to bring Karni and another girl to share in the event. Before entering the van, Karni ran to a telephone and called her parents.

"I had to call them. The return of the Jews to the Old City of Jerusalem had been their lifelong dream. I only wished that they could be making this trip instead of me. I said, 'the Old City is liberated . . . our boys are in the Old City.' They couldn't believe it at first, and then I knew they were crying, and I was crying, too."

Her parents asked her to stop on her way to the Old City and seek the blessing of an old Rabbi who used to visit the British prisons.

The Rabbi had prayed and talked with her father many times, most memorably when her father had just learned that his entire family had been exterminated in Poland. Karni saw the Rabbi, and he placed his hand on her head and blessed her.

The van entered the Old City, following the route of the fighters. The brigade had gathered in the square before the spectacular golden Dome of the Rock, a Moslem Mosque believed to have been built over an ancient Jewish temple.

"At first there was great joy, with everyone hugging and kissing. Then, when the initial excitement was over, the atmosphere became somber, as the soldiers exchanged information about friends who had been wounded and killed."

Karni stayed with the men throughout the day. She returned that night to the hospitals to tell the wounded of what she had seen.

There still were snipers in Jerusalem, and so the brigade remained there two or three days to insure security before moving north toward the Golan Heights. Karni continued to work with the wounded, and lived in the hospitals.

"During the time I was in the hospitals, I was very touched by the appearance of women of Jerusalem, who came to bring flowers and chocolates to the boys, and to offer to do their laundry. They brought cake and wine to one boy, in honor of his birthday. I guess I had such a buildup of emotions that I was not reacting normally--every human gesture made me want to cry. But I didn't cry. The crying, the real crying, was to come much later."

On one of the days in Jerusalem, a little convoy of three taxicabs arrived, carrying about 20 of the girls that Karni had left behind.

"The girls wanted to be with their brigade, but I could not allow it. The men were soon to move forward, and there were no jobs for administrative workers. So I sent them home again."

When the brigade started driving north, Karni went with an intelligence group that had commandeered a Jordanian firefighting van for transportation.

"We got lost because the intelligence people had to leave the convoy to get instructions. The convoy went on without us. We followed as best we could, asking people if they had seen our unit. We were mistakenly told that some of our men were in a police station. We headed for the station and, just as we arrived, it came under heavy shelling. We dashed inside for shelter. I was sure it was the end. It was frightening, but we were unharmed. During a lull in the firing, we went back to the van and resumed the search for the convoy."

Eventually they learned that they had outdistanced the convoy. They backtracked, and rejoined the brigade at the foot of Mount Tabor.

"The next day we moved toward the Golan with the brigade. It was a Saturday. By the time we reached the foot of the Golan Heights, it was six o'clock in the evening, and the ceasefire was announced."

The brigade commander decided that the convoy would return to Jerusalem via Jericho, through the newly won territory of the Jordan Valley. The trip took all day Sunday, ending at twilight.

"On Monday we visited the wounded again, to tell them what we had done. Then, on Tuesday, the brigade had its passing out parade, signifying release from reserve active duty. It was a moving experience. We sent cars to the hospitals to bring all those capable of leaving their beds. The wounded came, most of them wearing their pajamas, some in wheelchairs, accompanied by doctors and nurses. They took their places in the formations with their own units. The places of the boys who were killed or were too gravely injured to be present were left vacant. It was shocking to see the vacant spaces. One hundred and five men had lost their lives."

Karni declined to be released from active duty.

"I couldn't just close my files on the wounded and forget about them," she said. "I decided to go home for two days and then return, to continue working in the hospitals."

It was when she went home to see her parents that she started crying.

"The moment I saw them, I broke down. It seemed that I cried for two days--I couldn't talk to anyone without choking up. However, after I returned to duty, I was all right."

There was much to do in the hospitals. Karni acted as a contact officer between the men and their families, and helped bereaved families arrange for pensions. She arranged simple programs of musical entertainment, and brought special visitors such as writers and artists in to meet the patients. She read to the men, helped feed them, and helped them start walking again. And she went on errands for them.

"Sometimes they had strange requests. They would suddenly develop a craving for an unusual food, just as women do when they are pregnant, and it would be terribly important to them to have it. So I would go and find it for them. Also, a kind of a craze went through the wards. The boys wanted me to bring them their paratrooper wings. They wanted to wear them on their pajamas. If they couldn't have their wings, they wanted their red boots by their beds. They were very proud of being paratroopers, of being in Jerusalem in the war."

After three months, Karni decided to return to Tel Aviv university.

"My heart was with the Army, and I thought about staying on active duty in a permanent status, but at the same time I knew that my jobs in the Army would not contribute to my personal development in languages and the public relations field. So I went back to school. I thought that after I was graduated from the university, I would go to Paris for a year, to the Sorbonne, or perhaps to England."

She completed her studies at the university, but a telephone call made her change her mind about going to Europe. She was offered a job in the foreign liaison office of IDF headquarters. She could be in the Army, and she could have a job that involved languages and public relations. It was the realization of a dream.

"I think 1969 was a good year for me," Karni said, smiling. "It was the year I went into the Army on a regular basis, and it was the year I met my husband."

Karni was married in August 1970 to Danni Kav, who manages a petrochemical transportation company, goes to law school in the evenings and is a reserve paratrooper. (He is not in the same brigade in which she served, but he was in Jerusalem when she was, in the 1967 war. He was wounded on the Golan Heights.)

In September 1973, before the Yom Kippur war broke out, Karni's husband was called to active duty. At his urging, Karni decided to take a long-desired vacation trip to Sweden, Norway and England. She was in England when the Arabs attacked the Israelis.

"My husband called and said, 'Don't come home, it will be over in three days.' Of course, it was not. I wanted to go home, but the attache asked me to stay in London and work in the Embassy and give lectures and help raise money for Israel. I did that for two weeks, and it was terrible for me, not knowing where my husband was. Finally, I couldn't take it any more, and I returned to Israel."

She arrived at midnight, and at 7 o'clock the next morning she set out to look for her husband. She had only a general idea of the combat location of his unit in the Judean desert. She wore her uniform, so that there would be less likelihood that her car would be stopped.

"I drove from hill to hill, slowing down when I saw groups of men, and shouting my husband's name. They would shake their heads and wave me on. Finally, some men said he was on the next hill, and that I could talk to him on a field telephone. They got him on the phone, and the first thing he said was, 'I knew you would reach me somewhere.'"

Satisfied that he was all right and that she knew where he was, she went back to work in the foreign liaison office. She took every opportunity to go and visit him, and when she went she took candy, rolls, fresh milk, and letters from home to the men of his unit. She also visited her own brigade. She felt strangely wistful about not being a part of it.

Her husband's brigade, which went to the west bank of the Suez Canal, was released from active duty after it was withdrawn by international agreement. Now Danni is back at his civilian occupation. Karni, however, still has long hours in her military duties.

Karni's husband has mixed feelings about her being in the Army.

"He knows that my work gives me satisfaction, and he wants me to be happy. On the other hand, I cannot be a perfect housewife. He would love to be able to come home to a nice homecooked lunch, when he has time, and to see more of me in the evenings."

Karni intends to remain in the military for as long as she has interesting jobs. Thus far, she has served variously as a liaison officer for foreign correspondents, as an escort for VIPs, and as a contact officer for foreign military attaches.

Anytime now, she plans to start a family. She will not be the first woman to have her children while in the military.

"I will take the usual leaves of absence, three or four months at a time, when the children are born, and then return to my career," she said. "Of course, I will have someone to care for the children while I am at work."

To Karni, life is satisfying. She is enjoying self-actualization, looking forward to a family, and serving her country in the tradition of her parents.

CHAPTER VI

OUTLOOK: LITTLE CHANCE FOR CHANGE

In considering the role of women in the military in Israel, it is of interest to talk to individuals with varying views, both in and out of the military. Generally, it seems fair to say that even those who think that women should have a larger role are not optimistic as to the possibility of any changes.

Colonel Stella Levy, whose service in the military goes back to her enlistment in the British Army in 1942, and who has been with CHEN since its beginning in 1948, is not satisfied that women are treated fairly and utilized properly in the Israel Defense Force (IDF). But she sees little chance of change.

Ms. (in Hebrew there is no Miss or Mrs.) Tehila Ofer, editor of the woman's page of the Tel-Aviv newspaper, Maariv, believes that women are entitled to equal opportunities and "equal but necessarily the same" treatment. She says, however, that for some citizens of Israel, particularly those of Oriental origin, asking for equal rights for women is asking for a leap over centuries of time.

Colonel Zvi Reuter, a GHQ officer whose wife is a former sergeant major and whose daughter is presently in the Air Force, does not believe that women are limited in their opportunities in the IDF any more than is necessary "to maintain a proper balance."

Each of these individuals was asked to elaborate.

Colonel Levy said:

> I agree that the IDF should not give extensive and costly training to women conscripts, for they serve only 20 months. However, I feel that bright young women should be encouraged to stay on in the regular force and should be given opportunities for more schooling, better jobs, and higher responsibilities.

As it is now, she said, only those enlisted women who have special skills are permitted to remain in the regular force. Women officers may remain, but can look forward to doing "mostly secretarial-type work." In fact, she said, junior officers sometimes serve as secretaries to high-ranking officers.

"The claim that it is unwise to invest in the training of women because they might get married and start families is merely a convenient excuse," Colonel Levy said. "Not all women get married, and not all married women have children. There are other reasons for limiting the advancement of women."

These, she said, are some of the real reasons:

--Men feel that women should do only the lesser jobs, the lower ranking jobs, even though they may be capable and talented, bacause women do not have to support families.

--Women are not combat soldiers, therefore, they are not rotated between staff and field assignments as are men. The men worry that women might come to to monopolize the desirable jobs in headquarters.

--There always is resistance to change in established practices. It is human nature for people to shrug off suggestions with the comment that "we've never done it that way."

"Women are as much to blame as men for their secondary role in the military," Colonel Levy said. "They passively accept it when men tell them that 'this is not for women'."

It is Colonel Levy's opinion that men and women should try to rise above their "conditioned thinking" and do what is best for the service.

> I am not a women's liberationist," she said. "I don't think women are the same as men, or that no distinction should be made in their physical work. I, for instance, would not want to lead a fighting unit in combat. But I do think we are wasting some or our best resources when we deny women opportunities to develop and use technological skills and intellectual capabilities.

Certainly, she said, there are questions to be answered in regard to which jobs women can and cannot do.

"We should seek the answers to those questions in a practical way. We should give women opportunities and find out how they can be useful."

Tehila Ofer, the woman's editor, elaborated on the point of cultural origins.

"In this country we have people from places as England, America, and Russia, who live in the 20th century," she said. "But we also have people from the mountains in North Africa, from Yemen, and from small villages in India and Iran, who are still in the Middle Ages."

To some of the immigrants from underdeveloped places, she said, it is a shock even to learn that girls have to go to

school in Israel. And they can't believe it when they are told that girls not only have to go to school, but they will go with boys.

> Although they are Jewish and not Moslem, they have absorbed some of the Moslem thinking. To them, a woman has no rights. For example, in Iran, they accepted the idea that a man can divorce his wife simply by saying, 'I divorce you,' and she has to go away.

When Tehila was a teacher 20 years ago, there were pupils in her classroom who were "from Biblical times."

In the very old Jewish religion, she said, men could have more than one wife. In the Middle Ages, it became law that a Jewish man could take only one wife. However, some people, as in Yemen, never heard of the new law.

> In 1948 we received a big wave of immigrants from Yemen, and many men came with more than one wife. As a teacher, I had children in my classes who were from one family with the same father and different mothers. I couldn't believe it. Can you imagine how I felt when I went to the homes to talk with the parents about their children?

One day she was puzzled by a request made by a little boy in her class. he asked to change seats, so that he would not have to be near his sister. The boy and girl had different mothers, and Tehila wondered if there was a problem at home. Perhaps there was trouble between the mothers, she thought.

> During recess, I asked the little girl why she and her brother could not sit together," she said, "The girl, who was 11 or 12 years old, was embarrassed, but finally told me that the reason for it was that she had started menstruation. During menstruation, she said, a female was 'unclean' and not allowed to be near the male members of her family.

Today that girl is a professional nurse, and "lives in the 20th century," Tehila said.

> It is possible for the children to change, but not the parents or the grandparents. Conscripted service in the military does much to sophisticate the children. However, we still receive immigrants from underdeveloped cultures, and the differences they find here are hard on them. There are many breakups in families.

"Perhaps this will help you understand why there is a very big part of our population that cannot even think in terms of 'women's rights'."

All this is not to detract from the fact that the immigrants who came to the land during the latter part of the 19th century and the first half of the present century were primarily from Eastern Europe, and not influenced by Moslem cultures. The pioneer men and women worked together and fought side by side to defend their settlements (kibbutzim) from marauders.

"As time went on, I think it became clear to them that it was better for the women to work more in the kitchen and with the children while the men did the harder physical tasks," Tehila said. "There was division of labor but there was equality. Women were not chattels."

Colonel Reuter, before discussing the role of women in the military, remarked that he disagreed with the statement that a division of labor has evolved on the kibbutzim.

"There is total equality there," he said. "The women work in the fields with the men. If more women than men work in th·

kitchens in some settlements, it is because it is their preference, and not a requirement."

Asked whether the men on the kibbutzim ever took care of the babies and small children, he replied:

"Ah! They would kill themselves first."

What did he mean when he said that it is necessary to "maintain a proper balance" of men and women in the military?

> First, of course, you must realize that we have a situation in Israel that is different than yours in the United States," he said. "This is a small country, and our soldiers do not go abroad, and so it is feasible for military women to remain in the regular force even though their husbands are civilians. In your country, that would be difficult, because women married to civilians are less likely to be assigned where their husbands work. I would guess that your military women who want to marry civilians must make a choice between marriage and military life.
>
> The point I am making is that many of our women in the regular force are married and have children. And the fact that many are married, and have to worry about their children, plus the fact that women in general have many little problems that are natural to their sex, such as not feeling well on certain days, and the fact that they cannot be called on at all hours of the night and day for duty, makes them less than 100 percent useful on their jobs.

Men are 100 percent useful on their jobs, and women are 80 percent useful, he said.

> It is my opinion that the IDF should make allowances for this difference when it assigns people against organizational vacancies. As it is now, when the IDF assigns a woman to a unit, she is counted as one person, just as a man would be counted. But the unfortunate truth is that when I have ten women assigned to my office, I have only eight persons, from the standpoint of effectiveness.

He is managing to get along with things as they are, he said, but "it would be a mistake" for the IDF to take in too many women and give them too many responsible jobs. It would upset the balance of people against tasks that must be performed.

Because of this difference he would choose a man in preference to a woman for almost any type of military job, he said. The one big exception is the job of command over women.

> Since we must have women, because of manpower shortages, it follows that we must have CHEN commanders, both commissioned and noncommissioned, to take care of the girls. It might not be necessary to have a CHEN command if all the women were highly trained specialists and professional personnel. But we have many girls, young conscripts, and therefore we must have an organizational structure that looks to the welfare and discipline of the women. Our people would not have it otherwise.

Does he think women should be promoted to the senior ranks in the military?

"They sould go no higher than the rank of colonel, and there should be few women serving as colonels," he said. "In the IDF, our highest ranking officer is a 3-star general. You might say that our colonels are comparable to brigadier generals in the US."

> When an officer reaches the level of a brigadier general, he is no longer a trade specialist. He must be ready to talk like a division commander. Women who have no combat experience cannot talk like division commanders. They cannot deal with men who have been commanders and are commanders. If women fought, it would be different.

There was a woman in the IDF, now retired, who had combat experience from the days before Israel became a state, Colonel

Reuter said. She gained the rank of lieutenant colonel, and was the only woman in the IDF ever selected to attend its command and general staff college.

"After she finished the course, the commander of the school said, 'Never again'," Colonel Reuter said. "Having a woman present disrupted the class. Everyone paid too much attention to her."

Should women be combat soldiers?

"Not in the regular military forces," Colonel Reuter said. "It is demoralizing to the men and to the people at home, and it is dangerous to discipline."

"In the underground, it is different. Three persons may volunteer for a job, knowing they will be killed. One may be a woman. They die, and their friends feel bad about it, but it was their choice.

"In the regular military, we don't do Kamikazi missions. We plan for battle, and we fight in the normal way, and we try to come out of it with as many lives saved as possible."

> Sometimes it happens that we have to sacrifice some lives to save others. We may have to leave a wounded man behind, knowing he will be captured. He tells us to go on. And so we leave. Maybe one soldier stays with him, even against orders, but no more.
>
> Let me assure you that I have not a single doubt that the situation would be different if the wounded soldier were a woman. No man would be willing to leave her. Not only one man, but 20, would stay with her. And they could all be killed.

The Israelies have a horror of even the thought of enemy soldiers raping their young girls. During the October War, a rumor that a girl soldier had been captured and raped swept through the military and the civilian populace. Agitation was so great that public announcements were made, assuring everyone that the rumor had been thoroughly investigated and was untrue. Colonel Ruth Muscal, Director of CHEN, personally made a public statement to that effect.

"We had to calm the soldiers," Colonel Reuter said. "We don't want them to fight like frenzied killers."

"This is why I say that women should not fight. They can do other military jobs that are important to us, and they do."

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

Historically, when women have served in organized regular armies their purpose has been to free men for combat roles, and they have been utilized only to the degree necessary to meet manpower shortages.

This concept goes virtually unquestioned in Israel today, just as it did in the United States in World War II.

In the US today, however, it would be risky to remark that women serve in the military only to free men for combat. The phrase has fallen into disfavor, and not simply because the nation is at peace. It is felt by many that it has a negative connotation, in that it implies that military women have only a secondary role which is all but unnecessary except in emergencies. There is a growing, if not general, recognition that this can be undermining to the self-esteem of women who have chosen to make a career of the military.

It is true that US military women work only in service and support (non-combat) assignments. It is also true that they are far outnumbered by men who work only in service and support assignments, and yet it is never said, of the men, that they serve "to free men for combat." It is said, rather, that they are an indispensable part of the fighting team. In the US military, there are at least 15 times as many men in support roles

as there are in combat roles, and this ratio is expected to increase with the continuing development of warfare technology.

Although debating whether US military women serve "to free men for combat" may seem a pointless exercise in semantics, experience has shown that when the concept exists it does influence attitudes toward utilization and retention of women.

During World War II, women were recruited into the US military in large numbers (reaching a total of 350,000) to help make up for manpower shortages. After the war, there was serious consideration of total demobilization of the women, except for those in the medical corps. It was decided they would be retained, but in drastically reduced numbers, and only as "a nucleus for expansion in the event of national emergency." From 1945 to 1966, the strength ranged from about 2,000 in the Marine Corps to 11,000 in the Army.[1] Legislation provided that women could comprise up to 2 percent of the strength of the Armed Forces, but that proportion was never reached even at the height of the Vietnam buildup. And, until the advent of the no-draft era two years ago, whenever budget pressures were unusually severe there always seemed to be someone ready to suggest that money could be saved by doing away with the "nucleus" of women. Thus, even though the women were part of the regular establishment, their "necessity" in peacetime was sometimes questioned, without regard to the caliber of their work.

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[1]BG Mildred C. Bailey, Women in the Armed Forces, p. 7. Cited with special permission of General Bailey.

It is not surprising to note that in Israel, where the concept that women serve only to "free men for combat" is openly accepted, it has a depressive effect on the scope of training and job opportunities that are available to women. Manpower resources fluctuate from year to year. To whatever extent the shortage of men eases in any given period, opportunities for women are curtailed. Even when unusual shortages are anticipated, the preference always is to give women jobs that require little or no specialized training, so that there will be no serious loss of investment when they leave the service--and they are not encouraged to make a career of the service. Women are given highly specialized training only when there is no alternative.

There is no significant agitation for change in the policy of limiting training and job opportunities for women in the Israeli military. Certainly, there are some women who complain that their jobs are "uninteresting" and "unimportant," but the most that they hope for is a reshuffling of assignments. They do not campaign for "equal opportunities" in competition with men, or for greater responsibilities or higher status. They accept the fact that if they want education and advancement, or, as one woman put it, self-actualization, and the military will not give it to them, then they must seek it outside the military.

Why do women passively accept their subordinated role in the Israel Defense Force? As pointed out earlier in this report, the dominant cultural attitude in regard to women in Israel is that

their place is "in the kitchen." A male officer said: "After the women finish their compulsory service, they should go home and get married and have children. That is what they are meant to do." He granted that some women might want to work or have need to work at careers, but felt that it was better for them to do it outside the military, because "military life is not natural for women."

The few women who do try to press for greater opportunities for women in the military say they always are reproached with the argument that "this is not the time to worry about such things—we are concerned with the survival of our country."

Women in Israel have heard of the women's liberation movement in the United States and tend to regard it with a mixture of uneasy amusement and curiosity, but not necessarily with support. To them, it is just one more of those strange things going on in America, like the Watergate affair, and they are not sure that it should or will have any effect on them.

In view of the foregoing, it is apparent that the US military, in many ways, is far ahead of the IDF in its strides toward equalization of opportunities for women. In terms of percentages, the IDF has more women (unofficially estimated at 5 percent of its total strength). However, the US now has erased its post-World War II ceiling of 2 percent on its number of women, and it has opened an unprecedented variety of school and job opportunities to women. In 1970, there were 41,000 women in the Armed Forces.

Now there are 65,000. The target strength for 1978 is set at more than 123,000. The number of women will be increasing while the total strength of the Armed Forces is declining.

In the Army alone, the number of women is expected to climb from the present 26,000 to nearly 52,000 in the next four years. And women now may serve in 443 of the 482 occupational specialties, three times the number open to them in 1972. (They are not eligible for combat assignments.)

Many "firsts" have been chalked up by women in the US military in the last few years. For example: Women now participate in junior and senior ROTC programs. Women command units with both male and female personnel. Women attend the senior service colleges. Women take flight training. And women have been promoted to general and flag officer rank.

As stated by Brigadier General Mildred C. Bailey, director of the Women's Army Corps, the idea now, more than ever before, is to see to it that the military "can provide young American women a personally satisfying and professionally rewarding experience for one enlistment or for a lifetime career." Women are "to be considered seriously as professionals, be competitve for advancement, and receive equal recognition."

Certainly, as pointed out in the introduction to this report, the strides toward equality of opportunities for women in the US Armed Forces are not being taken without difficulty. There is much unsettled discussion, both inside and outside the military

establishment, as to the need for defining and setting limits on the utilization of women. Reason sometimes is colored by emotion, and emotion sometimes runs high.

Before discussing some of the questions that are being raised, relating them, as applicable, to the experience and views of the IDF, it might be well to account for the changes that are taking place in the US military.

Generally, there are three reasons given for the sudden move toward expansion of the role of women:

(1) By their own accomplishments, women in the military have proved themselves deserving of greater opportunities.

(2) The pressure in society to do away with all forms of discrimination has caused the military to reevaluate its policies on utilization of women.

(3) In a no-draft environment, women are seen as an answer to manpower problems.

Although the first two reasons had some influence, Defense Department officials generally agree that the cessation of the draft was the catalyst that changed the picture. People could argue against giving women greater opportunities simply because they deserved them, and they could argue that discrimination against women in the military was "necessary," but they could not argue against the prospect of the zero draft and declining enlistments of men.

As an aside, it is interesting to note that military women themselves have not been "militant" in seeking a wider choice of

occupational specialties and assignments. Women have never been drafted in the US military, and it has been speculated that women who enlist are not the "women's lib type," becuase most are from conservative backgrounds. (Sociologically, the military itself is a conservative stronghold.) A comment by General Bailey seems to support this thesis. She has said that her problem now, with more job opportunities open to women, is to influence women to take advantage of them. The majority of the women still want to work in offices and hospitals.

It is all but unavoidable, then, to reach the conclusion that the US military is much the same as the IDF in regard to one thing: Thus far in its history, it has utilized women to the degree necessary to meet manpower shortages, and the new developments are in accord with this practice.

There is no value in debating here whether it is "good" or "bad" that women have been and are being utilized in the military only as necessary to meet manpower shortages, or whether it means that the new footholds gained by women are only temporary (changing technology in warfare and changing cultural attitudes will have an unpredictable bearing on that subject). It is important, however, to recognize that this is the primary reason why women are being given a larger role in the military. It helps explain the seemingly paradoxical attitudes among some of the senior officers in the military. It explains, for instance, why some influential male officers have cast aside conservatism to become keen advoca[illegible] of

wider utilization of women--tradition allows for changes when dictated by hard necessity. It also helps explain why some female officers, who were expected to be champions of progress, have been surprisingly cautious about the new developments. As one said, she did not want enthusiasm to overcome judgment. "We don't want things to move so fast that they don't work out well," she said. "There later may be pressures on women to give up the ground gained. Nothing in their past tells them they can take the new situation for granted."

All this is not to say that the feminist movement for equal rights has had no impact on the military establishment. Necessity was, indeed, the catalyst that changed the picture and opened the door to a larger role for women, but it did not define the tasks that women should perform, or the degree of "equality" they should achieve. There is no doubt that many of the questions that are being raised today are all the more problematical because of the feminist movement. Certainly, in Israel, when questions of equality arise, they are given short shrift because it is generally accepted by the public that the military is a man's domain.

What are the questions that are being raised? These are the most commonly heard:

-Should there be a ceiling on the percentage of women in the military?

-Will the effectiveness of the military be weakened by widespread assignment of women into jobs formerly reserved for men?

-Is it cost-effective to give extensive training to women?

-Should women be eligible for assignment as noncombatants (in administrative and technical specialties) in Category I combat units? (Category I units are those whose mission is to confront the enemy in combat.)

-Is it justifiable to allow women to compete with men for advancement into the senior ranks, even though they do not serve in combat?

-Should women fight in combat?

-Why should there be separate personnel structures for women in the services?

-Should the standards for enlistment of women be higher than those for men?

-If the draft is resumed, should women be subject to conscription?

The foregoing chapters should have made it evident that every one of the above questions has been addressed and resolved by the Israeli military. It should be equally apparent, however, that the Israeli answers provide no ready solutions to the problems in the United States. The questions are the same, but the situations are different.

These are the significant differences:

(1) The Israeli military is empowered to meet its manpower needs by conscription of men and women.

(2) Given the cultural conservatism in Israel, the military can assign women to the tasks it deems necessary, without concern about feminist claims of discrimination.

(3) Israel is an embattled nation. The military is not inclined to occupy itself with matters of policy that are not directly and immediately concerned with the nation's survival.

Even with the differences in mind, it still is useful and thought-provoking to consider the answers the Israel Defense Force gives to the questions as listed.

Question: Should there be a ceiling on the percentage of women in the military?

The IDF has no firm ceiling, but the percentage is kept as low as possible. As pointed out earlier, women are conscripted only as needed to meet manpower shortages. IDF officers insist that this is not because of any feeling that women are physically or emotionally inferior to men in performing military tasks, but because women are likely to marry and have children and therefore are not as "fully useful" as men. Women who are in the regular force are permitted to remain in the military when they have children; however, it is felt that they are, in effect, holding two jobs at once.

In the US military, no new ceiling on the number of women has been set. The matter is not one of immediate concern, but it is generally recognized that at some point in the future, if the percentage of women continues to rise as expected or beyond expectations, a decision as to a ceiling will have to be made. It would be difficult to resolve now, because the extent to which women actually will be integrated into tasks, units, activities, and installations has yet to be fully determined.

As to problems about women with families, the US military has a "wait and see" attitude. It is only recently that regulations have been changed to permit women with dependent children to remain in the service. The permission is not automatic, as it is in the IDF (except with unwed mothers). A woman who becomes pregnant and wants to remain in the US military must offer convincing evidence that her family responsibilities will not interfere with her work. Even then, she is retained only if she is considered an asset to the military--if her work has been marginal, she is discharged.

Question: Will the effectiveness of the military be weakened by widespread assignment of women into jobs formerly reserved for men?

In Israel, women are not being moved into jobs traditionally reserved for men, and so the question has to be "would" instead of "will" the effectiveness of the military be weakened by such action. Typically, the question seems to receive a different interpretation in Israel than in the United States. In Israel, the reaction is to reply in terms of the dependability of women workers. Discussion is unemotional, and centers on matters such as retention rates and mobility of assignment. In the United States, the reaction more often than not is to focus on claims that women are "the weaker sex," and discussion tends to be emotionally charged.

It may well be that it does not occur to the Israelis to argue whether women are "the weaker sex," because they have a

living memory of the days when women fought alongside men to win the nation's independence. Certainly, Israeli men and women alike are quick to point this out when directly asked for opinions about the capabilities and capacities of women.

However, there may be another reason for the absence of argument and emotionalism on the subject in Israel. The question of whether women can do "men's work" in the military is not being put to a test there, and there is no immediate prospect that it will be tested. In the United States, the prospect is real. To many men, it is not only a prospect but a threat.

It would be unrealistic not to recognize that many career military men in the United States regard the integration of women into "men's jobs" and "men's units" as an unwelcome invasion into the comradeship of men of arms. Some men say that they chose their profession because of its masculine character--some even say they chose it to "get away from women." Men with this attitude usually do consider women the "weaker sex" and are deeply concerned that women will dilute the effectiveness of the military. At the very least, they say, changing the character of the military will be destructive to the morale of the men.

Of course, there is only one way to learn whether widespread assignments of women into the military will weaken it, and that is to try it. Through necessity, the trial is under way, albeit with caution in units whose missions would put them in close relationship to combat. In the Army, for instance, commanders of units,

activities, and installations are being asked to decide which jobs are interchangeable between men and women, and their decisions are being reviewed. As one senior officer said: "When the commander of one organization indicates that 79 percent of the jobs are interchangeable, and the commander of an almost identical organization indicates only 14 percent are interchangeable, we suspect bias. Or when a commander indicates he will accept enlisted women but not officers, or enlisted women only up to a certain grade, we suspect bias."

Question: Is it cost-effective to give extensive training to women?

In Israel, it is not considered cost-effective to routinely teach women skills that require a sizeable investment. Compulsory service for men is three years. For women it is only 20 months, and most women leave the military when their compulsory service ends. Of those who are permitted to remain in the regular force, the question of future conflicts because of marriage and family again arises.

The US military has other considerations. When men cannot be drafted, the military is faced with problems in recruiting individuals who are qualified to receive training in high-skill specialties. It has been compelled to lower its standards for enlistment of men, but not for women. All women entering the military have at least a high school education. And women serve the same length of time as men.

The plain fact is that it can be more cost-effective to train qualified women in high-skill specialties than to train poorly qualified men.

Question: Should women be eligible for assignment as non-combatants (in administrative and technical specialties) in Category I combat units?

The answer in Israel is yes, with the proviso that women may decline such assignments. Women receive no combat training, and the policy is to temporarily evacuate them from combat units when the units are advancing into action or are receiving heavy fire. (Exceptions are made for medical and signal specialists.)

The answer in the US military is no, and the reason commonly given is that it would unnecessarily create an additional burden of responsibility for combat commanders.

It is felt, for instance, that there always would be a possibility of "liaisons" between some of the men and women, and that this would create problems in unit morale and discipline. Why should this be of more concern in the US military than in the IDF? The answer that is suggested is that Israel is a small country, fighting on its own borders. Israeli soldiers are never far from home.

Times have changed. Until very recently, in the United States the first argument usually given against assigning women administrative and technical specialists to combat units was that the public would not tolerate the idea of exposing women to the

danger and the physical and emotional strain of living under battlefiled conditions. (Nurses have served in dangerous areas, but not in combat units.) Now no one is certain of the level of public tolerance. No one can say, without fear of contradiction, that women's lives should be protected more than men's, or that women cannot withstand physical and emotional strain.

Question: Is it justifiable to allow women to compete with men for advancement into the senior ranks, even though they do not serve in combat?

It is not considered justifiable in Israel, and it is not permitted. In the US military, a few women have advanced to general and flag officer rank, but it cannot be said that women are competitive with men on an equal basis. However, it should be noted that men who have not served as commanders and have not received decorations for action in combat are also unlikely to advance to senior positions.

All this may change. Technology is advancing to such a stage that is it becoming unrealistic in the US military to virtually require officers to alternate between command and staff assignments in order to win advancement. The Army already is moving toward a system that will encourage officers to specialize instead of generalize in their career development. The officer education system is being reevaluated in this light. If and when this change is accomplished, there will be more than one track to the top, and women will benefit by it.

Question: Should women fight in combat?

In the IDF, women do not fight in combat. It is felt that the success of combat missions might be jeopardized by a tendency of the men to be overly protective of the women. As one officer said: "Whether they should be overly protective is not the question. The fact is that they would be."

Women are not trained for combat in the US military, but the question is not closed to discussion. Some senior officers are beginning to foresee a possibility that women might someday be trained as fighter pilots. However, they do not think there is any likelihood that women will fight in ground combat units in direct confrontation with the enemy. They believe that the disadvantages would outweigh the advantages--that there would be too many problems in morale and discipline.

Question: Why should there be separate personnel structures for women in the services?

There are separate personnel structures for women in both the IDF and the US Armed Forces. There is no branch or corps designation specifically for women in the US Air Force, Navy, or Marine Corps, but in each of those services the women do have an organized structure similar to that of the Women's Army Corps.

In the US military, particularly in the Army, there has been talk of abolishing the separately organized personnel structures for women. There have been rumors to the effect that the Women's Army Corps is soon to be discontinued so that women of the corps

can be "fully integrated" into the Army. No such decision has been made, and it now appears unlikely that it will be made, at least for some time to come. WAC officers are being detailed to other branches of the Army, but not assigned to them. One of the strongest opponents of proposals to abolish the Women's Army Corps is its director, General Bailey.

General Bailey is convinced that the Women's Army Corps should be maintained for some years yet, because it is an organization through which women can have a voice in their own interests.

"The military does have 'equal opportunities' people, but the main thrust of their efforts has been in race relations," she said. I think that even if the Women's Army Corps eventually is abolished, the women will always have to have someone with a prestigious position and adequate staff to represent them to the Army and the public."

General Bailey also believes it would be a mistake to deny women their identity as members of the Women's Army Corps.

"In 1948, when it was decided that women would remain in the Army, the director felt that they should not have a separate corps. However, the Women's Army Corps was continued, and now it has a 33-year history. We have had time to develop a great depth of feeling and pride in it."

The IDF has no thought of abolishing its women's corps, the CHEN command. It is interesting to note, however, that women in the IDF wear both the insignia of CHEN and the insignia of the

branches in which they serve. This invites speculation as to whether women in the US Women's Army Corps might "retain their identity" even though the corps is discontinued, by continuing to wear an emblem symbolizing their link with the past.

Question: Should the standards for enlistment of women be higher than those for men?

In the IDF, standards for enlistment provide an effective control for the number of women conscripted. Like any employer, the IDF wants people with the highest possible qualifications, but standards are lowered as necessary to increase the intake.

In the US military, women are being accepted in greater numbers, but thus far it has not been necessary to dispense with the high school education requirement for women in order to meet recruiting goals. No one knows, yet, whether women who are high school graduates will continue to volunteer in numbers sufficient to meet the programmed goals. If they do not, either the goals or the enlistment requirements will have to be reconsidered. At present, however, the military sees no logic in lowering enlistment standards for women. It is, in fact, trying to reduce the necessity to accept men with low qualifications.

Question: If the draft is resumed, should women be subject to conscription?

In Israel, concripting women is a matter of necessity. Even though it is felt that it is beneficial to young women to have the experience of serving their country, and to learn to live and work with others, it is extremely doubtful that women would be conscripted if there were not shortage of manpower.

No one knows whether it will ever be a matter of necessity in the United States. The question of conscription of women is raised primarily because the movement for equal opportunities carries with it the implication that "equal opportunities means equal responsibilities." It is a question to be resolved not by the military but by legislation, and it probably will not be resolved unless and until there is a prospect of resumption of the draft.

As for the present, most Americans hope there will be no need to resume the draft. It is interesting to reflect that so long as it is not resumed, it appears that the military will have little choice but to accept women in ever-increasing numbers, and to experiment with widespread integration of women in jobs and units. Actually, there is no better time to experiment, deliberate, and make adjustments on changes of policy than now, while the nation is at peace.

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