

2018

Special Issue

# MCU Journal

## GENDER INTEGRATION



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## From the Editors

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On 13 August 1918, Opha May Johnson became the first woman to enlist in the United States Marine Corps—officially, of course. If one believes the stories of Lucy Brewer and the War of 1812, the first woman in the Corps predates Private Johnson by more than a century. While Brewer’s role, and those of the numerous other women who participated in previous conflicts, remains the subject of historical debate, the official records note that this year commemorates a century of Marine Corps women.<sup>1</sup>

At first only a wartime measure to provide administrative support and to “free a Marine to fight,” the role of women in the military has grown significantly since the first women were enlisted. It is perhaps fitting that, as we take a moment to celebrate 100 years of women in the Marine Corps, women are now completing the prestigious and notoriously difficult Infantry Officer Course.<sup>2</sup> With this last hurdle, there are no more lines to cross. Every military occupational specialty, every unit, every special duty assignment, every school, every opportunity has opened for women.<sup>3</sup> Despite this fact, there is still opposition to women in combat roles within the military, which is possibly the only lasting barrier to their success.

The past century has demonstrated a clear history of crossing lines and breaking down barriers. With each advancement, women were told “no further.” And with each subsequent generation, women pushed the boundaries to do more—until there were no more boundaries. In December 2015, then-Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter announced that all military occupational specialties were open to women. Carter declared that “they’ll be allowed to drive tanks, fire mortars and lead infantry soldiers into combat. They’ll be able to serve as Army Rangers and Green Berets, Navy SEALs, Marine Corps infantry, Air Force parajumpers, and everything else that was previously open only to men.”<sup>4</sup> The history of women in the Marine Corps offers only one small part of the story. Women across the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) and the world have their own experiences, their own stories to tell. Few know these stories, as the focus usually remains on one’s own Service or country. A gap exists

in understanding how other militaries have (or have not) integrated women successfully. This special issue is intended to fill that gap and provide differing perspectives on how other militaries have dealt with gender integration.

Every Service and nation has walked its own path toward full integration of women. Some, such as the former Soviet Union and Israel, witnessed tremendous gender integration advances during wartime—World War II and the War for Independence, respectively—only to see those improvements nearly disappear during peace. Others made steady progress, experiencing full integration early on (e.g., Canada in the late 1960s). Still others advanced in some areas but waited decades for others (e.g., Australia integrated submarines in the 1990s but only opened infantry to women a few years ago).

The authors here offer a variety of histories describing this journey of integration of women into the armed services of a variety of countries and cultures. From Mexico to Israel as well as the United Kingdom and the former Soviet Union, the diversity of experiences becomes clear. The reasons for integration (or not) are as diverse as the nations' cultures and offer unique insights into how a nation views women and their contribution to their community and their country, for the integration of women reflects directly on their role in society.

Understanding the global history of women in the military is crucial to understanding the most recent issues of gender integration. It is not possible to appreciate the significance of integrating women into ground combat without first understanding their initial purpose in the armed forces. In World War I and World War II, the U.S. Services employed women as an emergency wartime measure. Women worked in mostly administrative positions during World War I, where they quickly outpaced the men. World War II brought extreme manpower shortages and opened more opportunities to women, including in combat, particularly in the Soviet Union.<sup>5</sup> Only with the close of the war and passage of congressional legislation did women gain a permanent foothold in the U.S. military. Thus, a tradition of congressional advocacy begins through mutually supporting DOD policies, allowing more opportunities for women.<sup>6</sup> Though a victory for women, the Women's Armed Services Integration Act included two exclusionary edicts prohibiting assignment of women to duty in aircraft or on ships likely to be engaged in combat missions, known as the Risk Rule. The legislation also limited the proportion of women in the military to 2 percent of the enlisted force and 10 percent of officers. Finally, in 1991, the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal years 1992 and 1993 repealed the limitations on the assignment of women to combat aircraft. This movement forward would soon be followed by the first women graduating from the U.S. Army Ranger School in 2015 and from the Marine Corps' Infantry Officer Course in 2017.

Understanding the legislative and policy changes that brought us to this

day would be incomplete without an analysis of the associated civil-military relationship. The military has attempted to hold tight to the past, using terms such as *combat effectiveness* or *unit cohesion* and *morale* to fight integration, while supporters in Congress have countered with a continued push for women's equality in all areas, including the military. This collection of articles merely scratches the surface on this sensitive issue. The editors encourage readers to find the topics of most interest, dig in, and learn more.

The remainder of the journal rounds out with a selection of review essays and book reviews that continue our focus on gender but also highlight continuing challenges in national security and international relations. The coming year will be busy for the *MCU Journal* editors as we continue to provide issues on a diverse range of topics relevant to the study of militaries and defense. The upcoming fall issue will be on the concept of superpowers, and we are still accepting submissions for the spring 2019 issue that will open a debate on the economics of defense and the costs of making war and peace. We look forward to hearing your thoughts on these topics and to your future participation. Join the conversation on the MC UPress Facebook page or communicate with us via email at [MCU\\_Press@usmcu.edu](mailto:MCU_Press@usmcu.edu).

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## Notes

1. Capt Linda L. Hewitt, USMCR, *Women Marines in World War I* (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1974); Col Mary V. Stremlow, USMCR, *A History of the Women Marines, 1946–1977* (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, 1986); and Col Nancy P. Anderson, USMC (Ret), *The Very Few, the Proud: Women in the Marine Corps, 1977–2001* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps History Division, 2018).
2. The first woman, a lieutenant, completed the course in September 2017. See Merrit Kennedy, "First Female Marine Completes Grueling Infantry Officer Course," NPR, 25 September 2017. A second female Marine completed the course in Quantico, VA, on 23 June 2018. See Hope Hodge Seck, "Second Female Marine Graduates from Infantry Officers Course," *Military.com*, 28 June 2018.
3. Cheryl Pellerin, "Carter Opens All Military Occupations, Positions to Women," DOD News, 3 December 2015.
4. Pellerin, "Carter Opens All Military Occupations, Positions to Women."
5. Hewitt, *Women Marines in World War I*; and Stremlow, *A History of the Women Marines, 1946–1977*.
6. Women's Armed Services Integration Act of 1948, Pub. L. No. 80-625, 80th Cong. (1948).





# British and Soviet Women in the Military Campaign of 1939–45

## A Comparative Review

Nataliia Zalietok

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**Abstract:** This article investigates women's participation in the Second World War in the United Kingdom and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), which represent democratic and totalitarian regimes, respectively. The article shows differences in women's participation in the auxiliary organizations, armed forces, air forces, antiaircraft divisions, naval forces, and intelligence services. The goal of this research is to determine the similarities and differences between these two countries' policies concerning women's engagement in the military and their society's attitude toward female combatants.

**Keywords:** women in combat, Second World War, World War II, WWII, United Kingdom, UK, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, USSR, democracy, totalitarianism, combat, gender stereotypes, gender integration, armed forces and women

**T**he twentieth century witnessed not only two world wars but confrontation between democratic and totalitarian regimes. The brutal methods of repressing dissent in totalitarian states, which led to numerous victims, are unacceptable to the civilized world and substantially limit human rights. The government-sanctioned constraints and poisonous ideology led to the collapse of most totalitarian systems in Europe. The victory of democracy has been recognized as a progressive way of development, but the societal differences

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between the democratic and totalitarian regimes of the past is still a promising area of research.

The Second World War stands as the largest military conflict in human history. It involved about 80 percent of the world's population in 61 countries, and military operations were conducted on three continents. Norman Davies states that the victory in this war was a difficult decision for democratic countries, which were forced to make an alliance with one totalitarian state, the USSR, to defeat Nazi Germany, another totalitarian regime.<sup>1</sup> The victory of Allied forces made possible the further development of democracy in the West, and left far behind, both economically and democratically, the countries under Soviet protection.

Scholars usually emphasize the differences between democratic and totalitarian systems in the political, economic, social, and cultural spheres.<sup>2</sup> However, in this context, it is necessary to compare these regimes' focus on treatment of women. History illustrates these examples, when the epochs, which are famous in historiography as progressive for humankind, for example, the Renaissance and the Age of Enlightenment, embodied the opposite for women.<sup>3</sup> But what about different political systems, and not in the prosperous period, but in war years, which are the time of hardship for all its participants? What was the policy of democratic and totalitarian governments toward women in 1939–45? Did they have something in common, and what does it mean?

The United Kingdom (UK) is known as “the cradle of democracy,” while the Soviet Union embodied a totalitarian regime, and these two countries in the twentieth century were among the so-called great powers, which had influence on the other political players in the world.<sup>4</sup> That is why these countries are interesting examples to compare in the context of similarities and differences in gender policy during the Second World War. This comparison will advance our understanding of the essence of the British democratic system and Soviet totalitarianism in the war years.

Thus, this article aims to compare the peculiarities of the participation of British and Soviet women in the military campaign of World War II from 1939 to 1945 and to determine the commonalities and differences in policy toward women's conscription in democratic and totalitarian states. The memories of individual women and their reflections, which are given in this article, not only reveal their personal, unique experiences of the war but also outline the official interpretation of the British and Soviet governments regarding the role of women in Second World War.

## **Historiography**

Despite the well-established ideas about the “male face” of war and gender stereotypes concerning women, large numbers of women were involved in military

activities between 1939 and 1945.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, women directly participated in military engagements and proved themselves to be brave, competent soldiers. The merits of women as warriors have been underestimated by most societies throughout history. Whatever social rationale or justification was articulated by the prevailing power structures, gender stereotypes, particularly about women's "weakness" and their supposed inclination toward peace, are what drove the exclusion of women from the battlefield. The notion of warfare as "an entirely masculine activity," expressed by John Keegan and other researchers, still has many followers, but the reality of the twentieth century proved the opposite, and feminist historians researched the issue of women at war much deeper.<sup>6</sup>

Joan Scott notes that, in feminist historiography, the two world wars are often considered as watersheds for women. She highlights four main themes as dominant in the issue of war pertaining to women: 1) new opportunities for women's self-realization; 2) expanding women's rights; 3) active development of the pacifist movement as the women's answer to "the destructive (masculine) impulses of nation-states;" and 4) discussion of long- and short-term impacts of wars for women.<sup>7</sup>

But the most controversial subject is studying the presence of women in the military and their participation in combat. What happens with the dominant gender regime when women enter the army? Does it undermine the patriarchy or, conversely, make it stronger? Should women be combatants? These questions have raised a large discussion in feminist scholarship, but there is still no single answer.

In particular, Francine D'Amico, who studied the phenomenon of women warriors, identified three different points of view in the feminist community regarding the image of women in the battlefield: 1) radical feminists consider it a symbol of empowerment and a means of protection from the patriarchy; 2) liberal feminists see it as one of the components of ensuring equal rights of men and women and as proof of their sameness; 3) critical feminists (and D'Amico is one of them) consider it as a means of "promoting martial and masculine values rather than redefining gender-based social values and hierarchical power structures" and advocates "deconstruct[ing] the 'warrior mystique' and build[ing] in its place a positive concept of citizenship and equality."<sup>8</sup> D'Amico's position sounds ideal, but there are a few things that prevent many from accepting it. First, the issue of full demilitarization is a matter of a qualitative restructuring of the world community, which hardly can be imagined in the near future. Second, today we all live in more or less militarized societies, and masculinization of military activities leads to the limitation of women's choice.

However, here we face another problem, connected with reproduction of traditional gender roles in the military and a subordinate position for women. Despite high expectations, women's presence in the army did not lead to change

in these roles. Margaret R. Higonnet and Patrice L. R. Higonnet used the concept of the “double helix” to explain this phenomenon.<sup>9</sup> According to it, the double helix has two intertwined strands: one is male and the other is female. The female strand is not only the opposite of the male one, but it is subordinate to it. Every move of the female strand causes the move of the male one, which maintains its position of superiority. In the case of world wars, when women chose to perform some “male roles,” which were lower in the hierarchy, men took up senior positions and kept their higher status.

In her studies of the participation of Soviet women in the Second World War, Russian scholar Natalia Barsukova emphasizes that she believes that combat experiences harm women. She supports the gender division in military and suggests limiting women’s roles in the army “to those specialties that allow to provide them with more appropriate living conditions, and to limit physical and emotional burdens.”<sup>10</sup> Predominantly, she speaks about the positions of the service staff. It is obvious that this approach is just a reproduction of traditional gender roles, which exist in the civilian sphere.

In contrast to Barsukova, Lucy Noakes is convinced that “women in military uniform provide a very visible challenge to existing gender roles, not just in wartime but also, when they become permanent members of the military, in peacetime.”<sup>11</sup> In her opinion, “the overwhelming absence of women from combat” during the war is the crucial factor of reinforcement of the gender divisions in times of peace.<sup>12</sup> And it is difficult not to agree with this statement, because any ban on specific activities for a certain category of the population puts it in a subordinate position. But the Soviet experience of the large-scale use of weapons by women and their presence in the battlefield did not result in substantial changes within gender roles. As Reina Pennington admitted, “the Soviets did not see wartime integration of women into the military as a catalyst for fostering long-range changes in gender roles in society.”<sup>13</sup> Thus, government plays an important role in the process of integration of women into the military forces because government overall has a significant impact on such a hierarchical structure in the army and other military departments. The official position of the governments and the attitude toward women in society is based on traditional gender roles, and this concept is what drove the lackluster and one-sided representation of women’s experiences in the war in scholarly works. Nancy M. Wingfield notes that the “collective memory of the world wars is both selective and essentially gendered. Public discourse about the wars encoded heroism as male and paved the way to commemorative practices that celebrated and reinforced already existing gender dichotomies.”<sup>14</sup>

In general works on the Second World War, along with those focused on British and Soviet armies, the women’s activities are often considered as not worthy to write about in detail. David Fraser, in the study on the British Army

in the Second World War, briefly noted the existence of women's Auxiliary Territorial Service "whose work freed men from many logistic functions and who also played a key part in serving the batteries of Anti-Aircraft Command."<sup>15</sup> G. L. Weinberg mentions typical noncombat tasks, which governments of Western Allies gave to women during the war, in particular, transporting airplanes across the Atlantic or working with balloons, among other duties. But his emphasis was on women's work on the home front.<sup>16</sup>

*История Великой Отечественной войны Советского Союза 1941–1945 22* (The history of the Great Patriotic War in the Soviet Union 1941–1945), edited by Peter Pospelov et al., consists of six volumes, and it also does not include a detailed description of women's service in the military.<sup>17</sup> The attention here is focused on women's work at the rear. Women workers are usually mentioned together with teenagers and elderly people, categories that are considered weak in society. The few notions about women's military service during the war are included only in volume six. It is stated that "the patriotic upsurge among Soviet women was so great that many of them claimed their right to defend the Motherland. . . . By the end of the war, women were up to 24 per cent [*sic*] of the Air Defense Forces, and released hundreds of thousands of men for service in the battlefield. Many of our girls were pilots, anti-aircraft gunners, tankwomen, snipers."<sup>18</sup> Such a scarce mention of women soldiers, which accounted for at least 8 percent of the Red Army, indicates a diminishing interpretation of women's efforts in the Second World War by the Soviet government.

At the same time, a few substantial works were published in the former Soviet Union, which dealt with the participation of Soviet women in the Second World War, such as the research efforts by Vera Murmantseva and the collection of authentic memories of female Soviet veterans in *War's Unwomanly Face*, published by Svetlana Alexievich.<sup>19</sup> The latter deserves special attention as an important narrative for the study of a unique female experience. In the UK, among the first books dedicated to women in service was Dorothea Collett Wadge's *Women in Uniform*.<sup>20</sup> It was published in 1946, a few decades earlier than a similar work on Soviet women, which seems symbolic.

Among comparative works, which include the experiences on the Soviet and British women in the Second World War, are studies of Ann Taylor Allen and D'Ann Campbell.<sup>21</sup> Allen's work includes a very brief description of women's service on the battlefield in the United States, the UK, Germany, and the Soviet Union, and it gives a rough idea of women's contributions to war.<sup>22</sup> Campbell has compared the same countries, but her analysis is much more detailed. The common thread of this work is usage of weapons by women and their direct participation in combat. Campbell notes that "the noncombat-combat classification which preoccupied the Americans, British, and Germans proved an unaffordable luxury to the Soviets."<sup>23</sup> At the same time, both works leave many

similarities of the countries' policies on women's mobilization in 1939–45 undiscussed. Because of a lack of a detailed comparison between the UK and the Soviet Union, this article analyzes the policies toward mobilization of women in these countries in more detail.

## **Preconditions and Legislative Regulation of Women's Participation in the Military**

Analyzing the general situation in the field of gender relations and ensuring women's rights in democratic Britain and the totalitarian Soviet Union, one can conclude that at the legislative level and in public discourse the Soviet government went much further. First, the widening of women's rights in these countries was done in different ways. In the UK, the initiative to broaden women's rights came "from below," as the result of the active struggle of feminists. In contrast to the UK, there was no large struggle for women's rights either in the Russian Empire, or during the first years of the Soviet regime, so the initiative to enfranchise women and widen their rights in other spheres in the Soviet Union came "from above" and was part of the larger revolution and corresponded to the notion of people's equality as proclaimed by the Communist regime.<sup>24</sup>

On the surface, this should have contributed to raising the status of women in Soviet society, especially considering that in the interwar period in British legislation there was no equality between men and women. This time, the topic of equality was followed by the disagreements between British "old" and "new" feminists concerning "egalitarian" and "discriminatory" reforms as different ways of the further struggle.<sup>25</sup> At the same time, in the USSR, according to its Constitution of 1936, which on paper was one of the most democratic in the world, women obtained rights, equal with male rights in all spheres of economic, state, cultural, public, and political life. The possibility of exercising these rights was ensured by granting women the right to work, payment for work, rest and leisure, social insurance, and education equal to men (Article 122).<sup>26</sup> But was this step aimed at giving women freedom of choice and making them equal to men? This does not seem apparent to the casual observer. The political motive for implementing steps for gender equality was not aimed at the development of democracy, but it was for adapting to the changing economic needs of the Soviet Union. The Soviet emancipation was predominantly designed to benefit manufacturing by making women equal workers and thus benefit the system of production and other areas where the party can effectively use women.<sup>27</sup> As history has shown, war was one of the areas where women were used only to promptly be forgotten or discarded.

While investigating the participation of Soviet women in the Second World War, we take into consideration mainly the period from 22 June 1941 to 9 May 1945, which in Soviet historiography is called the Great Patriotic War, while the

modern Ukrainian historiography tends to call it the Soviet–German War.<sup>28</sup> For the UK, the Second World War began on 3 September 1939, when the UK, together with France, was fulfilling its Allied obligations to Poland due to the German aggression against Poland two days earlier, and they declared war on Germany together.

British and Soviet governments considered women as a vital source of labor to make their armies strong enough in the military campaigns of 1939–45. The UK was the first country to conscript women in 1941, and the Soviet Union was the first to make them soldiers of the regular army in 1942.<sup>29</sup> They both referred to the Second World War as “the people’s war” to mobilize as many resources as possible.<sup>30</sup> “The people’s war is going, the Holy War!”—these words are from the lyrics of the one of the most popular Soviet songs, “The Holy War” (1941), which was representative of the Soviet rhetoric in 1941–45.<sup>31</sup>

### **Women’s Conscription in the United Kingdom**

In the United Kingdom, on the first day of the war, the Military Training Act of May 1939, according to which men between 20–21 years of age were required to undergo compulsory six-month military training, was replaced by the National Service (Armed Forces) Act. According to it, British men between 18–41 years old were called up for military service. Women were called to contribute to the fulfillment of military needs, aimed at protecting the nation from military invasion, as well as to “keep the home fires burning.”<sup>32</sup>

The majority of British women were involved in so-called rear work (or “home front” work)—they worked in the military industry, manufacturing, and civil defense organizations, where they replaced men called up to the army. The Soviet government, in a similar manner, was also actively engaged in replacing men with women in noncombat roles—they took positions at the military’s second-line departments of infantry forces, fortified sectors, and political establishments of the Red Army.<sup>33</sup> At the same time, men released from their obligations in the rear were sent to the rifle divisions, brigades, and artillery regiments.<sup>34</sup>

The UK government officially prohibited involving women in direct combat, but in addition to the measures discussed above, different branches of the British Army in 1938–41 established the auxiliary women’s organizations to support the country in the war. Some of these Services successfully functioned during the First World War and were later reestablished, while others were created for the first time.<sup>35</sup>

Recruitment for the British women’s auxiliary organizations during the first two years of the war was carried out on a voluntary basis. Due to the lack of volunteers, the National Service (No. 2) Act of 18 December 1941 was adopted. It drafted 125,000 women into the British military with a further 430,000



volunteering.<sup>36</sup> Women who chose service in the auxiliary organizations (about one-quarter of the total number of women involved in some kind of war service) were not sent to an area of hostilities without their consent.

## **Women's Conscription in the Soviet Union**

The recruitment of Soviet women into the military sphere on the eve of the war had its own peculiarities. During the years preceding the Second World War, the Soviet government took a course toward militarization of social life, and public discourse was filled with rhetoric of the struggle on various "fronts": labor, sports, and culture. Also, the Soviet Union introduced military and paramilitary training for both men and women.<sup>37</sup> Unlike the British, in the army of the Soviet Union the role of women was not officially limited to auxiliary. Thus, the text of Article 13 of the Universal Military Duty Act of 1 September 1939 read:

The People's Commissars of Defense and Navy are given the right to register and recruit in the Army and Navy women who have medical, veterinary and special technical training, as well as to involve them into training meetings. In wartime, women with the specified training can be called up to the ranks of the Army and Navy for the auxiliary and special service.<sup>38</sup>

An important role in ensuring the active participation of youth in the armed struggle against the enemy was played by the *Komsomol*, or the All-Union Leninist Communist League of Youth, on the recommendation of which about 550,000 young women were sent to the army during the Second World War.<sup>39</sup>

At the very beginning of the war between USSR and Germany, the Soviet governmental newspaper, *Pravda*, presented British women as an example to be followed by Soviet females: "Soviet and English women stood firm in the face of the common enemy. Women of England work in military factories, drive ambulances, join patrols for guarding English cities. You will find an English woman in a fire brigade and in the Anti-Aircraft battery that protects London from the raids of fascist bombers."<sup>40</sup>

Due to the significant losses of the Soviet Army in the first years of the war, mass mobilization of women was conducted for service in the army and the rear units. The largest number of mobilizations were held in 1942. Between March and April 1942 alone, more than 200,000 women were mobilized.<sup>41</sup> Although women joined armed forces voluntarily in 1941, in 1942, pressure had been put on them to join.<sup>42</sup> The People's Commissar of Defense, Joseph Stalin, ordered 120,000 women to be mobilized for the Signal Corps, the Air Forces, and Air Defense.<sup>43</sup> Significantly, in the same year, the British government also decided to call up all women eligible for service who were born between 1920

and 1921, with the exception of those who had already been involved in some kind of war service. This additional mobilization was necessary because the number of women called up under the National Service (No. 2) Act became insufficient.<sup>44</sup>

Generally, in both countries, mobilization of women was the result of the lack of male resources, and it was a forced step for their respective governments. Both governments increased the numbers of females in the military gradually, when necessary, and involved their recruitment into service at the various branches of military. The differences between British and Soviet women's military service are highlighted below.

### **Women in Auxiliary Organizations, Land Forces, and Antiaircraft Divisions**

Most women served among the British women's auxiliary organizations—in particular the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS)—which was founded on 9 September 1938. It was the successor to the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, which existed between 1917 and 1921.

The ATS is known not only in the UK but also abroad. In 1939, members of the ATS had already been in France with the British expeditionary corps. From the beginning, the organization was headed by Dame Helen Gwynne-Vaughan and from June 1941 by Jean Knox.<sup>45</sup> In the same year, the organization was given military status. Approximately 80 different professions were available to women in the ATS. Among them were drivers, communications officers, postal workers, and ammunition supply inspectors.<sup>46</sup> In 1943, there were 210,308 members.<sup>47</sup>

A significant number of ATS members served outside the United Kingdom—in the Middle East, Northeast Europe, Africa, the United States, Canada, the Caribbean, and India. It is noteworthy that, before January 1945, when the order to transfer all the single women from ATS to serve abroad was issued, many served in the other countries only voluntarily. Because British society condemned women's service outside the UK, there were few volunteers. Thus, in August 1941, there were only 37 ATS members on service in the Middle East, compared to 4,196 in June 1945; and in Northeast Europe in 1945, there were 9,543 ATS members.<sup>48</sup>

A significant feature of the ATS was that many of its members served in the antiaircraft divisions—both in all-female formations (e.g., spotlight brigade No. 93) and in the mixed units.<sup>49</sup> In the case of mixed brigades, in addition to the male commander, there was a “gender commissar”—this position was occupied by a woman who had to keep discipline among women.<sup>50</sup> By September 1943, the amount of ATS members in the antiaircraft units was 53,000.<sup>51</sup>

At the beginning of women's entrance to the mixed units, the male offi-

cers were very skeptical of this practice and did not desire to head it. But in the course of time, they changed their position. One of the commanders of a mixed battery, who also was skeptical at the beginning, stated: “When I joined this battery, worked on it, watched its successful development, and shared my sorrows and joys with its members, I can say that I have never been so happy as I am now.”<sup>52</sup>

Women loaded the weapons, attached fires to the artillery shells, and detected the enemy’s aviation. Their jobs were reclassified as noncombat, however, to overcome public condemnation. Campbell states that this measure, together with prohibition of females pulling the trigger, was rather formal, and actually the “mixed AA [antiaircraft] crews were as much combat teams as were the airplane crews they shot down.”<sup>53</sup> Thus, British authorities tried to hide the cases when women actually performed combat roles, in contrast to the Soviet government, which did not refute it.

In the Soviet Union, women’s service in the Air Defense Artillery branch of the army was a common occurrence—at the end of the war their number reached 24 percent. In some regiments and divisions, women made up 50–100 percent of the total amount of personnel.<sup>54</sup> Just in the first half of 1942, according to the State Defense Committee Act No. 1488 from 25 March 1942, 100,000 women were called up for service to substitute men in the antiaircraft defense.<sup>55</sup>

The direct participation of Soviet women in combat was allowed at the legislative level. However, as in the United Kingdom, Soviet society and their male comrades were embarrassed by their presence in the Air Defense and in the army in general. As it was noted by the commander of the Moscow Air Defense Front Daniel Zhuravlev:

The news about women’s service in the Air Defense troops was perceived cautiously. Many people, especially the career military commanders, could not imagine how the presence of a weak sex on the firing positions in the rough conditions of the combat would look like. Will the girls cope with military “tricks,” which were [an] exclusively male affair before? But after 3–5 months of training and combat work it became clear that all concerns were groundless. The girls felt their strength and capabilities. Soon they showed good knowledge of their engagement. . . . Very soon we became convinced that the vast majority of girls became remarkable combatants. Diligence, discipline, precision were inherent to them not less (if not more) than to men.<sup>56</sup>

It is notable then that British women in the antiaircraft defense also “seemed

to be smarter than the rest of the service.”<sup>57</sup> Frederick A. Pile, general officer of the Anti-Aircraft Command, admitted that “the girls lived like men, fought their lights like men and, alas, some of them died like men. Unarmed, they often showed great personal bravery. They earned decorations and they deserved more.”<sup>58</sup> But in both countries, women’s work in the Anti-Aircraft Divisions was lost in public discourse, which aimed to glorify only male soldiers.

Soviet women proved themselves highly competent in combat. One German pilot, who flew many missions in Africa, Western Europe, and the eastern front and was shot down and captured on one of the missions, was asked during his interrogation how powerful the fire of English antiaircraft artillery was over Tobruk, Libya. Nirman replied: “I would rather fly 10 times over the skies of Tobruk than pass once through the fire of Russian flak sent up by female gunners.”<sup>59</sup> But in the Soviet Union, it took about 30 years after the war to publish a substantial work about these and other women, who served in different branches of the military.

Another peculiarity of the women’s service in the Red Army was the opportunity to join female rifle units. In November 1942, the 1st Separate Women’s Reserve Rifle Regiment, which trained women soldiers and officers for the Red Army, began to train women. The number of its permanent staff by 1 January 1944 was 473 members, and among them were 431 women. During its years of operation, the service trained 5,175 women (3,892 ordinary soldiers, 986 sergeants and master sergeants, and 297 officers).<sup>60</sup>

The Women’s Volunteer Rifle Brigade was founded a year later in 1943. It recruited both experienced soldiers (1,000 women were recalled from different fronts), as well as newcomers. Overall, the number of women recruited to the volunteer brigade was 7,000. It should be emphasized that in both organizations, the leading positions were occupied by women.<sup>61</sup>

Many Soviet women served during the war as snipers. Lyudmila Pavlichenko, or “Lady Death,” is considered one of the most famous. Her exploits during the Second World War were commemorated by American musician Woody Guthrie in his song “Miss Pavlichenko,” and the Russian-Ukrainian film *Battle for Sevastopol* (2015) was also dedicated to her. She participated in the battles for Moldavia, Odessa, and Sevastopol. According to the confirmed data, she killed 309 German soldiers, including 36 enemy snipers.<sup>62</sup> Elizaveta Mironova, a sniper in the battles for Sevastopol and Odessa, before her death in 1943 in the battle for Novorossiysk, killed about 100 enemy soldiers and officers. Another Soviet sniper, Rosa Shanina, known as “the Invisible Horror of East Prussia,” is credited with killing 59 enemy soldiers and officers, including 12 snipers.<sup>63</sup>

A significant number of Soviet women were in the Red Army Signal Corps; they accounted for 12 percent of the total number of servicemembers.<sup>64</sup> In con-

trast, there were few female tankers at that time. Well-known among them was Kateryna Petlyuk, a senior sergeant of the 56th Tank Brigade, and the driver of the famous lightweight tank T-60 “Malyutka.”<sup>65</sup> Another woman, Aleksandra Samusenko, may have commanded a tank battalion, although according to official data, she was the commander of the T-34 medium tank and the deputy commander of the tank battalion.<sup>66</sup>

## Women in the Air Forces

The women of both the UK and the Soviet Union were also involved in both countries’ air forces. British women in the air force were prohibited from being fighter pilots. However, some of them served as noncombat pilots. Thus, women members of the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA) transported the aircrafts of the Royal Air Force from the factories to the base of the combat squadron. In 1940, this organization transported de Havilland DH82 single-motor “Tiger Moth” training biplanes in English territory. At the beginning of ATA’s existence, only 8 women were members; but as the organization rapidly developed by 1941, there were already 1,152 men and 600 women, 166 of whom served as pilots and 4 as flight engineers.<sup>67</sup>

Predictably, the fact that women performed such stereotypically “male” jobs aroused the indignation among some. For example, the director of the journal *Aeroplane*, Charles Grey, rated working qualities of female ATA members very poorly, arguing that

the menace is the woman who thinks that she ought to be flying in a high-speed bomber when she really has not the intelligence to scrub the floor of a hospital properly, or who wants to nose around as an Air Raid Warden and yet can’t cook her husband’s dinner.<sup>68</sup>

Despite hostility to them, the women of the ATA proved themselves to be good pilots. They could fly more than 200 types of aircraft (Spitfires, Hurricanes, Mosquitoes, Blenheims, and heavy four-engine Lancaster and Flying Fortress bombers), and during the military campaigns they delivered 308,567 aircraft.<sup>69</sup>

In 1939, the Royal Air Force established the Women’s Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF). This organization was the successor to the Women’s Royal Air Force, which existed between 1918 and 1920. The members of the WAAF served both in their homeland and abroad and were mainly aviation mechanics or joined the Royal Observer Corps. WAAF members performed a wide range of jobs, including photograph interpretation, interception of enemy radio and telephone communications, work with flame guns, and radar installation. Of course, these kinds of jobs were very dangerous, because the enemy tried to destroy this

equipment above all else. In early 1943, the number of women members of the WAAF accounted for 16 percent of the total number of the Royal Air Force.<sup>70</sup> In July 1943, WAAF had 181,835 members.<sup>71</sup>

With the exception of the Turkish pilot Sabiha Gökçen, the women of the USSR were the only women in the world who participated in the war as fighter pilots. In 1941, the three women's aviation regiments of the Soviet Air Forces were: a regiment of 588 night bombers that German soldiers nicknamed "Night Witches" (in 1943 it was renamed to the 46th Guards Women's Aviation Regiment, commanded by Captain Yevdokia Bershanska), a regiment of 587 day bombers (commanded by squadron leader Marina Raskova), and a 586 fighter regiment of the Air Defense (commanded by wing commander Tamara Kazarinova).<sup>72</sup>

Women's air regiments fulfilled a variety of tasks. For example, they bombed enemy fighters and equipment; supported landing operations; delivered ammunition and food; provided air cover for industrial centers and river crossings; supported land operations; accompanied bombers; and stormed enemy airfields. For the successful fulfillment of combat tasks, women's regiments received awards and honorary titles. The women of the Soviet Air Forces conducted 4,419 operations, took part in 125 air battles, and won 38 of them. The Soviet pilot Kateryna Zelenko made the first "air ram attack" conducted by a woman on 12 September 1941. She was shot down trying to land the damaged aircraft.<sup>73</sup> Lilya Litvyak, known as the "White Rose of Stalingrad," shot down 12 German aircraft before her death in 1943.<sup>74</sup>

Many women served in the other units of the Soviet Air Forces. For example, in 1944, 1,749 women served in the 13th Air Army of the Transbaikal Front; 3,000 women served in the 10th Air Army of the Far Eastern Front; 4,376 women served in the 4th Air Army of the 2d Belorussian Front, including the 46th Guards Women's Aviation Regiment.<sup>75</sup>

## **Women in the Navy**

In February 1939, the British Royal Navy reestablished the Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS)—the organization that functioned in the end of the First World War. It was headed by Dame Vera Laughton Mathews from March 1939 to 1946. Initially, WRNS recruited women aged 18–45 years, but later the age limit was extended and women between the ages of 17.5 and 50 years old were recruited.<sup>76</sup>

Because there was a lack of men serving in the navy, the main aim of the WRNS members was to substitute for men in the inland Service. In 1939, women were employed in clerical, domestic, and communications duties. But in 1943, the range of their positions was substantially widened and included more than 60 categories. According to the speech of Member of Parliament

(MP) Stanley Holmes, they were “repairing and testing the radio sets of the Fleet Air Arm, testing and adjusting torpedoes and depth charges, servicing the electrical equipment of coastal craft, and doing a hundred and one other jobs that were formerly done by men.”<sup>77</sup> At the end of 1942, 1,801 officers and 36,554 servicewomen of the WRNS served in the UK, and 952 WRNS members served outside the country.<sup>78</sup>

The term *auxiliary* was not used to refer to the WRNS, because this organization was an integral part of the Royal Navy. However, WRNS officers were not equated with male colleagues in receiving naval ranks.<sup>79</sup> The work of WRNS members in the military campaign of 1939–45 was highly appreciated by the British Admiralty at the end of war. On 8 May 1945, the following message was issued:

The Board of Admiralty wish to record their highest appreciation of the part played by the Women’s Royal Naval Service in support of the Fleet, and in the work of the Naval Command throughout the war against Germany and her European Allies. The loyalty, zeal and efficiency with which the officers and ratings of the Women’s Royal Naval Service have shared the burdens and upheld the traditions of the Naval Service through more than five and a half years of war have earned the gratitude of the Royal Navy.<sup>80</sup>

Many Soviet women also served in the navy during the war, but only one, Marine Colonel Yevdokiya Zavaliy (or Frau Black Death), was the commander of the Marine Scout Platoon. For a long time, she was considered a man, and it was revealed that she was a woman only after being sent to the hospital after being wounded in battle.<sup>81</sup>

In general, the active mobilization of women for service in the Soviet Navy began in 1942, when the Soviet troops had already suffered enormous losses at the front. The main goal of this mobilization was the same as in the UK: to increase the number of men serving afloat by substituting them with women for land jobs.

First, women worked inland as electricians, radio operators, telephone operators, chauffeurs, topographers, meteorologists, clerks, librarians, cooks, hairdressers, and nurses, but later they also served in combat roles as automatic riflemen, snipers, and machine gunners.<sup>82</sup> However, because of the fact that the hostilities were predominantly on the territory of the USSR, and also because the mobilization was carried out in a hurry, there were the cases when the newly mobilized women were killed even before the start of their training. Thus, Galina Kameneva quotes Olha Serdykova, who was among those under fire during the Kerch retreat:



I was mobilized on May 3, 1942 in Krasnodar among 630 girls-volunteers. On May 5 we arrived in Temryuk. We were boarded onto a ship and told that it would take us to the rear to study for the telephonists. And on May 7, 1942 the ship arrived in Kerch, where the active combat operations were held. . . . We were bombed day and night. There was no kitchen there; we ate up what was taken from home. There was no talk of any training. . . . On May 16, we heard that we are called the girls from 50th Signal Regiment 47th Army for the first time. We were told that a motor boat would come to pick us up. But we did not get there. From 630 [women only] 115 [survived] and the men left us behind. The overcrowded boat left, and we stayed on the bridge. . . . Out of desperation, when the new motor boat with a barge came, we, eight girls holding together, rushed into the water. The five managed to get on the barge. Because of the overload, the barge began to fill up with water. They opened fire from the barge to drive people away from it. We sailed, but a lot of people [were] left there [on the shore].<sup>83</sup>

According to the archival data processed by Galina Tkachova, in the middle of 1944, 22,000 women served as regular personnel in the navy, excluding listeners and cadets of the naval educational institutions. Among them there were 1,769 officers and 2,449 master sergeants and sergeants. In July 1944, 4,073 women held positions of junior commanders.<sup>84</sup>

## **Women in the Intelligence Services**

Female special agents at the beginning of the war had a special status in the intelligence services. According to the cultural norms of the most countries of the world, women in the war were usually victims but not aggressors. Therefore, the enemies more often let their guard down in the women's company. However, this advantage quickly evaporated, and the spy service became a mortal danger for women.

In the UK, a significant number of women were employees of the Special Operations Executive (SOE). The organization was created by Winston Churchill's order of July 1940. The main task of the SOE was to carry out secret orders, as well as to supply, support, and train the members of the resistance movement in the countries occupied by Germany (e.g., France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, and others).

William Mackenzie states that the SOE "reached its maximum expansion in the late summer and early Autumn of 1944, when its total British strength



was probably just under 13,000 . . . the total includes about 450 ATS, 60 WAAF, and 1,500 FANY as well as nearly 1,200 civilian women: about 3,200 women.”<sup>85</sup> It should be noted that very few women were special agents; a majority held positions in the office. In particular, according to Juliette Pattinson, the French Section had 39 women spies, the French-led Gaullist Section had 11, the Dutch office had 3, and the Belgian Section had only 2.<sup>86</sup> But even these modest figures, together with above-mentioned women’s jobs in the anti-aircraft defense, undermined the British government’s assurance that women did not perform combat roles in the Second World War. Women spies had special training, including use of arms. As the SOE member Yvonne Baseden recalled: “We handled everything from anti-tank guns to Continental automatics. . . . By the time I returned to London I had learned a lot of ways of killing.”<sup>87</sup> At the same time, positions in the SOE were divided according to gender roles, where women’s positions were couriers and wireless operators, indicating that women would not actively use weapons, at least in theory.

Among the well-known British women special agents is Violette Szabo. Her first mission took place in France in April 1944. She was a courier and worked together with F Section agent Major Charles Staunton. Violette’s task was to find information about arrested agents and members of the Resistance, as well as to meet those who continued their work. The mission lasted for two weeks and was successful.<sup>88</sup> Very soon after its end, she was sent to France with another mission: “to intensify Resistance activity in the Haute Vienne and to aid the Allies in D-Day,” and on 10 June was captured by Germans.<sup>89</sup> In 1945, she was executed at the Ravensbrück concentration camp. She was posthumously awarded the French Croix de Guerre and the British George Cross.<sup>90</sup>

Another seven women—Andrée Borell, Diana Rowden, Vera Leigh, Odette Churchill, Yolande Beekmann, Sonya Olschanezky, and Madeleine Zoe Damerment—were captured, tortured, and taken to Germany. None of them reported to the Gestapo any information during the interrogation. From this group, only Odette Churchill escaped. She assured Germans that she was married to Peter Churchill and that he was Winston Churchill’s nephew, which, although false, saved her life.<sup>91</sup>

Nancy Wake, known to the Germans as the White Mouse, was one of the most famous and highly decorated women SOE agents.<sup>92</sup> For her successful service, she was awarded the American Presidential Medal of Freedom, the British George Medal, and the French Croix de Guerre with palm, the Croix de Guerre with star, the Médaille de la Résistance, and the Chevalier de Légion d’Honneur.<sup>93</sup> In the recommendation of the award of the George Medal to her, it was stated that

this officer was parachuted into France on the 1st March 1944  
as assistant to an organiser who was taking over the direction

of an important circuit in Central France. . . . Ensign Wake worked for several months helping to train and instruct Maquis groups. She took part in several engagements with the enemy, and showed the utmost bravery under fire.<sup>94</sup>

A number of prominent persons were among the Soviet intelligence officers, and some of them became famous before the beginning of hostilities between the USSR and Germany. In particular, the reconnaissance officer Zoya Voskresenskaya-Rybkina, together with her commander Pavel Zhuravlev, found evidence of the preparation of the German invasion and reported this to Joseph Stalin, but it is known that he ignored this information.<sup>95</sup> Since the beginning of the war, Voskresenskaya-Rybkina initially prepared intelligence agents and sent them to the rear of the German armies in the occupied Soviet territories. Later, in October 1941, she continued her activities in Sweden. There, she recruited new agents and restored a connection with Finnish intelligence, which was lost after the Soviet-Finnish War (1939–40).<sup>96</sup> The clandestine agent Anna Morozova, who worked at the German airbase in Sescha, helped to destroy the garrison of this airbase and to kill 200 people of the enemy air staff. In 1943, Morozova joined the detecting detachment “Jack” with the pseudonym “Swan” and worked on the territory of Eastern Prussia. She died in 1944, having been encircled.<sup>97</sup> No less tragic was the fate of the hero of the Soviet Union, Nina Hnylytska, the intelligence officer of the 465th Separate Reconnaissance Troop of the 383d Rifle Division (18th Army, southern front). In the early hours of 5 November 1941, she got a group of the Soviet intelligence officers into her native village Knyaginovka, occupied by the enemy, and killed the guard and 10 German soldiers. After that, the intelligence officers obtained valuable documents and weapons. Hnylytska died on 10 December 1941, after being encircled by the Germans and killed.<sup>98</sup>

Among the female intelligence officers who evaded death during the war were Maria Fortus, Maria Bobiereva, and Asya Zhukova. In particular, Fortus was a member of the partisan detachment of Dmitry Medvedev and collaborated with the famous Soviet intelligence officer Mykola Kuznetsov. She not only trained new intelligence officers as a member of the intelligence unit of the command staff of the 3d Ukrainian Front, but she also performed specific tasks on the territory of Romania and Hungary. After the war, she continued to work as an intelligence officer.<sup>99</sup> Maria Bobiereva was proficient in German. Being a member of the reconnaissance and sabotage group, she was engaged in partisan activity in Poland (e.g., explosive demolition of trains, roads, bridges, and other infrastructure). For successful service, she was not only awarded 28 orders and medals but also received the status of an honorary citizen of the Czech Republic and Poland. After the war, she pursued her scientific work and became the first

woman in Ukraine to receive a Full Doctor's Degree in Romance languages. Asya Zhukova joined the intelligence group at the end of the war in 1944. The most famous of her operations was carried out in Krakow, Poland, where Zhukova worked as a member of the intelligence group named Voice, together with Evgeniy Berezniak, nicknamed "Major Whirlwind."<sup>100</sup> Her evidence concerning buildings in Krakow, which Germans had started to mine, made it possible to save many Polish cultural artifacts.

### **Societal Gender Stereotypes of Women Members of the Auxiliary Services and Combatants**

Despite the fact that British women fulfilled unusual types of employment well and often displayed heroism, there remained a significant number of factors that led to the average Britons' negative image of their service in the auxiliary organizations. As in the times of the First World War, most of society still believed that women were engaged in "male" work, and therefore used double standards in shaping the attitude toward women and men in the army. It is important to note that servicewomen were criticized by military officers and civilians, both men and women. And everything caused concerns—masculinization, along with direct contact of women with men in the Services, which allegedly provoked promiscuity, causing the spread of STDs and resulting in extramarital pregnancy.

In particular, the WAAF members gained notoriety as the "groundsheet for the army."<sup>101</sup> Similar accusations were addressed to the members of the ATS. To investigate this problem, a special parliamentary committee was created. According to its report presented in August 1942, the level of STD and extramarital pregnancy among women in the auxiliary Services was significantly lower than among their peers who were not in the Service (0.6 percent versus 2.1 percent), which clearly contradicted many of the negative assertions leveled against the women who served.<sup>102</sup> Consequently, this negative image of members of the ATS was groundless, but such unwarranted statements about women's morality in the auxiliary organizations had a negative impact on the fighting spirit and the desire to join the auxiliary Services in general. It should be mentioned that accusations of promiscuity were not addressed to men. On the contrary, society tried to take care of their health by providing them with condoms. At the same time, women were not provided with any means to prevent pregnancy.<sup>103</sup>

Another barrage of criticism that women members of the auxiliary Services received was for their uniforms, which were similar to the military uniforms. This first caused public outcry during the First World War and was seen as an attack upon the honor of the male soldiers who paid for it with their own blood in combat.<sup>104</sup>

In the Soviet Union, the gossip about women in the army was also wide-

spread; concerning them, the scornful term “campaign wife” or “camp follower” was widely used.<sup>105</sup> A quote from the memoirs of the veteran of war Nikolai Posilayev, given by Elena Senyavskaya, not only illustrates one of the examples of stereotypical judgments about women in the army but also denotes the dishonorable conduct of Soviet men toward women:

Let the female soldiers forgive me, but I will talk about what I saw. As a rule, women on the frontline soon became mistresses of the officers. It could hardly be otherwise: if the woman is alone, the harassment will have no end. Another thing, when she has someone.<sup>106</sup>

It is noteworthy that in the Soviet Union there was no “gender equality” in the military sphere despite the fact that it was declared. One can come to this conclusion by analyzing the specifics of women’s recruitment to the army. For example, women’s recruitment on a large scale began only in 1942 and was put into effect as an extreme measure due to the significant losses at the beginning of the war. They dominated the so-called auxiliary works in the Soviet Army, and there was a general negative perception of them by male colleagues as well as within society at large concerning their military service. On the eve of the war’s end, almost all women were demobilized from military service, and nobody took into account the desire of many of them to continue their service. Nobody distinguished women in statistics on general military losses, which suppressed the number of wounded, shell-shocked, and disabled women, despite the fact that they served in all military specialties and acquired the ranks from common soldier to colonel.<sup>107</sup> One might consider this fact as proof of the Soviet government’s intent to erase women’s sacrifice. After the war, it was illustrative that both countries did not bring up the topic of the women’s military glory. In the public discourse, there was only male military valor, and the word “soldier” was associated exclusively with a man. In the UK, there were “Tommies” who came back home from war, and in the Soviet Union there were “Ivans.”<sup>108</sup> In other words, while the men’s participation in the war and their contribution very rarely caused doubts; in the case of women, it was still necessary to prove how they served, and at the same time their merits were often downgraded and reduced to discussions about “improper sexual behavior.”<sup>109</sup>

Given the complex conditions and the character of total hostilities in the territory of the Soviet Union, the quote from one of the veterans of the war, Mir Kochetkov, illustrates the negative stereotypes women were faced with when serving in the military:

When I heard that our nurses, being encircled, shot back, defending the wounded men, because the wounded were helpless as children, I understood that, but when two women are belly-

ing to kill somebody with a precision rifle on a grey area—this none the less is “hunting”. . . . Although I was a sniper. And I shot. . . . But I am a man. . . . Perhaps, I would go on the scout with her, but I will never marry such kind of woman.<sup>110</sup>

This veteran’s opinion was not an isolated incident. Ukrainian historian Tetyana Orlova notes that the authorities cynically used women in the war.<sup>111</sup> After its end, the first chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, Mikhail Kalinin, during his speech at a meeting with demobilized women, gave them the following advice: “Do not give yourselves airs in your future practical work. Do not talk about the services you have rendered, let others do it for you.”<sup>112</sup> Women took this advice to heart, in particular, to rebuild their lives. Svetlana Alexievich made a good point concerning this problem:

After the war, women had another war. They hid their military booklets, their certificates of wound—because they had to learn to smile again, to walk on high heels and to get married. The men forgot about their female companions in arms, betrayed them. They stole the Victory from them; did not share it.<sup>113</sup>

But Soviet authorities were not alone in their postwar rhetoric concerning women who served. During the debates on demobilization in the House of Commons on 22 October 1945, Winston Churchill, who was the leader of the Opposition at that time, stated:

women do not compete with the men in the same way or to the same degree. . . . If it can be proved that a woman is necessary for some indispensable task connected with our commitments or our demobilisation, let her be kept until the due time for her release arrives. . . . But I am not speaking of this class. I am speaking of the very large numbers of young women in the three Services who have been kept doing nothing, fooling around with every kind of futile, fanciful task, to their own annoyance and at wasteful expense to the State. Every woman who is not irreplaceable in her present Service job, except by a man of higher category, should be released on giving a month’s notice. . . . As for the women, many of them want to stay, but surely those who have nothing to do, and are not wanted for any purpose under the sun, should be set free now.<sup>114</sup>

During the same debates, another member of Parliament, Jennie Lee, expressed the opinion that “many women ought never to have been in the Ser-

vices, that they could have done their job equally well as civilians” and stated that the government should give “an assurance that no woman who could be released is being kept in the services.”<sup>115</sup> Thus, the insulting and sexist rhetoric on servicewomen was characteristic for both countries’ political leaders. And it is unlikely that after the war any servicemen in both countries had heard such negative views of their service from politicians.

The critical evaluation of the participation of women in the military campaign of 1939–45 is closely linked to well-established beliefs about the role of women in public life. The researchers argue that in the historiography of different countries the myth of a man-warrior was established for many years; women in such a position were seen as an exception to the rule, even a deviation.<sup>116</sup> The general argument was based on biological explanations, according to which a woman is a priori a lower, inferior human being.<sup>117</sup> Such a statement lay at the heart of the entire argument for a long time and was used for encouraging men to join military service and take an active part in the war. These views led to the masculinization of the role of the defender and the feminization of the person in need of protection; the formation of paired associations like the concept of *woman* relating to peace and *man* relating to war, and allegations that a woman, in contrast to a man, cannot kill, because it is “unnatural” for her.<sup>118</sup> Therefore, until recently, there was a belief that being a soldier is a kind of male privilege, which gives men an advantage over the other half of society—women.

In this context, of particular importance is the study of the American scientist Joshua Goldstein, who concluded that despite the existence of the certain gender patterns, according to which murder is “normal” for men, murder is indeed traumatic for both sexes.<sup>119</sup> And the numerous personal examples of women who participated in military conflicts as soldiers prove that murder, when necessary, can be committed by either men or women.

When studying women’s war experience, one must take into account the fact that as a result of cultural norms, women combatants had to overcome not only the fear of killing but fear of becoming a “wrong” woman, or not a woman at all. Lucy Noakes explains it as “the binary distinction between the female life-giver and the male life-taker,” which “has been so widely naturalised that when women do kill, they are often seen as more ferocious and more dangerous than men.”<sup>120</sup> Therefore, many of the memoirs by women contain an assessment of their service in comparison with male experience and often with hidden justifications. The former sniper Tamara Stepanova argued:

A man, he could endure it. He is a man none the less [*sic*]. But how could a woman, I do not know. Now when I think of it, I’m terrified, but then I could do everything: to sleep near the dead, to shoot; I saw the blood, I remember very well that in

the snow the smell of blood was especially strong. . . . Here I am telling you this, and it makes me sick. . . . But then it was no matter, then I could do everything.<sup>121</sup>

Justifying the participation of women in the war was also necessary for civilians. A senior officer who was a tank instructor in the tank battalion, Nina Vishnevskaya, recalled that she was seriously injured in the legs in battle near Kursk, and therefore she was taken to a medical and sanitary battalion located in one of the houses in the village Zhovta, Kirovograd region:

The matron of the house, in which the medical and sanitary battalion was located, rushed to me:

“It is not a boy, it is a girl!”

I’m crop-haired, wore the overalls like a boy. She then even slaughtered a pig to get me back on my feet. And she kept saying:

—“Could it be true, that the men are not enough, so they recruited the children, girls?!”<sup>122</sup>

Many memoirs of the Soviet female veterans are contained in the famous book of Svetlana Alexievich, *War’s Unwomanly Face*. The very title of the book suggests that the author considers women’s perception of the experience of the war to be different from men:

Women’s memory covers that continent of human feelings in the war, which usually slips away from male attention. If man’s attention was absorbed by the war as an action, the woman instead felt and rubbed through it differently because of her female psychology: bombing, death, suffering—it is not the whole war for her. A woman is more likely to feel the overload of the war—physical and moral.<sup>123</sup>

Despite the allegedly greater sensitivity of women as a group and the statement about “female psychology,” which now can be heavily criticized and labeled as culturally determined, this book contains valuable material, including women’s reflections that allow us to realize the everyday life of the female combatants in the Soviet Army. It is also necessary to take into account the fact that this book was published in Soviet times and some materials were censored and not included in this book. In a 2015 interview, Alexievich states that many of the most stunning memories have never seen the world. But despite this fact, after the book was released, she periodically received letters from irritated male war veterans.<sup>124</sup>

Undoubtedly, women members of auxiliary Services and combatants eval-



uated their participation in the military campaign of 1939–45 differently. Among them were those who considered their service as the unfortunate exception, dictated by the conditions of war and the lack of male population, and those who considered it as their duty. In particular, female SOE agents were among those who destroyed the myth of the exceptional “peacefulness” of women. The secret agent Nancy Wake noted the following on her service during the war: “I hate wars and violence but if they come then I don’t see why we women should just wave our men a proud goodbye and then knit them balaclavas.”<sup>125</sup> Many women and men noted that military experience made them feel much older. The sanitary inspector Olha Omelchenko noted: “My soul was tired.”<sup>126</sup>

Senior sergeant sniper Claudia Crochina subsequently explained her attitude to the war and to murder:

We laid in wait, and I had eyes on. Then I saw: one German rose. I pulled the trigger—he fell. And you know, everything shook in me, I was scared. It is nothing special when shooting the target, but how could I kill a man?! But then it went away. And that’s how it happened. We passed by some kind of small town in eastern Prussia. And we saw a burned area, just coal left. In this coal we saw human bones and stars from our wounded or captive who were burnt. And after what I saw there was no fear to kill the enemy. After the front I turned all white—at the age of 21 my hair was white.<sup>127</sup>

However, despite the horrors of war that had to engage both men and women, their participation in the military campaign of 1939–45 became not only an example of courage but also broke a number of established stereotypes and played an exceptional role in supporting gender equality.

WAAF member Trudy Murray recalled that she had mixed feelings on the day of the end of the war: “Demob[ilization] was a big disappointment to a lot of us. It was an awful and wonderful war. I wouldn’t have missed it for anything; some of the friends we made were forever.”<sup>128</sup>

## **Women Members of the Auxiliary Services and Combatants in the UK and the USSR**

Women’s participation in the military campaign of 1939–45 was widespread both in the UK and in the USSR. Undoubtedly, the number of women in the Red Army is much higher than the similar figures for the UK. But in this case, it is necessary to consider: 1) the difference in the total population for both countries: 170.6 million in the USSR (1939) and 46 million in the United Kingdom (1931)—the population of the USSR was 3.5 times higher; and 2) the total character of the military campaign on the territory of the USSR, which required more human resources.<sup>129</sup>



Martin van Creveld and David Fraser note that the women's contingent in the British Army during the Second World War was about 300,000.<sup>130</sup> According to George Forty, in the Women's Auxiliary Services and nursing organizations, there were about 470,000 women; the same amount were in the Civil Defense, Home Guard, Royal Observer Corps, and Women's Land Army.<sup>131</sup>

Until recently, the number of women in the Soviet Army was estimated at 800,000 during the period, according to official statistics.<sup>132</sup> However, the study of Ukrainian historian Tatyana Orlova refutes it and claims that

the number of trained nurses was 300,000, more than 900,000 members of the medical detachments, in the Air Defense served 300,000 women. During the war 222,000 women were trained as "soldiers-specialists": mortar gunners, medium machine gun and heavy assault rifle specialists, operators of an automatic machine, snipers, signalists, specialists for maintenance of roads service. Even to add a line of these figures we will get 1,722,000. This is without counting women in aviation, navy, armored troops, artillery, infantry forces, and even in the cavalry. Tens of thousands of women served as military doctors, intelligence officers, drivers, staffers, cooks, etc. So, the actual number of women who wore a military uniform [was] not less than 2–3 million. Furthermore, there were hundreds of thousands of women in militia, partisan units, clandestine forces.<sup>133</sup>

The fact that Soviet government tried to hide the real figures of women's participation in the war and accentuated single heroic personalities, which came off as the exception and did not take precedence over the "male" victory, is the additional proof that the proclaimed gender equality in the USSR was nothing more than propaganda.

According to the statistics, more than 150,000 women were awarded military orders and medals; more than 200 women were awarded the Orders of Glory of the second and third classes; four became full chevaliers of the Order of Glory; 93 women became Heroes of the Soviet Union; and 650 women were awarded by the governments of the other countries.<sup>134</sup> The majority of female Heroes of the Soviet Union were pilots (83 women).<sup>135</sup>

### **Commemoration of Women's War Effort**

The war effort of British women became a component of the argument used by activists of the second wave of feminism in the 1960s. For the Soviet women veterans, the 1960s also became an important milestone, because only then, during the reign of Leonid Brezhnev, the state officially added them to the

discourse on the war commemoration. In 1965, for the 20th anniversary of the victory in the Great Patriotic War, 8 March was proclaimed the day of all Soviet women and, in particular, women veterans of the war. In 1974, the first comprehensive study of the participation of Soviet women in the war, written by Vera Murmantseva, was published.<sup>136</sup>

In general, the decision to continue supporting some of the women's organizations on a regular basis can be considered evidence of the British government's acknowledgment of their effectiveness in the Second World War. The following organizations continued their activities after the war: WRNS (joined the Royal Navy in 1993), ATS (in 1949, integrated into the Women's Royal Army Corps, which was disbanded in 1992, and female employees joined various units of the British Army), and WAAF (from 1949 on it was known as the Women's Royal Air Force; since 1994, its members joined the Royal Air Force).<sup>137</sup>

In 2005, for the 60th anniversary of the victory in the World War II, Queen Elizabeth II opened the National Memorial dedicated to women who participated in the Second World War. The bronze sculpture by John W. Mills represents the uniform and working clothes worn by women during the Second World War. The memorial is located in Whitehall in central London.<sup>138</sup> Significantly, during the existence of the Soviet Union and after its collapse, there was no similar monument that would reflect the importance of women's front and rear work during the war. Among examples of Soviet monumental art devoted to women who protected their homeland are several sculptures: *Mother Georgia* (1958) in Tbilisi, Georgia, by Elguja Amashukeli; and *Homeland Mother* (1981) in Kiev, Ukraine, by Vasyl Borodai. The first monument depicts a woman with a vial of wine for friends and a sword for enemies; the second represents a woman with a sword and a shield. Similar monuments were also erected in other cities of the USSR (e.g., Yerevan, Armenia; Samara and Volgograd, Russia). However, for the Soviet Union, it was more common to focus on the single heroic personalities and glorify their examples.

## Conclusion

The comparative analysis of the British and Soviet women's participation in the auxiliary organizations, armed forces, air forces, antiaircraft divisions, naval forces, and intelligence during the Second World War indicates that democratic and totalitarian regimes had many common features in their policies toward women's conscription in war years and in their general interpretation of female service during that time. In particular, there were many similarities between the UK and the USSR's treatment of women and in their reasoning for including women in the workforce and Services—the decision to use women in military service in both countries was determined by the insufficient numbers of men for combat; both governments referred to the Second World War as “the peo-

ple's war" to mobilize more human resources; and both actively substituted women for men for noncombatant roles. Negative views on the inclusion of women were also similar—both held skepticism of women's presence in military service along with the belief that women were too fragile to cope with military duties; both viewed women's work in the military as supplementary, and thus less valuable. Many women were placed in second-line military departments, and their roles were seen as auxiliary—this was especially true in the UK, where women officially were explicitly prohibited from taking part in direct combat. The UK and the Soviet Union held similar double standards and negative attitudes toward women and their military achievements in society, and both had accusations of improper moral behavior and putting all responsibility for it on women. Despite this, both the USSR and the UK allowed the inclusion of women in more diverse types of work; however, both countries had a strong public relations effort to minimize women's military efforts during the war in public discourse by portraying it as an exception, despite the fact that the presence of women in the military was common in both countries, especially in the USSR.

Nevertheless, there was a postwar desire in the USSR and the UK to go back to normal life as it was and return to the concept of "masculine" men and "feminine" women. In contrast to men, women who served in both countries' military faced more difficulty readjusting to society both during the war and after it, because there was no equivalent glory or recognition for them. Society was more intolerant and critical of them, expecting them to act according to the strict prewar stereotypes of femininity, and both governments tried to hide important information concerning women's service.

In the case of the UK, its authorities reclassified some combat positions (e.g., in the Anti-Aircraft Defense) as noncombat. The female secret agents of the SOE also had different tasks, and some of them had combat experience. These actions led to the misconception that there were no women in direct combat in the UK during 1939–45. The Soviet official statistics on women who served is also questioned by modern scholars, who argue that the numbers were highly underrated. The most important difference between two countries' policies toward women's involvement in the military during the Second World War was the use of arms. Officially forbidden for British women, it was an essential part of the daily life of the Soviet women soldiers on the frontline.

In general, women served in different branches of the military in both countries and were able to perform exemplary military service, despite the fact that they were in the more complicated conditions than men. Military service was a new and harsh environment for them, and the negative social perception during the war years and after made their service and postwar rehabilitation much harder. With minor exceptions, women who served received not glory

but different kinds of accusations and tended to evaluate their roles in the military according to gender stereotypes.

Thus, given the wide range of similarities between the totalitarian and democratic countries toward women in military, it can be concluded that in this case the differences between their political regimes were placed in the background, giving way to their patriarchal essence. Both countries used women in the same manner during the Second World War, but only in the UK were the approaches to women's roles in different spheres of society substantially reconsidered during the postwar years as a result of democratic governance.

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# “Things must be bad at the front” Women in the Soviet Military during WWII<sup>1</sup>

Steven Merritt Miner, PhD

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**Abstract:** A number of claims have been advanced about the enlistment of some 900,000 women in the Red Army during WWII—that it resulted from the Communist commitment to gender equality; that voluntary service proves that the population supported the Stalinist regime; that the Soviet state was able to harness effectively its human and material resources; and finally that female service in combat units was both commonplace and a decisive factor in the war. In fact, far from being a well-executed policy, Soviet mobilization of women was hesitant, muddled, inefficient, and cruel. In other words, it reflected the many endemic social and governmental ills of the Stalinist state. If the experience of the wartime Red Army has any utility for debates elsewhere concerning women in the Armed Services, it is largely as a cautionary example.

**Keywords:** women in the military, women soldiers in the USSR, World War II, WWII and memory, male-female relations in the Soviet military, Soviet soldiers’ motivation, role of women in Soviet victory

**F**our decades after the Second World War, a female veteran who was inducted into the Red Army in 1942 recalled her somber departure from her village. By all accounts, morale among supporters of the Soviet war ef-

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fort was at a low ebb at that time. During the months following the Axis attack on 22 June 1941, the invaders inflicted millions of casualties, very nearly capturing Moscow, only to be halted by a combination of overextension, exhaustion, weather, and of course determined Soviet resistance. Many hoped that Hitler had been stopped for good, but in June 1942, the *Wehrmacht* resumed its advance. Axis forces broke through Red Army defenses in the south and began their drive toward Stalingrad and the crucial Soviet oilfields of the Caucasus. At the same time, German forces in North Africa threatened to breach British defenses; and in the Indian Ocean, the Japanese Imperial Navy menaced sea communications. The fate of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) once again hung in the balance.

This young female recruit was one individual in the first great wave of women swept into the Soviet armed forces amid the national emergency. She described the grim mood among her fellow villagers: “Those of us who were leaving and those seeing us off were all in tears, but our mothers cried most of all. The men shook their heads in dissatisfaction, though, and repeated: ‘Things must be bad at the front if they’ve started to call up women.’”<sup>2</sup>

The USSR’s induction of women into the Armed Services during the Second World War was the largest program of its kind, then or since.<sup>3</sup> Some 900,000 Soviet women entered the wartime armed forces, with about 580,000 serving in the Red Army.<sup>4</sup> An estimated 120,000 experienced action, though most were not in combat units.<sup>5</sup> Russia had prior experience of women serving in action. A small contingent of women’s units fought in the First World War, most famously the so-called “Women’s Battalion of Death,” under the formidable Mariia Bochkareva, who met and impressed Woodrow Wilson.<sup>6</sup> During the Russian Civil War of 1917–21, women constituted 2 percent of the Red Army’s soldiers.<sup>7</sup> But the Soviets’ mass employment of women in the Armed Services during 1941–45 vastly exceeded these precedents.

The subject of women in the Soviet military is of obvious historical significance, and as the largest mobilization of its kind, it is also germane to contemporary debates about women’s roles in the Armed Services, especially in combat. Unfortunately, historical evaluation of the subject has often been marred by myths and generalizations based on preconceptions about the USSR and Communism, ignorance of Stalinist reality, a certain romanticism and exoticism that too often suffuses the study of Russia and the eastern front, and by anecdotes and selective numbers divorced from context.

Historians and journalists have advanced a number of claims about women in the wartime Soviet military that have shaped popular perceptions of the Nazi-Soviet war. The readiness of the Soviet leadership to deploy women on a large scale is often ascribed to the Communist regime’s ideological commitment to gender equality.<sup>8</sup> The voluntary service of hundreds of thousands of women

has been cited as indicative of the wider population's support for the war effort and even for the Stalinist regime. The argument is often made that the Kremlin prepared from the very outset of hostilities for a protracted conflict, unlike the Nazis, who expected a swift victory.<sup>9</sup> Female mobilization is also sometimes cited as proof that the authoritarian wartime Soviet state was able to harness effectively its human and materiel resources—whatever the Communist system's many peacetime failings.<sup>10</sup> Finally, a number of popular histories and documentaries convey the impression that female service in combat units was both commonplace and a decisive factor in the war. In fact, few of these conventional assumptions hold up under close scrutiny. Far from being a well-executed policy, Soviet mobilization of women into the armed forces was hesitant, muddled, inefficient, and cruel; in other words, it reflected the many endemic social and governmental ills of the Stalinist state.

Six days before the invasion of the USSR, Nazi minister of propaganda Joseph Goebbels met with Adolf Hitler, who confidently predicted a swift triumph. "Bolshevism will collapse like a house of cards," Goebbels wrote. "We face victories unequalled in human history."<sup>11</sup> The massive human and materiel losses that the USSR suffered during the first four months of war seemed to vindicate the Nazis' initial optimism. On 22 June 1941, the Red Army numbered 5.4 million men, some 2.9 million of whom were deployed along the western frontier facing the invaders. According to German records, by December 1941, 3.3 million Soviet soldiers were prisoners of war (POWs).<sup>12</sup> The total number of killed, wounded, and missing by year's end reached 4,308,094, or almost 80 percent of the prewar army.<sup>13</sup> At the peak of their advance, during the summer of 1942, the invaders occupied only 8.7 percent of the USSR's enormous landmass.<sup>14</sup> Yet, given the heavy concentration of Soviet population and economic development in the west of the country, by November 1941, Axis forces had seized regions that supplied 38 percent of prewar Soviet gross grain production; 63 percent of coal; 68 percent of cast iron; 60 percent of aluminum; and 58 percent of all steel furnaces.<sup>15</sup> Less than 40 percent of Soviet civilians underwent enemy occupation, and at least 12 million civilians became refugees.<sup>16</sup>

When the Soviet order did not implode, and the Red Army defied Hitler's complacent predictions by remaining in the field even after suffering monumental losses, the German high command cast about for explanations. Following a Führer conference in August 1942, Chief of the German General Staff Franz Halder suggested in his diary: "Sources. Higher use of women (Russia, 60 percent, Germany, 41 percent)."<sup>17</sup> Halder was apparently referring to Soviet women in the industrial workforce, not to those serving in the armed forces. Yet, even as he wrote these words, the USSR was undertaking a mass mobilization of women, both in the rear and at the front, that would exceed his estimates.

The Soviet leadership did not order the large-scale induction of women into the military until almost a year after the war began, indicating an initial unpreparedness or reluctance on their part. Given that the highly centralized Stalinist state aspired to impose a uniform Communist Party line in all major aspects of Soviet life, it was ironic that, before the war, the Kremlin issued mixed messages concerning gender relations. To be sure, the 1936 Soviet Constitution guaranteed women “equal rights with men in all spheres of economic, state, cultural, social and political life,” but the same document also in theory proclaimed freedom of speech and assembly.<sup>18</sup> The Soviet regime eliminated formal barriers against women’s entry into professions that had either been closed or restricted under the tsarist regime, and equal pay for identical work was the norm throughout Soviet society—the army included.<sup>19</sup> The regime actively encouraged young women to enter the workforce, in part, because the state needed female labor; the violence of the previous decades had created an 11 percent deficit of males in the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic.<sup>20</sup> As for military training, from 1932 onward, many youths of both sexes aged 12 and older received some formal instruction, including in the use of firearms; thousands learned to fly gliders in aerial clubs. Both boys and girls in the *Komsomol* (All-Union Leninist Communist League of Youth) were more likely to receive such training, because the regime viewed them as the leading stratum of the future generation.<sup>21</sup> According to Soviet-era statistics, 220,000 young girls received at least some basic sharpshooting training before the war.<sup>22</sup> By contrast, both Nazi Germany and democratic Britain forbade female participation in combat and specifically prohibited women from discharging firearms—thus, even preventing them from firing anti-aircraft artillery in civil defense.<sup>23</sup> The USSR had no such prohibitions.

That said, however, women were almost entirely absent from the higher ranks of the Communist Party, government, and armed forces, and they rarely occupied high-level civilian managerial positions.<sup>24</sup> Official promises of daycare were seldom honored, and few facilities existed to care for the elderly or chronically ill.<sup>25</sup> With reliable birth control scarce, and abortion made a criminal offense in 1936, the USSR had a high birth rate, equivalent to modern developing nations. In 1939, the crude birthrate in the second-largest Soviet republic, Ukraine—the chief target of the German invaders—was 35.5; in urban areas, it was 33.2.<sup>26</sup> Millions of Soviet mothers did not work outside the home owing to family-care obligations.

The prewar image of the ideal Soviet woman was bifurcated: on the one hand, the state expected her to be an educated, modern member of the workforce; on the other, Communist authorities also expected fecund motherhood, and both the regime and society regarded caregiving as a largely female duty.<sup>27</sup> Communist notions of gender equality also did not sink deep roots in the

non-Slavic areas of the Soviet empire, where locals often resisted it as an alien Russian imposition.<sup>28</sup> Despite the state's formal commitment to gender equality and the military training of adolescent girls, only approximately 1,000 women were serving in the army in June 1941, fewer than in either Nazi Germany or the United Kingdom.<sup>29</sup> None served in combat units. This was the case despite the massive expansion of the Red Army between the outbreak of European war in September 1939 and the Nazi attack in June 1941. Perhaps the absence of women in decision-making positions caused Kremlin planners to overlook the potential for mobilization of women.

When war broke out, thousands of young women appeared at army recruiting stations (*voenkomaty*) seeking to volunteer. Most recruiting officers told these women to return home and await a state summons; some even responded insultingly. Mira Vaiman, for example, was a medical student in Voronezh whose father was Jewish. When she appeared at her local *voenkomat*, the recruiting officer replied with an anti-Semitic slur: "the *voenkom* sarcastically said: 'What do you think? They can't do without your snub nose at the front?'"<sup>30</sup> In the absence of central directives, the whim of the local recruiting officer determined whether a woman was inducted or not. Although a small number of women entered Red Army ranks at this time, the remainder of those not told to return home and wait were instead shunted into two formations: the so-called "destroyer battalions" (*istrebitel'nye battal'ony*) or the people's militia (*narodnoe opol'chenie*).

The destroyer battalions were created following Joseph Stalin's first wartime radio address of 3 July. In his words, they were formed to "fight against all disorganizers of the rear, deserters, panic-mongers, spreaders of rumors . . . [to] exterminate spies, diversionists and enemy parachutists."<sup>31</sup> By the end of July, Moscow had created 1,755 such units with a strength of 328,000.<sup>32</sup> Thousands of women served alongside men in these battalions, some conducting interrogations of enemy prisoners and even committing summary executions. One veteran, Zinaida Pytkina, recounted how she was ordered to "sort out" a German major after interrogation: "My hand didn't tremble when I killed him," she later told the BBC.<sup>33</sup> In April 1943, the destroyer battalions were incorporated into the fearsome SMERSH (*smert' sbpionam*, or "death to spies"), which served secret-police functions on a larger scale as the Red Army recovered formerly German-occupied territory before rolling into East and Central Europe.<sup>34</sup>

The "people's militia" was an uncharacteristically romantic throwback to the Russian Civil War of Stalin's youth, as well as to the 1812 war against Napoleon, when armed bands of irregulars harassed the retreating French.<sup>35</sup> In the Soviet incarnation, Moscow formed untrained and ill-armed detachments, lumping together young female volunteers with men judged to be too old or physically unfit to serve in the regular army. Although most such units were

assigned rearward duties, others were sent directly into action, with predictably tragic consequences. Nina Erdman, who volunteered for the army only to be sidelined into the militia remarked: “What are *opolchentsy* [the people’s militia] . . . anyway? They knew nothing, couldn’t do anything. None of these old people, who might have served at one time, could do anything. Many didn’t know [how] to shoot a rifle.” The Germans quickly surrounded her unit, and she only made it back to Soviet lines by good fortune.<sup>36</sup>

The people’s militia was a disastrous concept, and in mid-war the authorities eliminated it without fanfare, conveying the remaining recruits into the Red Army. By discouraging all but a small number of women from serving in the regular forces during the first months of the war, the Kremlin squandered the enthusiasm, and in the case of the *opolchenie*, even the lives of those women most inclined initially to support the regime and the war effort.

This wave of female voluntarism has been cited as proof that popular support for the war, and even for the Stalinist regime, was the norm in the USSR. One historian writes: “Convinced that their cause was a just one, Soviets entered World War II much as West Europeans had entered World War I—their patriotism firm, their faith in victory strong, their willingness to fight and die untroubled by the doubts about warfare that had circulated so widely in the West.”<sup>37</sup> In fact, nobody—neither officials of the Stalinist regime nor historians—could possibly assess overall Soviet public opinion with any certitude. The women who volunteered during the summer of 1941 tended to be urban and beneficiaries of the educational and employment opportunities offered by the Communist state.<sup>38</sup> Being literate, and having served on the winning side, many also bequeathed their accounts to posterity. A disproportionate number were also ethnic-majority Russians or Jews, the latter being the most literate, urbanized national group in the USSR and understandably the segment most wedded to the anti-Nazi cause.<sup>39</sup> To be sure, some women from minority nationalities volunteered, and Soviet propaganda magnified their exploits precisely because they were so few in number.<sup>40</sup>

Although many women volunteered for the cause, opposition to the Stalinist regime, evasion of wartime service, and even outright collaboration with the enemy were also common.<sup>41</sup> The Kremlin was aware that hundreds of thousands of their subjects welcomed the invaders in the Baltic republics (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania), Bessarabia, and Ukraine.<sup>42</sup> To Moscow’s alarm, non-Russian Red Army soldiers also were proportionally more inclined than their Russian or Jewish counterparts to desert.<sup>43</sup> In a handful of alleged instances, ethnic-German Soviet citizens sniped at retreating Red Army soldiers, provoking Stalin’s wrath, who in retaliation ordered the deportation to the east of 1.2 million Soviet-Germans, which included men, women, the elderly, and children.<sup>44</sup>

The scale of collaboration in the western borderlands is undeniable, but



some historians contend that the phenomenon was largely limited to areas that were either majority non-Russian, or were only incorporated into the USSR between 1939 and 1941.<sup>45</sup> Once again, the evidence suggests caution: even in the Russian-majority Orlov region, for instance, when draft notices were sent to 110,000 men in the summer of 1941, only 45,000 turned up to the *voenkomaty*.<sup>46</sup>

In 1941, the USSR was a vast, diverse, and still a majority-peasant country; the view from Moscow and the other major cities did not penetrate the hinterland very deeply. Yet historians' sources are almost exclusively of urban origin. Rural Soviets were often suspicious of urban Soviet citizens, and resentment against the murderous collectivization of the farms less than a decade earlier remained rife.<sup>47</sup> Contemporary urban Soviet citizens were often mystified by their rural fellow citizens. When Muscovite Nikolai Obryn'ba found himself cut off behind German lines, he expected help from locals, only to find that some were "actually looking forward to the Fritzes!"<sup>48</sup> Likewise, war correspondent Vasily Grossman encountered female peasants who hoped that the invaders would dissolve the collective farms and reopen churches closed by the atheist Communist regime.<sup>49</sup>

In short, it is misleading to generalize about popular opinion throughout the USSR based on the stated motives of Red Army women. Most female servicemembers were volunteers and constituted a self-selected group that was by definition more committed to the war effort and more supportive of the regime than the population as a whole. This does not render their views insignificant, but they were not a representative cross section of the population.

On 2 October 1941, the *Wehrmacht* launched what Hitler expected to be the final assault on Moscow. By 16 October, when it appeared that the attackers could not be stopped, panic, rioting, and looting swept the capital, lasting for several days before order was restored. Stalin commanded the evacuation of government ministries and defense plants.<sup>50</sup> Half of the city's population fled.<sup>51</sup> Soviet power appeared to hang in thin air. Amid this crisis, on 8 October 1941, the GKO (*Gosudarstvennyi Komitet Oborony*, or State Committee of Defense) ordered the creation of three new aerial regiments, to be staffed entirely by female aviators and ground crew.<sup>52</sup> These were to be the USSR's first entirely female combat units.

For most, 8 October was a surprisingly strange time to create such formations. On that very day, the GKO ordered the evacuation of aircraft plants from Moscow, Rostov, and Voronezh to escape the advancing enemy.<sup>53</sup> Rather than forming women's infantry detachments to defend the capital, the Kremlin opted instead to invest in air squadrons that would require at least six months to equip and train. One account suggests that the decision resulted from the persistent efforts of Marina Raskova, a prewar air pioneer and heroine. Raskova



pressed the authorities to harness the skills of women who had learned to fly before the war, and she was backed by a letter-writing campaign from many women eager to serve.<sup>54</sup> If she had any wartime influence with Stalin, however, she probably exerted it via a third party, because the dictator's wartime appointments diary does not indicate that he met her during the months before the October decision.<sup>55</sup> A recent history argues that the initiative came instead from the *Komsomol* leadership and that Raskova's advocacy only helped.<sup>56</sup> Whatever the reason, the choice to form air squadrons, rather than ground units, circumvented the principal concern commonly voiced by those opposed to putting women into combat: that doing so would undermine morale and unit cohesion. Segregation of women in their own units on air bases, rather than sending them into the frontline alongside men, harnessed women's skills while minimizing the intermingling of the sexes.

These three units have been studied more thoroughly than any other female formations. Totalling roughly 300 fliers, one group piloted modern Yakovlev Yak-9 fighters; a second, light bombers; and the third flew obsolete two-seater biplanes constructed of canvas and wood.<sup>57</sup> This latter group gained notoriety during the Battle of Stalingrad, when the Germans dubbed them *Die Nachthexen* (the Nightwitches).<sup>58</sup> The fighter squadron produced the world's first female air ace; Lidiia (or Lilia) Litviak, who was not only the first Soviet female fighter pilot to down an enemy plane but also became the highest-scoring female flier of any nationality, eventually compiling a total of 12 confirmed solo kills before she herself disappeared over German-held territory in 1943.<sup>59</sup>

The experiment of female-staffed air units never spread; instead, two of the three groups were eventually diluted by adding more male members. This may have been in reaction to Raskova's death in a crash on 4 January 1943, which eliminated her energetic advocacy. Curiously, Moscow never made significant mention of these female fliers in their otherwise extensive propaganda.<sup>60</sup> According to the recollections of one female veteran, Stalin hinted at the reason when he allegedly told Raskova: "You understand, future generations will not forgive us for sacrificing young girls."<sup>61</sup> Of course, Stalin had already sacrificed countless young girls; but fostering popular emotional connections with individual heroines risked undermining, rather than bolstering, public morale if these airwomen were to be killed in action. Highlighting the exploits of female fliers in Soviet propaganda also threatened the masculine ethos of "Stalin's falcons," as male fighter pilots were dubbed by the press.

The creation of the women's air squadrons in October did not portend an immediate spike in female recruitment. As late as January 1942, fewer women were serving in the Red Army than in either the British or German armed forces.<sup>62</sup> The Kremlin leadership was not yet convinced that it required large numbers of female soldiers. When the Red Army halted the *Wehrmacht* be-

fore Moscow in December, then drove it back along several large sectors of the front, Stalin seems to have become convinced that, as with Napoleon's Grande Armée of 1812, the *Wehrmacht* was a spent force on the verge of disintegration. He spurred his generals to press the enemy unceasingly, heedless of losses, in hopes of turning retreat into rout.<sup>63</sup> In December 1941, the dictator boasted to Britain's visiting foreign minister that "the German Army is not so strong after all," even suggesting that the USSR might be prepared to enter the war against Japan in 1942.<sup>64</sup>

Battered though it was, however, the *Wehrmacht* did not crack. By the spring of 1942, even the most stubbornly optimistic Soviet leaders recognized that the war had become a protracted conflict, demanding the full efforts of every citizen. The Soviet government therefore scoured every corner of society in search of underutilized personnel. Food-ration standards were issued that effectively forced millions of mothers not already working outside the home to choose between entering defense plants or watching their families starve.<sup>65</sup> The regime sent tens of thousands of children aged 12 and older into war industries under the guise of training schemes, that were "in reality . . . merciless exploitation."<sup>66</sup> The NKVD (*Narodnyi kommissariat vnutrennykh del*, or People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs) strictly enforced labor-discipline laws enacted in 1940, punishing absenteeism or changing jobs without permission.<sup>67</sup> Moscow announced a series of amnesties, applying only to ordinary criminals, not political prisoners; by war's end more than 1 million former Gulag convicts had entered the army.<sup>68</sup> On 3 April, the GKO ordered the NKVD to transfer 500,000 "suitable" prisoners from labor colonies to frontline construction gangs.<sup>69</sup> Work-capable ethnic Germans, whom Stalin had ordered deported during the previous autumn, were now driven into compulsory *trudarmii* (labor armies), or forced labor.<sup>70</sup>

The Soviet government began inducting women into the armed forces on a mass scale amid this dire national emergency of 1942, not in response to a spontaneous upsurge of patriotic enthusiasm, or owing to any lingering commitment to gender equality. Beginning in March, Moscow issued a flurry of orders and decrees designed to replace every male soldier not directly engaged at the front with women, even adolescent girls, freeing every male soldier previously detailed to logistical and support roles. On 26 March, the People's Commissariat of Defense (NKO) issued order no. 0058, directing 100,000 *Komsomol* girls to replace men as antiaircraft personnel.<sup>71</sup> A decree on 13 April ordered that, within one month, 5,856 women replace male soldiers in all forms of army communications—from radio to telephone and telegraph, even the postal service.<sup>72</sup> The next day, the NKO decreed that women draftees replace men in all military secretarial positions.<sup>73</sup> Four days later, Moscow ordered female soldiers to replace all riflemen guarding rear positions and for-

tifications.<sup>74</sup> Further decrees followed, ordering women to supplant men in all noncombat roles, which included the navy, merchant marine, truck transport, delivery of newly manufactured tanks to depots or the front, and, where possible, in all army medical Services. In these instances, some of the women and girls who were *Komsomol* members were not volunteers but conscripts. The regime viewed these adolescents as subject to Communist Party discipline and thus to mandatory assignment.

These noncombat positions were, for the most part, well behind the front lines, but Soviet authorities also decided to experiment with a broader female combat role. On 3 November 1942, a women's volunteer rifle brigade was formed, with recruits numbering 6,240.<sup>75</sup> Although many of these women were eager to serve at the front, the Red Army balked. The brigade was instead assigned garrison duties, where recruits suffered from demoralization, a number of sexual assaults, and abiding hunger. Soldiers at the front received full rations, whereas those stationed in the rear received 500 fewer calories per day. Stuck in limbo as the brigade was, desertion increased, with some soldiers even fleeing to the front in hopes of finally seeing action—and of being fed better.<sup>76</sup> Eventually, the unit was broken up into smaller detachments before being dissolved entirely in 1944. This refusal to field an all-female infantry unit was actually a retrograde step from tsarist precedent.

The first group of female frontline soldiers to gain international fame was not this lost brigade but rather the smaller contingent of snipers. The best-known of these was Lyudmila Pavlichenko, who amassed a total of 309 kills. Pavlichenko was one of the few women who had been allowed to enter the army in the summer of 1941, but in mid-1942 authorities removed her from combat and sent her on a propaganda tour of both the United Kingdom and the United States. President Franklin D. Roosevelt and his wife, Eleanor Roosevelt, hosted her in the White House, and she addressed rallies in several American cities accompanied by the First Lady. In November 1942, the NKO ordered formal training for female snipers, and in March of the following year they established a school for them.<sup>77</sup> By the end of the war, 1,885 women had graduated from seven sniper classes.<sup>78</sup>

As compelling as female snipers' stories were, women made by far their largest contribution to the Soviet military in more customary gender roles when they flooded into the medical corps by the tens of thousands during the last half of 1942. The vast majority were volunteers, with motives ranging from ideological commitment or patriotism, to hatred of the enemy or more personal reasons. Nurse Mariia Lesina explained that "I and thousands of young people (and not them only) were spoiling for the front. Each person had his own motive—revenge for a ruined life, for the death of family and friends, a personal desire to take part in the fight, yes, and the party-political apparatus was not idle.

. . . ‘Everything for the front, everything for victory!’ was no empty phrase.”<sup>79</sup> Forty-one percent of the 200,000 medical doctors who served in the Red Army during the war were women. Working with the Red Cross, more than 300,000 women trained as nurses and another 500,000 as less-skilled medics.<sup>80</sup> Some of these medics were sent to the front after receiving only six weeks of medical training.<sup>81</sup> Soviet-era sources claim that 100 percent of wartime nurses were women.<sup>82</sup> During the war, Red Army medical staff treated more than 22 million patients; 90 percent of sick soldiers and 72 percent of wounded returned to the front, many after having been wounded multiple times.<sup>83</sup>

Before the autumn of 1942, the relatively small numbers of snipers and airwomen made it possible to segregate them somewhat from male soldiers; the same held true, at least in theory, for logistical and rearward services. The mass influx of women into command staff, and especially into medical units, during 1942–43, however, rendered separation impossible. Nor did the distinction between the fighting front and rearward services long survive contact with battlefield reality. As American forces in conflicts such as those in Afghanistan and Iraq later discovered, modern warfare erases bright lines between combat and support units.

Although most female medical personnel served in facilities situated well to the rear, many staffed frontline aid stations. One wounded soldier was surprised to encounter a nurse so close to the fighting. “The nurse smiled at my alarm,” he recalled. “ ‘Don’t worry, soldier, during battles we always deploy the medical stations as close as possible to the front. For the wounded, especially the severely wounded, even an extra minute, not to mention an extra hour or day, can be critical to his survival’.”<sup>84</sup> Not only did this forward positioning risk injury or death from hostile fire but forward-based hospitals also were overrun at times by the enemy. During the Battle of Stalingrad, for instance, where the defenders of the city were pinned with their backs against the Volga River for more than four months, all Soviet personnel in the city were without exception at the frontline, regardless of whether they were in designated combat units. Among female nursing staff, the casualty rate in that battle was by all accounts horrific.<sup>85</sup>

Female medics could be assigned to combat units; many of the estimated 120,000 female soldiers who experienced fighting did so under such circumstances. Artilleryman Isaak Kobylanskiy remembered that “most medical orderlies in such platoons were older men, but sometimes a girl served there.”<sup>86</sup> The death rate among infantry and armored units on the eastern front was frightful, far higher than in the western theater, and female medics who had to retrieve wounded soldiers from between the battle lines were often even more exposed than ordinary soldiers. Lesina recalled: “It was extremely difficult work to crawl under fire and then drag back the badly wounded, also under fire.”<sup>87</sup>

Another female veteran told an interviewer: “In tank units medical orderlies didn’t last long. There was no place in a tank for us. We clung to the armour and thought about one thing only: how to keep our feet clear of the caterpillars so we wouldn’t get dragged in. . . . There were five of us, five friends at the front. . . . And they were all killed, except me.”<sup>88</sup>

Aside from the threat of death or mutilation at the front, female soldiers most feared being captured by the enemy. The Germans routinely treated Soviet POWs barbarically, but in several instances German commanders issued explicit orders to mistreat female captives.<sup>89</sup> A nurse described the widely shared terror: “One of our nurses was taken prisoner. About a day later we liberated the village and found her—her eyes had been put out, her breasts lopped off. She had been impaled. . . . She was a young girl of nineteen. . . . [W]e would rather die than be taken prisoner. . . . Nothing else was that frightening.”<sup>90</sup>

Women remained a minority in the frontline zone. A sympathetic male veteran recalled that “the life and fate of most women [in the army] were [*sic*] very hard,” because women shared all the dangers and physical hardships of frontline life with the added burdens of everyday indignities and sexual vulnerability from both sides of the conflict.<sup>91</sup> Galina Khokhlova recalls that “it was uncomfortable to be among men all the time. One was always surrounded by guys.”<sup>92</sup> The presence of women at the front transformed social relations. Many male soldiers were protective, even if sometimes patronizingly so, referring to their female comrades as *sestrěnki*, or “little sisters,” doing what they could to protect them. Natalia Peshkova, a medic, claims “I should say that I have a very high opinion of the men. They never cursed when I was near.”<sup>93</sup>

Nonetheless, a wide variety of abuses flourished. Absent any social consensus about women’s roles, Soviet commanders’ attitudes toward female recruits ranged from supportive, to hostile, to outright exploitative. Sexual abuse was not a monopoly of the Soviet armed forces. Necessarily authoritarian and generally male-dominated command structures, pervasive violence, and a masculine warrior ethos provide fertile conditions for outrages in other militaries; but the specific circumstances of the Stalinist forces magnified these problems. During the preceding decades, Soviet society was extraordinarily violent. The totalitarian state promoted an ethic of collectivism and obedience, not individualism or critical thinking. Red Army discipline was draconian: during the war, military tribunals convicted 994,000 Red Army soldiers of cowardice, desertion, and unauthorized retreat; 157,593 were sentenced to death, some for “crimes” no more serious than grumbling about food and living conditions.<sup>94</sup> In such circumstances, male and female recruits were reluctant to complain about their officers’ misbehavior, let alone that of the omnipresent political police. “We were more afraid of the special police agents than we were of the Germans,” a female veteran explained. “Even the Generals were afraid of them.”<sup>95</sup>

Soviet society lacked independent courts, a free press, or civil institutions to which an aggrieved soldier might appeal. Adding to these factors, in August 1941, Stalin ordered frontline troops to be supplied with 100 grams of vodka per day, or 3.38 fluid ounces.<sup>96</sup> Prolonged battlefield stress and high casualties; a patriarchal culture; authoritarian, unaccountable, and violent institutions; the easy availability of weaponry and strong drink; and the intermingling of the sexes in circumstances where peacetime social restraints were weakened—was a toxic brew.

Flaunting their authority, many officers soon adopted mistresses. Jealous recruits gave such women a derisory name: *pokhodno-polevye zheny* (roughly, “campaign field wives”). Shortened to PPZh, this acronym was a play on the name of the infantry’s submachine gun, the PPSH-41. Lev Kopelev, a veteran and later dissident, recounted that “some generals quickly came to regard all nurses, waitresses and women typists and radio operators as fair game.”<sup>97</sup> Another soldier explained: “Most division and higher commanders had an enormous entourage . . . [including] without fail a harem or a PPZh.”<sup>98</sup> One regimental commander ordered a subordinate to “report . . . upon the arrival of any new woman, especially on her appearance and sexual appeal” before he would assign her a position.<sup>99</sup> Most female volunteers did not, of course, become PPZh, and many disparaged those who did. One female veteran remarked disdainfully: “We didn’t like them at all.”<sup>100</sup> Women who spurned the attentions of predatory officers, however, might find themselves sent to the guardhouse or assigned to hazardous duty.<sup>101</sup> One memoirist recounts the story of a young nurse whose persistent refusals “cost her very dearly.” Her commander dispatched her to a combat unit in retaliation, where she was soon killed by an artillery shell.<sup>102</sup>

Male/female frontline relationships often generated rivalries and sometimes violence. Lev Kopelev’s commanding officer tried to coerce Kopelev’s girlfriend into a sexual relationship; when she resisted, the officer attempted to get Kopelev arrested as a Trotskyite.<sup>103</sup> Moisei Dorman described how one officer became suspicious that his men were paying undue attention to his mistress and planned murderous revenge. He stuffed their artillery barrel with sod, expecting it to explode and kill the crew. The gunners discovered the sabotage and later exacted their own vengeance, murdering the officer during combat. “In fact, such things happened at the front,” Dorman wrote prosaically.<sup>104</sup>

With sex common and contraceptives few, pregnancies inevitably resulted.<sup>105</sup> Ol’ga Pivovarova recalls that three women from her village served in the army, “but they all got pregnant and returned from the front.”<sup>106</sup> Although abortion was illegal, many women nonetheless arranged operations. Vera Stepina, who served in a combat construction unit, explained that women “did not do these things openly, people hid them.”<sup>107</sup> This was risky. During the war years, 9,105 doctors and 29,635 women were convicted of performing illegal

abortions and sentenced to eight years in the Gulag; if the fetus was more than four and one-half months old, the charge was elevated to murder.<sup>108</sup> By way of contrast, only 7,363 men were convicted of rape during the same period.<sup>109</sup> This low number of convictions for rape is even more striking in view of the fact that Red Army soldiers notoriously committed this crime on an unprecedented scale as they swept into Eastern Europe and Germany.<sup>110</sup>

Contrary to hardy myth, Red Army women did not play a decisive combat role. This is not to disparage the heroism or skills of female soldiers—it is purely a matter of numbers. The eastern front was vast; a total of 34.4 million Soviet citizens entered the wartime forces.<sup>111</sup> In 7 of the 16 quarter-years of the war, the number of Soviet soldiers killed and missing exceeded the total sum of the 580,000 women who served in the army.<sup>112</sup> Nor were women as intensively mobilized as many segments of the population. From a prewar community of just over 3 million, for example, approximately 500,000 Jewish men served in the ranks of the armed forces, with 216,000 perishing in combat or as a result of wounds.<sup>113</sup> A small fraction of Red Army women served in dedicated combat units. According to two scholars, “only about 2,500 women . . . actually stormed the ultimate military bastion: military combat on the frontline.”<sup>114</sup>

Soviet employment of women both in the army and the rear was cruel and wasteful. In every year of the war, more women languished in the Gulag, by a substantial margin, than served in Red Army ranks. Most were civilians convicted under excessively harsh labor statutes, though some female soldiers were also imprisoned for various infractions. In August 1945, the Gulag held 547,753 female prisoners—almost equal to the number of women who served in the army throughout the entire war. In 1942, the threat to national survival caused the Kremlin to induct women en masse; but only two years later, in mid-1944, when Soviet victory looked assured, a demographic national crisis loomed owing to the massive wartime loss of life. The Kremlin accordingly jammed gender policies into reverse gear: in March, the women’s rifle battalion was disbanded; thousands of women were returned quietly from the front; and on 8 July, a new law on marriage and the family was promulgated, making divorce harder, single motherhood more onerous, and effectively restoring the stigma of “illegitimate” birth.<sup>115</sup> Medals and monetary awards were established for “Hero Mothers,” urging women to bear multiple children. Soviet statisticians pored over birth, abortion, and marriage statistics, searching for ways to increase baby output, much as they would to accelerate annual hog production.<sup>116</sup>

When the war ended, many female veterans were understandably proud of the part they played in defeating Nazism. Women’s role in combat may have been marginal, but this was certainly not true of the medical and support services, where female doctors and nurses saved tens of thousands of lives and lo-



gistical personnel helped to sustain the Red Army's drive on Berlin. The number of women in the armed forces before 1943 was too small to have any major effect during the battles of Moscow and Stalingrad, which are generally regarded as the turning points on the Eastern Front; but the subsequent recovery of occupied Soviet territory and the drive into the heart of Europe owed a good deal to female personnel. The war irrevocably altered employment patterns as well: hitherto largely male professions, such as accounting and medicine, became, and remained, largely female realms.<sup>117</sup> Unlike in the postwar United States, where many women who had been employed during wartime were released to make way for returning male veterans, this did not happen in the USSR. As with female employment before the war, this owed less to the regime's commitment to gender equality than it did to a need for their labor. The Red Army suffered 8,668,400 deaths during the war; although no precise breakdown by gender has emerged, it has been claimed that more than 192,458 of these were women.<sup>118</sup> This lost generation of men would never return to resume their civilian jobs; the state expected women to fill the void while simultaneously producing millions of babies to replace wartime losses.<sup>119</sup>

The Soviet regime and society more generally did not celebrate female veterans' wartime achievements; indeed, during the first postwar years the state seemed eager to erase the record of women's service almost as though it were a national embarrassment. The Stalinist leadership had a largely instrumental view of women, as it did for all its citizens: they were a resource to be thrown at national crises as they arose, only to be discarded, or redirected, when their services were no longer required. In a condescending address to demobilizing female soldiers in July 1945, Soviet president Mikhail Kalinin declared: "Allow me, as one grown wise with years, to say to you: do not give yourself airs in your future practical work. Do not talk about the services you rendered, let others do it for you. That will be better."<sup>120</sup> Others did not in fact do this for decades afterward; when female veterans were finally able to speak their minds freely, as the Communist regime disintegrated and then collapsed, many complained that their achievements had been written out of official history and that during the early postwar years many of their fellow citizens actually held their service against them. The state shared responsibility for this. When Lieutenant General Pavel Shafarenko published his memoirs in the 1970s, a questioner asked why he had written so little about the women who had served under his command during the war. His reply lifted the veil on official policy: "I wrote about the twenty-two women who served in the division, but the deputy head of the war memoirs department of the publishing house in Moscow crossed out twenty-one of the women, saying, 'Do you want young people thinking that our war was won by women?'"<sup>121</sup>

Whereas Red Army men, including many who had taken part in mass rapes in Central Europe, were lionized as the saviors of the USSR and of civilization itself, returning female soldiers were often stigmatized as women of dubious morals who had volunteered for the army in search of male companionship.

Six decades after the end of the war, an interviewer asked Nina Afanas'evna how the public treated returning female veterans, and her response was typical: "Badly," she replied. "From strangers one could hear: '*Frontovaiá*' or '*frontovichka*.' This continued for five years after the war. Many did not talk about the fact that they had fought, they were ashamed. I was never afraid, and I was never ashamed."<sup>122</sup> With a huge postwar deficit of males, parents often discouraged their sons from marrying female veterans, whom they treated as damaged goods. Senior Sargent Nina Ilyinskaya remarked: "A man returned and there he was, a hero. An eligible young man! But if it was a girl, then immediately people looked askance: 'We know what you did there! . . .' And the whole of the suitor's family would think: should he marry her? To tell the truth, we concealed the fact that we had been at the front, we did not want to tell people about it. We wanted to become ordinary girls again. Marriageable girls."<sup>123</sup> Unmarried female soldiers who had become pregnant faced even greater social stigma and, owing to the new family law, found it almost impossible to establish paternity or to receive the same state benefits awarded to married mothers.

If the experience of women in the wartime Red Army has any utility for debates elsewhere concerning women in the armed services, it is largely as a cautionary example. When allowed to do so, female soldiers performed well, proving that women could serve in combat and support units; as one female veteran asserted, "we lived honorably, fought honorably."<sup>124</sup> Characteristically, however, the authoritarian, highly centralized Communist state utilized women's talents reluctantly, erratically, and inefficiently. Defenders of the Soviet wartime record claim that mass mobilization of women reflected the progressive gender policies of the USSR and contend that the manifold shortcomings of that mobilization can be explained by the fact that it was conducted under the worst possible circumstances, as the invaders threatened Soviet survival. The first assertion is not borne out by the halting and haphazard history of female mobilization. As for the second claim, the Communist authorities do not merit a pass based on the dire exigencies of 1941–42. The war in Europe raged for almost two years before Barbarossa erupted. During that time, foreseeing the possibility of being drawn into the conflict, the Kremlin ordered a massive expansion of the Red Army, increasing the number of soldiers from 1.5 million men in 1938 to more than 5 million by June 1941, and preparing to field a force of 8.6 million by spring 1942; Moscow also heavily reoriented industry toward military production.<sup>125</sup> Soviet historians, and of much Western historiography as well, have long held that the Soviets used the period of the Nazi-Soviet Pact (August

1939–June 1941) to buy time to prepare for war against Hitler.<sup>126</sup> Yet, even as the threat of war loomed large, when Hitler attacked the USSR, the Red Army lagged well behind both the United Kingdom and Nazi Germany in the military mobilization of its female population, even in support services.<sup>127</sup>

Early wartime steps to harness women's skills were ill-conceived. The misbegotten *opolchenie* units were thankfully soon disbanded. As the Germans threatened Moscow, the Kremlin chose to create costly female air squadrons whose lengthy training prevented them from defending the besieged capital. Once established, however, these air units were not allowed to expand to include the many women who possessed flying skills and were eager to serve; their propaganda value was squandered. The creation, equipment, training—and then subsequent dissolution—of a women's rifle battalion was a case study in bureaucratic waste and even cruelty. Most discredibly, the state discarded female veterans once their services were no longer required, did nothing at all to protect them from widespread social opprobrium based on tales of supposed frontline licentiousness, and even enacted laws that effectively punished women who had become pregnant at the front. Once the war was over, the army reverted to its prewar practices; few women remained in the armed services, and those who did occupied traditionally female supportive roles. The high command remained entirely male.

Although the service of women in logistical and medical roles was indisputably valuable, the mingling of men and women at the front engendered all manner of abuses: sexual exploitation, violence, rivalries, and morale problems—even murder. The widespread availability of alcohol aggravated every ill. Unexpurgated post-Soviet memoirs suggest that outrages were widespread, though the subject requires further, detailed research. Prominent contemporary Russian scholars have neglected the subject, as well as women's wartime roles more generally.<sup>128</sup> Clearly, however, several important elements were absent in the Soviet experience, which foreordained trouble. The USSR lacked any prewar social or governmental consensus that women should serve on par with men. Stalinist political culture was violent, secretive, and designed to foster fear and division; it did little to contain or eradicate abuses, and indeed the unchecked power that officers and security men wielded fostered and protected misbehavior. Despite the regime's hyperbolic rhetoric about gender equality, and despite the many individual soldiers and officers who embraced these concepts, the regime did little to challenge widespread social notions about women's subordinate status, which had deep roots in the patriarchal peasant culture. Most importantly, Soviet society lacked any of the institutions that are common in democracies that together provide some protection against abuse: independent courts, a free press, and nonstate social organizations. The wartime mobilization of Soviet women into the Red Army was the largest ex-

periment of its kind. No advocate of gender equality or of the integration of women into the armed forces should wish to see it celebrated, much less used as a model.

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## Notes

1. The important role women played in the partisan war throughout German-occupied regions is not examined here, because this would have both greatly expanded and diluted what must be a brief survey.
2. Svetlana Alexievich, *The Unwomanly Face of War* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1988), 162.
3. During the peak of the war, 272,000 women served in the U.S. military; 470,000 served in the British women's and nursing services, where they constituted a slightly higher proportion of the armed forces (10 percent) than in the Soviet case (8 percent). I. C. B. Dear, ed., *The Oxford Companion to World War II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 1,277 and 1,278; and "By the Numbers: Women in the U.S. Military," CNN, 24 January 2013. Approximately 203,000 women were serving in the American military in 2013.
4. G. F. Krivosheev, "Ob itogakh statisticheskikh issledovaniï poter' Vooruzhennykh Sil SSSR v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine" [On the sources of statistical research of losses of the armed forces of the USSR in the Great Patriotic War], in *Liudskie poteri SSSR v period vtoroi mirovoi voiny: Sbornik statei* [Human losses of the USSR in the period of the Second World War: collection of essays] (Moscow: Russko-Baltiiskii informatsionnyi tsentr, 1995), 79. Original in Russian. The overall number of women who served in all branches of the armed forces is not certain. Soviet-era figures indicate 800,000. M. M. Kozlov, ed., *Velikaia Otechestvennaia voina, 1941–1945: Entsiklopediia* [The Great Patriotic War, 1941–1945: encyclopedia, hereafter, VOVE] (Moscow: Sovetskaia entsiklopediia, 1985), 270. Original in Russian. A recent historian puts the figure at 900,000. Anna Krylova, *Soviet Women in Combat: A History of Violence on the Eastern Front* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 145.
5. Krylova, *Soviet Women in Combat*, 10.
6. Laurie S. Stoff, *They Fought for the Motherland: Russia's Women Soldiers in World War I and the Revolution* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006).
7. Susanne Conze and Beate Fieseler, "Soviet Women as Comrades-in-Arms: A Blind Spot in the History of the War," in *The People's War: Responses to World War II in the Soviet Union*, ed. Robert W. Thurston and Bernd Bonwetsch (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 214; and Barbara Evans Clements, *Bolshevik Women* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 172–80.
8. This is the assumption, with some reservations, underlying the two most recent book-length studies of women in the wartime Soviet military: Krylova, *Soviet Women in Combat*; Roger D. Markwick and Euridice Charon Cardona, *Soviet Women on the Frontline in the Second World War* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012); and also Barbara Alpern Engel, "The Womanly Face of War: Soviet Women Remember World War II," in *Women and War in the Twentieth Century: Enlisted with or without Consent*, ed. Nicole Ann Dombrowski (New York: Routledge, 1999).
9. David Stahel, *Operation Typhoon: Hitler's March on Moscow, October 1941* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 134. Stahel does not mention women specifically, pointing to superior Soviet tank production as his chief indicator of Soviet preparations for protracted war.
10. In an influential book, Richard Overy offers a common explanation for Soviet wartime economic achievements: "The simple answer might be that the Soviet Union operated a command economy, directed by the state and centrally planned." Richard Overy, *Why the Allies Won* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1995), 183–84; see David Stahel, *Operation Barbarossa and Germany's Defeat in the East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 144.

11. Entry for 16 June 1941 in Fred Taylor, ed., *The Goebbels Diaries, 1939–1941* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1983), 414.
12. Soviet sources suggest a lower figure of 2 million POWs. Alexander N. Yakovlev, *A Century of Violence in Soviet Russia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 171. Yakovlev provides a breakdown per year of prisoner numbers. The higher German figure is provided by Rolf-Dieter Müller and Gerd R. Ueberschär, *Hitler's War in the East, 1941–1945: A Critical Assessment* (Providence, RI: Berghahn Books, 1997), 214. The disparity may be explained by the fact that the Germans counted each prisoner as they were captured, whereas the Soviets often could not determine whether a soldier had gone missing or had been captured and subsequently perished in Nazi custody.
13. David M. Glantz and Jonathan M. House, *When Titans Clashed: How the Red Army Stopped Hitler* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995), table A, 292.
14. “Dannye o territorii i naselenii, podvergovshikhsia vremennoi okkupatsii i osvobodzhennykh rainov” [Figures about the territory and population that underwent temporary occupation and liberated regions], in *Sovetskaia povsednevnost' i massovoe soznanie, 1939–1945* [Soviet daily life and mass consciousness, 1939–1945], ed. I. Ia. Livshin and I. B. Orlov (Moscow, 2003), 297. Original in Russian.
15. N. Voznesenskii, *Voennaia ekonomika SSSR v period Otechestvennoi voiny* [The wartime economy of the USSR in the period of the Patriotic War] (Moscow: Ekonomicheskaiia gazeta, 2003), 110–11. Original in Russian.
16. Voznesenskii, *The Wartime Economy of the USSR in the Period of the Patriotic War*, 110. Original in Russian. Estimates of the number of refugees range from a low of 12 million to a high of 20. See William Moskoff, *The Bread of Affliction: The Food Supply in the USSR during WWII* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 30.
17. Entry for 3 August 1942, in Charles Burdick and Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, eds., *The Halder War Diary, 1939–1942* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1988), 651.
18. “1936 Constitution of the USSR,” Bucknell University.
19. Clements, *Bolshevik Women*, 244–55.
20. Rossiiskaia akademiia nauka [Russian Academy of Sciences], *Vsesoiuznaia perepis' naseleniia 1939 goda: Osnovnye itogi* [All-union census of the population in the year 1939: basic results], hereafter RAN, 21. Original in Russian.
21. Krylova, *Soviet Women in Combat*, 51, 57, 99.
22. Kozlov, *VOVE*, 270. Original in Russian.
23. Georgina Natzi, “Homeland Defence: British Gunners, Women and Ethics during the Second World War,” in *Women in War: From Home Front to Front Line*, ed. Celia Lee and Paul Edward Strong (Barnsley, UK: Pen & Sword Military, 2012), 91.
24. Clements, *Bolshevik Women*, 257. Barbara Clements contends that advancement in female leadership during the decade after the Revolution reverted during the 1930s to “the ancient belief that politics was the business of men working in teams.”
25. Barbara Alpern Engel, *Women in Russia, 1700–2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 175–76.
26. Riabichko to Korotchenko, 12 August 1946, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum [hereafter, USHMM], RG-31.026, reel 58, fond 1 opis' 23 delo 2536. By way of comparison, this is equivalent to the current crude birthrate in Benin (35.5), the 19th highest rate in the world; the current figure for the United States is 12.5; for Russia, 11.3. “The World Factbook,” CIA, accessed 26 May 2017. The birthrate in Ukraine was roughly the same as in the Russian Federation, though lower than that in Central Asia. Ansley J. Coale, Barbara A. Anderson, and Erna Harm, *Human Fertility in Russia since the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979).
27. Engel, *Women in Russia*, 166–84.
28. Engel, *Women in Russia*, 186–207.
29. Krylova, *Soviet Women in Combat*, 117.
30. Interview with Вайман Мира Зелиховна [Mira Zelikhovna Vaiman], IRemember, accessed 17 May 2013.
31. “Vystuplenie po radio, 3 July 1941” [Speech by radio, 3 July 1941], in I. Stalin, *O*

- velikoi Otechestvennoi voine sovsetskogo soiuza* [On the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union] (Moscow: Kraft, 2002), 11–16. Original in Russian.
32. Kozlov, VOVE, 478. Original in Russian.
  33. Laurence Rees interview of Zinaida Pytkina, *BBC History Magazine*, October 2007.
  34. GKO resolution no 235, 21 April 1943, *Lubianka Stalin i NKVD-NKGB-GUKP "Smersh," 1939–Mart 1946* [The Lubianka, Stalin and the NKVD-NKGB-GUKP "Smersh," 1939–March 1946], ed. N. V. Khaustov et al. (Moscow, 2006), 372–75.
  35. Dominic Lieven, *Russia against Napoleon: The True Story of the Campaigns of War and Peace* (New York: Penguin Books, 2009), 217–19.
  36. "Nina Erdman," IRemember, accessed 6 June 2013.
  37. Engel, *The Womanly Face of War*, 138.
  38. Krylova, *Soviet Women in Combat*, 26. Krylova refers to the group she has studied as "highly educated."
  39. RAN, 57, 83. At the time, 86.9 percent of Russian Jews lived in cities, and their literacy rate was 85 percent; the comparative figures for the largest Soviet ethnic group, Russians, were 37.8 percent and 58 percent.
  40. Kazimiera J. Cottam, *Women in War and Resistance: Selected Biographies of Soviet Women Soldiers* (Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing/R. Pullins, 1998), 176–79. See the case of Mansiia (Manshuk) Mametova.
  41. See, for example, Martin Dean, *Collaboration in the Holocaust: Crimes of the Local Police in Belorussia and Ukraine, 1941–1944* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999).
  42. "Razvedsvodka," Ts KP/b/U, 19 September 1942, USHMM, RG-31.026, reel 7, fond 1 opis' 23 delo 115. A lengthy report to Nikita Khrushchev, Communist Party boss of Ukraine, provided ample detail about collaboration in that republic during the first year of the war.
  43. Leonov, "Spravka o faktakh izmeny rodine v chastiakh deistvuiashchei Krasnoi Army," [Information regarding facts of betrayal of the motherland in units of the active Red Army] 15 July 1942, RtsKhIDNI, R 1358 fond 5 opis' 6 ekh. 85. Original in Russian. A report to Moscow from the spring of 1942 broke down the numbers of desertions in forces operating in the south, demonstrating that members of minority nationalities, as well as those with families behind German lines, were less reliable.
  44. Tiulenev, Zaporozhets, and Romanov to Stalin and Budënyi, 1 August 1941, in *Stalinskie deportatsii, 1928–1953* [Stalinist deportations, 1928–1953], ed. N. L. Pabol' and P. M. Pol'ian, Rossiia XX vek: Dokumenty [Russia of the xxth century: documents] (Moscow, 2005), 323. Original in Russian.
  45. Robert W. Thurston, *Life and Terror in Stalin's Russia, 1934–1941* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996), 216ff.
  46. Ponomarenko to Stalin, 19 August 1941, " 'Tol'ko avtoritetnyi komandir smozhet zastavit' preodelet' strakh i instinkt samosokhraneniia': Dokladnie zapiski sekretaria TsK KP(b)B P. Nl. Ponomarenko I. V. Stalinu, 1940–1942 gg." [Only an authoritative commander can manage to overcome fear and the instinct for self-preservation': report notes of the secretary of the C[entral] C[ommittee] C[ommunist] P[arty] (b[olsheviks]) B[elorussia] P N. Ponomarenko to I. V. Stalin, 1940–1942], *Istoricheskii arkhiv* [Historical archive], no. 6 (2004). Original in Russian.
  47. Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Stalin's Peasants: Resistance and Revival in the Russian Village after Collectivization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 314.
  48. Nikolai I. Obryn'ba, *Red Partisan: The Memoirs of a Soviet Resistance Fighter on the Eastern Front*, trans. Vladimir Krupnik (Barnsley, UK: Pen & Sword Military, 2006), 19.
  49. Anthony Beevor and Luba Vinogradova, eds. and trans., *A Writer at War: Vasily Grossman with the Red Army, 1941–1945* (New York: Pantheon, 2005), 48.
  50. "Postanovlenie gosudarstvennogo komiteta oborony 'ob evakuatsii stolitsy SSSR Moskvyy'" ["Resolution of the State Committee of Defense about evacuation of the capital Moscow"], 15 October 1941, in *Gosudarstvennyi komitet oborony postanovliaet (1941–1945)* [State Committee of Defense resolves (1941–1945)], ed. Iiurii Gor'kov (Moscow: Olma Press, 2002), 506. Original in Russian.
  51. Beria, Shcherbakov and Pronin to Stalin and GKO, 8 January 1942, in *Lubianka Stalin*



- i NKVD-NKGB-GUKP "Smersh," 1939–Mart 1946* [The Lubianka, Stalin and the NKVD-NKGB-GUKP "Smersh," 1939–March 1946], ed. Khaustov et al. (Moscow: 2006), 325–26. Original in Russian.
52. "8 October, 1941, Prikaz Narodnogo komissara oborony SSSR No. 0099" [Order of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR, no. 0099], in Iu. N. Ivanova, *Khrabreishie iz prekrasnykh: Zhenshchiny rossii v voynakh* [The bravest among the most beautiful: women of Russia at war] (Moscow: 2002), 220. Original in Russian.
  53. GKO Order No. 741 ss, 8 October 1941, in M. S. Astakhov et al., eds., *Gosudarstvennyi Komitet Oborony SSSR: Postanovleniia i deiatel'nost' 1941–1945 gg.* [The State Committee of Defense of the USSR: Resolutions and activities in the years 1941–1945] (Moscow: Rosspen, 2015), 1:152. Original in Russian.
  54. The best book-length study is Reina Pennington, *Wings, Women, and War: Soviet Airwomen in World War II Combat* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001), 22–29.
  55. Stalin's wartime appointment diary is in Gor'kov, ed., *Gosudarstvennyi komitet oborony postanovliet* [The State Committee of Defense resolves], 223–469. Original in Russian.
  56. Markwick and Cardona, *Soviet Women on the Frontline*, 86.
  57. Krylova, *Soviet Women in Combat*, 119.
  58. Paul Edward Strong, "Lotta Svärd, Nachthexen and Blitzmädel: Women in Military Service on the Eastern Front," in *Women in War*, 189.
  59. Bill Yenne, *The White Rose of Stalingrad: The Real-Life Adventure of Lidiya Vladimirovna Litvyak, the Highest-Scoring Female Air Ace of All Time* (Long Island City, NY: Osprey Publishing, 2013).
  60. Karel C. Berkhoff, *Motherland in Danger: Soviet Propaganda during World War II* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 53. A recent history of wartime propaganda does not even mention either Raskova or Litviak. The author writes that "enticing women to pick up arms was and remained taboo, as was the role of the state in enlisting them."
  61. Pennington, *Wings, Women, and War*, 26. Evgeniia Zhigulenko related this anecdote but provided no date, nor does she claim to have been present. Whether Stalin ever met Raskova after the outbreak of war remains an open question.
  62. Krylova, *Soviet Women in Combat*, 117.
  63. Marshal G. K. Zhukov, *Vospominaniia i razmysleniia* [Reminiscences and reflections] (Moscow: 1985), 2: chapter 15. Original in Russian.
  64. War Cabinet Minutes of Meetings between I. V. Stalin and Anthony Eden, December 1942, National Archives, Great Britain, WP(42) 8.
  65. Moskov, *The Bread of Affliction*, 148–49.
  66. This is the judgment of the editors of a book of documents on the subject. Vilenskii et al., eds., *Deti GULAGA, 1918–1956* [Children of the gulag, 1918–1956] (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyi fond 'Demokratiia,' 2002), 569n51. Original in Russian.
  67. "Postanovlenie plenuma TsK VKP (b)" ["Resolution of the Plenum of the C[entral] C[ommittee] of the a[ll-Union] C[ommunist] P[arty] (b[olshevik])"], 31 July 1940, in *1941 god v 2-kh knigakh* [The year 1941 in two volumes], ed. V. P. Naumov et al.: 1:139–43. Original in Russian. In April 1941, a front-page article in *Pravda* called for stricter enforcement of these draconian laws and quoted Stalin himself on the need to maintain "iron discipline . . . in production." *Soviet War News*, 22 April 1942, 1.
  68. One NKVD summary near the end of the war gives a figure of 1,068,800 men. Aleshenskii Spravka, 10 March 1945, in *Istoriia stalinskogo Gulaga: Konets 1920-kh–pervaia polovina 1950-kh godov* [The history of the Stalinist gulag: the end of the 1920s–the first half of the 1950s], ed. N. Vert et al.: 4:98–101. Original in Russian.
  69. GKO Order no. 1526 ss, 3 April 1942, *Gosudarstvennyi Komitet Oborony SSSR* [The State Committee of Defense of the USSR], 1:273. Original in Russian.
  70. "Postanovlenie GOKO no. 1123ss" [Resolution of the GOKO (State Committee of Defense)], 10 January 1942; and "Postanovlenie GOKO no. 1281 ss" [Resolution of the GOKO no. 1281 ss], 14 February 1942, in *Stalinskie deportatsii, 1928–1953* [Stalinist deportations, 1928–1953] ed. N. L. Pobol' and P. M. Polian (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyi fond 'Demokratiia,' 2005), 376–78. Original in Russian.



71. Prikaz Narodnogo komissara oborony Soiuzu SSR No. 0058 [Order of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR no. 0588], in Iu. N. Ivanova, *Khrabreishie iz prekrasnykh* [The bravest among the most beautiful], 222–23. Original in Russian.
72. Prikaz Narodnogo komissara oborony Soiuzu SSR No. 0276 [Order of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR no. 0276], in Ivanova, *The Bravest among the Most Beautiful*, 224–26. Original in Russian.
73. Prikaz Narodnogo komissara oborony Soiuzu SSR No. 0284 [Order of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR no. 0284], in Ivanova, *The Bravest among the Most Beautiful*, 227–28. Original in Russian.
74. Prikaz Narodnogo komissara oborony Soiuzu SSR No. 0296 [Order of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR no. 0296], in Ivanova, *The Bravest among the Most Beautiful*, 228. Original in Russian.
75. Order no. 2470 ss, in *Gosudarstvennyi Komitet Oborony SSSR: Poslanovleniia i deiatel'nost' 1941–1945 gg.: Annotirovannyi katalog v dvukh tomakh* [The State Committee of Defense of the USSR: resolutions and actions, 1941–1945: annotated catalogue in two volumes], ed. M. S. Astakhova et al. (Moscow: Rosspen, 2015), 1:500. Original in Russian.
76. Markwick and Cardona, *Soviet Women on the Frontline*, 181–202.
77. Prikaz Narodnogo komissara oborony Soiuzu SSR No. 0902 [Order of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR, no. 0902], in Ivanova, *The Bravest among the Most Beautiful*, 238. Original in Russian. Prikaz Narodnogo komissara oborony Soiuzu SSR No. 0237 [Order of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR no. 0237], in Ivanova, *The Bravest among the Most Beautiful*, 240. Original in Russian.
78. Krylova, *Soviet Women in Combat*, 163.
79. Лесина (Друзьякина) Мария Степановна [Mariia Stepanovna Lesina (Druz'iakina)], IRemember, accessed 28 May 2013.
80. Kozlov, VOVE, 270. Original in Russian.
81. Афанасьева Нина Федотовна [Nina Afanas'eva Fedotovna], IRemember, accessed 18 May 2013.
82. Kazimiera J. Cottam, “Soviet Women in Combat in World War II: The Rear Services, Resistance behind Enemy Lines and Military-Political Workers,” *International Journal of Women's Studies* 5, no. 4 (1982): 367.
83. G. F. Krivosheev et al., eds., *Soviet Casualties and Combat Losses in the Twentieth Century* (London: Greenhill Books, 1997), 90; and Ivanova, *The Bravest among the Most Beautiful*, 170. Original in Russian.
84. Boris Gorbachevsky, *Through the Maelstrom: A Red Army Soldier's War on the Eastern Front, 1942–1945*, ed. and trans. Stuart Britton (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008), 121.
85. Grossman provides a vignette of a group of nurses during the battle. Beevor and Vinogradova, *A Writer at War*, 183.
86. Isaak Kobylanskiy, *From Stalingrad to Pillau: A Red Army Artillery Officer Remembers the Great Patriotic War*, ed. Stuart Britton (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas), 227.
87. Лесина (Друзьякина) Мария Степановна [Mariia Stepanovna Lesina (Druz'iakina)], IRemember, accessed 28 May 2013.
88. Alexievich, *The Unwomanly Face of War*, 72.
89. The mortality figure among Soviet POWs is contested, though the most comprehensive study suggests that from a total of 5.7 million Red Army soldiers captured during the war, 3.3 million died. Christian Streit, *Keine Kameraden: Die Wehrmacht und die sowjetischen Kriegsgefangenen, 1941–1945* [No comrades: the Wehrmacht and the Soviet prisoners of war, 1941–1945] (Stuttgart, 1991). Original in German. On orders for the mistreatment of female captives, see Markwick and Cardona, *Soviet Women in the Frontline*, 242.
90. Alexievich, *The Unwomanly Face of War*, 102–3.
91. Kobylanskiy, *From Stalingrad to Pillau*, 227.
92. Хохлова Галина Александровна [Galina Aleksandrovna Khokhlova], IRemember, accessed 17 May 2013.

93. “Natalia Peshkova,” IRemember, accessed 6 June 2013.
94. Dmitri Volkogonov, *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Empire: Political Leaders from Lenin to Gorbachev*, ed. Harold Shukman (London: HarperCollins, 1998), 118; and Aleksandr Iakovlev, “Istoriia i sovremennost’: Voina so ‘svoiei’ armiei” [History and the current day: war with “their own” army], *Grazhdanin* [The Citizen], no. 2 (2003). Original in Russian. How many of these death sentences were carried out is disputed. Military statistician G. F. Krivosheev cites the same number of death sentences, but he writes elsewhere of 135,000 executed soldiers; however, he does not document that reduced number, and historians have generally cited the original, higher figure. Krivosheev, *Rossia i SSSR v voynakh XX veka* [Russia and the wars of the xxth century], 43.
95. Svetlana Alexievich, *Secondhand Time: The Last of the Soviets* (New York: Random House, 2016), 194.
96. GKO Order no. 562ss, 22 August 1941, in *Gosudarstvennyi komitet oborony postanovliaet: 1941–1945, Tsify, dokumenty* [The State Committee of Defense resolves: 1941–1945: figures, documents], ed. Iurii Gor’kov (Moscow: Olma Press, 2002), 505–6. Not all soldiers received or consumed their ration, some trading or selling it to comrades; consequently, binge drinking and alcohol abuse were common problems in the Red Army.
97. Lev Kopelev, *To Be Preserved Forever*, ed. and trans. Anthony Austin (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1977), 30.
98. Gorbachevsky, *Through the Maelstrom*, 93.
99. Kobylyanskiy, *From Stalingrad to Pillau*, 228.
100. Quoted in Engel, “The Womanly Face of War,” 146.
101. Афанасьева Нина Федотовна [Nina Afanas’evna Fedotovna], IRemember, accessed 18 May 2013.
102. Kobylyanskiy, *From Stalingrad to Pillau*, 228.
103. *Trotskyism* refers to a Marxist ideology based on the theory of permanent revolution by Leon Trotsky, one of the leading theoreticians of the Russian Bolshevik Party and the Russian Revolution. Trotskyism would become the primary theoretical target of Stalin. Kopelev, *To Be Preserved Forever*, 30–34.
104. Moisei Isaakovich Dorman, “Enough Endurance Trials for a Lifetime,” in *Panzer Killers: Anti-Tank Warfare on the Eastern Front*, ed. Artem Drabkin, trans. Stuart Britton (Barnsley, UK: Pen and Sword, 2013), 113–14.
105. Wendy Goldman, “Women, Abortion, and the State, 1917–36,” in *Russia’s Women: Accommodation, Resistance, Transformation*, ed. Barbara Evans Clements et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 245–47. Even before the war, a rubber shortage and consequent absence of contraceptives drove many Soviet women to opt for abortion.
106. Пивоварова (Пудовкина) Ольга Алексеевна [Ol’ga Alekseevna Pivovarova (Pudovkina)], IRemember, accessed 11 September 2018.
107. Степина (Потанина) Вера Васильевна [Vera Vasil’evna Stepina (Potanina)], IRemember, accessed 6 June 2013.
108. Elinor Lipper, *Eleven Years in Soviet Prison Camps* (London: World Affairs Book Club, 1950), 12.
109. Vert, et al., eds., *Istoriia stalinskogo Gulaga* [The history of the Stalinist gulag], appendix 8, 1:632–37. Original in Russian.
110. Norman M. Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945–1949* (Cambridge, MA: President and Fellows, Harvard College, 1995), chapter 2.
111. Krivosheev et al., eds., *Soviet Casualties and Combat Losses in the Twentieth Century*, 85.
112. Glantz and House, *When Titans Clashed*, 292.
113. Jews accounted for 1.78 percent of the pre-1939 Soviet population. RAN, 57; and Leonid Smilovitsky, “A Demographic Profile of the Jews of Belorussia from the Pre-War Time to the Post-War Time,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 5, no. 1 (2003): 117–29, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623520305652>.
114. Markwick and Cardona, *Soviet Women on the Frontline*, 246. Kazimiera Cottam claims

- that the following number of women received combat training in 1942: 6,097 female mortar operators; 4,522 heavy machine gunners; 7,796 light machine gunners; 15,290 submachine gunners; and 40,509 communications specialists. Cottam drew these figures from two Soviet-era publications, which also claim that 102,333 female snipers were trained in that year. Cottam, *Women in War and Resistance*, xx. It is difficult to reconcile such numbers with the fact that wartime sniper schools trained only a total of 1,885 female snipers. Krylova, *Soviet Women in Combat*, 163. At any rate, most women trained for combat never made it to the front.
115. “New Soviet Law on Mothers and Children, Marriage and Divorce,” *Soviet War News*, no. 907, 12 July 1944.
  116. USHMM, RG-31.026, reel 58, fond 1 opis’ 23 delo 2536.
  117. Arsen Djatej and Robert Sarikas, “The Second World War and Soviet Accounting,” *Accounting History* 14, nos. 1–2 (2009): 35–54, 52, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1032373208098551>.
  118. Krivosheev et al., eds., *Soviet Casualties and Combat Losses in the Twentieth Century*, 85; and Krylova, *Soviet Women in Combat*, 300. Because Krylova gives a number of 120,000 women who experienced combat, this mortality figure seems improbably high. This is one of many subjects concerning the eastern front that require more research. Perhaps women killed in the partisan conflict would in part explain the high number.
  119. Engel, *Women in Russia*, 229. Barbara Alpern Engel writes: “In the postwar period women were expected to be all things to all people and to enjoy it,” before concluding with surprising confidence that “women did not regard the division of labor in the home as unjust,” though they “drew the line . . . at providing the desired number of children.”
  120. Quoted in Pennington, *Wings, Women, and War*, 68.
  121. Boris Bogachev, *For the Motherland, for Stalin: A Red Army Officer’s Memoir of the Eastern Front*, trans. Maria Bogacheva (London: C. Hurst, 2017), 280.
  122. *Frontovoi* is the adjective and *frontovichka* the noun for a female frontline veteran. Афанасьева Нина Федотовна [Nina Afanas’eva Fedotovna], IRemember, accessed 18 May 2013.
  123. Alexievich, *The Unwomanly Face of War*, 189.
  124. Quoted in Engel, “The Womanly Face of War,” 154.
  125. David M. Glantz, *Stumbling Colossus: The Red Army on the Eve of World War* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 99. Roger R. Reese calls the “scale of the expansion . . . mind boggling.” Roger R. Reese, *Red Commanders: A Social History of the Soviet Army Officer Corps, 1918–1991* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 136–38.
  126. This consensus view is expressed by the foremost biographer of Hitler, Ian Kershaw, *To Hell and Back: Europe, 1914–1949* (New York: Henry Hold, 2015), 341. The most respected and prolific historian of the Soviet military deploys the same argument. David M. Glantz, *Barbarossa Derailed: The Battle for Smolensk, 10 July–10 September 1941* (Solihull, UK: Helion, 2010), 1:17.
  127. Engel, *Women in Russia*, 209. Barbara Alpern Engel, for instance, claims that the Nazi-Soviet Pact “raised hope of avoiding war.” She does not mention the immense Soviet military preparations during this period, nor the fact that mobilization of women into the armed forces was almost entirely neglected.
  128. A milestone two-volume compilation on the social history of the war containing contributions from the most prominent Russian historians of the war years, for instance, includes no chapters on women in the armed services or in the economy. G. N. Sevast’ianov, ed., *Voina i obshchestvo, 1941–1945* [War and society, 1941–1945] (Moscow: Nauka, 2004).

# Rumors, Lies, and Fake Radio Broadcasts

## One Woman's Pioneering Efforts in Psychological Warfare

Ann Todd

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**Abstract:** During the Second World War, Elizabeth P. McIntosh spent 18 months serving in the Office of Strategic Services in what has been called the “forgotten theater” of China-Burma-India. As a member of the Morale Operations Branch, she employed black propaganda to deceive, confuse, and demoralize troops in the Imperial Japanese Army. This article will analyze McIntosh's trailblazing path in the field of psychological warfare.

**Keywords:** Office of Strategic Services, OSS, morale operations, psychological warfare, China-Burma-India, CBI, World War II, WWII, black propaganda, psychological operations, psyops

**O**n a steamy July day in 1944, 31-year-old Elizabeth P. McIntosh arrived in New Delhi, India, having flown an Air Transport Command (ATC) flight from Miami, Florida, by way of Amazonia, Accra, Aden, and Masirah. She had arrived in China-Burma-India (CBI), the most overlooked, underprovisioned, and forgotten theater of operations in World War II (WWII). McIntosh was 1 of 4,500 women to serve in the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the wartime predecessor to the Central Intelligence Agency and the creation of Army Colonel William J. Donovan, Wall Street lawyer and recipient of the Medal of Honor for his actions during WWI. Although the vast majority of OSS women served stateside in support of overseas operations as cartographers, cryptographers, linguists, and clerical staff, Elizabeth McIntosh

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was one of hundreds who were stationed abroad, where they broke codes in London, flew photoreconnaissance flights over the Balkans, and trained Maquis resistance fighters deep behind enemy lines in France.<sup>1</sup> Donovan created an organizational environment uniquely welcoming to gifted women whose skills were neither valued nor utilized by the conventional military. Most women in the OSS were given a civilian rank commensurate with their prewar professions and salaries but were nonetheless subject to the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). There were also Women's Army Corps (WACs) serving in uniform, and these women did experience direct harassment from U.S. military personnel while performing their OSS duties.<sup>2</sup> McIntosh was not in uniform, and although she did not encounter those difficulties, her challenges involved a general lack of material and British hostility in a theater of war lacking cohesive lines of authority. Her experience during the 18 months she served in the OSS offers a firsthand look at how a civilian woman serving in a quasimilitary intelligence agency was able to contribute not only to the Allied war effort in Asia but also pioneered the art of psychological warfare.

Colorful histories of OSS abound: scholarship on Donovan, the luminous founder of the organization, thrilling accounts of Operation Jedburgh (1944) teams training and fighting with the French resistance, frogmen pioneering underwater special warfare, and the daring exploits of Norwegian Special Operations (NORSO). Any treatment of the branch Donovan added to his agency in 1943, Morale Operations (MO), and the journalists, artists, linguists, and other creative types recruited to wage psychological warfare against the enemy—in this case, the Japanese—appears to be missing. The recruitment drive for MO focused on talent and skill sets, not gender, which meant women were flagged by Donovan's scouts right along with men.<sup>3</sup> McIntosh was recruited for her skills as a journalist and was a student of Japanese language and culture.<sup>4</sup> As a reporter, she valued truth and transparency. In the OSS, she learned the art of deception.

The MO mission was to employ the art of black propaganda to destroy the morale of the Japanese soldier along with his family back home, infecting them with both with confusion and defeatism. Black propaganda involves misleading people about the true origin and source of information: a newspaper is made to look as if it originated in Honshu Province in Japan, when it was actually printed in Delhi, India. The MO crew trained to produce subversive materials from captured letters, magazines, and newspapers. While other commodities in Japan had grown scarce, newspaper circulation exploded as the war progressed; and although each newspaper competed with the others, all were managed by the government. Every paper produced a local publication in occupied territories, dividing them into linguistic spheres. The *Asaki* published the *Java News* in Malay; *Yomui* published *Burma News* in Burmese. With the right equip-

ment, all could be faked. Similarly, a radio broadcast could pose as Radio Tokyo, when in reality it was being transmitted from a hand-cranked generator in Chittagong, featuring popular music and scripts designed to influence the listener.<sup>5</sup> Black propaganda in CBI took the form of leaflets, newspapers, poems, cartoons, magazines, forged orders, and radio broadcasts.

Black propaganda was a strategic weapon designed to do one thing—weaken the enemy’s will—not to affect the outcome of a particular battle. The goal was to identify the man within the soldier—the son, husband, father—and similarly to target Japanese wives, mothers, and children, planting a virus of doubt and desolation that could then reverse infect the soldiers and create a circle of despair. By planting false information, it was not necessary to make the target believe the falsehoods but simply to disrupt his focus. McIntosh proved to be adept at targeting the Japanese, largely due to her extreme sympathy for them.

There was a limited American presence in CBI, including the Tenth Air Force, which flew bombing runs over northern Burma and carried supplies to China over the “Hump”—a southern portion of the Himalayas—and the Fourteenth Air Force, comprising what had previously been members of Claire L. Chennault’s American Volunteer Group (AVG), otherwise known as the Flying Tigers.<sup>6</sup> Army General Joseph W. Stilwell led Chinese forces in an ineffectual ground offensive to open a land route from northern Burma to China. Burma and India were ostensibly under British control, with no American operational command structure in place prior to 1942, and Stilwell found himself thwarted by uncooperative British in Burma and a recalcitrant Chiang Kai-shek in China. He came to share the perception that CBI actually stood for “Confusion Beyond Imagination.”<sup>7</sup>

Elizabeth McIntosh was tasked with standing up a functional MO shop in Delhi and to begin promulgating black propaganda as soon as possible. In addition to McIntosh, who had been a journalist before the war, the MO team in Delhi included anthropologists, missionaries, ornithologists, an advertising executive, linguists specializing in Japanese, Burmese, and Malay, and several artists. They all understood the rationale that underlaid their mission: the Allies had gleaned intelligence from captured documents indicating the Japanese were secretly shifting troops from Burma to the Pacific. It was vital to, if not stop them, at least slow them down.<sup>8</sup>

Singapore, the jewel in the crown of the British Empire, surrendered to the Japanese on 15 February 1942. By May, the Dutch East Indies, the American colony of the Philippines, French Indochina, and the British possessions of Hong Kong, Malaya, Borneo, and Burma were all under Japanese control. The Imperial Japanese Army (IJA) invaded Malaya in January 1942, after which General Shojiro Iida’s *15th Army* occupied southern Burma and advanced to



Rangoon.<sup>9</sup> The main Japanese invasion came across a mountainous frontier so formidable the British made the grave mistake of believing it would protect them. It did not. British forces along with civilian dependents were forced into a grueling exodus, traveling more than 500 miles for refuge in India. The trek took them across the Irrawaddy and Chindwin rivers, and the Chin “hills,” the highest peak being 10,000 feet.<sup>10</sup>

After occupying Rangoon, the Japanese Army split, with Lieutenant General Renya Mutaguchi sending his forces northwest up through the mountains and jungles of Burma with the objective of invading and occupying India.<sup>11</sup> General Shinichi Tanaka’s *18th Division* moved north to take the airfield at Myitkyina, from where he could defend against British Spitfires and harass the Hump flights of the Tenth Air Force. Upon reaching the Imphal plain in India, the three divisions of the IJA’s *15th Army* were defeated and turned back by British forces under the command of Lieutenant Generals William J. Slim and Geoffrey A. P. Scoones. Lieutenant General Kotoku Sato, commander of IJA’s *31st Division*, messaged Mutaguchi, “Our swords are broken and our arrows gone,” before ordering a retreat.<sup>12</sup>

The three Japanese divisions had charged toward India as experienced guerrilla jungle fighters, cleverly camouflaged and packing their collapsible bicycles and inflatable rubber rafts, along with enough rations for many days. Their supply lines were strong and intact, and morale was high. By autumn 1944, a catastrophic defeat in the Leyte Gulf meant the Japanese defensive line had pulled back, placing Thailand and Malaya on the perimeter. The Allies had more than 1,300 aircraft in the skies over Burma while the Japanese were down to 64. The three IJA divisions embarking on the retreat from Imphal constituted a shattered and defeated force, the men strung out in a line as they crossed back over mountain passes and thick jungle on what was often no wider than a goat path. Increased Allied submarine activity had all but shut down Imperial Japanese Navy shipping, straining supply lines almost to the breaking point and leaving the soldiers with less than one rice ball a day, one-eighth of that necessary to fuel even a very minimal level of focus and energy. These soldiers retraced the horrendous trek the British made in 1942 and grew just as demoralized with every step.

The desperate IJA soldiers quickly shifted into *jikatsu risen* mode—subsisting and fighting on one’s own; all but giving up on expectation of support from Japan. But it is virtually impossible to “live off the land” in the jungle, which will not sustain a traveling human. A postwar account of a coastwatcher in the Philippines reads:

The jungle is, in effect a desert. At its best, the food the jungle can supply is only enough to sustain life, and under a prolonged diet of jungle food, mental and physical vigor decline



until there is no ability to do more than barely support life itself. Even natives cannot live indefinitely on jungle products only, but rely on cultivated food.<sup>13</sup>

Disease, including dysentery and a virulent strain of cerebral malaria that could kill in two hours, brought delirium and dehydration. Giant striped tigers, keeping pace and growing fatter and fatter, picked the soldiers off at leisure. Meanwhile, OSS Detachment 101 was working in the north to train and equip Burmese Kachin mountain warriors and Naga headhunters, unleashing them to prey upon the retreating Japanese. These soldiers—sick, spooked, and starving—were ripe for demoralization; the optimal targets for Elizabeth McIntosh and her MO team.

To perpetrate black propaganda against the Japanese, it was necessary to have equipment and materiel. In addition to a creative mind and flexible temperament, one needed tools, including the correct inks, dyes, brushes for grass-style *kanji* script, and several different types of paper, the most important being a coarser, cheaper variety than that found in the West. McIntosh quickly grasped her most critical problem in getting the MO shop up and running: she had landed in Delhi with exactly one box of typewriter ribbon and no typewriter, and at the minimum she needed printing presses required to begin actual production. An offset press, which made no indentation on the paper, was needed for printing leaflets, documents, magazines, or posters. Letter press left a physical indentation, and if that was not present on a page of newsprint, any reasonably observant person, let alone a suspicious Japanese reader, would notice.

The cold reality was that the OSS MO in Delhi had neither offset nor letter press. The British had both, but it became immediately apparent they neither cared for the Americans nor were they inclined to share, as they found black propaganda distasteful and a waste of time and resources. Relations between the Allies in CBI were strained to the point of outright hostility. Donovan's OSS Detachment 101 had arrived in Northern India on 4 July 1942 and quickly established itself near the Burmese border, well away from British bases and thus able to avoid being saddled with a "junior partner" status. By August 1943, Detachment 101 had four intelligence and operational forward bases behind enemy lines in northern Burma: Forward, Knothead, L Group, and Pat. OSS operations in the region quickly became completely independent of British control, not only due to distance but the Americans' seemingly endless resources. Donovan's pool of "unvouchered funds" meant his Detachment 101 officers had, in contrast to MO Delhi, "the men, the equipment, and the means of supplying what is wanted, when it is wanted, and where it is wanted." The British did not.<sup>14</sup>

The animus felt by the British toward their American allies also stemmed from a strong suspicion that the latter were actively encouraging the various independence movements simmering among many Indians and Burmese. This was in fact true of OSS personnel, at least in sympathy and sentiment, but the MO crew remained focused on the Japanese. It fell to McIntosh to reason with the British, and to this end, she formulated a plan for developing a professional working relationship with the “cousins” (a somewhat forced term of endearment used by Allies in recognition of the “special relationship” between their two countries) to fulfill her orders as she understood them. As she recalled, it involved “a great deal of creative bartering, schmoozing, and outright begging.”<sup>15</sup> She quickly earned a reputation for being “indefatigable”; relentless in her quest to obtain access to equipment, cooperation from the British, and permission to pursue her black propaganda schemes from the OSS higher-ups in Washington. She eventually managed not only to acquire presses and paper but also typesetters, translators, and access to intelligence from British agent nets as well. Washington was mostly ignored.<sup>16</sup>

### **Operation Black Mail**

In exchange for her ration of Lucky Strike cigarettes, McIntosh was allowed to dip into a moldy mailbag captured near Myitkyina and make use of whatever she could retrieve with one hand. This turned out to be a wrapped stack of clean, dry postcards, missives from Japanese soldiers to their loved ones back home. The heartfelt messages were written in simple colloquial kanji script in pencil and easily translated. Additionally, the cards had already cleared the IJA censor, meaning they could hypothetically be placed back in the mail stream to the home islands. Operation Black Mail commenced, and the MO crew set about to erase the personal messages and deftly write in kanji such plaintive notes as: “Obasan, where are supplies from home? We are starving in the jungle. How can we fight without bullets?”<sup>17</sup> Among the MO crew, common themes were agreed upon: the IJA in Burma was underequipped and being defeated, U.S. bombers were passing overhead daily to mass for bombings of Japan, and soldiers were unsettled by rumors of strikes on the home islands. The underlying message: the war is lost.<sup>18</sup>

The practice of tampering with personal mail had been perfected by the British, who regularly captured mail, altered it, and reposted it to Germany during WWI. The Soviets had likewise been at the practice for many years and were quite proficient. OSS officer Edmund Taylor, one of Donovan’s black propaganda pioneers in the European theater, recounted specific “fendish” cases and promoted the technique as one that was extremely indirect, often containing no obvious political propaganda. A soldier at the front would receive letters telling him his children had been evacuated to a country village and were

“dangerously ill” due to the inadequate food rations being provided by the German government. The object, Taylor asserted, was to “shake the soldier’s nerves, make him hate the war.”<sup>19</sup>

Elizabeth McIntosh was known as a “Jap lover,” which was, in the collective opinion of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington, the U.S. Army, and most all British personnel, an epithet. It meant she empathized with the enemy. McIntosh fervently believed that her ability to put herself in the position of a Japanese soldier was a strength to be utilized in the work of demoralization. She came up with her own *MO dictum*, “Love your enemy—if you want to deceive him.”<sup>20</sup> She believed what the experts in Washington and London refused to acknowledge: that each Japanese soldier was human and did not necessarily succumb to a hive mentality. There was in fact hard evidence for this. American missionaries in Japan before the war had supported and encouraged a Peace Party, largely comprised of Japanese college students before they fled to avoid prison. The missionaries who found their way into Donovan’s OSS knew that a sizable portion of the Japanese population viewed war with the United States as suicidal, and many who held this belief were university students. A 1934 petition denouncing the militarists had been signed by a million Japanese, but now those signees were silent.<sup>21</sup> It stood to reason they represented some cohort of troops in Burma. Additionally, many Western military experts also thought the Japanese soldier clung to a fierce single-minded adoration of the emperor. But a tradition of deep dedication to familial authority had existed in Japan before written history, predating and rivaling devotion to an emperor.<sup>22</sup>

Operation Black Mail evolved into an ongoing endeavor. Another captured sack of letters arrived—these were en route to Japanese soldiers from the home islands. Together with fellow Japanese linguist William Magistretti, McIntosh worked from the originals to write new letters, such as this example:<sup>23</sup>

I hope that you are in good health. It has been seven months since we have heard from you but we know you are safe as the army has not notified us differently. How I wish the mail was faster: I have not been able to write because of long hours at the factory.

Michiko and Tetsuo are in the nursery at the factory and I have little time to spend with them. I will be glad when the war is won and we can settle down to normal family life once more.

This is just gossip, but if I repeat it to you do not say anything as it may get back here and it would be embarrassing. However, do you remember Ikeda’s wife? She was from Kyoto? He has been away in China and Burma for five years now, and she has only had letters from him four times in that period, al-

though he said he wrote her weekly postcards. Well, the truth is that she is going to have a baby. She went on working at the factory until it became noticeable then she was asked by the foreman to leave as the effect was bad on the others. She went back to her parents' place.

Such things are happening all over the city, I am told. It is probably because so many men are away and the women get lonesome.

Do not worry about me, as I am too busy with the children, the work at the factory, and defense duties after work. . . . I am beginning to look like a coolie. However, you must admit that five years is a long time to be away from your wife and children, is it not? They tell us it will be after India is conquered. I pray that will be soon. The children send their best wishes. I will try to enclose notes from them in my next letter.<sup>24</sup>

Psychological warfare, as with all covert operations, is dependent on intelligence from the field. In CBI, this was often a rare commodity, and MO Delhi scrutinized every item that came its way, gleaning names of Japanese military personnel, civilians, and their collaborators from captured materials. What started as a trickle turned into a stream when IJA troops, turned at Imphal, headed south across the Chindwin River down the Tiddim Road, jettisoning everything as they went: diaries, postcards, letters from home, family photos, and cartoons depicting everyday life in Japan. The Japanese also had the habit of carrying into combat battle plans and marked maps, which when captured gave good indications of the order of battle, especially the dire lack of supplies.

Elizabeth McIntosh had her own personal source of intelligence from the field, a Marine second lieutenant who had been recruited by Donovan. Charles H. Fenn was a journalist before the war with extensive experience in Southeast Asia and China. Most men who joined OSS were given perfunctory military training before being assigned a rank in one of the Armed Services commensurate with their civilian salary and position. This was not true of the Marine Corps, which put its "seconded" OSS male recruits through the entire course of basic training. Fenn was a free-ranging agent who prowled through Burma and into China, gathering intelligence for the Fourteenth Air Force and various black propaganda teams throughout the theater. When a packet from Fenn arrived, the little MO team in Delhi huddled over it as though a gift had dropped from heaven. He was technically tethered to Detachment 101, tasked with sending back information and implementing MO schemes from the field in a support role. But as an OSS operative, he carried orders from the U.S.

Navy, giving him clearance to travel wherever his duties required and allowing him to roam outside any local chain of command.<sup>25</sup>

Fenn passed on a great deal of captured material, including diaries. Every Japanese soldier kept a diary. This was part of a long tradition dating from the tenth century, and each soldier and sailor was issued a new diary at the start of every year. The diaries were inspected by superiors regularly, and so most were filled with patriotic sentiments and a desire for glory in the name of the emperor.<sup>26</sup> British propagandists had dismissed them as useless and stopped reading them, but McIntosh was intrigued. She found them increasingly easy to understand as time went on, and by the end of 1944, they contained the simply worded musings of school children, leading her to conclude that the IJA had been reduced to conscripting middle-school boys. In November 1944, the number of boys age 12–14 pressed into service in Tokyo reached 700,000; these replacements trickled into Burma.<sup>27</sup> The diaries' contents were more heartfelt as well, describing extreme hardships and containing fewer references to the emperor. More and more poetry appeared. Now and then a passage, seemingly scribbled in secret, would emerge: "Whenever we make a major deployment, the *kempei tai* [military police] come and confiscate our notebooks, so I had to put my poems in my head; I'd write them later."<sup>28</sup>

McIntosh's strongly held opinions on the Japanese mind-set were partially born out when postwar scholars examined many diaries, seeking answers to what motivated the Japanese. Donald Keene observed, "Reading diaries filled with the thoughts of men suffering from hunger and disease convinced me that those who professed to understand Japanese psychology were grossly mistaken when they said that the Japanese were fanatics devoid of normal human frailty."<sup>29</sup>

## Rumors

MO schemes took many forms in CBI, including rumormongering. The best lies are built around a grain of truth—a lesson from MO school—and the truth was that it was getting harder for the Imperial Japanese government to mislead the civilian population. The Mariana Islands had been retaken, primarily to provide a base of operations for the new Boeing B-29 Superfortress heavy bombers, poised within striking distance of the heart of Japan. India and China-based B-29s of the XX Bomber Command were now hitting industrial targets in Japan, constrained only by how much fuel could be gotten over the southern stretch of the Hump. American forces were preparing to renew the offensive in northern Burma before the end of the year.<sup>30</sup> Perhaps it was possible for people on the Japanese home islands to believe someone else.

The government-controlled press in Japan could not deny the Allied bombing but always identified the targets as hospitals and schools. Rumors were tak-

ing the place of information. It was a common belief that, if the Americans were victorious, they would prevent the birth of Japanese babies by castrating all Japanese men or sending them to exile on distant islands. The former U.S. ambassador to Japan was widely and falsely quoted as saying, “The only good way to deal with the Japanese was to kill them.”<sup>31</sup>

McIntosh’s rumor of choice was spreading disinformation about potential war with Russia, as in a second Russo-Japanese War. She gleaned from captured diaries the typical IJA soldier’s inordinate fear of the specter of Russian Cossacks pouring down through Manchuria, eager to exact revenge for the humiliations of 1905. There were many other fears upon which to prey, such as a known Japanese terror of American indigenous tribes, which led Betty to plant fake Allied correspondence discussing thousands of Comanche warriors recently deployed into the jungles. Most IJA soldiers possessed an array of superstitions and took prognostication seriously. OSS intelligence knew the value of a well-placed astrological prediction or explanation of events. As the war progressed, more diaries captured in the Pacific painted a vibrant relationship between the Japanese soldier and the spirit world. Many believed those who died in “special attacks,” such as kamikaze or suicidal efforts, continued to live invisibly around them in spiritual form.<sup>32</sup>

## **Radio**

When not concocting rumors and altering mail between Japanese soldiers and their families, McIntosh and her team provided scripts for black radio stations, primarily the one operating out of a British Royal Air Force camp at Chit-tagong, near the border between India and Burma. To overcome problems experienced by the British beginning in 1942—atmospheric interference with radio waves during monsoon season and bulky wireless transmitter sets—OSS Research and Analysis (R&A) created a 53-pound receiver-transmitter and power pack, which worked over more than 1,200 miles. This allowed for dissemination of fake radio broadcasts from anywhere in the theater.<sup>33</sup> The Chit-tagong radio was a Model AZL 1150MW, powerful enough to broadcast into Thailand. Harvard-educated Thai students were recruited by the OSS to analyze Thai-language broadcasts over Radio Tokyo by Thai collaborators and create their own. Radio JOAK was snugged up to a Tokyo frequency, only a “hair’s breadth turn of the dial.” When JOAK made its debut broadcast, it worked so well that it tricked British direction-finding units in Burma into thinking there was an enemy station operating in the jungle. A test program beamed into Thailand described bomb damage in Tokyo and the resultant instability in Japanese markets. Intelligence intercepts confirmed the broadcast was received in Thailand as the “real deal.” Meanwhile, Radio Tokyo was broadcasting that Japan was, of course, winning the war; therefore, Thailand, which remained

nonaligned with either the Allies or Axis Powers, should join the empire in the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere.<sup>34</sup> Moving slowly and subtly, the MO team introduced slivers of real news about regrettable Japanese setbacks in the Pacific. As in European operations, music was identified as the essential hook in a black radio transmission.<sup>35</sup>

## Conclusions

Were the considerable efforts on the part of Elizabeth McIntosh and her fellow black propagandists successful? At one point, carefully crafted copies of a false surrender order, purported to have been issued from IJA headquarters, were clutched in the hands of IJA soldiers walking out of the jungle in Burma. OSS operations on the Arakan coast provided ample justification for a continued MO presence in Burma, specifically during the 1945 Battle of Ramree Island. Ramree was an island 60 miles long and 25 miles wide, inhabited by a few Burmese and Arakans, and served as an important staging area for the Allies to expand into southern Burma and block the road used by Japanese forces to resupply sea routes. Seizing the islands of Akyab, Cheduba, and Ramree would bring Allied air bases within range of Rangoon. British and Raj Indian troops retook the island off the southern coast of Burma after six weeks of fighting a Japanese garrison, during which a small contingent of bedraggled Japanese showed up at the house of a Burmese MO agent to beg for rice. After listening to their hardships, the agent launched a sales pitch describing the good treatment Japanese soldiers were receiving in Ramree Town (although no such prisoners existed) and presented them with an OSS leaflet. Additional copies were given to a small boy to pass to more Japanese, and by the next morning, 14 men and 1 wounded officer were ready to surrender to a British unit.<sup>36</sup> Colonel William R. Peers, the commanding officer of Detachment 101, remembered one apparently successful scheme: a “devilish trick” of forging letters in a Japanese soldier’s handwriting purporting to be offers to work for the Allies. The letters would then find their way into the hands of the *kempei tai*, and the unfortunate “traitor” was summarily executed.<sup>37</sup>

However, these examples are rare, and the efficacy of most of the many schemes conjured by the MO team of Elizabeth McIntosh and her fellow black propagandists remain unknown. Such is the nature of psychological warfare—then and now. Operations are opaque on both ends; the target elusive and the reception of rumors, lies, and black radio transmissions veiled. There is no clear victory or defeat on the battlefield of the mind.

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## Notes

1. *Maquis* refers to the French guerrilla bands of resistance fighters. For the seminal overview, see Elizabeth P. McIntosh’s own book, *Sisterhood of Spies: The Women of the OSS* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1998). This article is derived from the author’s



- book *OSS Operation Black Mail: One Woman's Covert War against the Imperial Japanese Army* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2017), which draws upon hundreds of hours of interviews with McIntosh and other OSS veterans, declassified documents from the National Archives II (NARA II) in College Park, MD, holdings in the Library of Congress, and personal papers in the Smithsonian Archives and the Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America, Harvard University.
2. Katherine Keene, personal papers, Seattle, WA. Keene was one of 62 OSS WACs serving in the London station. The women tracked production of German aircraft, half-tracks, tanks, self-propelled guns, and large ammunition. They worked under blitz attacks of German V1 and V2 bombs launched from across the English Channel.
  3. Examples of other women recruited into or in support of MO can be found in Jane Foster, *An Unamerican Lady* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1980); Jennet Conant, *A Covert Affair: Julia Child and Paul Child in the OSS* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2011); and McIntosh, *Sisterhood of Spies*.
  4. Todd, *OSS Operation Black Mail*, 17–34. McIntosh was working as a journalist for the Honolulu newspaper the *Advertiser* in Hawaii when Pearl Harbor was attacked, whereupon she was picked up as a stringer for Scripps Howard News Service and sent to Washington, DC, to cover women's issues for First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt during Franklin D. Roosevelt's term in the White House. McIntosh and her husband, Alexander McDonald, had studied Japanese language together while living with their teacher in a traditional Japanese household in hopes of future employment in Japan.
  5. Haroku Taya Cook and Theodore F. Cook, *Japan at War: An Oral History* (New York: New Press, 1992), 172; and Lawrence C. Soley, *Radio Warfare: OSS and CIA Subversive Propaganda* (New York: Praeger, 1989), 161.
  6. Daniel Ford, *Flying Tigers: Claire Chennault and the American Volunteer Group* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991).
  7. Barbara Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China, 1911–45* (New York: Grove Press, 1970), 382–83; and William B. Sinclair, *Confusion Beyond Imagination*, vol. 4, *Vinegar Joe: More Brass Hats and One GI* (Coeur d'Alene, ID: Joe F. Whitley, 1988).
  8. Elizabeth McIntosh, interview with author, 1 June 2013.
  9. Frank McLynn, *The Burma Campaign: Disaster into Triumph, 1942–45* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011).
  10. Richard Dunlop, *Behind Japanese Lines: With the OSS in Burma* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1979), 56–61.
  11. Gerald Astor, *The Jungle War: Mavericks, Marauders, and Madmen in the China-Burma-India Theater of World War II* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2004), 215.
  12. Troy J. Sacquety, *The OSS in Burma: Jungle War against the Japanese* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2013), 113.
  13. Eric A. Feldt, *The Coast Watchers: How a Few Daring Men Trapped on Japanese Islands Warned the Allies of Enemy Attacks* (New York: Bantam Books, 1979), 33.
  14. Richard Duckett, *The Special Operations Executive in Burma: Jungle Warfare and Intelligence Gathering in World War II* (London: I. B. Taurus, 2017), 92.
  15. Elizabeth P. McIntosh, interview with author, 11 November 2013. See also Elizabeth MacDonald, *Undercover Girl* (New York: Macmillan, 1949).
  16. Elizabeth P. McIntosh, interview with author, 10 October 2012.
  17. McIntosh, *Sisterhood of Spies*, 260.
  18. OSS Records, Box 42, folder 691, E 108, RG 226, NARA II.
  19. Edmond Taylor, *The Strategy of Terror: Europe's Inner Front* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1940), 205.
  20. Elizabeth P. McIntosh, interview with author, 10 October 2013.
  21. Bonner F. Fellers, *Psychology of the Japanese Soldier* (Washington, DC: Bibliogov, 2012), 34. Fellers cites a study showing that 25 percent of Japanese university students opposed the militarists and war with the United States. Fellers's papers are housed at the Hoover Institution in Stanford, CA.
  22. Fellers, *Psychology of the Japanese Soldier*, 34.

23. William Magistretti was on loan from OSS Research and Analysis (R&A). His expertise in Japanese language and culture stemmed from a childhood spent in Kyoto, Japan, and the study of Asian languages, which included Medieval Japanese. When MO recruited him, he had completed an analysis of Japanese propaganda in the vernacular press. See OSS Personnel Files, 0475, E 224, RG 226, NARA II.
24. OSS Records, Box 106, E 144, RG 226, NARA II.
25. Todd, *OSS Operation Black Mail*, 91. See also Charles Fenn, *At the Dragon's Gate: With the OSS in the Far East* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2004). Eventually Fenn was able to persuade Ho Chi Minh to provide valuable intelligence from his base north of Hanoi, Indochina.
26. Donald Keene, *So Lovely a Country Will Never Perish: Wartime Diaries of Japanese Writers* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 34.
27. McLynn, *The Burma Campaign*, 378.
28. Keene, *So Lovely a Country*, 34.
29. Keene, *So Lovely a Country*, 34.
30. OSS Records, Box 106 E 144, RG 226, NARA II.
31. Keene, *So Lovely a Country*, 48.
32. OSS Records, JCS, Box 133, E 190, RG 226, NARA II. See also Lafcadio Hearn, *Kokoro: Hints and Echoes of Japanese Inner Life* (New York: Cosimo, 2005), 26.
33. Duckett, *Special Operations in Burma*, 104; and Sacquety, *OSS in Burma*, 28.
34. The Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere refers to the Japanese control of occupied countries during WWII, in which puppet governments manipulated local populations and economies to benefit Imperial Japan. See *The Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere*, Current Intelligence Study No. 35 (Washington, DC: Research and Analysis Branch, Office of Strategic Services, 1945).
35. The best-known OSS radio operation in Europe was *Soldatensender West*, an operation run jointly with the Special Operations Executive, Britain's counterpart to OSS. The Washington liaison was a woman named Rhoda K. Hirsch. It aired from 2000 to 0800 each day, supposedly from German stations relaying news and music to the front, and it was transmitted on multiple medium and shortwave frequencies. German lyrics were written for songs by George Gershwin, Cole Porter, and Irving Berlin and were sung by Marlene Dietrich. See McIntosh, *Sisterhood of Spies*, 72; and "JN 27 Radio Scripts," 1 May 1945, Box 133, E 144, RG 226, NARA II. See also Alexander MacDonald, *My Footloose Newspaper Life* (Bangkok: Post Publishing, 1990).
36. "Ramree Town," OSS Arakan Field Unit, Box 106, E 144, RG 226, NARA II, 3.
37. William R. Peers and Dean Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road: The Story of America's Most Successful Guerrilla Force* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1963), 214.

# From WACs to Rangers

## Women in the U.S. Military since World War II

William A. Taylor

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**Abstract:** This article examines women's participation in U.S. military service from World War II to the present. It argues that there have been five major milestones that have expanded opportunities for women within military service and that these momentous changes have revealed a dichotomy in causation between national need based on personnel shortages and the pursuit of equal opportunity. As a result, this article contributes to an informed understanding of the dynamic and contested nature of military service.

**Keywords:** All-Volunteer Force, Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services, DACOWITS, draft, equal opportunity, military occupational specialty, MOS, military service, national need, Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces, Selective Service System, Women's Armed Services Integration Act

It had been a grueling journey, but they had made it to graduation day. The summer air was heavy, humid, and stale, but it could not stifle the anticipation that they felt. As the ceremony commenced, First Lieutenants Kristen Griest and Shaye Haver proudly reflected on their graduation from U.S. Army Ranger School at Fort Benning, Georgia. These two Army officers were West

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Point graduates; Griest served as a military police officer and Haver flew Boeing AH-64 Apache attack helicopters. Griest and Haver also were among the first women to attend the intense infantry combat tactics course, which the Army had previously restricted to males. On 21 August 2015, after two months of exhausting road marches, demanding obstacle courses, and extreme physical training through woodland, mountain, and swamp terrain, they became the first two women to complete the school and earn the distinctive, respected, and coveted Ranger tabs to wear on their uniforms. It was an immense personal achievement, but it also marked a new era for women in the U.S. military.<sup>1</sup>

Women have served in the U.S. military for a long time and with much distinction.<sup>2</sup> Roughly 34,500 American women served during World War I. Of these, 22,000 women served in the Army Nurse Corps and 12,500 females served as secretaries, radio electricians, translators, draftsmen, and camouflage designers.<sup>3</sup> Approximately 350,000 women served in the U.S. military during World War II in a variety of capacities. Because of the large influx of women, the Armed Services created new organizations to manage their service within the larger, male-dominated military. In 1941, the Army established the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC), and in 1943 changed the name to the Women's Army Corps (WAC); contemporary observers colloquially referred to women in this organization as WACs.<sup>4</sup> In 1941, the Navy established Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES), and two years later the Coast Guard established the U.S. Coast Guard Women's Reserve (SPARs), an acronym created from combination of the first letters of the group's Latin motto, *Semper Paratus*, and its English translation, "Always Ready."<sup>5</sup> In 1943, the Marines created the Marine Corps Women's Reserve and eventually used the broad term *Women in the Marines*, and females serving in the Army Air Corps first served as Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASPs), which later became part of an organization unimaginatively called Women in the Air Force (WAF) once that Service became independent in 1947.<sup>6</sup>

The 350,000 women who served in the U.S. military during World War II represented approximately 2.3 percent of the total American force, an important but temporary duty in the minds of most Americans, including some of these women.<sup>7</sup> As a result, their service freed men to fight a two-front war, and that global conflict dramatically altered the perception and reality of women in the U.S. military in new ways. Women had served before, but the U.S. military had not utilized women in such large numbers and doing so spurred the creation of separate organizations with attendant heightened visibility of women's roles. Even with seismic shifts due to military necessity, personnel policy still relegated women to an auxiliary status that was by definition not permanent. Women's service within these auxiliary branches ended six months after the cessation of hostilities.

As World War II demonstrated, even though women have served in the U.S. military in large numbers and with great merit, the policies that have governed their service often limited their full participation and denied them equal opportunities to serve in combat arms and thus advance to the higher ranks.<sup>8</sup> Since World War II, there have been enormous changes for women in the U.S. military, evidenced by the stark contrast between women serving as WACs in World War II to women now qualified to serve as U.S. Army Rangers and the ultimate milestone that all military occupations, including combat specialties (also known as MOSs), are now open to women. These opportunities for women in the U.S. military have emerged through a series of initiatives that transformed policies regulating their service. This article explores the major milestones for women in the U.S. military from their inclusion as permanent members of the military in 1948 to the opening of combat specialties to women in 2015. Throughout this period, women have found more openings and become a larger proportion of the U.S. military, increasing from roughly 2 percent during World War II to approximately 15 percent in 2017.<sup>9</sup>

We examine five specific milestones—the Women’s Armed Services Integration Act (1948), the creation of the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS, 1951), the advent of the All-Volunteer Force (1973), the Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces (1992), and the opening of combat occupations and units to women (2015)—spanning seven decades that have fundamentally altered the nature of service for women as well as the U.S. military itself. This history exposes an important dichotomy regarding opportunities for women, especially the balance between national need versus access to one of the few aspects of service dominated primarily by men. Moreover, these five changes in policy have demonstrated that the modern moment emerged because of both internal and external forces.

In looking at these policies together, it becomes clear that military necessity and national need opened the door for greater participation of women, a foundation that civilians built upon to expand opportunities for female servicemembers. The first three milestones—the Women’s Armed Services Integration Act, the creation of the DACOWITS, and the advent of the All-Volunteer Force—demonstrate national need and reveal that the military fought broader social norms of the Cold War era regarding women’s roles in the workplace. At the same time that American society defined women’s roles in terms of Cold War domesticity, confining women to the duty of mother or wife in image if not reality, the military sought to increase their responsibilities. Albeit for pragmatic motives, the military needed greater female participation in the military even while it was still overwhelmingly biased in favor of service by men.

Recruiting more women to fill the ranks for the military—as clerks, tech-

nicians, and medical personnel—became the most significant indicator, and driver, of change. The last two milestones—the Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces and the opening of combat occupations and units to women—demonstrated a far different dynamic. Policy makers extended the scope of women’s assignment for political purposes based on the meaning of citizenship, often in concert with the social expectations of a large segment of Americans. Ensuring that women had equal opportunities within military service became a paramount factor for some, while still hotly contested among others who openly question the issue of combat effectiveness. The last and current generations of Americans generally accept increased involvement of women in other sectors, and leaders adjusted certain aspects of policy and service to ensure commensurate changes for women in the Services.

Consequently, a stark contrast emerged. While both periods witnessed dramatic redefinitions in context of their social milieus, they did so in distinct ways. The first three milestones focused on national need and how women could fill roles to meet it, while the period of the last two milestones hinged on the meaning of full citizenship by expanding opportunities for women to ensure equality of access. As a result, women in the U.S. military evolved from serving in auxiliary units, such as the WACs during WWII, to qualifying for and seeking positions in combat units, such as the Army Rangers in 2015. Soon thereafter, civilian leaders opened all military assignments to women in most of the Services.

### **Women’s Armed Services Integration Act**

On 3 June 1948, Congress passed the Women’s Armed Services Integration Act; President Harry S. Truman signed it into law on 12 June 1948.<sup>10</sup> The law had positive and negative impacts on opportunities for women in the U.S. military. During the First and Second World Wars, women on the home front and in the military functioned as a reserve labor force, allowing them to defy social norms for the good of the war effort. The 1948 law, however, transitioned women from auxiliary to permanent service but also constrained their opportunities. The law placed a ceiling of 2 percent on the number of women who could serve and restricted the highest rank that those women could attain to lieutenant colonel or commander in both active duty and Reserve forces. The act allowed a woman to serve as a colonel or captain if she was the director of the Women’s Army Corps or WAVES, but that rank was only temporary and tied to that specific assignment. Once she left the billet, she returned to her previous rank.

Thus, Congress and President Truman made a change in military demographics without making women equal to men in access to billets or ranks.<sup>11</sup> Four days after Truman signed the law, WAVES director Captain Joy Bright Hancock, head of WAC Colonel Mary Hallaren, director of Women in the

Marines Major Julia E. Hamblet, and director of WAF Lieutenant Colonel Geraldine May held a joint press conference and outlined adjustments wrought by the new law. Colonel Hallaren fielded questions and cautioned that even though the new law would make women's role in the American military permanent, assignments for women would remain much the same. When asked if women would now serve in such new roles as pilots, she indicated, "No pilots for the moment."<sup>12</sup>

A series of enlistment ceremonies for women occurred throughout summer and fall of 1948, marking their transition into permanent service. General Omar N. Bradley, U.S. Army Chief of Staff, administered the oath of enlistment to Technician Third Grade Vietta M. Bates of Camden, New Jersey, making Bates the first enlisted woman to serve in the regular Army.<sup>13</sup> Numerous enlistment ceremonies occurred for the other Services, which for the optimistic seemed full of promise to women denied permanent billets.<sup>14</sup> "The lure of foreign travel, all expenses paid, steady work, and no more inflation worries, is inspiring thousands of young women all over the country in a new rush to the colors," Josephine Ripley reported for the *Christian Science Monitor*. In an era when most women were supposed to be considering motherhood as their main social role, Ripley noted that the new law "opened up a brand new, lifetime career for women."<sup>15</sup>

Nona Brown, a reporter for the *New York Times*, explained the impact of the legislation: "When 412 young military recruits started hugging and saluting in three new training schools this fall, something new was definitely added to the American way of life. These recruits were women—girls, really—the first in the nation's history to sign up for three-year hitches in the regular military services."<sup>16</sup> The three schools included the Great Lakes Naval Training Station near Chicago, the Army's Camp Lee in Virginia, and Lackland Air Force Base (now Joint Base San Antonio), Texas. After their training, women were able to serve in the military as a career, rather than solely as short-term emergency reserves. Clearly, despite social norms, women responded to the changes as did the military by making room for them at the various training camps.

## **The Creation of the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services**

The creation of the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services, or DACOWITS, was another major milestone regarding women in the U.S. military. George C. Marshall, secretary of defense in 1951, created DACOWITS.<sup>17</sup> Marshall explained, "For some time I have felt the desirability of establishing in my office a policy advisory committee of leading American women to furnish guidance to the Department of Defense on problems relating to women in the Services."<sup>18</sup> To implement his policy vision, Marshall chose his close friend and



confidant, Anna M. Rosenberg, assistant secretary of defense for manpower and reserve affairs. Marshall boasted that Rosenberg “keenly desires that such a committee be established and the committee would work with her in the accomplishment of its objectives.” He added that the committee would “perform a distinct and much needed service to the Department and the nation.”<sup>19</sup> Likewise, Rosenberg was a staunch supporter of Marshall on a range of personnel issues, including women in the U.S. military and universal military training, among many others.<sup>20</sup>

Once he formed the committee and she took the lead with it, Marshall and Rosenberg appointed 50 prominent women to serve annually as members, and the group held approximately four meetings per year, providing oversight and guidance on the entire spectrum of issues impacting women in the U.S. military. The establishment of DACOWITS resulted in women in American military service receiving attention from senior policy makers and the many renowned members that filled the committee’s ranks every year thereafter.<sup>21</sup> The 1948 Women’s Armed Services Integration Act and the 1950 outbreak of the Korean War undoubtedly triggered DACOWITS, as the former heightened the role of women in the U.S. military even as it constrained the number of women allowed to serve and the ranks that they could attain, while the latter strained total available military personnel, leading to arguments at that time that increased recruiting of women would allow more men to fight on the Korean Peninsula. As a result, policy makers considered the role of women in American military service in a way previously ignored.

A little more than one year later, Mary I. Barber, DACOWITS member and well-known food consultant from Battle Creek, Michigan, reflected on the committee’s first year in a lecture given to the 35th Annual Meeting of the American Dietetic Association in the Minneapolis Municipal Auditorium. Discussing DACOWITS and explaining that the group’s members “represent fields of interest of especial [*sic*] value in studying the needs of women who have answered the call to military service,” Barber articulated the group’s goals as well as its interpretation at that time of women in the U.S. military. As the Korean War raged, much of their discourse centered on recruiting women into the military to allow more men to serve on the front lines. Barber divulged, “Mrs. Rosenberg has indicated that unless women volunteer for military service, men will have to be recalled for the second or even third time.”<sup>22</sup> It is instructive to remember that policy makers such as Marshall and Rosenberg were responsible for military personnel in its totality, including men and women. Rosenberg related women in the U.S. military directly to men because there was an overall requirement for personnel: she argued that every woman who served in the military would release a man who could then report to commanders in Korea. Wartime requirements drove attention

toward military service by women and forced leaders to consider policy revisions as a result.

Barber also articulated both “hurdles” and “advantages” of women in the U.S. military. The hurdles included “lack of prestige (this is rapidly changing),” the “belief that [a] women’s place is in the home (young girls often get more supervision in service than in the home),” “objection to regimentation (no more than in summer camps and boarding schools),” “living conditions in some installations (one job of the committee is to inspect, report and recommend on this subject),” “career opportunities (greater than many civilian jobs for high school girls),” and “objections of men in the family and of boy friends [*sic*].” The advantages encompassed a variety of differing motivations, which included:

[a] chance for continuing education at college level . . . training for a career in one of many fields . . . [a] healthful life . . . [the] opportunity for leadership . . . good pay with medical and dental care . . . challenging work . . . patriotic service, [and the] chance to share the sacrifice being made by the young men of our country.<sup>23</sup>

Barber’s lengthy exposition illustrated the positives and negatives confronting women in the U.S. military, as perceived by some observers at that time.

DACOWITS focused on these important issues. The group sought to outline challenges and opportunities for women in the U.S. military and to promulgate ways to overcome them. As a result, the group continued “to create public acceptance of and respect for women in uniform, to improve the quality of enlistees by careful screening, to inspect installations where service women are on duty, to make constructive recommendations regarding their health and nutrition, education, career training, recreation, and housing. An over-all [*sic*] recruitment drive is a continuing project.” The committee provided relentless emphasis, analysis, and oversight on improving the experience of women in the U.S. military and highlighting prospects for progress. As a result, policy makers at the highest levels increasingly noticed DACOWITS’s work specifically and women in the U.S. military generally:

Tangible recognition of Women in the Armed Services was evidenced by a commemorative stamp issued on September 11[, 1952,] with an impressive ceremony at the White House. Most of the largest and many smaller women’s organizations are cooperating with our Committee. Public opinion polls show that attitudes are changing and improving toward Women in the Armed Services. Material has been prepared—leaflets, movies, television and radio programs, to keep people informed and alert on the subject.<sup>24</sup>

DACOWITS, as demonstrated by the commemorative stamp and White House ceremony, facilitated many activities promoting women in American military service.

DACOWITS's major accomplishment was its steadfast public-relations campaign to promote women in the U.S. military and persistent policy oversight to advocate equal opportunities for them. Of course, many policy makers at this time held paternalistic attitudes and linked the issue of women in the U.S. military with their support of their male counterparts. Barber argued, "The Korean situation shows no sign of being brought to an end. Women are needed to release men from duty in this country, for duty overseas."<sup>25</sup> For policy makers at that time, there was a direct and tangible connection between women and men in the American military. Those in charge of military personnel policy had to fill specific personnel requirements. Therefore, they argued that having more women in the U.S. military, although predominantly in support functions stateside, freed men to fill other military positions, primarily combat assignments overseas. Military leaders teamed the two in a practical, albeit patronizing, way. Yet this fit the culture of the time and allowed women, who supported or disagreed with gendered roles, to have access to military service.

The Women's Armed Services Integration Act in 1948 and the creation of DACOWITS in 1951 portended a partial shift toward integrating women into the American military. Progress for those who sought it, unfortunately, stalled for the following two decades, because the presence of the draft during the Cold War satiated the demand for additional personnel. When shortages of personnel occurred, Lewis B. Hershey, director of the Selective Service System, simply increased the quota during draft calls. Women continued to serve in the U.S. military during this time at roughly 2 percent of the total force. Approximately 48,700 women served during the Korean War, and females filled many positions in the United States during the Vietnam War when there was a shortage of men to fill these positions—7,500 women served in Vietnam, primarily as nurses.<sup>26</sup> World War II had greatly expanded the role of women in the U.S. military in a reserve capacity, but afterward the draft dominated the early Cold War environment, which alleviated the shortage of personnel and therefore diminished the perceived need among military policy makers for additional personnel, including women. As a result, the draft also limited changes to military personnel policy to recruit women in larger numbers. The transition to the All-Volunteer Force, or AVF, removed the pressure-relief valve of the draft and prompted military leaders to search for additional recruits. As a result, women in the U.S. military received heightened attention once again.

## **Advent of the All-Volunteer Force**

Opportunities for women in the U.S. military fundamentally changed with the

transition to the AVF. On 17 October 1968, then-presidential candidate Richard M. Nixon made a campaign pledge to end the draft. "I say it's time we took a new look at the draft—at the question of permanent conscription in a free society," he vowed. "If we find we can reasonably meet our peacetime manpower needs by other means—then we should prepare for the day when the draft can be phased out of American life."<sup>27</sup> Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird later identified this revelation as the beginning of the end for the draft. To Nixon, the main challenge concerning military service in a democracy was determining the best method to keep and maintain force levels. He publicly questioned how such a goal could be accomplished with the draft and concluded that voluntary recruitment was the superlative option. Therefore, who served and how they did so became prominent questions related to American military service.

Nixon hoped to leverage his promise to end the draft to appeal to young voters in the 1968 presidential election.<sup>28</sup> The draft had become increasingly unpopular due to a range of reasons. "A variety of student and other deferments had undermined confidence in the fairness of the draft system," admitted Laird. "For seven long years, from age 19 to 26, young men endured the uncertainty of an inequitable draft system which selected a few among the many who were subject to it. This prolonged term of uncertainty made it extremely difficult for them to plan for their education, career, and family." This situation meant that not everyone served but that there was great uncertainty for all because of the lingering exposure to draft calls for seven years. In addition to uncertainty, inconsistency cast a dark shadow. One significant problem with the draft was the widely perceived inequity of deferments. "The chance of being drafted varied by state and local community, and by one's economic status," Laird conceded. "Many young men entered college solely to avoid the draft, and their interaction with the educational community was often unsatisfactory. Those who could not afford college were drafted and felt the sting of discrimination."<sup>29</sup> Thus, the draft impacted Americans quite differently. If a young man had the means to go to college, then the draft receded in impact for him. If not, then he was much more likely to receive a draft notice and perhaps feel the economically based discriminatory nature of the draft system.<sup>30</sup> Additionally, local variations created inequalities based on geographical location because the system was not standardized nationally.

In addition to uncertainty and inconsistency, the military increasingly used the draft to meet the heightened mobilization demands of the Vietnam War, making the draft more important for increasing manpower than previously during the early Cold War. Laird explained this new emphasis on increasing manpower due to the Vietnam War: "In the years preceding this Administration, draft calls were increased to supply manpower for the massive build-up of troops in Vietnam." This correlation with the Vietnam War's manpower re-

quirements were reflected in the fact that personnel needs skyrocketed due to the Vietnam War, and so too did draft calls. This dynamic accentuated uncertainty and inconsistency, thereby making the draft increasingly unpopular. A brief survey of draft calls during this time proves the point. In 1964, the draft called 108,000 men to compulsory military service. The following year, that number more than doubled to 233,000 draftees. In 1966, draft calls skyrocketed to 365,000 soldiers. In 1967, draft calls temporarily dipped to 219,000 but spiked again the following year to 299,000 men. In addition to draftees, the Selective Service System also produced draft-motivated volunteers, individuals who volunteered to retain control over their military service and assignment. According to Laird, "In addition to those drafted, more than half of the young men enlisting in military service did so because of the draft, not because they are true volunteers." This caused "thousands more [men to] enlist . . . in the Guard and Reserve because they perceived these organizations to be without a mission, undeployable, and a safe haven from the draft and the war in Vietnam."<sup>31</sup> The draft, essentially, ensured that the Department of Defense (DOD) had all the men it needed for an unpopular war, keeping women's participation low and almost invisible to the American public.

For Nixon and Laird, the solution to ending the draft meant converting the military to a voluntary force made up of American citizens. For the AVF to be viable, however, military leaders needed to make military service increasingly attractive to potential recruits and expand opportunities for underrepresented groups, especially women. Laird ensured that "we are determined that the All-Volunteer Force shall have broad appeal to young men and women of all racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds." Moreover, he noted that the DOD had also reinforced the message that this meant drawing potential recruits from both sexes by emphasizing "equality of opportunity for all uniformed members."<sup>32</sup> To accomplish the transition to the AVF, Nixon and Laird shifted focus toward equality of opportunity within military service, resulting in an action and reaction cycle. Critics unfairly contended that the AVF would be either all African American, all poor, or both. In response, the DOD sought to ensure that the AVF was representative of American society, as Laird's language above articulated.

Military leaders also recognized that in order to make the AVF sustainable, they would need to expand opportunities for women. Early in the transition, the DOD predicted that there would be significant shortfalls in male recruiting and identified increased female recruiting as one potential offset: "Current trends indicate that a series of vigorous actions must be taken to avoid enlisted shortages" by intensifying recruitment and making the current force better trained but also "by selectively replacing military men in jobs that can be performed as well and as economically by civilians and military women."<sup>33</sup> The

DOD pointed toward women as one way to offset the absence of male draftees after the advent of the AVF. Policy makers sought improved retention as one offset and increased opportunities for women in military service as another. Because their views often patronized women, and for the most part did not yet envision complete equality for them in American military service, they started a process that would continue. Laird explained to Nixon that

many support-type jobs now filled by military men can be performed effectively and economically by civilians and military women. The expanded use of these alternate sources of manpower can reduce the requirement for male recruits.<sup>34</sup>

As a result, the transition to the AVF spurred military policy makers to increase the recruitment of women, albeit with the explicit intention of placing them into support functions. These policy makers argued that doing so served two important functions: it lessened the overall number of male recruits required in the absence of the draft, and it allowed more of those male recruits to serve in combat functions instead of support roles.

Using civilians and military women were two important factors to end the draft and maintain force levels, an approach that resulted in unintended consequences. One way to attract female recruits was to open up more military jobs for women. Doing so, however, provided additional pressure to open even more occupations, especially ones that many policy makers at that time did not envision ever opening, such as combat roles. Debates regarding military service prompted alterations in personnel policy in the 1970s. Demand for more people in military service during conflict forced consideration of the use of additional personnel from underutilized groups. These dynamics spurred expanded opportunity and future change. One part of Laird's plan to make the AVF feasible was to double the number of women in the U.S. military. Laird divulged the strategy to increase personnel:

the Services . . . prepar[ed] plans which would nearly double the number of enlisted women in the Services from 31,000 to 59,000 by June 1977, with the addition of another 3,000 female officers. . . . These plans will be implemented to the extent they are effective and feasible.<sup>35</sup>

The adoption of the AVF created a significant shift toward expanded opportunity in American military service, probably far more than most envisioned at that time. This milestone, however, initiated the process of wider access to various military occupational specialties, which would gain momentum later.

As the AVF survived its initial trials, other efforts took center stage. In

1987, the DOD established a Task Force on Women in the Military “as a direct result of continuing concerns raised by the DACOWITS about the full integration of women in the armed forces.”<sup>36</sup> The task force evaluated a range of issues related to women in the U.S. military, including attitudes toward women, combat exclusion policies, and career development, among others; combat exclusion policies were chief among them. Even with some progress in enlarging prospects for women, numerous barriers remained. In 1988, the General Accounting Office found that approximately one-half of all active duty military jobs were still closed to women.<sup>37</sup> These male-only occupations included both combat and noncombat positions. Even so, the task force interpreted its mission in a narrow sense: “The Task Force mission on this topic was to evaluate the impact of ‘consistency in application’ of exclusion statutes and policies rather than questioning the combat exclusion itself.”<sup>38</sup> While events spurred military policy makers to ensure that the exclusion policies were uniform in implementation, it failed to generate a wholesale reconsideration at that time of their necessity, desirability, or even appropriateness.

In January 1988, the task force issued its final report and declared, “Total force readiness requires that all military members, male and female, have an opportunity to develop their talent to the fullest. Because women are a minority of people in uniform (about 10 percent), special efforts are essential to establish that opportunity.”<sup>39</sup> Key among its recommendations, the task force urged Secretary of Defense Frank C. Carlucci to take bold action:

Issue guidance to the Secretaries of the Military Departments on the definition of combat missions which excludes women from combat positions and units in each Service as required or implied by statutes. In addition, the guidance should state that noncombat units can be also closed to women on grounds of risk of exposure to direct combat, hostile fire, or capture, provided that the type, degree, and duration of risk is equal to or greater than that experienced by associated combat units (of similar land, sea or air type) in the same theaters of operation.<sup>40</sup>

The task force standardized combat exclusion policies across the military Services; it also reinforced them. As a result, the Department of Defense on 3 February 1988 adopted the “Risk Rule,” which specified that

risks of direct combat, exposure to hostile fire, or capture are proper criteria for closing non-combat positions or units to women, when the type, degree, and duration of such risks are equal to or greater than the combat units with which they are normally associated within a given theater of operations.<sup>41</sup>



Carlucci further specified that “if the risk of non-combat units or positions is less than comparable land, air or sea combat units with which they are associated, then they should be open to women.”<sup>42</sup> Even though Carlucci’s order standardized combat exclusions for women, many observers still praised it for opening numerous noncombat occupations. The *Washington Post* characterized the alteration as “an expansion of job opportunities for women in the Air Force and Marine Corps, including the assignment of female Marines to embassy guard duty.”<sup>43</sup> Carlucci praised the Navy’s prior efforts to make approximately 9,900 new occupations available to women and ordered the Air Force to allow women to serve in an additional 3,600 military assignments, including Red Horse (rapid engineer deployable heavy operational repair squadron engineers) and Mobile Aerial Port squadrons.

### **The Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces**

The Persian Gulf War (1990–91) produced another opportunity for women to serve in the U.S. military.<sup>44</sup> The massive mobilization for this war refocused American society on military service, especially the issue of women in the U.S. military.<sup>45</sup> On 5 December 1991, President George H. W. Bush signed Public Law 102-190, also known as the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Years 1992 and 1993. Part D, titled “Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces,” included the establishment of a panel “to be known as the Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces.” As a result, the Persian Gulf War influenced military personnel policy, especially regarding women. Prior to the war, there were restrictions on females serving on combatant ships; the commission’s recommendations would eventually overturn this long-standing prohibition. The timing of this commission was no coincidence. As before, major military personnel policy changes often coincided with war.

Practical concerns dictated policy, and wars focused American society on military service, including opportunities and challenges. The Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces was no different. Its general duties were to “assess the laws and policies restricting the assignment of female service members” and “make findings on such matters.” The commission evaluated assignment policies, specifically looking at expanding opportunity and the implications of such developments. Its members analyzed a wide range of considerations related to women in the military, including combat effectiveness, public attitudes, legal matters, the Selective Service System, required modifications to facilities, and such personnel issues as recruitment, retention, and promotion.<sup>46</sup> The commission had to submit its final report to President Bush no later than 15 November 1992, which he would then transmit to Congress by 15 December 1992.

Robert T. Herres, a U.S. Air Force retired general, chaired the commission. Herres was a U.S. Naval Academy graduate but received his commission in the U.S. Air Force. Throughout his lengthy military career, he had served as commander of 8th Air Force; commander-in-chief of U.S. Space Command; and vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff when he retired after 36 years of military service. The commission's 15 members also included Major General Mary Elizabeth Clarke, U.S. Army (Retired), who had served as commandant of the Military Police Corps and Chemical Corps; commanded Fort McClellan, Alabama; and had been director of the Women's Army Corps. Like Herres, she had served in the military for more than 36 years. Charles C. Moskos, professor of sociology at Northwestern University, chairman of the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society, and a former draftee, also served as a member.<sup>47</sup>

The commission conducted the most extensive research effort into women in the military in American history. Its members recounted that "research has included surveys of active duty military personnel and the general public, comments from over 3,000 retired Generals and Admirals, review of thousands of documents, and site visits to 31 military installations." The commission's activities and scope were vast. Its members examined an enormous amount in a relatively short period of time and produced an exhaustive study of policies regarding women in the U.S. military. The commission also surveyed all retired general and flag officers: "In September, the Commission approved and mailed a questionnaire to all 6,109 retired generals and admirals. More than 3,200 responded by October 8, the date the commission stopped tabulating answers." As a result, the commission obtained direct input from more than half of all retired generals and admirals in the United States and considered their collective judgment among a host of other data gathered.<sup>48</sup>

These surveys done by the commission indicated that the vast majority of general and flag officers at that time opposed allowing women in the military to serve in combat assignments. Herres and his colleagues revealed that "90 percent of those polled say they oppose assignments to infantry, while 76 percent and 71 percent oppose the assignment of women to combatant ships and combat aircraft, respectively." General and flag officers overwhelmingly resisted lifting any of the direct combat exclusions for women. It was interesting, however, that there was more opposition to combatant ships than fighter aircraft, given that the commission eventually would vote to lift the restriction on ships but not aircraft; the two positions were inverted. There was also divergence between age groups that presaged the potential for more change in the future: "The most recently retired flag officers (1990–1992) are less opposed to women in combat than the older retirees." This situation indicated that there was more acceptance for women serving in the armed forces as women continued to at-

tain more prominent roles and that there was a generational gap in the level of acceptance.<sup>49</sup>

There was a generational difference between older and younger general and flag officers. The younger officers had served with women in increased numbers in the AVF, whereas the older officers had served largely during the draft era, when women represented less than 2 percent of the military. The Persian Gulf War also seemed to be a watershed moment in perception in American society toward women in the U.S. military, although the actual results of the commission were not commensurate with this development, likely due to the timing of the final report between the end of the Bush administration and the beginning of the William J. “Bill” Clinton administration. In addition, fierce debate erupted at the start of the Clinton administration regarding open service by homosexuals in the military, shifting the public’s attention. After exhaustive research, the commission revealed prominent military attitudes in the early 1990s toward service by females. Herres and his colleagues concluded, “It is apparent, that this unique military community opposed assigning women to combat specialties.”<sup>50</sup> In the end, the commission voted against the retired flag officers’ position on one of three counts—women were allowed on ships but were not able to serve aboard aircraft or in ground combat.

To conclude its work, the commission met from 1–3 November 1992 to vote on its final recommendations. Herres stated that “the Commission voted to uphold the current exclusions barring women from ground and air combat, and agreed that these exclusions be made law. However, in an historic ballot, the Commission also voted to open combat assignments, never before open to women, aboard some combatant ships.” Commission members highlighted the following three votes as their most important legacy. By a vote of 10 to 2 with three abstentions, they urged “the Services [to] adopt gender-neutral assignment policies, providing for the possibility of involuntary assignment of any qualified personnel to any position open to them.” By a vote of eight to seven, with zero abstentions, they approved the combat aircraft exclusion, while they repealed the combat ship exclusion by a vote of eight to six with one abstention.<sup>51</sup>

It is important to note that commission members held a wide divergence of views, unlike some previous presidential commissions that worked on military personnel policy. The President’s Advisory Commission on Universal Training (19 December 1946–29 May 1947), which considered universal military training, or UMT; the President’s National Advisory Commission on Selective Service (2 July 1966–February 1967), which examined equity in military service; and the President’s Commission on an All-Volunteer Armed Force (27 March 1969–20 February 1970), which investigated the transition to the AVF, all included supporters who unanimously recommended the proposed policy under consideration—UMT, the draft, or the AVF in each specific case. President

Bush's commission evidenced far greater diversity of views among the commission members; on the contentious votes, they almost evenly split.

On 15 November 1992, the commission submitted its final report to President Bush. According to Herres, "Our most important achievement, among others, is the clear identification of 17 major issues that need to be addressed by the Administration and Congress if we are to develop a comprehensive policy on the role of women in the military." Herres reiterated that

even if there is disagreement with how we came down on some of these issues, I hope our nation's political leadership addresses each of them squarely and at least considers the rationale behind all of the Commission's recommendations. Their significance must not be overlooked.<sup>52</sup>

The commission submitted its final report to both President Bush and President-elect Clinton. Their recommendations came at a time of transition, however, occurring after Clinton's election victory but before he assumed office. This political timing muted the impact of the commission as the debate shifted almost immediately at Clinton's initiative to open military service by homosexuals, which would consume much of his administration's first six months in 1993 and eventually resulted in the compromise law colloquially referred to as Don't Ask, Don't Tell.

The commission's major recommendations were far-reaching:

Repeal legislation that excludes the assignment of women to combatant ships;

Exclude women from direct land combat and combat aircraft;

Apply gender-neutral assignment policies to all positions open to both genders on a best-qualified basis;

Maintain different standards for physical fitness and wellness for men and women, however, when physical strength and endurance are integral to job performance, physical standards should be established and both men and women must meet those same standards;

Women would not be required to register for the draft.<sup>53</sup>

These major recommendations of the commission were a step forward, although incomplete and disjointed.

Members of the commission provided a thorough and vast investigation into military personnel policy regarding women, the largest of its kind in American history. It included a massive survey of both societal and military attitudes toward women in military service, public hearings with hundreds of expert

witnesses, and diverse input from thousands of Americans, military and civilian alike. Within the setting of the early 1990s, it explains why some of the conclusions seemed progressive while others were more conservative. For example, the commission voted to repeal the combat restriction for ships but not for aircraft, even though neither one evidenced the same heightened resistance as that against ground combat. Its members shied away from ground combat because there was not a consensus in American society for overturning this restriction at that time. Throughout their deliberations, Herres and his colleagues undertook the most extensive study of women in the military in U.S. history:

The objective pursuit of facts included a comprehensive survey of active duty military personnel and the general public by The Roper Organization and review of thousands of documents. In addition, the Commission heard testimony from more than 300 witnesses: soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines of all ranks and in a wide variety of military specialties, as well as social, cultural and religious experts; over 11,000 American citizens sent statements or letters to the Commission.<sup>54</sup>

In other words, the military heard from Americans on their views of equality as well as from officers and their concerns about women in combat.

As the commission's work came to a close, Herres boasted, "Since its inception on March 17, 1992, the Commission has been studying the role of women in the military. The result has been the creation of an unprecedented, extensive repository of information that will be useful for policy-makers, historians, and students of the issue."<sup>55</sup> Indeed, with its work completed, the commission officially disbanded on 15 February 1993.<sup>56</sup>

## **Opening Ground Combat Occupations and Units to Women**

As in the case of World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War, conflict has often focused American society's attention on military service, opportunities within it, and challenges to improve it. As the second decade of the twenty-first century dawned, the U.S. military found itself still involved in two major armed conflicts, and debate resurfaced regarding opening remaining combat occupations and units to women. One factor that heightened reconsideration was that the nature of combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan provided evidence of little distinction between front lines and rear areas or combat assignments and support operations.<sup>57</sup> As a result, many observers argued that policies restricting women from combat assignments were increasingly anachronistic and irrelevant.<sup>58</sup> Regardless of one's specific MOS, male and female servicemembers often found themselves in combat even when military person-

nel policy officially categorized their specific assignments as noncombat. Partly in response, a series of significant changes occurred in less than a decade.<sup>59</sup> In a first, the DOD rescinded long-standing Navy prohibitions and allowed women to serve on submarines.<sup>60</sup> On 22 February 2010, Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates ordered the Navy to launch a phased plan to allow women to serve on submarines: first female officers and then women sailors would serve aboard submarines after appropriate training, which would take approximately one year to complete.<sup>61</sup> By December 2011, two dozen female officers assumed billets aboard the USS *Georgia* (SSGN 729) and USS *Wyoming* (SSBN 742), homeported at Kings Bay, Georgia, and the USS *Maine* (SSBN 741) and USS *Ohio* (SSGN 726), based in Bangor, Washington.<sup>62</sup> By August 2015, four female enlisted sailors began Basic Enlisted Submarine School in Groton, Connecticut. They would be the first of 38 female sailors who would serve aboard the USS *Michigan* (SSGN 727) upon completion of their training.<sup>63</sup>

A little more than one year after the Pentagon's decision to allow women to serve aboard submarines, another major change addressed opening combat occupations and units to women. On 15 March 2011, Lester L. Lyles, chair of the Military Leadership Diversity Commission, informed President Barack H. Obama, "While we find the promotion policies and practices of the Department of Defense and the Services to be fair, we find also that there are some barriers to improving demographic representation among military leaders."<sup>64</sup> The commission made 20 specific recommendations, ranging from simple definitions to annual reports. The most significant suggestion, however, related to women in the U.S. military. Lyles urged the "DoD and the Services [to] eliminate the 'combat exclusion policies' for women, including the removal of barriers and inconsistencies, to create a level playing field for all qualified servicemembers."<sup>65</sup> In response, in the Ike Skelton National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011, Congress mandated that

the Secretary of Defense, in coordination with the Secretaries of the military departments, shall conduct a review of laws, policies, and regulations, including the collocation policy, that may restrict the service of female members of the Armed Forces to determine whether changes in such laws, policies, and regulations are needed to ensure that female members have equitable opportunities to compete and excel in the Armed Forces.<sup>66</sup>

Promotion processes within the military Services dictated a comprehensive re-examination of women in the U.S. military.

The Department of Defense immediately commenced the required review, and after nearly a year of exhaustive study prepared to act. In February 2012,

Jo Ann Rooney, acting undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, disclosed that the DOD intended to “eliminate the co-location exclusion from the 1994 policy,” allow exceptions to policy that would assign women to open occupational specialties in battalions that engaged in direct combat, assess the relevance of the direct combat unit assignment prohibition for future policy decisions, and pursue the development of gender-neutral physical standards for occupational specialties closed due to separate and unequal gender-based physical requirements. As a result, the DOD eliminated the previous “Risk Rule” and made two major policy revisions affecting women in the U.S. military, eliminating the colocation prohibition and allowing women to serve in open MOSs with combat units at the battalion level.<sup>67</sup> The National Women’s Law Center estimated that the first change unlocked 13,139 positions that were previously inaccessible to women in the Army and the second modification released 1,186 positions that beforehand the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps had restricted.<sup>68</sup>

On 24 January 2013, Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta and Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Martin E. Dempsey rescinded the 1994 Department of Defense assignment policy for women and required the military departments to submit by 15 May 2013 implementation plans for opening combat occupations and units to women and to integrate women into newly opened positions no later than 1 January 2016.<sup>69</sup> On 3 December 2015, Ashton B. Carter, the new secretary of defense, opened to women all combat roles within the U.S. military. “There will be no exceptions,” Carter insisted. “They’ll be allowed to drive tanks, fire mortars and lead infantry soldiers into combat. They’ll be able to serve as Army Rangers and Green Berets, Navy SEALs, Marine Corps infantry, Air Force parajumpers and everything else that was previously open only to men.”<sup>70</sup> Carter’s order opened approximately 220,000 military assignments to women, erasing the last vestiges of gender-based assignment policies for women in the U.S. military.

Momentous change occurred quickly, and Kristen Griest again made history. On 27 April 2016, the U.S. Army Ranger and captain became the Army’s first female infantry officer as she transferred to that combat arms specialty. As previously discussed at the outset of this essay, Griest had become one of the first females to complete Ranger School, a grueling two-month course that the Army previously had restricted to male soldiers.<sup>71</sup> Griest “hope[d] that with our performance in Ranger school we’ve been able to inform that decision as to what they can expect from women in the military,” emphasizing that “w[omen] can handle things physically and mentally on the same level as men.” Even though Griest blazed a trail, others immediately followed.

In spring 2016, the U.S. Military Academy at West Point approved 13 female cadets to enter the armor branch of the Army and 9 others entered the infantry, providing a career path for women that heretofore the Army had of-



ficially blocked.<sup>72</sup> First as a Ranger and then as an infantry officer, Griest had completed an immeasurable personal journey. She also personified the longer and broader journey of women in the U.S. military. From WACs in World War II to Rangers today, women in the U.S. military have served for a long time and with much distinction. There have been numerous hurdles in their path: military personnel policies often have restricted their numbers, ranks, and assignments, among many other obstacles. Over time, however, women in the U.S. military have persevered to challenge these inequalities, advocate for expanded opportunities, and serve with honor. As a result, they have ensured that the U.S. military is open to all who are willing and able to serve.

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# The Observatory for Equality between Women and Men in the Mexican Army and Air Force

## Guardian of Gender Equality

María Concepción Márquez Sandoval, PhD

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**Abstract:** The 2007 reforms implemented by President Felipe Calderón brought unprecedented changes for the Mexican Army. Female recruitment reached a new high, allowing women to join combat positions in tactical units and special forces as well to be admitted into some military academies for the first time, including the previously male-only Heroic Military Academy and the Higher War College. This article contextualizes these reforms and focuses on one of the most tangible efforts by the Mexican Army to set in motion gender equality: the creation, goals, and mission of the Observatory for Equality between Women and Men in the Mexican Army and Air Force.

**Keywords:** modern Latin American history, Latin American armies, Mexican modern history, Mexican Army, women in the army, Latino women, gender equality in Latin America

In the last few years, the Mexican armed forces have been implementing actions to put into place gender integration and equality. These changes have significantly transformed the expectations and way of life of female and male soldiers. Although these reforms required some mediation and were put on hold for decades, at the end it was impossible to stop them as society changed, and with it, military life.

This article will provide a general view of these reforms and how their enforcement has become policy in the present-day Mexican Army. As a way to

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exemplify gender integration, the discussion will focus on one of the most tangible and easy to recognize organizations for gender policies implementation, the Observatory for Equality between Women and Men in the Mexican Army and Air Force (*Observatorio para la Igualdad entre Mujeres y Hombres en el Ejército y Fuerza Aérea Mexicanos*). This article will analyze its main roles, campaigns, expectations, and usefulness for female and male personnel.

For a better understanding of this organization, specifically created in 2011 as a watchdog organization, this article will describe the context in which it emerged and what trends were followed to implement gender equality policy in the army. Knowing the context will allow us to understand the reasons why, regardless of still being a predominantly male-oriented institution, the Mexican Army has become more welcoming to women, offering them new positions that were unthinkable just a few years ago, allowing women to achieve higher ranks.

For a more complete analysis on gender integration within the Mexican Army, it is important to look at the whole picture and not only at the observatory that is a small part of a large institution. It has been a long path for Mexican women to be able to achieve equality in the army. From the first woman in the institution, Maria Gonzalez de Carter, who worked as a janitor in 1934, to the School of Nursing opening in 1938 to the first female general nurse, Maria Eugenia Gomez Lopez, who was promoted to brigadier general in 1991 and major general in 2002 when she retired, as well today's Captain Andrea Cruz Hernandez, who in September of 2011 graduated as the first female pilot and could potentially be lieutenant general.<sup>1</sup>

The author accessed archival data and earlier army magazines to follow the steps of the first women in the Mexican Army. There has been an active but silent participation since the 1920s through the 1940s, as shown by several images of women working as seamstresses, janitors, and cooks. The Mexican declaration of war on the Axis powers in 22 May 1942 accelerated the Mexican arms industry in an unprecedented way. And just as in the United States, women filled these positions as more personnel were needed in different areas, including offices where women's recruitment as secretaries increased notably. Perhaps World War II might have also influenced the creation of the military nursing school, whose admission and resources increased to educate exclusively female military personnel.

The first women in the Mexican Army were wives, which was an indirect but important presence that is traceable in different sources. A life insurance policy brochure from the 1940s for soldiers featured a woman holding a soldier's hand and talks about the importance of providing housing and financial security to army wives. Today, in different commemorations, such as Mother's Day, the Mexican Army pays tribute to army wives, who have different social roles that have not seen many changes.



The integration of women into a traditionally male dominated sphere prompts many questions for the larger military community. How did women obtain more positions in a still predominantly male institution? What are the challenges faced both by female and male personnel? What are the general actions needed to tackle gender inequality? And finally, how are these policies used in everyday life for army members? Those are some of questions that will be addressed in this article.

## **Mexico Moving Toward Gender Equality: The 2007 Army Reforms**

To understand the reasons why the Mexican Army has an organization specially focused on gender equality, it is necessary to refer back to the 2007 reforms. The public face of these reforms was President Felipe de Jesús Calderón Hinojosa (2006–12) who, as we shall see, followed international trends and to a certain extent his own concerns to enforce them.<sup>2</sup> There is no evidence to suggest what extent these changes were already set in place before Calderón's presidency, but it is possible that military chiefs were already familiar with the changes and knew they were coming whether they liked it or not.

It is important to mention that we must *not* attribute these changes in the armed forces solely to a president concerned with and sensitive to gender equality, and whose wife ran for a short time for president in the 2018 elections. Strong evidence shows that Calderón responded to international trends to fulfill gender quotas and tackle gender inequality, because it was stated in international agreements signed by Mexico that had to be followed and that can no longer be postponed. Some of the most important agreements Mexico signed were the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which achieved constitutional status in 1992; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); the 1994 Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women; and the Fourth World Conference on Women.

Another element that might have influenced the decision to open more jobs to women was social pressure from the harsh economic reality that required two-income families as well as increasing rates of single mothers and divorcees. Compounding this is the fact that Mexico was in 2007 and is to this date a country in which the female population is higher than the male population, where most women fall within working age (15 to 64 years).<sup>3</sup>

From a social and organizational perspective, the 2007 reforms are one of the most monumental changes in the history of the Mexican armed forces. The changes consisted of unprecedented modifications in admission policies for both sexes in eight military academies, including ground and air combat positions, as well as allowing female officers to access higher ranks. Ordered by the

president, the army's commander in chief, reforms allowed entrance for female recruits in the Mexican Army and Air Force in 2007, enabling female recruitment to reach a new high, as they were now allowed to join combat positions in tactical units and special forces and admitted into some military academies for the first time, including the previously male-only Heroic Military Academy (*Heroico Colegio Militar*) and the Higher War College (*Escuela Superior de Guerra*).<sup>4</sup>

They transformed the way in which the institution depicts itself as well as the way citizens perceive it. The new presence of women in the army modified army life as First Lieutenant Yadira Suárez Martínez, a member of the first female generation of the Culinary School at the Military Academy, acknowledged in our interview held in November of 2015. She mentioned challenges that included adapting formal male dormitories for herself and her female fellows, which included different restrooms, installing shower curtains absent at male dormitories, as well as more numerous and larger mirrors. She remembered that guards of both genders were stationed at the doors to prevent males and females from entering the dormitories of the opposite sex at night. Female-fitted uniforms and shoes and new health challenges unique to female personnel were needed as well.

Reforms did not extend exclusively to new positions; technical, tactical, operative, and administrative tasks in which women were already participants experienced changes. The secretary of defense was ordered to open women's admission for the first time to military schools, such as engineering, aviation, communication, as well as in the military academy as cooks. Also, for the first time, the Higher War College, closed to women since its creation in 1932, allowed female officers to obtain graduate degrees, including specialties in military management to be potential commanders.

Women's admission to the Higher War College brought profound changes as well. Women could obtain graduate degrees offered at this college, providing access to higher ranks, particularly with the possibility of administrative and command posts. According to different interviews conducted by the author with female officers that were part of the first generation, they experienced several tensions at the time of their studies, for instance, physical tests were not adapted to women and neither were the school's facilities. The two graduated officers interviewed were at the time of our conversation still expecting to achieve command positions.

Changes were made at higher ranks as well. From 2000 to 2010, six female officers became generals after an average of 30 years of service. To this day, Mexico still does not have a female major general, and brigadier generals and major generals can only be found in health services such as nursing, dentistry, and medical schools. The latter is considered one of the top institutes in Latin America, and it opened its doors to women's admission in 1973. The nursing

school was founded in 1938 as the first military institution exclusively for women, and the dentistry school, founded in 1976, was the only one that admitted both genders of cadets since it opened.

What type of women did these reforms envision recruiting? Beside the descriptions from official sources, another way to approach the army's ideal of women is to look at brochures and posters targeting potential recruits. One poster from the 2010 campaign shows the smiling face of a young female soldier as she greets a rural family distressed by a natural disaster with the slogan: "In the Mexican Army and Air Force women and men take action for you." Notice that the noun for women (*mujer*) comes first, which is still featured in all public campaigns. Since that year, there has been an increasing display of pictures in brochures and posters of both sexes of cadets with women usually at the center, circulating in army schools and bases as well in public buildings.

For a better understanding of campaigns and their influence in women's recruitment into the army, it is important to discuss briefly the ideal women sought by the army from the initial campaigns up to the current ones. To promote first-time and continuing registrations to different schools, the army employed the services of professional image and media agencies, as evident in the quality of photographs, radio, television, and internet ads, which led to questions of whether those who posed for them were real recruits, as they fit perfectly in the message they wanted to convey.

Women depicted in those campaigns followed specific aesthetic patterns: young, in their 20s, slim and athletic, usually wearing custom-made fatigues, their working clothing, using light but noticeable full-face makeup, discrete pin earrings, gel-glued hair with a ponytail or a hair bun, and well-shaped, waxed eyebrows. At first glance, such campaigns show professional feminization, with the use of bright makeup and neat appearance. In a closer analysis, there is evident sexualization.<sup>5</sup> The study of the way in which the Mexican Army portrays female soldiers can shed light into what is expected from women in the Mexican Army, which leads to a better understanding of this topic.

Another poster widely publicized across the country showed the smiling face of a young female soldier targeting potential recruits from the 2010 campaign, which states: "The opportunity to prepare yourself and to serve your fatherland has arrived! University of the Mexican Army and Air Force educating women and men loyal to Mexico." Notice that "women" appears before "men."

## **Context of the Reforms**

Reforms began in 2006 and were enforced just a year after President Calderón started his administration. His six-year term became one of the most violent in recent years; among other things, this was caused by the way in which he enforced the so-called War on Drugs as a commander in chief by ordering the

participation of the armed forces.<sup>6</sup> By that time, constant references in Mexican media mentioned an ongoing war that brought fear and violence into Mexican society, while at the same time gave a more active role for the navy and the army institutions, whose report on the latest effects of the War on Drugs commonly includes references on the actions achieved by the armed forces.

Since the beginning of his presidential period, Calderón launched an intensive and noticeable campaign named Equal Opportunities aimed at providing all citizens more access to education and jobs, which was reported on his first annual government report in August of 2007.<sup>7</sup> Equal Opportunities was the first large-scale attempt to tackle gender-based discrimination and had three axes: the 2007–12 National Plan of Development (*Plan Nacional de Desarrollo*, or PND), the National Program for Equality between Women and Men, and the General Law for the Equity amongst Women and Men. The plan included five guiding principles: 1) rule of law and security; 2) a competitive economy that generates jobs; 3) equal opportunities; 4) environmental sustainability; and 5) effective democracy and responsible foreign policy. Its basic premise was “sustainable human development,” which was understood as a permanent process of expanding capabilities and freedoms that allows all Mexicans to have a dignified life without compromising the patrimony of future generations.<sup>8</sup>

The 2007–12 PND complied with article 26 of the Mexican Constitution as well with articles 4 and 20 of the Planning Law (*Ley de Planeación*). The plan was presented by Calderón to the National Congress, who circulated it among the different secretariats and departments. The more than 300-page document includes constant references to gender equality, opportunities for everyone, and aimed at “forging of a generation of Mexicans free of complex or insecurities, taboos, fear and prejudices. Opening the path to a generation of citizens with a winning mentality.”<sup>9</sup> With the Planning Law, President Calderón sought to expand his notion of equality in a sort of “democracy for all” by enforcing a comprehensive strategy for development that was meant to eliminate the determinism that birth conditions represented for many.<sup>10</sup> Although it can be inferred that his so-called determinism is mostly addressed to non-gender-related poverty disadvantages, based on the rest of the document it can also be understood as a gender inequality one.

Overall, Calderón’s national plan, from the self-proclaimed “employment president,” was aimed at improving Mexico’s social conditions, but its enforcement was not an easy task. The campaign was directed at all governmental organizations and federal institutions, such as the army, and it required important changes in Mexican society.<sup>11</sup>

Reforms arrived at a time when gender debates were occurring in Mexican society, achieving legal recognition in the Constitution in articles 1 and 4. These articles protected citizens from all discrimination, including gender-

related discrimination and provided legal equality for men and women, enforced by the federal government by incorporating gender quotas at all levels of government.

Several national and international documents provided a legal framework for the 2007 army reforms. The documents that provided a legal framework included the UDHR; the CEDAW; 1994 Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women; and the Fourth World Conference on Women. One of the most relevant international agreements for its implications in changing Mexican society is the UDHR, which was adopted by Mexico in 1990 and achieved constitutional status in 1992.<sup>12</sup> The CEDAW adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, to which Mexico belongs, constantly refers to the importance of enforcing gender equity. The 1994 Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women, held in Belém do Pará, Brazil, and in the following year, the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, China, sought to guarantee equity and avoid discrimination for gender reasons to “empower women to build egalitarian relationships, with social justice, development and peace.”<sup>13</sup>

Although it has been a slow process, the fact that Mexico has adhered to international norms is promising and shows improvements toward gender equality. Perhaps one of the most tangible results of these international agreements has been the creation of laws that drew upon those agreements, such as the 2006 General Law for Equality between Men and Women and the 2007 Law on Access to Women to a Life Free of Violence, reinforced in nationwide campaigns since its creation and constantly referred to in the army’s official documents.

Officially, the reforms were presented by the Mexican president on 1 September 2007, and a few months later, the army General Guillermo Galván Galván announced the Program for the Equality Amongst Women and Men of the Secretary of National Defense 2008–12, an adapted version for military personnel in compliance with the presidential plan.<sup>14</sup> The 17-page program considers four main objectives. The first objective refers to the importance of the creation of mechanisms that assure equal opportunities for women and men introducing a public policy concept, gender mainstreaming, which seeks to recognize the importance of using a pluralistic approach that values the differences of both sexes. The second goal calls for a strengthening of the institutional culture and management process in favor of equity and gender equality. The third objective updates the legal framework of the Secretariat of National Defense’s gender perspective, and the fourth objective creates mechanisms to register information and indicators to follow and fulfill the national policy of equality.<sup>15</sup>

The Program for the Equality Amongst Women and Men of the Secretariat of National Defense 2008–12 was announced in January 2012 with 11 projects

aimed to fight discrimination and accomplish gender equality. Known in 2011 as the Program for Training and Awareness for Troops in Gender Perspective, it is without a doubt a valuable source to understand how the army management conceived female personnel in those years. It established the guiding lines for 22 projects toward gender perspective institutionalization. This program drew upon the “Sectorial Program of National Defense 2007–2012” and was designed by a multidisciplinary committee of military personnel specialists in public policy and gender. By November 2010, congress approved necessary funds toward these gender equality actions to be employed in 2011.<sup>16</sup>

### **The Observatory for Equality between Women and Men in the Mexican Army and Air Force: A Watchdog of Human Rights**

The Observatory for Equality between Women and Men in the Mexican Army and Air Force was created on 14 December 2011, months before President Calderón ended his term. It is the only organization within the army specifically tasked with reporting internally and publicly the way in which gender reforms are being enforced as well to suggest changes, which makes it an unprecedented effort to provide gender integration within the Mexican armed forces. Its facilities are placed within meters of the office of the army’s commander in chief. It works as a watchdog organization that follows gender-integration policies by organizing campaigns, questionnaires, and conducting research and its results, which are circulated in different army departments. It has agreements with different universities and governmental institutions such as the National Institute of Women (*Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres*) for training their personnel as well others who want to attend seminars on gender topics.

The creation of the observatory was the result of several actions promoted by Mexico’s Human Rights Commission, a civil organization, as well other federal policies enforced by the Secretariat of National Defense in concordance with President Calderón’s orders. It is important to state that the observatory does not have the legal means to order any reform to the military, as it only issues recommendations for internal use that might be followed by the higher commandant, emulating what the Human Rights Commission does. The organizational chart found on its website places this organization under the Secretariat of National Defense (*Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional*, or SEDENA), who created a directorate-general of human rights exclusively for army members that supervise the observatory’s actions.<sup>17</sup>

Since its creation, this organization has only been managed by female officers. Lieutenant Colonel Nurse Yadira Paredes Rojas is in charge of the observatory, a position she has held since 16 October 2016. She has a 22-year career in the army and has completed several courses and certifications on

human rights and gender, sexual harassment prevention, and public policy.<sup>18</sup>

During the fall of 2015, the author interviewed one of the observatory's directors, Lieutenant Colonel Dental Surgeon Maria Dolores Dominguez Rocha, who joined the army when she was 16 years old and had a 28-year career with the army. In the interview, she acknowledged that "we are in a masculinized space. . . . It is important to secure women's development in all the areas where they can now participate with infrastructure and learning tools so we can recruit more women."<sup>19</sup> Her answer reflected a vast knowledge of the Equity Law (*Ley de Igualdad*) and how engaged she was with the role and programs promoted by the observatory. The Equity Law promulgated in 2006 received its name from the federal government and is key to the army reforms.<sup>20</sup> Dominguez Rocha described the actions of the observatory:

to detect situations with sex discrimination, to verify the impact of the equality actions implemented by the Secretariat inside the institution and the way in which they benefit men and women. We act as consultants in army-personal only campaigns and all the gender programs as well, we make proposals and diagnoses and issue recommendations such as changes in educational programs and regulations, as well in the way that all personnel, from the board of directors to students, is being trained.<sup>21</sup>

This statement shows the limits placed on the observatory to enforce gender equality in the Mexican Army, but at the same time, its actions are aimed at dealing with the problems that the increasing number of female army members have brought to the institution. Issuing recommendations, just as the Human Rights Commission does, can be seen as an important limit to its usefulness; however, until the federal Human Right Commission reaches judicial level, it is impossible to pretend that the actions and recommendations of the observatory are mandatory.

The observatory's mission is stated on its website: "planning, detecting, evaluat[ing] and implementing actions aimed to prevent and eliminate any form of discrimination originated by gender and to ensure equal opportunities for women and men in the Mexican Army and Air Force."<sup>22</sup> The resources employed to achieve its mission include access to monetary funds to accomplish several activities, including numerous conferences, seminars, campaigns, and visits to supervise military schools with female recruits to verify that gender policies are being applied. There are several opportunities for personnel to be constantly trained on gender topics in courses offered by specialized officers and civilian institutions. Its facilities and technological resources have been recently improved with a vast acquisition of bibliographical resources on gender topics exclusively for military personnel use.



The chief of the observatory supervises six branches: 1) Administration and Archive; 2) Information Technology and Communication; 3) Analyzing Statistics and Evaluation 4) Institutional Culture; 5) Public Policies and Organizational Development; and 6) Gender Perspective Training.<sup>23</sup> The observatory's facilities are located at Avenida Industria Militar No. 261, Campo Militar 1-K. Naucalpan, State of Mexico, in a highly secured facility just a few blocks from the Mexican Army headquarters. Access to civilians is allowed only by providing official identification, which is retained while the visit takes place, as well as filling out a registration with your name, telephone, and email. Cell phones must be turned off, no cameras can be used, and sunglasses and hats are forbidden. Civilians are escorted by military personnel at all times.

In an interview with the author, Lieutenant Colonel Dominguez Rocha mentioned specific actions by the observatory on collecting data for statistics, planning, and instituting potential programs: "We just received paternity and maternity data from Personnel Area and right now we are working in the design of a standardized protocol for pregnant women, regarding the absence months for the authorization of their maternity leave."<sup>24</sup> This exemplifies the type of data collected by the observatory and how it is used for specific purposes based on the needs of the army, whose commander in chief, through his different bureaus, requests research to improve army personnel's life and career.

The observatory also creates brochures about different campaigns enforced by the federal government and the Secretariat of National Defense. One downloadable example of these brochures can be found on its website. Entitled "For a culture in gender equality for Mexican women and men (basic concepts)," it is a model of several brochures with different topics that are distributed among personnel. It describes basic concepts for gender equity as well what constitutes sexual harassment, how many types there are, how to identify them, and what to do in case of experiencing it. These brochures are sent by the Department of Social Communication and distributed in schools, army bases, and bureaus—usually for personnel to have free access to them at the head offices.<sup>25</sup>

Another way for the observatory to collect data and to inform on gender equality is to ask chiefs and personnel to constantly fill out questionnaires and booklets that teach them how to identify potential or actual harassment, discrimination, and gender-based violence in their offices that needs to be recognized and prevented. In a conversation with Major General Tomás Jaime Aguirre Cervantes, director of the Army Staff Division of the Secretariat of National Defense (*Dirección General de Personal de la SEDENA*), in November 2015, the author found him filling out several booklets, and he commented about these campaigns where the use of Violentometers (*Violentómetros*) is common.

Violentometers are colorful charts with a gradual blending of one color

hue to another that contain examples of hurtful phrases, behavior, and sexist assumptions that are aimed at helping readers identify and measure violence against women and, if necessary, to take appropriate action.<sup>26</sup> Major General Aguirre Cervantes described how he and his staff had to constantly send out the materials to the Observatory for Equality between Women and Men in the Mexican Army and Air Force for planning specific actions while educating on gender-specific topics.<sup>27</sup>

The observatory does have specific roles and policies that, from the outside, seem positive and well-thought out. However, it is important to consider that all the information that civilians see from the observatory is generated by the organization. If we wish to know something that is not reported by the Secretariat of National Defense, the Mexican government has introduced ways to request and access information from public servants regarding government organizations. This is called Right to Petition (*Derecho de Petición*) described in article 8 of the Mexican Constitution, which states:

Public officers and employees will respect the exercise of the right to petition provided that petition is made in writing and in a peaceful and respectful manner. Regarding political petitioning, only citizens have this right. Every petition must be decided in writing by the authority to whom it was addressed, who has the duty to reply to the petitioner within a brief term.<sup>28</sup>

Under this article, civilians can write a letter to federal authorities and request information from organizations, secretariats, authorities, and individuals in public service, which is often a laborious process that takes several months. It is very common to have your request denied by authorities who often argue that the question or request was unclear, or as in the author's case, they wait until the last deadline to have your request not properly answered.

During the author's visit to headquarters of the Observatory for Equality between Women and Men in the Mexican Army and Air Force, she saw both genders working in its different areas. Since its creation in 2011, all its directors have been female officers, which provides evidence of positive gender integration of the observatory by enabling women to achieve upward mobility and leadership positions.

The services provided by this organization to army members through courses, seminars, workshops, brochures, posters, and articles, in which egalitarianism is stressed, provides evidence of the desire to achieve gender integration. The statistics, design of the programs, recommendations, visits to all army schools to supervise the enforcement of official gender policies, and seminars

fulfill a key role in promoting a healthier environment for both genders of army members.

## **Conclusion:**

### **Is the Observatory Successful at Gender Integration?**

There are different ways to tackle this question. If we only consider official sources and government-authorized sources, the answer is positive judging from the uplifting numbers they provide of women's participation and employment, coupled with such campaigns as the Violentometer aimed to create awareness of gender-related discrimination and violence against women for chiefs, officers, and troops, as well as the several reports on their website of how the Mexican Army is moving toward gender equality.<sup>29</sup> However, contrasting that information with what the sources do not tell by reading the opposition press, such as *Proceso* and others, then some of the challenges of achieving gender equality in the Mexican Army become apparent.<sup>30</sup>

To evaluate the effectiveness of the gender integration, we must first ask how the army conceives gender equality. To begin, it is necessary to consider federal laws in the matter and then the particular campaigns launched by the army to its members. A point that is constantly stressed is the right to access equal job opportunities, with adequate mechanisms to create a secure environment for women to keep their jobs and achieve promotions. This was summarized by one of the several campaigns launched by the observatory with this slogan: "That the difference does not translate into inequality" (*Que la diferencia no se traduzca en desigualdad*). It states in another part, "here we work so that there are equal opportunities, rights and obligations." The materials for this campaign included a compact disc and a booklet distributed among personnel of different areas who, after taking several lessons in a one-month period, became "gender agents" and received a certification by the Observatory for Equality between Women and Men in the Mexican Army and Air Force.<sup>31</sup>

Presently, there is no indication in official sources of any commitment to equality of gender, such as the stereotyping of masculinity and femininity, in addition to equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals for army members. Although the army subscribes to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and provides education on gender-related issues with the document Gender Equity Card (*Cartilla de Equidad de Género*), this is aimed at acknowledging heterosexual gender differences and preventing gender-based discrimination exclusively for men and women.

It can be inferred then that for the Mexican Army intersexuals and individuals who identify as LGBT do not exist in official documents. The Gender Equity Card only refers to women and men, in that order, saying that to incor-

porate gender equity would include offering military personnel of both genders the opportunities of “work and professional development in an environment free from discrimination and with equality.”<sup>32</sup>

Personnel who attend seminars provided by the Observatory for Equality between Women and Men in the Mexican Army and Air Force study their brochures and participate in their campaigns, including their participation within personnel files and *résumés*. Also, judging by the commander in chief’s yearly reports, which has included a section on Gender Equity since 2006, the awareness of the issue of gender equality is growing within the armed forces.

For example, we can refer to a very small pocket book with the title “Military Booklet” (*Cartillas Militares*) that compiles 20 important documents that are mandatory for military personnel to be familiar with. This booklet must be carried at all times by military personnel, as it is mandatory to show it at the daily review of soldiers by their officers before starting their duties. This booklet cannot be found on the website as a compilation, but all the 20 documents and regulations can be found in Spanish on SEDENA’s website.<sup>33</sup> Notice that gender equality norms are second in this important booklet and that all personnel are constantly informed by their chiefs or by other officers about respect for gender equality. Of course, this does not mean that they fully understand it or respect it, but at least there is an awareness of it and, when compared to the years before 2006, a step in the right direction for respect and equality for people regardless of their gender.

The Mexican Army is not an exception within the armies of the world that are predominantly male organizations. As Lieutenant Colonel Dominguez Rocha stated, the army is a masculinized space, but that does not mean that female soldiers are forced to modify their social practices to fit in. As discussed, there is an inherent femininity in posters, ads, brochures, and media campaigns that seems to be encouraged and supported by military authorities. Being a minority in an institution brings both advantages and disadvantages.<sup>34</sup>

The prevalence of men in the military are shown in the following statistics. Table 1 shows the noticeable increase in female army members in a four-year period, which almost doubled, but the percentage is still less than 6 percent of the military’s population.<sup>35</sup> The increase in the employment of women found in the official data, the only one available for civilians, is remarkable when considering the way in which female personnel has increased substantially in 10 years (tables 2 and 3).<sup>36</sup>

The call for peace by national and international groups seeking to stabilize Mexican society by reducing violence seems to contradict the army’s trend to boost its members, which includes the process of increasing the number of female personnel. Women called into the army to combat and noncombat po-

**Table 1.** The total population of women in the Mexican Army and Air Force

Period	September 2007	September 2008	September 2009	September 2010
Number of women admitted in the army	6,825	7,958	9,090	10,223
Representation within the institution	3.83%	4.46%	5.10%	5.73%

Source: "Program for the equality amongst women and men of the Secretariat of National Defense, 2008-2012."

**Table 2.** Female personnel, ca. 2012

Generals	Chiefs	Officers	Cadets	Troops	Total
2	651	2,578	532	6,421	10,184

Source: "Program for the equality amongst women and men of the Secretariat of National Defense, 2008-2012."

**Table 3.** Comparison of numbers of women and men by rank, January 2018

Rank	Women	Men	Total
Lieutenant general	0	45	45
Major general	0	175	175
Brigadier general	5	316	321
Colonel	21	852	873
Lieutenant colonel	132	1,503	1,635
Major	560	3,052	3,612
First captain	307	3,792	4,099
Second captain	260	3,564	3,824
First lieutenant	1,321	13,705	15,026
Second lieutenant	698	8,669	9,367
Staff sergeant	937	16,148	17,085
Sergeant	1,501	36,405	37,906
Corporal	2,630	46,779	49,409
Private	10,417	60,363	70,780
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,789</b>	<b>195,368</b>	<b>214,157</b>

Source: "Actions and programs. Frequently asked questions of the Observatory for Equality between Women and Men in the Mexican Army and Air Force."

sitions will enforce the controversial and profoundly contradictory "army-peace process." This means that the military's presence has become more active and permanent with the enforcement of a constant dissuasion campaign by the armed forces whose presence is visible throughout the country. The goal of the constant presence of the military is to disrupt the drug-related violence.

The official line of "serving your country" (*sirviendo a tu patria*) acquires a different perspective in the light of the current war on drugs when the enemy is inside the beloved *patria* (homeland). New laws are being approved quickly by the Congress of the Union to seek peace at any cost. Military police are growing in numbers, marines are patrolling cities, and women are called to join the military police and other risky positions. Still, a vast majority of army members of

both genders fulfill other duties and use their time and efforts to maintain the large and complex organization that is the Mexican Army.

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## Notes

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# Gender Integration and Citizenship

## A Civil-Military Perspective

Bradford A. Wineman, PhD

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**Abstract:** In the debates over the inclusion of women in combat specialties, the arguments raised by those opposed to female inclusion almost always default to women's physical capabilities. As those issues are quickly becoming reconciled, this article proposes a shift in the discussion to the topics of the meaning of military service, its connection to the national concept of citizenship, and the impact of these concepts on the issue of women integrating into combat roles.

**Keywords:** women, combat, civil-military relations, citizenship, women in combat specialties, meaning of military service, military service and citizenship, integration of women into combat roles

**I**n November 2015, when Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter opened all military occupational specialties (MOSs), including combat roles, to women, he defied a military norm that some thought was cultural more than tactically relevant. The United States Marine Corps, however, two months prior had released reports indicating that combined units (men and women) were potentially less combat effective than all-male units.<sup>1</sup> While the Marines have resisted gender integration, the leaders of other Services have moved forward with adapting their respective forces with new policies to incorporate women into combat specialties. Yet Carter's unilateral, universal, top-down shift in policy has not resulted in a concomitant change in combat units. Resistance

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is palpable among some while others accepted the obvious next step in the all-volunteer force of the twenty-first century military.

A summary of the arguments protesting the integration of women into combat roles nearly all center around two main premises: physiology and readiness. This article intends to move the discussion of this topic away from these two problematic criticisms to a conversational space of greater social and philosophical significance. Rather than fixating on the question of how much a woman can carry, the inquiry should instead focus on who serves and why they serve as well as who matters, both within the military and American society. Solutions to reconcile the difference in physical capabilities between men and women in the armed forces will eventually be found. It is imperative that we as a society engage the challenging philosophical and sociocultural questions that will impact the debate and change in national civil-military relations. In this piece, the operative concept in this intellectual debate is not the study of physical strength but instead focuses on the concept of citizenship.

Although nearly all of the literature that opposes women in combat specialties relies on physical strength-based arguments, it is not going to be the primary focus of this particular essay. The universal fear of nearly all those in the combat arms community is that physical standards will be lowered to accommodate female success. This modification of requirements, they assert, will reduce the overall quality of the graduates and have a cascading effect of declining fighting effectiveness of the total force.<sup>2</sup>

The dilemma with this position is two-fold. Female servicemembers interested in entry into combat arms do not want a reduction in standards to facilitate their success.<sup>3</sup> They, like their male counterparts, are drawn to this career path because of the challenge and prestige of the combat arms branches. The easing of any standards would undermine their rationale of pursuing equal opportunity, especially for women who hope to advance to high-level leadership positions.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the overall intent of this initiative is the search for equality. Female servicemembers demand the equality of experience and standards, not accommodation or preferential treatment. The skewing of requirements specifically for their success would unlevel the playing field that they all pursue in the military profession. Finally, a slowly growing number of women have passed the requirements of the Army Infantry courses, Ranger School, and the Marine Corps Infantry Officer Course, so the concern over needing to reduce the physical standards should be receding.<sup>5</sup>

Second, a historical examination of physical requirements for combat training reveals a surprising amount of inconsistency over the years. Although there are many challenges to these assertions, perhaps the best refutation comes from political scientist Robert Egnell, who contends that the two main arguments that traditionalists consistently use in their defense—standards and combat ef-

fectiveness—have proven to be historically “fungible” concepts.<sup>6</sup> The physical fitness criteria that used to vet incoming combat arms candidates has varied a tremendous degree over the years, often driven by the personnel requirements at the time.<sup>7</sup> Additionally, the idea of combat effectiveness has proven similarly as problematic, as those in the military profession can neither find consensus as to what measures demonstrate a military’s effectiveness nor a clear causal variable that undeniably indicates what makes a unit become ineffective. The elasticity of these concepts cast considerable doubt on their sacrosanctity and on the immutability of physical requirements for men or women. Currently, there is no doctrinal publication, study, or policy that provides a clear and accepted definition of *combat effectiveness* in either the Marine Corps or Department of Defense (DOD). Yet, those who vocally oppose the inclusion of women in combat arms (or who opposed social inclusion of other minority groups in the military) have relied on this concept as their primary argument with remarkable success.

Nearly all of the debate regarding women serving in combat specialties fixates specifically on female physiology. This is understandably so as the preponderance of studies conducted by the DOD on gender integration place heavy emphasis on the physical capabilities of women servicemembers. Far too much of the research, debate, and focus has been directed to the singular myopic inquiry of whether or not a female can carry a heavy pack. Instead, the argumentative energies would be better directed to investigating far more important philosophical issues and implications introduced by this controversy. This article proposes a redirection of the conversation from the physical carrying capacity of an infantryman to the relationship between the military and its government and people, and more broadly, the meaning of military service writ large.

In fairness, opponents to female integration into combat units do not dismiss the broader civil-military relationship issue out of hand. The most frequently articulated protest by military traditionalists when reacting to issues such as this is that the armed forces should not be a petri dish for social experimentation; this coincides with the argument that the pursuit of a “liberal political agenda” too often takes precedence over national security and readiness. For defenders of military exclusion, this broadly means any citizen who had traditionally been barred from service (homosexuals, transgender individuals, and women in combat). They consider their inclusion into military service as only serving a political purpose for liberal politicians and not driven by military necessity. Opponents frequently reference variations of the terms liberal political agenda or social experimentation as the true inspiration for inclusion.<sup>8</sup>

The position of not letting the military become part of the aforementioned social experimentation gets less attention than the physical arguments but warns that such a misplacement of priorities puts the nation’s safety at risk.<sup>9</sup> The

military, they believe, should be left alone to determine the means (manning, equipping, and training) to fight and win the nation's wars. Their complaint inspires a broader question: Should a military that is an all-volunteer force be made to demographically reflect the society it serves? Traditionalists frame this question in a frightening dichotomy. In deciding whether to allow women to serve in combat specialties, the American people are choosing between social diversity or the nation's safety. One has to question, however, whether this choice results in these mutually exclusive outcomes, or whether the military can pursue equality and still maintain its superiority in military effectiveness. Those who champion this argument always frame diversity as inherently reducing the military's effectiveness and never consider that it could actually enhance it by offering a variety of opinions and backgrounds representative of our diverse American society—which many others would consider our strength.<sup>10</sup>

Supporters of this stance find intellectual reinforcement in what is arguably the foundational source of military professionalism, Samuel Huntington's *The Soldier and the State*. In his thesis, which calls for objective control of the nation's military, Huntington warns his readers that the "gravest domestic threat to national security" is the American liberal tradition.<sup>11</sup> Liberalism, according to Huntington, represents a singular focus on the individual at the cost of the collective, a championing of social justice versus social order as well as embracing pacifism. Therefore, he argues that liberalism is then the greatest enemy of military profession. Huntington calls for the distinct separation of the military profession from the spheres of politics and broader society. The military professional should only embrace obedience and recognize the values of liberalism as antithetical to his own professional ethos.

To be sure, women with the right to serve in the armed forces is not at issue today, as they have served in uniform in some capacity for more than a century. Moreover, their role has expanded to nearly every MOS, including piloting helicopter aircraft and commanding warships. Women currently comprise more than 20 percent of the U.S. Air Force's total personnel.<sup>12</sup> During the last several decades, women have served bravely in uniform, deployed to combat zones, and held high levels of command in all the Services. But the question still remains—do women in the U.S. military enjoy the same social and professional equality as their male counterparts? And is denying their ability to serve in combat billets evidence of that inequality?

The soldier has played a crucial role in the sociopolitical construct of the republic and has been a foundational concept in the Western political tradition since ancient times. The earliest Western civilizations, the Greeks and Romans, embraced the concept of republicanism in their population, demanding that all citizens have to sacrifice for the common good of the republic. This sacrifice would come most commonly in the form of taxation, serving on juries, or most

importantly, the nation-state's defense. Both of these civilizations can attribute much of their nationalistic rise partially to their adoption of the citizen-soldier ideal, as they demanded that all free, able-bodied men provide military service as a condition of their citizenship.<sup>13</sup> This construct was revitalized with the rise of the modern nation-state and was championed by such theorists as Machiavelli and Jean Jacques Rousseau. This requirement of military service as an application of citizenship was brought to the New World in the form of the first militia systems in America, as the first permanent English settlements in the seventeenth century required all free men of military age (usually 18–35) to serve in defense of their colony. This connection of military service as a duty to the state and the representation of attachment and obligation to the state directly connected it to the ideals of citizenship.<sup>14</sup>

However, the conversation about what military service means in the American tradition has become less frequently engaged as the nation nears half a century of the All-Volunteer Force (AVF) instituted in 1973.<sup>15</sup> For most citizens, the AVF is all they have ever known and remains the understood reality of who serves in the military and why. As a result, a decreasing number of Americans have worn the uniform and have accepted that doing so has been and will continue to be done by a microscopic percentage of the population. As a result of these decreasing numbers, many observers are noting now that U.S. service-members enjoy privileged status among the citizenry as the military continues to reign as the institution most trusted by the population (nearly triple the popularity of the elected government) and that individual troops are bestowed with praise, congratulations, and gratitude.<sup>16</sup> In essence, soldiers in America enjoy elevated social and cultural status as military service is seen as unique, and because it is only pursued by a handful of citizens, it receives recognition beyond the expectations of normal citizenship.<sup>17</sup>

Since the Civil War, military service in the United States has most frequently been applied to national conscription. Traditionally, conscription is viewed as the practical necessity used by the federal government to meet the overwhelming manpower needs of the military in times of large-scale wars. But the modern Selective Service System (and its capability to facilitate a military draft) means much more than the simple requirement to man a mass army. Military sociologists and political scientists identify two primary positive impacts from conscription.<sup>18</sup> The first is that a draft demands broader sacrifice by a larger group of citizens, thereby increasing the shared burden in the defense of the republic. This creates a greater sense of patriotism and connection to the state. Second, conscription draws from a wider pool of talent, as it demands service from all able-bodied citizens, regardless of economic background or social status. Today, similar sentiments can be applied to broadening the field of applicants and opportunity for ground combat arms. Recent statistics indicate that

the pool for qualified recruits is shrinking as recruiters struggle to meet quotas for an operating force that has greater demands put upon it by national security commitments.<sup>19</sup> Philosophically, this could be a questionable time to embrace an exclusionary policy toward manpower requirements. Expanding the pool of the eligible, the draft demonstrates, expands the amount of talent available.

The connectivity between citizenship and military service has gradually eroded with the advent of the AVF as military service is now a choice—one that is made by an increasingly smaller part of the population. Nearly all those who do so argue that they serve out of sense of patriotism, duty, and obligation to protect the republic. Defending the republic allows for the actualization of citizenship and subsequently access to the opportunity that it provides to those who do answer the call to serve. It is the most conspicuous method for any person in society to demonstrate their worth through their selfless sacrifice for the good of the nation. The nation, therefore, demonstrates gratitude and offers privilege to citizens who serve. The greatest value and respect of citizens who serve, however, is reserved for those who serve in combat. African Americans recognized this connection between combat and citizenship in every conflict since the Civil War, as they demanded the opportunity to serve on the front lines to prove their worth as citizens and their commitment to the nation by placing their lives on the line in the fiercest combat.<sup>20</sup>

This intersection of the government, military, and citizenry also needs greater attention in the debate of women in combat roles as opponents frequently rely on the social petri dish argument. Advocates for maintaining the combat arms as an all-male force lament that efforts at gender integration are motivated only by liberal politics and that efforts to use the armed forces for sociocultural experimentation is an abuse of the nation's military.<sup>21</sup> They assert that such changes (e.g., race, gender, or sexual orientation/identity) is unnecessary, intrusive, counterproductive, and potentially dangerous. Politicians and social reformers who seek to use America's military for social justice causes have no business doing so and both elected officials and the citizenry have no business or right to meddle in manpower policies and should leave the armed forces alone.

History, however, does not support them in this effort as the broader dynamics of civil-military relations throughout the nation's history need to be properly contextualized. The American armed forces are funded by a popularly elected government and are staffed by volunteers from the citizenry. The federal government gives the military its mission, designs the system of service (in this case, all-volunteer), its organizational structure through federal law, and a social service network during their service to facilitate their lifestyles (medical, housing, education, family support, etc.). All of the DOD is supported by federal taxpayer dollars as Congress appropriates spending for the military annually as one of the largest portions of the national budget, and the public continues to



support the armed forces socially and culturally as the most popular institution in the United States.<sup>22</sup> However, surveys also show wide support from the American public of women having combat-related billets, although the military is usually slow to adopt new societal norms.

Historically, the American military has been consistently resistant to both political and social policy initiatives that it views to be a violation of its own expert assessment of the ideal conditions to fight and win the nation's wars. However, historian (and retired military officer) William A. Taylor, in his study on American military service, is keen to point out that the government has labored to ensure that the armed forces remain consistent with broader American values when it comes to the issue of who serves. Moreover, he notes that nearly every episode in which the military has thought that it knew what was best for the defense of the republic in these situations has proven the government—and not the military—right in the end.<sup>23</sup>

The military frequently does itself a disservice in this debate through its inconsistent assessment of the civil-military gap. The military professionals in the age of the AVF have often identified themselves as isolated, misunderstood, and underappreciated by the government and people they serve. They demand a better connection with society and a greater closeness in understanding.<sup>24</sup> But when asked to share and incorporate values and ideals from civilian politicians and society to better connect them, the military professionals recoil at such notions as senseless manipulation and exploitation.<sup>25</sup> The closing of the civil-military gap consists not just of the public's increased awareness of how the military functions but, more importantly, the need to conjoin values, participation, and share common ideals. The military outwardly desires more engagement and connection to the broader population, but when it comes to certain recruiting policies that could connect them to that population, it wants to be left alone. The American military will always be a national institution, and in situations where that responsibility causes discomfort within the institution and inspires resistance in society, it will cause the civil-military gap to widen.

An examination of the more than 200-year history of the American civil-military tradition portrays a larger give-and-take and back-and-forth relationship between the civilian government and the armed forces.<sup>26</sup> When assessing the requirements necessary for maintaining the nation's security, Congress and the executive branch have had to weigh countless factors (economic, social, and political). They have rarely given the military a proverbial blank check for all that it demands to accomplish in its mission. Indeed, the military experience is one of never truly being satisfied with what the government has allocated for them and will always view themselves as having to pursue overwhelmingly demanding tasks with deliberately restricted resources in personnel, materiel, technology, and overall funding. Every attempt by civilian lawmakers to give

the military less than what it requests is often met with incredulous threats that doing so could come at the risk of national security or inability to win the nation's wars.<sup>27</sup> Yet, even with two centuries of Congress willfully not fulfilling their wishes, the military continues to succeed on the world's battlefields and maintain its dominance, financially and technologically, among its competitors.<sup>28</sup>

Much as in other historical examples, traditionalists who resist social changes within the military nearly always fixate their protests on the negative outcomes of said changes. However, they rarely identify the consequences for maintaining the status quo. In this case, if the military becomes more exclusionary, it may invite the risk of reducing the pool of talented applicants for various duties. The DOD is already weighing the potential effects on recruiting/retention and public relations for its perceived embracing of misogyny, bias, and prejudice. The Marine Corps, for example, in reaction to the Marines United scandal, has created the Personnel Studies and Oversight (PSO) Office to "ensure that the institution is properly recognizing, investing in, and leveraging the diversity of our Marines." The Assistant Commandant, General Glenn M. Walters, who pioneered this organization, asserts that attitudes such as bias and contempt actually damage the Corps' mission readiness. He vocally argues that a force that embraces inclusivity, equality, and tolerance create a better fighting force, not the opposite.<sup>29</sup> By standing up and championing PSO's mission, it will lead to reduced resistance from fellow general officers to the inclusion of women in ground combat specialties.

By extension, the concept of egalitarianism and the question of who can serve extends to equality within the force itself, particularly in the AVF professional force. Those in combat arms demand egalitarianism in the maintenance of common standards of entrance and performance—and rightfully so. Perception of inequality has a negative impact on morale within units and the profession itself, as they believe that all share an equal burden in meeting the same standards—and burden sharing creates unit cohesion.

Those in the combat arms communities benefit from the absence of egalitarianism between the MOS communities themselves, specifically with career progression and institutional leadership opportunities. For the highest flag officer billets, preference is given to those in ground combat specialties for the two ground Services (the Marine Corps and the Army). Nearly all the Joint Chiefs during the last half of a century from both of those Services have come from the infantry community as with countless other high-level flag officer billets.<sup>30</sup> Without access to opportunities to combat arms billets, female servicemembers are by default denied the access to the highest levels of command and responsibility. So the question of who gets to serve in the military broadly then trans-

lates to who matters and is given preference within the institution itself. This question of who matters broadens the discussion to the value of servicewomen overall to the nation's security and, again, to the connection of military service to their broader value as citizens.<sup>31</sup>

The issue also demands a more nuanced assessment of the military's role in the twenty-first century. The arguments from those who oppose women in combat, particularly those who fixate on physiological evidence, base their assessment exclusively through the lens of combat and conventional war.<sup>32</sup> However, the realities of the post-9/11 world have forced the military to evolve and has broadened its role in our national security strategy. Fighting and winning the nation's wars no longer adequately encapsulates the military profession's universal role as it now more accurately serves as a key instrument in the projection of American interests, ideas, and values. The best means to accomplish this mission is to fashion a military that looks like America.<sup>33</sup> As the forward-deployed military consistently represents the face of America, should it not look like America to those to whom the nation looks to influence, embrace, and inspire? For example, the traditional model of assessing a military's power through individual strength or toughness may be becoming more anachronistic and possibly counterproductive. To be sure, traditional hard power should seek to demonstrate strength to potential enemies and serve as a weighty deterrent to all adversaries.

However, as the military increasingly functions as the ambassadors of Western liberal values in their effort to win "hearts and minds," it contributes to this mission more effectively by being a visual representation of equality and opportunity for all as demonstrated by those wearing the uniform. This is a concept that is explicitly mentioned in America's 2018 National Defense Strategy published by the DOD.<sup>34</sup> This grand strategy demands a military of talent, intelligence, and judgment rather than pure physical endurance.<sup>35</sup> Air Force fighter pilots and Marine Corps infantry continue to embrace the theories of Colonel John Boyd, who contended that military success comes not to the strongest or best-equipped force but to the one that can think faster than its enemy.<sup>36</sup> If the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan are any indication of the requirements of conflicts to come, these wars will be determined by the sharpest minds, not the strongest backs.

If recent history indicates that this type of war has indeed become the reality for America's fighting forces, then it may call into question some of Samuel Huntington's premises regarding the perceived dangers of liberalism. Experts can agree that much of his civil-military theory viewed the role of the military profession through the lens of the existential threat of the Soviet Union during the Cold War in which the future conflict would most certainly be a total war

with only one nation surviving the outcome. This paradigm may not accurately reflect the conflicts of the twenty-first century, which may call for a different philosophical framework to understand the role of the military professional. Perhaps a more useful model is the one proposed by sociologist Morris Janowitz, whose seminal work, *The Professional Soldier*, offers two concepts that better fit this dynamic. First, Janowitz challenges the idea that the military professional eschews the ideals and values of civilian society and instead argues that they should be leveraged to create a more dynamic officer corps. Second, he notes that most combat American service personnel are likely to encounter is that of “limited war”—small, political wars that require a much more nuanced, thoughtful, and varied collection of soldiers. He notes that America’s military is more likely to engage in a “constabulary” role versus a large, conventional war and will act more as “police” in irregular environments, instead of functioning in conventional combat.<sup>37</sup> History demonstrates that conflicts of these kinds are best resolved by demographically diverse military forces who bring thoughts and experiences from differing perspectives to situations that present a variety of challenges.

The greatest challenge to this issue is that the only way to truly assess if gender integration in ground combat arms impacts combat effectiveness is through war itself.<sup>38</sup> In the absence of kinetic conflict, military thinkers, planners, and commanders are left to ponder and prognosticate what will make their force the most successful in the next fight. They must tirelessly deliberate over which doctrine, demographic, organizational structure, and technology will give U.S. forces the best advantage against their potential adversaries.

In the absence of real fighting (and killing), the military elite must rely on training, exercises, and history to provide any insight into what methods will be the crucial keys to victory, though history can be a poor predictor of what will work best in future conflicts. For the issue of gender integration, perhaps the latter can shed the most light as to its impact on the military’s future. The past cases of the armed forces having to engage in social equality issues, or the perennial debate of rights versus readiness may be a false dichotomy. For each instance where issues such as this have reached national attention, the social reforms forced upon the military by American society have never identifiably caused a regression in their fighting capability. Those who have claimed the inevitable decline in combat effectiveness as a result of such reforms have yet to provide valid data to prove their predications; therefore, the false correlation between inclusion in the military and its relation to so-called combat readiness should not determine the outcome of this decision. It would seem that the U.S. military could actually have both and still remain a prestigious military power on the world stage, while also reflecting our democratic, egalitarian values that

are the hallmark of American democracy and demonstrate our values of opportunity for all for the rest of the world to hopefully emulate.

## Notes

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  35. *The National Military Strategy of the United States of America: The United States Military's Contribution to National Security, 2015* (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2015), 14. The latest *National Military Strategy* reinforces this concept: “We are adapting our organizational culture. To enhance our warfighting capability, we must attract, develop, and retain the right people at every echelon. Central to this effort is understanding how society is changing. Today’s youth grow up in a thoroughly connected environment. They are comfortable using technology and interactive social structures to solve problems. These young men and women are tomorrow’s leaders and we need their service. Therefore, the U.S. military must be willing to embrace social and cultural change to better identify, cultivate, and reward such talent.”
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## Opening Marine Infantry to Women A Civil-Military Crisis?

Rebecca Jensen

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**Abstract:** In 2016, the secretary of defense directed all U.S. military Services to work toward the inclusion of women in all roles, including combat occupations. The United States Marine Corps has shown more resistance to this directive than other Services, particularly with respect to infantry. This article discusses the history and extent of the civil-military gap between the Marine Corps and American society and analyzes different dimensions of this gap. Using a framework that describes different drivers of military resistance to change, it argues that the nature of the civil-military gap in the Marine Corps makes mandated gender integration a multifaceted threat to the Corps' identity and institutional culture—and a greater threat than in other Services. The inclusion of women in infantry training is thus a crucial issue for the health of the civil-military relationship, as it pits effective civilian oversight against Service culture.

**Keywords:** civil-military relations, civil-military gap, gender integration, United States Marine Corps, USMC, women in the infantry, civilian control, Service culture, institutional culture

**T**he case of integrating women into Marine Corps infantry is a useful example of civil-military tension in the twenty-first century. Although typically framed as a matter of civil rights by its proponents and of military effectiveness by its critics, it is in fact a flash point in a much deeper disconnect between the civil and military worlds. The degree to which each party invests in forcing its own desired outcome therefore represents something much more

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substantial about the health of the civil-military relationship today. Similarly, any approach, solution, or mechanism that enables the resolution of this issue has the potential to shed light on, or even ameliorate, this strained relationship.

It is not a new insight that warrior culture has been indivisible from masculinity for much of recorded history. The *virtues*, which included physical courage and valor, the sine qua non of being a warrior, come from the Latin word *vir*, meaning “man.” In a very real sense, not just in the linguistic sense, to be a good warrior was to be a good man, and vice versa, until quite recently.<sup>1</sup> Since the early years of the Cold War, the U.S. military has created various permanent roles for women in response to perceived recruiting necessities, and especially due to directives from civilian authorities. The patterns of both gender integration and resistance to it that have emerged among the different Services indicate that Service culture, an understudied variable in the civil-military relationship, acts as an intervening factor between civilian authorities and the military Services.

This article examines gender integration as a point of conflict in the civil-military relationship, using the United States Marine Corps as a case study. Whether gender integration is harmful or beneficial to military effectiveness, the Corps, like the other Services, is bound by the directive of the secretary of defense to implement this change; yet, the Corps has shown more resistance than its sister Services. By using existing frameworks for analyzing civil-military gaps, this article shows how the mandate from Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter to integrate women fully into the Corps presents challenges in all the major arenas usually discussed in the literature of civil-military relations. It considers existing work on the circumstances in which military forces are most likely to resist civilian pressure to change and evaluates this case in light of those insights. Finally, the article examines a broader way of conceptualizing civil-military dissonance and concludes by discussing the importance of gender integration not as a goal in itself, about which this article takes no position, but as an example of the magnitude and relevance of the tension between the Marine Corps (and the military more broadly) and civilian leadership.

Although masculinity remains part of the individual identity of the warrior today, and of the identity of military organizations, each institution and each age manifests this phenomenon differently. The Marine Corps in the years since the Second World War is no exception; it construes masculinity, femininity, and the definition of a “good Marine” in ways that differ, sometimes slightly but sometimes profoundly, from the definitions found in other Service cultures, and by an even greater degree from those definitions in civilian culture. Each of the Services evolved a new understanding of recruiting and force generation during the transition to the All-Volunteer Force (AVF), and the Corps chose to emphasize masculinity and martial elitism in its self-representation to the na-

tion.<sup>2</sup> Understanding gender as it is seen through the lens of the culture of the Marine Corps is therefore necessary to see exactly how and why it has resisted civilian mandates to integrate women fully.

On 3 December 2015, Defense Secretary Carter announced that all military occupations and professions would be opened to women beginning 1 January 2016. The stated reasoning behind this decision was twofold: to create a thoroughly meritocratic institution in which ability to do the job is the only criterion for acceptance and to draw more fully upon all the human capital available to the U.S. military.<sup>3</sup> While the Services were permitted to request exemptions for specific roles, along with a justification for why women should continue to be barred from them, the U.S. Army had already opened its elite and physically demanding Ranger School to women and graduated three, and the U.S. Navy had begun accepting applications from women for its SEAL selection process, though none had yet qualified to start the course. The Marine Corps alone, under the direction of then-Commandant of the Marine Corps General Joseph F. Dunford Jr., requested an exemption for some military occupational specialties (MOSs), particularly those related to infantry and reconnaissance. This exemption was denied, meaning that for the first time all positions within the U.S. military are nominally open to women, all Services are required to make sincere efforts to integrate women into these roles in as timely a fashion as possible, and General Dunford, now the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, must oversee the implementation of a policy he had previously, as Commandant, opposed.<sup>4</sup>

The implementation of a policy mandated by civilians over the objections or reservations of the military is the crux of civil-military relations. One tool for diagnosing the health of the civil-military relationship is the question of whose preferences prevail when the Services and civilian oversight differ.<sup>5</sup> By this metric, gender integration and the bureaucratic and political struggles around it represent a weakness in the current civil-military relationship in the United States—efforts to lift various exclusions imposed upon women's service began in the early 1990s, but they are not yet fully realized.<sup>6</sup>

## **Women in the U.S. Military**

Women have participated in combat, and worked in combat theaters, among the U.S. military since, and in fact before, the nation's inception, serving alongside men during the American Revolution and after. Largely restricted to administrative and nursing roles until the Second World War, they were given the opportunity to fill a wide range of noncombat roles in that conflict, including responsibility over others and for aircraft and ships, primarily to act as a force multiplier during times when manpower was in short supply.<sup>7</sup> Because traditional American views considered women to be a reserve labor force in times of emergencies, these roles were closed to women after World War II. These

actions within the military paralleled the civilian workforce; due to fears about the return of the Great Depression, women left their jobs, voluntarily or with pressure, to make available private sector jobs for the men who had gone to fight.<sup>8</sup> Strict limits were imposed by the Department of Defense on how many women could join the ranks or hold a commission after the war. It was not until a generation after the Second World War that military service, particularly as a career, became a viable option for women. The postwar 2 percent cap on women in the military was lifted in 1967, and Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) programs admitted women in 1972. Consequently, the Service academies opened to women in 1976.<sup>9</sup>

Although a permanent role for women in the regular and reserve forces was codified in law for all the Services in 1948, participation remained low. The creation of the AVF in 1973 created new opportunities for women to serve and also prompted the Services to actively recruit them to counter dwindling interest in military service society-wide. Beyond lifting caps and opening up Service academies, however, much of the change related to integrating women more widely into the military was at the discretion of the Services, each of which approached the challenge differently, and with differing outcomes.

There are a number of different benchmarks by which to evaluate the degree that women have been integrated in each Service. Two benchmarks of particular relevance are the extent to which women are admitted into job fields that lead to the highest ranks and assignments and the proportion of the Service that is made up of women. The former indicates the degree to which women are likely to reach positions from which they can lead at the institutional level, while the latter reflects how much the full participation of women in the Service has been normalized. If the Services fall on a spectrum on both these indicators, then the Marine Corps is at the far end of the spectrum, both with respect to the number of fields open to women and representation at all levels.

In the U.S. military as a whole, as of October 2017, women make up 16.25 percent of the force, 17.7 percent of officers, and 15.9 percent of enlisted ranks.<sup>10</sup> While the Marine Corps has the lowest proportion of women, the Air Force and Navy have the greatest proportional participation of women. In the U.S. Air Force, women represent 19.5 percent of enlisted, 21 percent of officers, and 7.2 percent of general officers. Pilots and air crew are perceived by some within the Air Force as the most prestigious occupations and are statistically overrepresented at the general officer level; the Air Force opened pilot training to women in 1976, navigator training in 1977, and fighter pilot training in 1993, with the first female fighter pilot going on to become the first female fighter wing commander in 2012.<sup>11</sup> As of 2015, 99 percent of Air Force positions were open to women, with 6 job fields (out of more than 4,000 total) restricted to men. The Air Force has indicated it will not seek an exemption

and has begun the process of opening up these remaining fields to women.<sup>12</sup>

Women in the U.S. Navy currently represent 19.4 percent of enlisted, 18.5 percent of officers, and 9.1 percent of flag officers. The most desirable assignments, and those considered most likely to lead to promotion, are in the surface warfare, submarine, and aviation communities. In 1979, a woman earned carrier aviation qualifications, and another woman earned surface warfare qualifications. It was not until 2011 that women began service aboard submarines as officers. The first woman took command of a Navy ship in 1990, the same year that a woman was the commanding officer of a naval aviation squadron.<sup>13</sup> Currently, all Navy ratings and communities are in theory open to women, although enlisted women are only now beginning to serve on submarines. While the first women attempted SEAL training in late 2016, none have yet completed the course.<sup>14</sup>

The U.S. Army is the largest of the Services, and it has the largest number of women in absolute, though not proportional, terms. Women currently make up 14.3 percent of Army enlisted, 14.1 percent of officers, and 5.6 percent of general officers. Prestige occupations within the Army tend to be marked by highly competitive selection processes, with an emphasis on extreme physical endurance; this includes ground combat arms and special operations forces (SOF). Although all artillery and combat engineer MOSs were opened to women in 2012, 2016 is the first year that infantry and SOF were accepting applications from women, with 22 women commissioning as infantry and armor officers in the summer of 2016.<sup>15</sup>

Women are underrepresented in the Marine Corps by comparison, both as a total fraction of servicemembers and the proportion of female officers compared to the proportion of female enlisted personnel. This is consistent throughout the history of the Corps in the post–Second World War period.<sup>16</sup> Today, women make up 8.5 percent of enlisted Marines, 7.5 percent of officers, and slightly more than 1 percent (1 out of 85) of general officers. Though combined operations using all elements of the Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) have been the backbone of Marine Corps operations throughout the twenty-first century, the heart of the Corps is the infantry, and so far only one woman has passed the Infantry Officer Course (IOC) and joined the fleet with that officer MOS, opening up the possibility for women to enlist in that branch. A small number of enlisted women have completed the program of instruction at the School of Infantry (the training that follows boot camp for those enlisted Marines seeking to join the infantry) as part of an experiment. These Marines passed when measured against the same standards in place for male students, but their participation in training was never intended to be the first step to serving in the infantry.<sup>17</sup> The IOC is considered the most grueling program in the Corps. While it was opened to women in 2012, so far, of the 33

women who have attempted it, 1 has completed the course, another was able to continue beyond the second week of the 12-weeklong program of instruction before subsequently being dropped, and more than half were eliminated from the course on the first day.<sup>18</sup>

The fact that only one woman completed IOC after many cohorts attempted it is particularly striking given the recent graduation of 3 women (out of 19 who attempted the course, in the first cohort to include women) from the Army's Ranger school, another famously grueling test of physical and mental strength and endurance. One significant factor is the practice in Ranger school of allowing candidates (male and female) who cannot succeed in a given phase to make multiple attempts, with the three women who have completed the course to date receiving several "recycles," although not an unprecedented number for previous graduates, who were all male.<sup>19</sup> This ability to reattempt all, or part, of the course is not typically offered to candidates at the Marine Corps' IOC.<sup>20</sup>

The Marine Corps, then, lags behind the other Services dramatically with regard to women at every level, both in absolute terms and proportionally within the organization. It has the most career paths closed to women, particularly those likely to lead to senior positions later in a Marine's career.<sup>21</sup> While the relative importance of musculature and physical strength are attenuated through technology in many occupations in the Air Force and Navy, the physical requirements of ground combat are largely the same across Services, so the differential in women's participation between the two ground forces is particularly significant. What factors explain why, given more than four decades of civilian-directed pressure to increase the role of women in the AVF, the Marine Corps has responded differently from the other Services?

## **The Marine Corps and the Postwar Civil-Military Relationship**

The seminal texts in civil-military relations agree that there is a fundamental disconnect between civil authority and the military but disagree as to its significance and desirability. More recent work in the field has opened up new lines of inquiry into how the civilian authorities seek to direct the military and how the military responds, but they maintain the concern expressed by earlier scholars that the health of this relationship cannot be taken for granted. In the context of the Cold War, Samuel Huntington, a political scientist who spent much of his career at Harvard, argued that the unique mission of the military inevitably resulted in a different set of values and orientation from those of broader society—and that this was necessary and arguably positive.<sup>22</sup> By contrast, Morris Janowitz, a professor of sociology at the University of Chicago, agreed that while a divergence in culture between the groups is inherent in the nature of

the institution of the military, the divergence is potentially worrisome with respect to the continued subordination of the military to civilian leadership.<sup>23</sup> More recent evaluations of the civil-military relationship suggest that the two spheres can, and sometimes do, interact in more nuanced ways. Rebecca Schiff, who has studied civil-military relations in North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries, proposes a concordance theory, arguing that the military and the civilian world, comprised both of the citizens writ large and the state's leadership, can agree to negotiate decision making on particular issues according to their expertise, which bridges the gap regardless of its source.<sup>24</sup> Treating the interactions between the military and civilian oversight as a principle-agent relationship exposes the ways in which the military can exploit its information advantage to resist civilian direction, whether or not that direction reflects expertise or wisdom.<sup>25</sup> The dynamic through which militaries are resourced by the state can also inform how both parties negotiate disagreements as to policy and execution; while the military has an information advantage over civilian oversight, civilian institutions exercise power over funding levels and recruiting policies, and can choose to regulate military personnel and spending quite closely.<sup>26</sup>

Taking these more abstract discussions and applying them to the Marine Corps, two separate but related questions must be considered. First, in what ways and along what dimensions do the Corps and civilian leadership differ, particularly on the question of the integration of women into combat MOSs? Second, in what ways do these gaps contribute to the Marine Corps' resistance to implementing the policy wishes of civilian oversight? One recent taxonomy of civil-military gaps presented by a group of researchers in *Armed Forces & Society* suggests that there are four ideal types of mismatch. Even though most issues will touch upon elements of more than one type, it is nonetheless useful to consider how any given problem yields different sorts of gaps between the two groups. The four dimensions in which civil-military gaps can be evaluated are cultural, demographic, policy preference, and institutional disconnects between the civilian and military worlds.<sup>27</sup>

### **The Cultural Divide**

Cultural gaps exist when attitudes and values, in the aggregate, are substantially different between the military and civil society. While the range of opinions and values held by military members is similar to those of broader society, the distribution of those opinions and values is not, as strikingly illustrated in a recent Military.com study.<sup>28</sup> Military elites in particular, and members more broadly, often characterize civilian society as weak and corrupt, and they perceive this state of affairs not as a natural consequence of a different function but as a flaw that would be remedied by bringing civilian culture closer to that of the military.<sup>29</sup> Although less overt contempt characterizes the civilian view of



the military, a case can also be made that the frequent testaments of respect for, and faith in, the military conceals a mistrust of the military by civilians, rooted largely in the increasingly small proportion of the American public with first- or secondhand knowledge of military life and culture, and also in decreasing public confidence in major institutions in general.<sup>30</sup>

In particular, the cultural gap between the Marine Corps and broader civilian culture is significant. The relationship between the individual and the broader community of the Corps is among the first values imparted to new recruits, from the insistence that recruits refer to themselves in the third person, to repeated inculcation of the need to subordinate individual desires, even individual survival, to the greater good of mission accomplishment.<sup>31</sup> This stands in increasingly stark contrast to the orientation of Americans, particularly from Generation X onward, toward their work lives, which shows a consistent trend of valuing compensation, personal gratification, recognition for their accomplishments as individuals, and the ability to subordinate workplace demands to better meet their other social and personal needs.<sup>32</sup> While American society has grown more individualistic, the Marine Corps continues to inculcate collective and group values.

### **Demographic Differences between American Society and the Corps**

Demographic differences between the Marine Corps and American society are comparatively easy to identify. Ethnically, Caucasians and Native Americans and Pacific Islanders are slightly overrepresented (Caucasians are 62.1 percent and Native Americans and Pacific Islanders are 1.4 percent in the general population, and 65.9 percent and 1.9 percent in the Corps, respectively) while African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians are underrepresented (13.2 percent, 17.4 percent, and 5.4 percent in the general population, and 10.3 percent, 15.8 percent, and 3.4 percent in the Corps). The more striking disparity is along gender lines: women make up 50.8 percent of the general population and 43.5 percent of the current American workforce. With respect to either measure, the proportion of women in the Marine Corps does not parallel the civilian world, with women making up only 7.7 percent of the Service. Women participate in the military at far lower rates than they do in the general labor market, but the Marine Corps has a markedly lower rate than the Army (14.1 percent), Navy (18.0 percent), and Air Force (19.1 percent).<sup>33</sup>

Other demographic and political differences exist between the U.S. military and the U.S. population at large, although for these factors, little information exists to differentiate the Corps from the rest of the military. Military officers, in particular, are both more socially conservative and more likely to identify as, and vote, Republican than the general population.<sup>34</sup> Recruits are drawn in disproportionate numbers from southern and southwestern states.<sup>35</sup>

Both enlisted and officers are more likely to come from middle-class and upper-middle-class homes than from the poorest quintile, and when controlling for age, military personnel are more highly educated than their civilian counterparts.<sup>36</sup> Notwithstanding reports of evangelical activity within the military, religious identification of military members corresponds quite closely to that of the general public, with Catholics, evangelical Protestants, nonevangelical Protestants, and “other” (which includes atheists) within roughly 1 percent of their proportion in the general public.<sup>37</sup>

Culturally, the generational differences provided for different perspectives on work ethic and values, but generational continuities are significant and gendered. As of 2000, the majority of new recruits (although not officers) had fathers who were veterans, despite the number of veterans in the general population then being quite low.<sup>38</sup> More recent work suggests that an orientation toward public service is a strong predictor of reenlistment among military members in the twenty-first century.<sup>39</sup> Studies on previous generations have also shown a small but significant difference between Marines and members of other Services with respect to Charles Moskos’s institutional-occupational orientation. Writing in the 1980s, Moskos, a sociologist who shaped much of the study of institutional culture in the U.S. military, suggested Western militaries were in the process of transitioning from an institutional model, in which motivations were generally altruistic, patriotic, or normative, to one that was occupationally oriented, in which motivations were more likely to involve pay, training, and career benefits in the short and long term.<sup>40</sup> Applying this theory to the U.S. Services, the research shows that Marine survey responses indicate a slightly higher degree of institutional motivation rather than occupational motivation at the level of the individual Marine.<sup>41</sup> While the majority of the nation is pursuing individualism and personal gratification, a small segment of society, heavily influenced by the experiences of male parents, chooses to do the opposite.

### **Policy Preferences of the Services and Civilian Leadership**

A gap in policy preference has emerged quite clearly in the years since the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks (9/11), particularly in light of the protracted, costly, and minimally effective interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan that followed those attacks. There is no unanimity among either military or civilian decision makers and elites as to how to counter existing threats, prepare for future threats, or even what the threats of today and tomorrow are, but there are nonetheless observable trends around the circumstances in which each group, broadly, supports intervention, and what sorts of intervention they envisage. With respect to the most senior members of both groups, there is a consistent preference among civilians for the more frequent use of limited force, for the

purposes of pacification, stability operations, and nation-building, while senior military officers by contrast consistently believe the appropriate use of military force should be infrequent, much less limited, and used for countering direct threats to national interests and security.<sup>42</sup>

In terms of policy preference differences among the Services, it is impossible to generalize and ascribe an orientation to any particular style of warfighting to the whole of either ground Service; however, there are discernible differences in the aggregate between the two. By the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, the Army had large constituencies supporting investment in counterinsurgency (COIN), even at the expense of continued training and development of counterforce capabilities, as well as those arguing precisely the opposite—that COIN is a “lesser included” role that can be ably carried out by a conventionally oriented force.<sup>43</sup> When considering the lines of effort emphasized in *Counterinsurgency*, Field Manual 3-24, which was predominantly shaped by the U.S. Army, and contrasting it both with more empirical work on COIN as well as with Marine Corps experiences in Iraq prior to the surge, a picture emerges of a preference within the Army for stability, capacity-building, and policing elements of COIN, with a diminished emphasis on direct and supporting military actions on the part of the intervening power.<sup>44</sup> Since 2011, the Army has reorganized in ways designed to facilitate conventional warfighting and decreased the weight given to COIN and stability operations in its education and research institutions.<sup>45</sup>

The preference gap between Services is slight but perceptible when viewed through the lens of different theoretical approaches to COIN. More broadly, Marine Corps publications discussing anticipated future roles and capabilities emphasize, by contrast, forcible entry, forward seabasing, and amphibious assaults—all more traditional and counterforce-oriented types of military activity.<sup>46</sup> Although small wars and stability operations are part of the Corps’ heritage, institutional identity is converging on amphibious assault as the primary mission for the Corps, in part to distinguish it from the role it played in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) as a second land army.<sup>47</sup> The most recent Marine Corps Operating Concept document, updated in 2016, also emphasizes the combat orientation of the Service; the Commandant says in it that “[t]he Marine Corps exists to defeat our Nation’s enemies.”<sup>48</sup>

### **Institutional Issues**

An institutional civil-military gap exists when major civilian institutions, such as the media, the world of higher education, and branches of government are at odds with the military, as reflected by policy, values, and identities. In this regard, there are mixed indicators of whether a gap exists between the military

and civilian society, and there is insufficient research to differentiate among the Services. With respect to education, the increased presence of ROTC programs on campuses in recent years suggests increasing alignment, or at least a decreasing disconnect, although these programs are still less numerous than before Vietnam. There is, however, more criticism of the military and current conflicts by faculty and students, although again, not to the extent seen in the 1970s.<sup>49</sup> In terms of whether a state of harmony exists between the executive branch and the military, the Barack H. Obama administration may represent a low point, with public disagreements between Obama and senior military leaders about troop levels in Afghanistan, culminating in the firing of the senior commander in Afghanistan after his staff derided the administration on the record.<sup>50</sup> In the broader context, it was one of a series of presidencies in which mutual disrespect, colored largely by unfamiliarity on the part of most administration officials with military institutions and culture, hampered effective civil-military cooperation and communication.<sup>51</sup>

The initial months of the Donald J. Trump administration have complicated the civil-military relationship by drawing an unprecedented number of cabinet and senior officials from the rolls of recently retired senior officers, which has polarized public opinion. A 2017 survey of the military found that approval for the new president was at 47 percent among enlisted members, with 16 percent neutral and 37 percent disapproving. The numbers are nearly the inverse among officers, with slightly more than 30 percent approving, 16 percent neutral, and more than 53 percent disapproving. Other divisions show up in military support for the current president: only in the Marine Corps does a majority have a favorable opinion of him, while in the Air Force and Navy a plurality has an unfavorable view of the president. As in the civilian population, women and minorities are far less likely to have a favorable view of the president compared to men and Caucasians.<sup>52</sup>

Mass media has been criticized for being uncritically supportive of the military and for fearmongering that drives support for war.<sup>53</sup> The media has also been accused of sensationalistic reporting on military scandals and wrongdoing, driving reflexive opposition to the military.<sup>54</sup> If the media is a window into how Americans perceive the military, it reveals an ambivalence on the part of public opinion. In terms of broad values, millennials—influenced by but also influencing media and education ecosystems—consciously reject gender essentialism, which is the view that there are capabilities, temperaments, and traits that are determined by biology; embrace egalitarianism over hierarchies; and are comfortable with ambiguity. These value orientations are, to put it mildly, antithetical to military culture.<sup>55</sup> How military culture will reflect the values of the millennial generation when this cohort makes up senior leadership cannot be predicted; will this cohort change the military, will the military change

millennials, or a bit of both, with respect to these attitudes and beliefs? While this cohort remains among the more junior ranks and grades, though, this gulf remains wide.

There are, then, clear gaps between the U.S. military in the twenty-first century and the civilian society it serves and is controlled by. In addition, with respect to culture, demographics, and policy preference, the Marine Corps is positioned slightly differently from, and further from the civilian sector, than other Services. The existence of a gap does not intrinsically lead to dysfunction, though; power struggles arise only when civilian control of the military is hampered, or at the extremes threatened, by these gaps.

### **Strength of Resistance**

There are four main ways a civil-military gap manifests. The degree to which these differences generate resistance to civilian leadership is another issue, with this variation best explained by the degree to which the military (or Service) feels threatened. Scholars examining innovation imposed by civilians upon militaries identify four variables that explain when, and to what degree, militaries will resist change. These variables are professional identity, operational routines, autonomy, and budget. Professional identity describes in this case not only the notion of military professionalism in the general sense but also in the identity of Marines, an explicitly warrior culture, and a group that defines itself as the “first to fight.”<sup>56</sup>

Operational routines are threatened by mandated change when that change would require disruption to existing routines not only for planning and fighting wars but for recruiting, training, and equipping servicemembers. Threats to autonomy lead to institutional resistance not only because stakeholders feel their resources or influence are threatened but also because it is through the exercise of autonomy that institutions, particularly those faced with the unexpected or the risky, which characterizes the military, can rapidly adapt. The fact that threats to budgets, or to control over budgets, as a result of forced innovation, results in institutional resistance does not require much explanation.<sup>57</sup> The more the military or Service perceives a threat to any of these spheres of its identity and activity, the likelier it is to resist imposed change.

### **The Corps' Interests, Gender Integration, and the Civil-Military Gap**

Despite the success of thousands of individual women in the Marine Corps, the conflation of Marine identity with masculinity within Corps culture is omnipresent. A linguist studying communication within the Corps—both official, in the form of statements and publications, and also casual or informal speech—found that patterns and word choices traditionally coded as feminine

are treated as intrinsically inappropriate, while styles of communication that correspond to more typically male patterns are praised and emulated. In other words, “I statements” (beginning sentences with “I”) and the use of modifiers implying emotion, coded as feminine, are frowned upon, while the more masculine style of speaking impersonally and with brevity is encouraged. Male and female Marines alike used the term *pussy* to describe a Marine who complains, and *weak sister* to characterize a Marine who is frequently injured or ill, without reference to the gender of the object.<sup>58</sup>

The inclusion of makeup classes in boot camp for women (and the issuing of official cosmetic brushes) may be almost two generations in the past, but concern that women in the Corps appear not simply neat or uniform but attractive still echoes in the lengthy and often ambiguous official guidelines that exist today with respect to women’s physical appearance, while the guidelines within which men’s grooming must fall are brief, specific, and narrow.<sup>59</sup> The appearance of men in the Corps matters in that it is uniform; the appearance of women is framed, by contrast, in the language of aesthetics, in a manner reminiscent of the “femininity quotient” imposed on women in the military during World War II, designed to reinforce differences at both the cosmetic and visceral level.<sup>60</sup>

From boot camp—which is conducted in single sex units, unlike in other U.S. Services—Marines, both male and female, are cautioned that women in the Corps fall into one of three categories: “you’re [either] a bitch, a slut, or a dyke,” as one recruit reports being cautioned during her initial training.<sup>61</sup> The experiences of women in the Corps indicate that while men and women are both instructed about appropriate boundaries and behavior, in practice women feel maintaining these boundaries in their interactions with male Marines is a responsibility that falls disproportionately upon them.<sup>62</sup> Until 1975, women in the Corps were formally referred to as Woman Marines, and although this label today is considered unacceptable for official use, it persists colloquially; the modifier confirms that the default Marine is a man.<sup>63</sup> The conflation of “Marine-ness” with masculinity persists in other arenas, often insignificant in isolation, but part of a systematic identification of the virtues being inculcated as inhering in men. The language used to describe illness, injury, or the inability to meet physical standards suggests both femininity and failure.<sup>64</sup> The physical uniformity imposed from the very start of the military experience—with respect not only to clothing but bodies themselves—“displaces idiosyncrasy, individuality, and particularity,” and the ideal standard is masculine, particularly in the Marines.<sup>65</sup>

Marines frequently describe themselves, implicitly or explicitly, as Spartans. The reference shows up in histories of the Corps, in the required reading list published by the Commandant, in tattoos on Marine bodies, and in the logos

of gyms in which they hone their bodies—even in exhortations to Marines to be more energy efficient and environmentally friendly, as shorter supply trains, and the ability to live off the land, will make them more resilient, lethal, and austere—like the Spartans.<sup>66</sup> The evocation of an exclusively male, infantry-based and elite force from history finds a mirror in a modern-day slogan that is one of the best-known maxims of the Corps: “Every Marine a rifleman.” All the Services have weapons proficiency tests required of all recruits and officer candidates before graduating from initial training. Only the Marine Corps requires all members, regardless of whether their MOS is likely to expose them to combat, to recertify at regular intervals throughout their careers, due to both combat considerations and the centrality of the rifleman to Marine identity.<sup>67</sup> This has cultural significance in illustrating the primacy of the infantry to the Corps’ history and identity, and it also serves to maintain a level of alterity, in reinforcing that even though a woman in the Marines must be proficient with weapons, she cannot, as long as she is barred from infantry MOSs, be a part of that cadre.

The duality embodied here—that female Marines are riflemen (in that they are qualified with rifles) but are intrinsically unable to serve as Riflemen (the name of the primary infantry MOS, 0311)—reflects an ambivalence about women and combat in the Corps. Few Marines, regardless of their opinion on integration, today speak about “women in combat,” as the nature of twenty-first century war has ensured that anyone in theater is (or at least can be) in combat.<sup>68</sup> Rather, the debate is framed about whether women should be assigned combat MOSs. It is a point of pride for the Corps that, in their folklore, the ambush and capture of a convoy that included Army Private First Class Jessica Lynch would have played out differently had its target been Marines, with every mechanic, logistician, and driver a skilled shooter, regardless of sex.<sup>69</sup> At the same time, many express concern that the integration of women—more capable of self-defense than their counterparts in other Services, per Marine mythos—into infantry units would place these units in greater peril.<sup>70</sup>

Threats to identity are perhaps the most obvious source of resistance to gender integration in the Corps, but they can overlap with threats to operational routines. Some of these issues might seem pedestrian, such as concern about the infrastructure changes required to provide privacy—or the cultural changes required in the absence of privacy—with respect to sleeping, changing, and hygiene facilities, which in the field are frequently minimal. The need to develop procedures for meeting personnel requirements in light of unexpected pregnancies is a more concrete example of a threat to routine presented by gender integration.<sup>71</sup> Some threats to routines can even come from within, though they may be prompted by externally mandated change: Lieutenant Colonel Kate Germano, the commanding officer of the training battalion for all enlisted



women, was relieved in 2015 after investigation into complaints about her efforts to hold women recruits to a higher standard, one more closely aligned with the standard for men. Her critics allege a toxic command environment, while her defenders argue she was working to minimize the distinctions between the sexes in the Corps, from the ground up. In any event, Germano's approach to raising standards—in part in an attempt to accommodate a new requirement for female recruits to do pull-ups—resulted in her relief on the grounds of “a poor command climate and the loss of trust and confidence” in her ability to do the job.<sup>72</sup>

Concerns about cohesion in infantry units also are tied to threats to existing routines and habits. The crudity and vulgarity of barracks life, according to Lieutenant General Gregory S. Newbold, are part of the cement that bonds infantrymen into a band of brothers, and the changes that he believes would result from including women would invariably erode that cohesion, as would the jealousy, gossip, and tension that would result from the sexual relationships that would inevitably follow when young, fit men and women live and work in close quarters.<sup>73</sup> While in most other settings, such an argument would be discredited for putting the onus only on women to prevent these complications, in much of the military sphere this belief holds sufficient credibility to be accepted as part of the debate.

More analytical work based on studies of integration in other workplaces and cultures, meanwhile, has found that in at least some cases, the presence of women in formerly all-male units has harmed both cohesion and performance, at least during the initial period following integration.<sup>74</sup> A preliminary report on a Marine Corps study in which all-male groups, groups with a low proportion of women, and groups with a high proportion of women were asked to perform the same combat-related tasks showed that the all-male groups consistently performed better than mixed groups by a significant margin during those trials.<sup>75</sup> While the methodology of the study has been criticized for the construction of the experiment, as well as the absence of an all-female control group, and a non-random and nonuniform selection of study participants, these results are taken by opponents of integration to substantiate concerns that military effectiveness might be harmed by gender integration, whether through threats to cohesion or by some other mechanism. It is perhaps relevant that critics of racial desegregation of the military also argued it would harm cohesion and thus combat effectiveness; 50 years of research on the racially integrated military has shown this supposition to be untrue.<sup>76</sup>

Threats to routines and effectiveness bleed into threats to autonomy. The Marine Corps' in-house study found that when standards are lowered to allow women to qualify for combat MOSs, cohesion and effectiveness are harmed even further. In recent years, there has been a push from civilian leadership to

do precisely that, as exemplified by Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James's decision to waive traditional requirements for pilot training in the interests of achieving "diversity and inclusion requirements."<sup>77</sup> Navy Secretary Ray Mabus has made an even more pointed statement about how he would like to reengineer the composition of the Marine Corps, stating that one-quarter of recruits should be women, which would represent, depending upon end strength numbers, roughly quadrupling the number of women in the Corps as it exists today, and which does not reflect research into the feasibility of this proposal.<sup>78</sup> Given the traditional attrition rates for women in Marine training compared to men, this would de facto amount to a mass lowering of standards. The potential loss of control that would result from externally mandated changes to standards in the recruitment and training of future Marines presents a grave institutional threat to the Corps' autonomy.

Other indications exist that not only will gender integration be imposed but that the manner in which it is conducted will be directed by civilians outside the Corps. Secretary of Defense Carter, who never served in the military, joined Mabus in dismissing the results of the internal study showing reduced combat effectiveness in mixed infantry units, and Mabus has repeatedly expressed a desire to force the Corps to desegregate genders in boot camp for men and women.<sup>79</sup> When Carter announced the end to all combat exclusions for women in December 2015, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Joseph Dunford, who as Commandant of the Marine Corps had recommended against integration, was (pointedly) absent from the press conference, a departure from similar press conferences in the past, in which the chairman typically appears alongside the secretary of defense.<sup>80</sup> With the change in administration in January 2017, Americans inside and outside of the Marine Corps have been particularly eager to see how recently retired Marine General James N. Mattis will influence policy and implementation around these issues. So far, attempts at integration of women into infantry commissions and ranks have been sustained, and their first successes achieved in the graduation of a woman from IOC, which makes it possible to assign enlisted women who have graduated from the SOI to be given an infantry MOS.

There are threats to budgets caused by gender integration of combat occupations for the Marine Corps. The costs of modifying facilities and equipment, while real, are not expected to be significant. Costs related to those Marines who are not ready to deploy in the form of "increases to the training, transient, prisoner, and patient (T2P2) population, medical separations, non-deployability rates, attrition, and recycling or reclassification, will be more significant."<sup>81</sup> Given increased health care utilization rates among women veterans returning from OIF and OEF, future health care costs will also rise as the participation of women increases, and particularly as it increases in com-

bat roles, although this is a military-wide cost and is non-Corps specific.<sup>82</sup>

Savos's model suggests military resistance to externally mandated change is more likely to arise when identity, routines, autonomy, and budgets are threatened by that change. The integration of women into combat occupations in the Marine Corps presents threats in all four domains. According to the taxonomy of types of civil-military gap discussed earlier, gender integration resonates with the tensions caused by cultural, demographic, and policy preference gaps between U.S. society in the twenty-first century and the Corps, even more so than in the other Services.

With respect to Service culture, the emphasis on the needs of the Corps over those of the individual, and the contempt for the perceived civilian preoccupation with personal and material benefit, clash with many of the arguments for opening combat MOSs to women as a matter of individual equity, career advancement, or the fulfillment of individual ambition to serve in the infantry.<sup>83</sup> Gender essentialism, increasingly rejected in the civilian sphere, has a robust constituency in the Corps, which sees its role primarily in terms of combat, and the norms of chivalry are still invoked to make a normative case against women in the infantry, an argument that would be rejected, even mocked, in industry, academia, or politics.<sup>84</sup> The demographic gap, more acute in the Corps both in absolute numbers and in the number of roles closed to women relative to other Services, adds volatility to mandated gender integration, as it represents a bigger change in personnel and routines, associated costs are correspondingly higher, and the cultural shift required is more dramatic.

Policy preferences cast perspectives on the integration of women in an interesting light, given the capabilities needed for institutions and individual Marines in various sorts of military interventions. While the military in general, and the Marine Corps in particular, have been quietly reorienting themselves toward more traditional military missions, the U.S. government, in a trend that predates the 9/11 terrorist attacks, increasingly sees the military as a force-in-being for deterrent purposes and a force to be deployed in humanitarian, stabilization, and peacekeeping missions. This trend can be observed in administrations of both parties.<sup>85</sup> Much of the discussion touting the success and relevance of women in combat zones in the twenty-first century draws upon female engagement teams in Iraq and Afghanistan, in which women were integrated with forward-deployed combat units to interact with the local population in ways that male troops could not.<sup>86</sup> There is even a school of thought that for humanitarian missions, women are not only as capable and fit as men for all military roles, but they are in fact intrinsically superior.<sup>87</sup> One need not accept this gender essentialist position to see that a civilian sector that sees military intervention as a tool to remedy humanitarian crises, exercise the responsibility to protect, or keep the peace, will have a different view of gender integration and

its possible consequences than does a Marine Corps that sees invasion of other states and the defeat of other militaries as its primary mission.

## **A Modern Service in the Age of the Postmodern Military**

The differentiation of a general civil-military gap into specific kinds of mismatch shows that the U.S. military, and the Marine Corps in particular, is in many ways far apart from the society that it serves, and this indicates how the role of women in the Corps illustrates these specific differences. The analysis of the myriad forms of institutional threat shows how externally mandated gender integration of women provokes resistance from the Corps. Another framework, though, is helpful in illustrating a broad philosophical and possibly ontological difference between civilian elites in the twenty-first century and the Marine Corps.

The nature of militaries evolves, as does the character of war, and this evolution influences, among other spheres, how militaries as institutions view their members. Moskos suggests that the militaries of the Western world are in transition from a late-modern age (1945–90) to a postmodern age.<sup>88</sup> While a postmodern military continues to define their identity and mission in terms of the primacy of the nation, the traditional basis of national sovereignty has been functionally eroded by the globalization of finance, trade, communication, and transnational identities.<sup>89</sup> Moskos presents a chart listing attributes typical of modern, late-modern, and postmodern armed forces. Major characteristics of postmodern militaries include the transition to subnational threats, new missions centered around humanitarian concerns, and the full integration of women.

What is striking about his schema is that in many ways the Marine Corps, rather than drawing closer to the postmodern ideal, is in fact somewhere between the modern and late-modern ideal types, and actively resists moving toward the postmodern attributes of other militaries and other U.S. Services. Where late-modern militaries are oriented toward a perceived threat of nuclear war, the Corps, even during the Cold War, focused primarily on maneuver warfare and conventional war; where late-modern militaries envision the officer as a manager or technician, rather than a combat leader, Marines still emphasize combat leadership as the foundational quality; and because modern militaries include women in a separate structure, if at all, while late-modern militaries involve them to some degree, it could be argued that the Corps' current approach to women falls between the two, and is nowhere near the postmodern, full integration.<sup>90</sup>

The utility of this conception of the source of the conflict in the matter of gender integration of the combat arms of the Marine Corps lies in its more

holistic view of the two groups—the Corps and the society that it defends, and which finances and supports it—as being rooted in fundamentally different worldviews, or perhaps different eras. This does not invalidate either the previously discussed taxonomy of the gap or Savos’s theory of predictors of institutional resistance. Rather, it positions them as symptoms and/or indicators of this fundamental worldview mismatch. The role of identity and masculinity in the Corps also suggests that, despite the content of so much of the debate on the issue, matters such as how many pull-ups an infantryman must be able to do, how much more prone women are to stress fractures from long hikes under heavy loads, or how feasible it is to prevent sexual relationships from developing among people living and working in close quarters are not really relevant to the real dispute, and perhaps even distractions from it, as they have not been an obstacle to the integration of women in the U.S. Army’s Ranger School or in Army infantry.<sup>91</sup>

## Conclusion

The crux of the problem during the last decade of the ongoing clash between an administration that will see women fully integrated, and a Corps that wishes to carry this out on its own terms, lies in the different orientations of each sphere, both civilian and military, and the challenge of harmonizing across gaps that exist in many dimensions, especially when the Corps feels itself threatened by change. While the Trump administration has signaled a different attitude toward the military, policies around gender and combat MOS assignments have not changed.

If the demographics of the military were somehow to become perfectly aligned with those of society with respect to gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, religion, and education, there would still be profound differences between its structures, values, and policy preferences, characteristics that are themselves continually in flux in both the civilian and military worlds. An organization that relies upon subordination and hierarchy seems destined to be dissonant from broader Western society in the twenty-first century under any circumstances as individualism and debate are increasingly preferred to top down or authoritarian management. An organization trained to apply (and withstand) violence in the interests of a greater good will view the use of force differently than a society that prizes individualism. Because the demographics of the military are in some key dimensions not representative of the broader society, and are not likely to become so in the near future, differences will persist.

Although the Marine Corps works to implement policy decisions from the secretary of defense, it should work to better communicate its reservations about the effects of integration on its doctrinal role, military effectiveness, and

cohesion.<sup>92</sup> To have a healthy civilian-military relationship, it is essential that the Corps obeys instructions from civilian leadership. More broadly, beyond the compliance it owes, the military can help the civil-military dynamic to function better by educating a civilian government that is increasingly more divorced from firsthand military experience about its culture and concerns. Equally, when civilians determine that the military must change, they will achieve their aims more readily, and with fewer unintended consequences, if they account for military culture and interests, and specify the changes they seek while leaving the military to determine the how to implement these changes.

There is another dimension unique to the Marine Corps that influences attitudes and implementation around gender integration. As Lieutenant General Victor H. Krulak said, America does not need a Marine Corps, it wants a Marine Corps.<sup>93</sup> The sort of Marine Corps the nation wants may be more like the Marine Corps of the past, the force famous for combat victories like Belleau Wood and Iwo Jima. Perception and identity, so central both to military and broader American culture, weigh more heavily on the Corps than on the other Services because of their greater differentiation from American society, which may contribute to the tension around the integration of women into Marine infantry.

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# Guarding the Border, Crossing a Barrier

## Women Trooper Integration in the Israel Border Police, 1995–98

Shlomi Chetrit

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**Abstract:** Between 1995 and 1998, the Israel Border Police conducted a large-scale experiment, training women conscripts to operate with male police and deploying them in operational units. At the time, this was revolutionary: Israeli women did not serve in operational roles in the police or the military. Moreover, the Border Police, a masculine and traditional organization, was not the natural candidate for such a gender-neutral policy. The experiment proved successful, and it led to the widespread integration of women in the Border Police. This article examines the history of female integration in the Israel Border Police, the rationale behind the project, the challenges faced by its participants, and its outcomes. The way in which the project evolved is a relevant case study for any military or paramilitary organization seeking to improve gender equality.

**Keywords:** police, Israel Border Police, gender integration, internal security, Mišmar Ha-Gvul, trooper, policewoman, gendarmerie

**O**n 3 February 2016, an Israel Border Police patrol noticed two suspicious-looking Arab civilians near the Damascus Gate, outside the Old City of Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> The patrol team, composed of a noncommis-

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sioned officer (NCO) and three troopers, split according to regulations: the commander and another trooper approached the suspects to identify them, while the other two stood a few meters back, for backup in case of attack.<sup>2</sup> Following a short interaction, the suspects drew a handgun and a knife and attacked, severely wounding the trooper. Within seconds, a 19-year-old private, Hadar Cohen, successfully neutralized one assailant.<sup>3</sup> However, a third terrorist, who was sitting apart from his coconspirators, approached Private Cohen from behind, shooting at point-blank range. Hadar Cohen collapsed, mortally wounded. In the ensuing firefight, the police killed all three terrorists who, as the investigation later discovered, carried explosives and were on their way to attack Israeli civilians.<sup>4</sup> The only thing that set this terrorist attack apart was the troopers' gender: all three, including the late Hadar Cohen, were women; they were young conscripts in basic combat training on their very first active duty posting.

A year later, on 16 June 2017, Staff Sergeant Hadas Malka, a Border Police NCO, fell in combat with Arab terrorists, again near the Damascus Gate.<sup>5</sup> Hadar Cohen and Hadas Malka were the first female Border Police troopers killed in the line of duty as well as two of the very few Israeli women killed in action.

These fatalities, and more so the gallantry demonstrated by both troopers, brought into the public eye the full scope of female integration into Border Police units.<sup>6</sup> The fact that today women perform a major role as a part of Israel's last line of defense, participating in the war against terror just like male troopers and soldiers, is the result of a process that began 22 years ago in the Border Police.

This article examines the early beginnings of female integration in Border Police operational units from 1995 to 1998. During that period, the idea to deploy female combatants was born, and the first troopers were recruited, trained, and deployed. The experience gained served not just the Border Police but also the police force as a whole and the Israeli military. The research seeks to explain why the project formed, how it evolved, what challenges it faced, what its results were, and what its current influence is.

To understand the integration of female Border Police, some background is necessary. Therefore, the article begins with a description of the Israel Police and Border Police, their organization, roles, and duties, followed by a short historical overview of female integration in the Israeli armed services. The history of the female integration project follows. First, this article will look at the immediate historical background for the project and the reasons for it. Second, we will consider the selection process and training of the first female troopers. Third, the article covers the early operational deployment of women in Border Police units and an evaluation of their deployment. Fourth, the various challenges and objections that faced the female troopers are described, followed by the solutions offered to them. Finally, a discussion of the project and its

outcomes, alongside a description of the current integration of women in the Border Police.

Research regarding the history of the Israel Border Police is scarce. Few academic publications, a minority of them in English, deal with the history of Israel's law-enforcement agencies, the challenges they faced, their triumphs, and their failures. The subject of female inclusion in the Border Police is no exception. Though the experience gained by it helped further female integration into the military, no researcher has yet looked into it. Therefore, while the introductory section of the article relies on secondary sources, those dealing with the core subject depend on primary sources of various kinds. These, however, are also few. Israeli Archives Law (1955) requires the review of every document created by the police, prior to its release to the public, to prevent infringement of personal privacy, revealing of operational methods, or harm to national security. This delays the release of police documents considerably, and severely limits the sources available for research. The sources used in this research include contemporary official reports, the few declassified headquarters discussion minutes, and press reports. The study also included interviews with three of the project participants: Israel Sadan, Border Police commander who initiated the project; Hadas Shapira, who headed the first trooper training course; and Dikla Hanuqer, one of the Border Police's very first women troopers.

## **The Israel Police and Border Police**

The Israel Police (*Mišteret Yisra'el*) are responsible for law enforcement, public order, traffic control, and internal security throughout Israel. It is a national organization, under the responsibility of the Ministry of Public Security. The police are centrally commanded and directed by the inspector general, who holds the rank of lieutenant general and is appointed by the government. Seven police districts divide Israel's territory. Each district includes 2–4 subdistricts, which are divided in turn between police stations. The national headquarters contains seven professional divisions, each responsible for force building in a specific field, such as investigations and intelligence, training and doctrine, and human resources. The headquarters also includes the national crime investigations unit, Lahav 433, and several other offices, such as the police spokesperson and legal adviser. Commanding the different districts and divisions are officers of major general rank, who form the general staff of the police.<sup>7</sup> In 2017, the police included 29,727 men and women.

In 1974, following the Yom Kippur War and due to the ongoing threats posed by Arab terrorist organizations, the Israeli government transferred the responsibility for internal security from the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) to the police. Since then, the police operate as a dual-purpose service, capable of performing civilian police duties, such as preventing and combating crime, along-



side counterterrorism operations. The Border Police play a major role in these activities.<sup>8</sup>

The Israel Border Police (Mišmar Ha-Gvul, or “border guard”) is a corps within the Israel Police, equivalent in organization and responsibilities to a headquarters division. Essentially a gendarmerie, it is a paramilitary unit, employing infantry organization, tactics, and armament. In 2016, the Border Police included 7,272 men and women, roughly 25 percent of the entire police force. About one-half of Border Police personnel are conscripts who join the corps for their term of mandatory military service, which lasts 32 months for men and women in combat roles and 24 months for women in noncombat roles. The rest are career police officers, serving for more extended periods. Regardless of their service status, all Border Police members have legal jurisdiction identical to that of regular police officers throughout Israel and the territories it controls.

Border Police use a wide variety of military-style equipment, from personal protective gear to M4 carbines, Glock handguns, and armored patrol cars. All members wear dark green military-style uniforms and dark-green berets, distinct from the IDF’s olive green and the regular police blue. The different uniforms created the common distinction between the “blue” police, who focus on public service and crime prevention, and the “green” police, who specialize in internal security.<sup>9</sup>

The Border Police perform security and counterterrorism duties, patrol the border areas between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, counter riots and public disorder, and combats crimes against Israeli agriculture. It can operate as a highly mobile reserve force and can counter terrorist, criminal, and public order threats.<sup>10</sup>

The basic Border Police unit is the company. Each company includes 70–100 troopers, NCOs, and junior officers, and is commanded by a major or a lieutenant colonel. Companies differ in their areas of expertise but have a similar basic organization. For example, SAMAG (*Sayeret Mišmar Ha-gvul*, or “Border Police Reconnaissance”) companies specialize in crime fighting, while BATASH (*Bitahon Šotef*, or “routine security”) companies mostly deal with public security.<sup>11</sup>

Border Police companies are subordinate to the local police district or sub-district commander or (in Judea and Samaria) to the IDF. In several areas (most notably Jerusalem and the areas surrounding it), Border Police battalions are composed of two to four companies. Border Police territorial brigades serve as a liaison between the corps’ headquarters, police districts, and the companies, and can operate as a command echelon in times of crisis. The Border Police also operates several special units: YAMAM (*Yehidat Mištara Meyuhedet*, or “Special Police Unit”), Israel’s national counterterrorism and hostage rescue unit;



YAMAS (*Yehidat Mista'arvim*), the undercover counterterrorist unit; and the Tactical Brigade (*Hahativa Hataktit*), a rapid response force for riot control and severe terror attacks.

Border Police headquarters are responsible for the corps' preparedness and buildup and does not directly command the operational units. Therefore, it deals mostly with organizational planning, training, human resource management, and logistical support. The corps includes several training camps, separate from those of the regular police. The Border Police commander, a major general in charge of the corps' headquarters, reports directly to the inspector general of the Israel Police.

From its first days in the early 1950s, the Border Police specialized in monitoring Arab communities, first within Israel's 1949 armistice borders and later, following the victory in the 1967 Six-Day War, in the territories of Judea, Samaria, Gaza, and Eastern Jerusalem. The Border Police were the primary police force used to counter the Arab uprising of 1987–93 (the "First Intifada"), as well as the insurgency waged against Israel by the Palestinian Authority and other terror organizations during the late 1990s and early 2000s (the "Second Intifada"). Today, Border Police units primarily operate in areas susceptible to terrorist attacks, such as Jerusalem and the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron and along the Israeli West Bank barrier that defends the Israeli hinterlands from terrorist attacks.

From its early days, the Border Police established a unique and robust esprit de corps based on the camaraderie between troopers and the commander's devotion to them as well as its special social composition.<sup>12</sup> Historically, the Border Police recruited mainly from peripheral communities in Israeli society, such as new immigrants and ethnic minorities. While Ashkenazi Jews (immigrants from European countries and their descendants) predominantly staffed paratrooper, infantry, and armor units, the Border Police included mostly so-called Mizrahi Jews (or Oriental Jews originating in Arab countries), Druze, Circassian, and Israeli Arabs.<sup>13</sup> The trend continues today, with a disproportionate number of troopers coming from the Russian and Ethiopian immigrant communities. These characteristics helped shape the organization of the Border Police culture as a close-knit, familiar, and supportive group, connected by strong unit pride.

## **Women in the Israeli Military and Police: A Short History**

Women's participation in the armed defense of the Jewish community in Israel, and the debate regarding it, predate the establishment of the IDF and the Israeli police. On the one hand, the socialist, democratic, and egalitarian ethos that characterized the leading elements of the Zionist movement in Palestine,

together with the grave security threat posed by Arabs, made the arming of women seem logical. On the other hand, traditional perceptions of gender roles continued to affect the debate and hinder women's full integration in the matters of security.

Although women were part of the very first Jewish self-defense organizations—Bar-Giora (1907–9) and Hashomer (“The Watchmen,” 1909–20)—they were few in number and typically did not participate in actual guard duties.<sup>14</sup> During periods of intensive Arab terror attacks, first in 1929 and then in 1936, women were forbidden from participating in armed defense.<sup>15</sup> During the early phase of the Arab revolt in Palestine of 1936–39 (“The Great Arab Revolt”), this led to confrontation. In the *Kibbutzim* (Jewish collective agricultural settlements), women demanded to train with firearms and to stand guard alongside men. Following a fierce debate that included, in one instance, a boycott of a kibbutz's assembly by its female members, women joined men in guarding their settlements.<sup>16</sup>

Female integration in defense grew during the Second World War. With the encouragement of the Jewish Agency (de facto leadership of the organized Jewish community in Palestine), Jewish Palestinian women volunteered to join British military units. About 3,000 women joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS), and another 1,000 enrolled in Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF).<sup>17</sup> The women mostly served in various administrative, technical and logistical roles, such as clerks, orderlies, technicians, nurses and drivers.<sup>18</sup> Many of them, who were also members of the Haganah (“Defense,” the Jewish Agency's undercover security organization), secretly served the interests of that organization while in British uniform.<sup>19</sup> At the same time, women joined the first Palmach (*Plugot Hamahatz*, or “Storm Companies”) units, formed by the Haganah in 1941.<sup>20</sup> The two other underground movements, Etzel (Hebrew acronym for *Irgun Tzva'i Le'umi*, or “National Army Organization”) and Lehi (*Lohamey Herut Yisrael*, or “Fighters for Israel's Freedom”), also included many women.<sup>21</sup> By 1948, 20 percent of all underground organization members were female.<sup>22</sup> However, even though women were integrated into combat units (mainly within Palmach), it seems that very few participated in actual combat operations, either during the Mandate or Israel's War of Independence (1948–49).<sup>23</sup>

Following Israeli independence, women were conscripted as part of mandatory military service. However, for most of its history, Israeli women did not serve in combat or frontline units and were primarily relegated to ancillary duties. Israeli law stated that women could not serve in combat roles.<sup>24</sup> Only during the 1970s and 1980s did matters change. Following a severe workforce shortage, the IDF began training and posting women in positions previously reserved for men, explicitly to free male soldiers for combat duty. These included

the role of instructors in the infantry, armor and artillery schools, drill instructors for noncombat trainees (men and women), wireless and radar operators, and other supporting functions.<sup>25</sup> In 1995, a Supreme Court ruling forced the Israeli Air Force to accept female candidates to its flight academy, leading to the integration of women in other field units and combat support roles. The first integrated light infantry company began operating in 2000. This unit and others that followed it used the experience gained in the Border Police since 1996. Today, about 7 percent of all female conscripts (approximately 30 percent of the IDF) serve in combat units, including the Border Police.<sup>26</sup>

The story of female integration in the Israeli police is somewhat different. During the War of Independence, the police recruited and deployed women in various roles, including that of patrol officer, to free male recruits for military service.<sup>27</sup> However, after the war ended, most policewomen were discharged, and the few remaining transferred to technical and clerical positions or to duties that required contact with female civilians and prisoners.<sup>28</sup> In 1960, due to an ongoing failure to recruit and retain sufficient policemen, the police established the Policewomen Patrol Unit (*Yehidat Hašotrot*) in the Tel Aviv District. The unit employed women patrol and traffic control troopers in Israel's most densely populated area. In numerous cases, civilians resented the policewomen, ridiculed them, or treated them condescendingly.<sup>29</sup> However, in time, the public accepted the presence of policewomen who became, in the words of a 1969 news bulletin, "an inseparable, and pleasant, part of the city."<sup>30</sup>

During the 1970s and 1980s, women entered additional units and roles in various fields, including forensics, police prosecution, intelligence, legal counsel, and others. The Policewomen Patrol Unit was disbanded, and policewomen became an integral part of regular patrol units in every station. Women also achieved positions of responsibility, first in the administrative and legal branches, but as time passed, in operational units as well. The first female major general, Hannah Hirsch, was appointed in 1989, and four other women attained that rank after her.<sup>31</sup>

The service of women in combat roles and their service alongside men raised a fierce debate within Israeli society. Some claim that women integrating into combat units detracts from combat readiness. Several reasons for this have been cited: first, that women are not as physically fit as men and cannot endure the rigors of training, deployment, and combat.<sup>32</sup> Second, that women tend to be less violent by nature, and therefore adversely affect masculine military culture.<sup>33</sup> Third, the proximity of men and women leads to sexual tensions and jealousy, which harms morale.<sup>34</sup> Other objections come from traditional views of gender roles. Such arguments include the claims that combat duty would interfere with a woman's "natural" role as a mother, or that women should be protected from the horrors of battle and especially from captivity in enemy

hands.<sup>35</sup> Last, some religiously observant Jews object to integration due to their belief in the proper separation of men and women in the public sphere.<sup>36</sup>

## **The Border Police Women Integration Project: Immediate Background**

In April 1995, the newly appointed Border Police commander, Major General Israel Sadan, ordered a preliminary study regarding the integration of female conscripts in Border Police companies. Ten months later, on 11 February 1996, the first training course for female troopers opened.<sup>37</sup>

What led Sadan to that unorthodox course of action? It was not due to any public demand: at the time, the Border Police faced no outside pressures to integrate women. The struggle for gender equality in the IDF, as far as it existed, focused on integration into Israel's most prestigious military establishment: the Air Force Flight Academy. The public image of the Border Police, by contrast, was relatively weak. There were several reasons for this. For example, the corps' main task, policing Judea, Samaria, and Gaza, was seen as less "heroic" than the tasks performed by IDF combat units. The history of violence against Arab civilians by the Border Police, most notably the Kafr Qasim massacre of 1956, also contributed to its negative public image.<sup>38</sup> Another critical factor that affected the Border Police's public image was the fact that most of its recruits came from groups on the periphery of Israeli society, namely Oriental Jewish communities and various ethnic minorities, such as Druze, Bedouin Arabs, and Circassians. Jewish youth with high socioeconomic status rarely joined the corps, preferring higher-status units such as the paratroopers or the armored corps.<sup>39</sup>

In addition, the Border Police had an overly masculine image, due to the frequent use of physical force by its troopers, as well as to the disproportionate number of recruits from a Jewish Oriental background and ethnic minority communities. Both groups categorically hold relatively traditional perceptions regarding gender roles.<sup>40</sup>

During the mid-1990s, the Border Police faced new challenges. In 1993, following a five-year-long insurgency (the Intifada), Israel's government and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) concluded the Oslo Accords in Washington, DC. That treaty led, in 1994, to the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, an autonomous Arab polity in parts of the Gaza Strip, Judea, and Samaria. The accords included the withdrawal of all Israeli security forces, including the Border Police, from the areas allotted to the Palestinian Authority, and their replacement by the newly formed Palestinian Police and security organizations.<sup>41</sup> The Border Police had to adapt quickly to the new situation. Many companies redeployed to new areas, following the transfer of their former bases to the Palestinian Police. Missions changed accordingly: troopers ceased patrolling Arab cities and towns and began securing the newly created "Seam

Zone,” the areas between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Most notably, the Border Police supplied personnel for mobile joint patrols, together with Palestinian Police troopers.<sup>42</sup>

These changes contributed to Sadan’s decision to integrate. First, the new units needed additional personnel, which had to come through the IDF conscription apparatus. While the military needed combat-fit men for its units, it had less need for female soldiers, who at the time could not serve in frontline units. Any female soldier transferred to the Border Police, therefore, would have added to its force.<sup>43</sup> Second, it is probable that the change in operational emphasis ensuing from the Oslo Accords, namely the shift from urban patrols and intense friction with the Arab population to frontier control duties, also promoted the idea that women could integrate within the corps. Another, less tangible influence of the accords might also have helped. The agreement between Israel and the PLO ushered feelings of hope for an impending and everlasting peace in parts of the Israeli public. A brave new world, many believed, was in the making. Shimon Peres, Israel’s minister of foreign affairs, summarized these feelings: “We will bring a new, modern Middle-East to everyone’s children, not according to the narrative of yesterday.”<sup>44</sup> The acceptance of women in combat duty fits well within that “end of history” outlook.

According to Sadan, his background contributed to this project as well: “I grew up in a *Kibbutz* and educated to egalitarianism from childhood. For me, that means total equality between the sexes. Both can contribute to a goal.”<sup>45</sup> It may be that the results of the 1936 struggle for equality for women in these organizations had long-term effects.

## Selection and Training

IDF Lieutenant (currently Israel’s police colonel) Hadas Shapira transferred to the Border Police in January 1996 to command the first-ever course of female troopers. Shapira’s experience as a commander of a female drill instructors’ course prepared her for her new role. She also brought with her a firm belief in feminism. When asked on national television her reason for joining the project, she said: “[I do it] out of ideology. . . . I believe this is what is right for women, that’s the way forward, that’s what I can contribute to women[’s] advancement in our State.”<sup>46</sup>

Border Police staff looked for volunteers in the IDF’s women basic training camps.<sup>47</sup> The main factors for selection were a high Quality Index score, sound physical condition, and motivation.<sup>48</sup> The examiners chose 60 appropriate volunteers from approximately 1,100 recruits. These volunteers underwent further selection, and 33 successfully passed a day of tryouts.<sup>49</sup>

The offer to join a combat training course and to serve as an operational trooper surprised the candidates. “We were initially frightened, none of us

wanted it,” said one of the trainees, Private Na’ama Mutznik. “Personally, when the sorting officer told me I was going to the Border Police course . . . I didn’t want to, and that day I cried to my mother on the phone. But then we went to the tryouts, and got excited.”<sup>50</sup> Another trooper, Dikla Hanuqer, remembered: “I didn’t know much about it, everything happened very quickly. They told us that we would serve just like men, and that got me interested.”<sup>51</sup> Mutznik and Hanuqer’s positive experience was not universal: five candidates, who successfully passed the tryouts, chose not to volunteer and remained in the IDF.<sup>52</sup>

The recruits moved to the Border Police Training Center in Beit Horon, near Jerusalem, for their Basic Combat Training. Lieutenant Shapira’s team of instructors included a staff sergeant, a sergeant, and three drill instructors. Besides the commanding officer, only one other drill instructor was a woman, who was transferred from the IDF, with the rest being veteran Border Police instructors.<sup>53</sup> During the following 15 weeks, the recruits prepared to become operational troopers: they studied about police duties and the core values of the Border Police, learned to shoot various firearms, underwent physical training, participated in tactical field exercises (up to and including platoon-level combat), and practiced primary counterterrorist warfare. The training program was almost identical to that of male conscript training, with some changes made to adapt it better to the feminine physique. For example, to prevent stress fractures, which can be caused by a variety of factors including lack of sleep, female trainees were exempt from guard duty at night.<sup>54</sup> For the same reason, female trainees marched shorter distances than males.<sup>55</sup> Three trainees did not complete the course and returned to the IDF.<sup>56</sup>

Training women for combat roles, while in contact with a large group of men, proved challenging. “We were ‘shooting on the move,’ solving problems as they came,” explained Shapira. “We had very little time to prepare for the course, and honestly we did not know what to expect. All kind of questions arose . . . [such as] what shoes should they wear? Should we allow them wearing sleeveless shirts during physical training?”<sup>57</sup>

Motivation was high: “We knew nothing of the Border Police, I even didn’t know it was a part of the police,” said Hanuqer. “All we knew was that we were pioneers.”<sup>58</sup> Another trainee, Private Meital Gueta said, “Nothing will break us. That’s our motto. . . . We compare the bruises in our legs. Whoever got more . . . it shows she worked harder.”<sup>59</sup> Shimon added, “That’s what we will remember at the end. Not sitting between four walls, writing letters like clerks, but that we went out to the field, jumped, and crawled in thorns.”<sup>60</sup>

At graduation, the recruits were qualified Rifleman 05, as required for all Border Police operational troopers and IDF infantrymen at the end of basic combat training.<sup>61</sup> These were the first Israeli women trained as an infantry unit and the first to receive that qualification. In October 1996, another basic

training course commenced. This time, more trainees participated, and in January 1997, 42 troopers graduated and were deployed. During 1997, two more classes added 101 female troopers to the corps.

In addition to the basic courses, Border Police headquarters decided to train female NCOs and officers. The goal was to create a cadre of female junior commanders to accompany the troopers in the companies and to lead the following basic courses. During 1996, seven NCO women transferred from the IDF and joined Border Police command courses. Four of them, previously drill instructors, participated in the NCO course, while the remaining three enrolled in the officer's course.<sup>62</sup> Also, a certain percentage of graduates went directly to NCO training, thus quickly enlarging the number of available junior commanders.<sup>63</sup> Unlike basic training, women in those courses participated in lessons and exercises alongside male troopers. That was another new occurrence in Israel.

## Deployment

After completing their training, the women transferred to their active service postings. The majority moved to Border Police companies and began performing their duties. The first 16 troopers and two NCOs were posted to *Lamed-Vav* Company (Company 36, LV), which operated on the southeastern area of the Seam Zone, near Beit Guvrin Kibbutz. In LV, the troopers patrolled the border area between Israel and the Palestinian Authority and gained their first experience in active operations and unit life. A few months later, 10 of these troopers relocated to two SAMAG units, 5 troopers each. Further assignments to companies without policewomen included at least four troopers who graduated together and created a female support group in a mostly male environment.<sup>64</sup> However, to prevent the opposition from company commanders (as discussed later), the Border Police commander ordered that female troopers should not account for more than 10 percent in any single unit.<sup>65</sup>

At first, women mostly acted on patrol as regular troopers, but in time they trained to fill all positions available, such as patrol commander, driver, radio operator, medic, and so on.<sup>66</sup> In principle, female troopers were fit for all operational duties, but actual practice varied from unit to unit, according to the company commander's policy, which is described later.

The first operational female troopers felt as if they were under constant scrutiny. They knew they were making history and were aware of the objections toward them. "It seemed everyone was looking at me all the time," said Dikla Hanuqer. "I had to prove myself to them, show them that women can do everything like men." Hanuqer was one of the troopers transferred to a SAMAG company, where she participated in policing the Negev Desert in Southern Israel. Hanuqer continued, "When confronting violent criminals and car thieves,



[we] sometimes needed to use force. As a woman, I knew that I had to prove [that] I also could hit when needed.”<sup>67</sup>

Some female troopers went from basic combat training directly to the NCO course. After graduating, they acted as NCOs in operational companies or as drill instructors. These instructors commanded the cadres of women recruits that followed them, as well as male conscripts.<sup>68</sup>

The initial reports on female integration in active duty varied. Because the women were select volunteers, unlike the men, they were usually more intelligent, as well as better disciplined and motivated. Female presence on patrols improved the behavior and discipline of male troopers. In missions that involved contact with female civilians, suspects, or protesters, women proved invaluable. Finally, social integration between men and women in the companies, as a whole, was also very successful.<sup>69</sup>

However, women were prone to lose their motivation when engaged in monotonous duties, such as long and repetitive border patrols. They also tended to be less physically fit than was required, which detracted from the unit’s preparedness and contributed to their chances of being injured.<sup>70</sup>

## **Challenges**

The integration of women in the Border Police faced various challenges from its earliest stages. First, the innovation posed by women in combat units, which broke traditional gender roles, raised many objections. “We had to change the Israeli prejudice regarding women in combat roles, prove that a woman isn’t only a mother,” said Shapira.<sup>71</sup>

This change did not come easily. “Girls have their office, their telephone . . . they don’t need to shoot and fight,” said Rami Levi, a male recruit who trained alongside the first female course, in an interview, while laughing with his comrades.<sup>72</sup> Not only 18-year-old conscripts objected. “Ideologically and principally, I think that women troopers should not integrate into Border Police operational units and that men should replace them,” said the head of the Border Police training department in 1997.<sup>73</sup> Major General Sadan recalled: “We had to fight male chauvinism and prejudice . . . even within the Border Police, against commanders who believed the stereotype, [which claimed] that women could not be warriors.”<sup>74</sup> Sadan continued, saying that “some disparaged the idea. [They said,] ‘Why did he do that for?’ ‘Who needs women in fighting units?’”<sup>75</sup> Even the minister for public security, the renowned war hero Avigdor Kahalani, was a skeptic.<sup>76</sup> When interviewed in 1997 with then-Lieutenant Shapira, he said, “I prefer that my wife will continue wearing nail polish, rather than wander around the house with a knife between her teeth.”<sup>77</sup>

Some senior officers had little faith in women’s abilities. At least three out of five brigade commanders were opposed to women integrating in their units.<sup>78</sup>

“Company commanders are opposed to women troopers, and their opinion should not be disregarded,” claimed Brigadier General Bentzi Sau, commander of the Northern Brigade. “What if,” he added, “a patrol that included women needs to enter Palestinian-controlled territory?” This officer and some of his colleagues advocated posting female troopers in the areas around Jerusalem, “mainly on checkpoint duty.” That meant putting women back in their traditional police role, conducting searches on female civilians.<sup>79</sup>

Another cause for objection was the traditional male belief that a man’s role includes protecting and sheltering women. Kahalani voiced such feelings when explaining his opposition to women in combat service: “I believe that girls can do anything. But I fear the moment when girls will be under fire, facing an enemy. I wouldn’t want a girl to go through that horrific experience. . . . [Women] should not experience facing an enemy and seeing friends [killed].”<sup>80</sup> Such attitudes caused male instructors, at times, to lower their demands of the women. “The boys had some difficulty at first. . . . with training girls,” said Lieutenant Shapira. “If a girl had a stomach ache . . . [they would say to her,] ‘Sit down, it’s OK’. . . . Until we taught them that they [the women] could train even if their stomach hurts and that even if someone is crying, its [*sic*] fine. When a man sees a girl crying . . . that’s it for him! [He thinks that if] she is crying, she should sit down and relax. No! She can continue training even if it’s difficult for her.”<sup>81</sup>

These reasons led some commanders to refrain from using women in more complicated or dangerous, and therefore prestigious, missions. In some units, for example, female troopers were barred from participating in arrests or were positioned in safer positions in the rear.<sup>82</sup> Hanuquer concluded: “We felt that our commanders were overprotective. They wouldn’t let us participate in some missions, either because they feared for us, or they didn’t believe that we could perform as well as men.”<sup>83</sup>

Gender-biased views of women troopers were not limited to the police. Civilians, especially those from communities that hold traditional views of gender roles, such as Oriental Jews or Arabs, found dealing with the new policewomen difficult at times. Integrated patrols in Taybe, an Israeli-Arab town, reported that civilians repeatedly insulted female troopers.<sup>84</sup> Hanuquer reported a similar experience: “Bedouin Arabs, who have no esteem for women, didn’t know what to make of us, or why a woman would want to check their identity cards. In the beginning, they would completely ignore us, and only speak to policemen.”<sup>85</sup>

Resentment, based on the feeling that women received preferential treatment during training, also fueled objections. Differences in service conditions during basic training were another cause, or excuse, for a grudge. One example of this was the difference in lodging conditions: while men trainees had to sleep under canvas, the women were posted in a concrete building. Another was the

fact that female trainees were exempt from guard detail, which added to the burden on the men.<sup>86</sup> “There was a lot of it [objection to women’s service]. The troopers in the training center kept saying that the staff was pampering us, that we are not doing the same things they did, that we cannot [do it],” said Hanuqer.<sup>87</sup> A report cautioned that male trainees saw their female colleagues as “prima donnas” and advised combining both sexes in as many details and exercises as possible.<sup>88</sup>

The physical aspect of training and operations also was challenging. At the time, Israeli women did not grow up considering service in a combat unit possible, and usually did not prepare themselves physically for military service. Male recruits, on the other hand, tended to train for months before enrolling, many of them under the supervision of private or IDF-sponsored professional trainers.<sup>89</sup> Therefore, the women who joined the Border Police at that early stage were relatively unfit.

Knowing this, and wishing to accept as many suitable candidates as possible, the Border Police set relatively low physical fitness demands for the female volunteers.<sup>90</sup> Combined with the inexperience in training women, this led to many injuries during the course. “We all returned wounded from the squad exercise: [with] blood, cuts, dislocated elbows,” said Private Hannah Shimon, and she added that for them “[visiting the] hospital is a regular thing.”<sup>91</sup> While Shimon spoke enthusiastically, telling a news reporter how she and her friends surmounted every obstacle in front of them, others found the training too hard. Three trainees left the course, apparently due to the physical and psychological strain.<sup>92</sup> Others remained and suffered. In a Border Police general staff meeting, the officer responsible for the project admitted that the level of skeletal strain fractures among female trainees was higher than average and that adjusting the training program did not succeed in preventing injuries.<sup>93</sup> Additionally, female troopers were more likely to need medical treatment and sick leave while on deployment, due to the strenuous activity.<sup>94</sup>

There were also practical and technical problems. For example, the bases of the Border Police, which had never housed women before, were unprepared for the new inhabitants. At the training center, there was no room for female trainees in the tents used by men or to set separate ones. The training center’s staff vacated one of the few buildings available, which became a women’s dormitory. Likewise, companies’ home bases lacked facilities for women. In some units, female troopers were lodged in “soldier houses,” government hostels located in major cities, and not on the base in which they served.<sup>95</sup> Another example was the weapon issued to women. At that time, troopers carried the M16A1 assault rifle, while NCOs and officers used the less common CAR15 carbine, which is shorter and lighter. Experience showed that most female troopers, being shorter on average than men, had difficulties handling the standard assault rifle.<sup>96</sup> In the

beginning, only exceptionally short troopers (both women and men) were given carbines; but in time, all female troopers carried them long before the weapon became standard issue. However, this caused further resentment. The men, who considered the carbine a status symbol, considered its issue to rookie women unfair.<sup>97</sup> Other problems involved the military's bureaucracy. At first, the IDF refused to acknowledge the training women passed as equivalent to the military level or to grant them "warrior status" like male troopers.<sup>98</sup>

Existing sources do not mention sexual harassment as a serious problem. There could be several explanations for this. First, perhaps discipline, esprit de corps, and camaraderie prevented harassment from becoming a widespread phenomenon. Second, the constant supervision of the project by headquarters, as well as the corps commander's personal interest in its success as discussed later, might have encouraged officers to prevent misconduct. Third, it is possible the different social norms at the time made women accept behaviors we consider offensive. Last, the women, feeling like pioneers and knowing that they were continuously being tested, might have chosen to "keep a stiff upper lip," seeing sexual harassment as another way for men to project their resentment toward their position. "There were many [offensive] remarks, at first," said Hanuqer. "Remember, the harassment [prevention] law was not too well known then. You got some good [male] friends, but there are also those who see you simply as a sexual object."<sup>99</sup>

## **Precautions and Solutions**

One of Major General Sadan's first steps, when initiating female integration, was to gain his superiors' support for it: "I went to Minister of Public Security Shahal and Inspector-General Hefetz and presented my idea. I received their full support. . . . Without it the Border Police would not have succeeded."<sup>100</sup> That support ensured the cooperation of senior commanders within the police and Border Police, as well as the ministry's help in dealing with the IDF.

The most serious objection to overcome was that of commanders within the Border Police. Headquarters rightly regarded the commanders' attitude toward integration as crucial for success: "Some brigade/company commanders have concerns regarding women troopers in operational units and duties. Wherever they are concerned—there is no integration. Wherever they are not—we see that women troopers integrate successfully."<sup>101</sup> Sadan, the Border Police commander, countered this in two ways. First, he personally followed the project and helped solve the problems that arose. Lieutenant Shapira felt that interest firsthand: "I got full support from the Border Police Commander. Whatever I asked for, he would supply. . . . I had an open line to him."<sup>102</sup> Moreover, Sadan made it clear to his subordinates that he expected the project to succeed. In September 1997, facing the opposition of brigade commanders, he ordered the

further integration of women into almost all available training courses and declared that the project “had passed the point of no return.”<sup>103</sup> Unit commanders were told that successful integration was a part of their duty and that they were personally responsible for any outcome. Conversely, Sadan agreed to limit the number of female troopers in any single company, at least for the initial phases of the project, as a means to decrease objections among company commanders.<sup>104</sup>

The initial deployment of women was accompanied by activities aimed at educating the men regarding the right ways to integrate women. “I went from one unit to another, and met with the officers and NCOs,” said Shapira. “We would have long discussions. . . . We told them how to integrate [women], how to notice harmful remarks [toward the female troopers], how to make sure that the boys don’t leave the girls behind [at the base] when going on mission.”<sup>105</sup> These meetings, as well as routine visits by the officers in charge of the project, enabled headquarters to closely monitor the way in which integration progressed and reinforced the company commanders’ responsibility to success. “We watched them through a magnifying glass,” summarized Shapira.<sup>106</sup>

Border Police headquarters planned women’s integration as a long-lasting project. The human resources department created a new office dedicated to female integration to oversee integration throughout all different phases and units. The recruitment of women directly to officer and NCO training, alongside those sent to basic combat training, illustrate one forward-looking solution, which was designed to provide the new troopers with both assistance and role models from their first day on deployment. Another was the integration of female instructors in predominantly male training courses, such as the NCO course and basic combat training. This accustomed male trainees to seeing women both as professional troopers and as commanders and promoted cooperation in the units to which those men later deployed.<sup>107</sup>

During the first years of female integration, the Border Police studied it intently. Headquarters sponsored research projects designed to improve integration. These examined the attitudes of female troopers, commanders, and staff officers to integration and inspected the various phases and components of the project. For example, one study discovered that a high Quality Index score did not necessarily predict successful integration and might even be detrimental. Shapira admitted that “we had very high quality girls at first, but we found out it wasn’t always for the best. The gap [between women and men] was too wide. . . . If a woman is reading poetry on a Jeep, while the other team members do not understand why she does it—it’s a problem.”<sup>108</sup> Other research, led by the police chief medical officer, looked into the physical side effects of operational duty on women.<sup>109</sup> The corps quickly implemented the lessons learned by those studies, for example, by supplying female trainees with a special diet or by issuing them appropriate boots.<sup>110</sup>

The last measure that likely assisted integration had to do with the troopers' gender identity. While assuming a role previously reserved to men, conscripts did not embrace nor mimic stereotypically male behavior. When asked whether she feared losing her femininity, Private Mutznik replied, "I don't think so. When we return home [on leave], we pretty up again. . . . And also here [in the training center], as aggressive as we are during exercises, when we get to our rooms we love to shower, wear perfume."<sup>111</sup> "We are women first, warriors second," added Private Gueta. "We bring new points [of view] to warfare."<sup>112</sup> These women's attitudes mirror their commanders' beliefs and actions. "We didn't try 'making men out of them,' on the contrary," said Shapira. "It was all about who we are and what our character is."<sup>113</sup> One scene on the television report shows where that attitude came from: a trainee sits on the ground, pressing a bruise on her head and sobbing. Lieutenant Shapira consoles her, offering her water and gently encouraging her. Shapira's behavior sends a strong message: that she regards crying as legitimate behavior.<sup>114</sup> Because some researchers claim that women combat soldiers are "distanced from their femininity" during service and internalize misogynistic, self-hating viewpoints, the policy of the Border Police on this matter probably helped engender a more wholesome viewpoint within the troopers.<sup>115</sup>

## Conclusion

In May 2000, the Border Police human resources department presented the status of female integration in the corps. Four years after the first experimental basic training course, there were 150 operational female troopers in more than 20 companies, accounting for 3 percent of all operational personnel in the Border Police. Few women were also serving as career officers, having opted to remain in service after the termination of their mandatory term.<sup>116</sup>

The concerns regarding female troopers mostly dispelled with time. As more women joined, they stopped being a curiosity and became a part of the natural order of things. Male troopers, commanded by women drill inspectors and officers at basic training, regarded female troopers as equal colleagues when deployed together.

Female troopers quickly gained their final vindication while under fire. During the first years of the twenty-first century, Arab terrorist organizations increased their attacks on Israeli civilians. In October 2000, an undeclared war broke out between the Palestinian Authority and Israel, accompanied by massive riots in Israeli-Arab settlements. Police officers, and especially Border Police troopers, participated in the struggle against terrorism and anarchy. In countless incidents, female troopers proved themselves as professional and brave as the men fighting beside them. Since 2001, nine female troopers were decorated for bravery under fire, including the late Hadar Cohen and Hadas Malka.

The Border Police set the trend in female integration. In early 2000, the IDF deployed the first integrated infantry company, which in 2004 became the Karakal Battalion (33d Battalion). In the following years, women integrated into many other units, including artillery, air defense, military police, search and rescue, and the IDF K9 unit (*Oketz*). These units made use of the experience gained by the Border Police. “The IDF came to learn from us,” recalled Shapira. “*Karakal [sic]*, the Air Force . . . they wanted to know everything: physiological aspects, diet, how to integrate women together with men.”<sup>117</sup> The Israel Police also were affected. Women officers, who began as troopers, transferred to the “blue” police and advanced within the service.<sup>118</sup> Following the precedent set by the Border Police, policewomen entered into new operational police units and roles. For example, women serve today as SWAT operatives (YASAM in Israel), K9 operators, crime scene investigators, and bomb disposal technicians.

As of 2018, 1,000 women serve in the Border Police. A significant majority of them, 807, fulfill operational roles, the rest serving in the corps’ administrative branches. The 745 women troopers constitute about 25 percent of all conscripts and 20 percent of all of the corps’ operational personnel. Another 100 troopers serve in the Border Police Women Patrol, which is a separate unit tasked with assisting the regular police in Jerusalem.<sup>119</sup> In addition, 50 civilian women, which were former troopers, continue to serve in reserve companies and are recruited in times of emergency.<sup>120</sup> Female Border Police officers attained high ranks, though no woman has yet served as an operational company commander.

Female integration also helped improve the public image of the Border Police. The Israeli media followed the female warriors from the beginning and reported on them disproportionately to their initially small numbers. For the first time, the press presented the Border Police as a forward-looking, ethical organization, which helped advance female empowerment and equality. The results were dramatic. In the last few years, the Border Police has become the most sought-after unit for recruits, ahead of IDF’s units.<sup>121</sup> This change, in part, is due to the widespread integration of women in the corps.

The story of women troopers in the Israel Border Police is an example of successful integration of women into security organizations. The women and men of Israel’s Border Police proved that motivation, determination, planning, and continuous learning could lead to revolutionary outcomes, especially when the organization itself is committed to successfully integrating women.

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## Notes

Editor’s note: sources originally in Hebrew have been translated into English by the author.

1. The Damascus Gate is located on the border between the Jewish and Arab parts of Jerusalem and was the location of numerous terror attacks against Israeli security forces and civilians.



2. The term *trooper* denotes a low-ranking operational law-enforcement officer. It provides a gender-neutral alternative to “policeman/policewoman,” while preventing any misunderstandings, which may arise from the use of the term *officer*.
3. Because police rank titles differ between various organizations, the article will use the equivalent standard military nomenclature (e.g., “private” instead of “constable,” “lieutenant” for “inspector,” etc.). The complete Israeli police rank ladder can be viewed at “Structure,” Israel Police, 13 February 2012.
4. Efrat Forsher, Shlomo Cesana, and Yori Yalon, “Heroic Policewoman Murdered by Terrorists in Jerusalem,” *Israel Hayom*, 4 February 2016.
5. Daniel K. Eisenbud, “Hadas Malka, Killed by Terrorist, Remembered as Loving, Brave Warrior,” *Jerusalem Post*, 17 June 2017.
6. Both troopers were posthumously promoted and commended for valor: Hadar Cohen was awarded the Medal of Distinguished Service, and Hadas Malka received the inspector general’s citation.
7. Tal Jonathan-Zamir, David Weisburd, and Badi Hasisi, *Policing Terrorism, Crime Control, and Police-Community Relations: Learning from the Israeli Experience* (Heidelberg, Switzerland: Springer Cham, 2014), 12–13. Note that since the book’s publication, another district and division were added to the police, bringing their numbers to the ones cited above.
8. Zamir, Weisburd, and Hasisi, *Policing Terrorism*, 14.
9. Zamir, Weisburd, and Hasisi, *Policing Terrorism*, 13.
10. Larrie E. Sullivan and Marie Simonetti Rosen, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Law Enforcement* (London: Sage, 2005), 1:1, 131.
11. Yossef Argaman, *The Border: Episodes in Border Police History* (Tel-Aviv: Ministry of Defense, 1995), 181–82. Original in Hebrew.
12. Argaman, *The Border*, 32.
13. Argaman, *The Border*, 21.
14. Ofra Elad, “‘Every Man to Arms—Every Woman, on the Watch!’: The Female Palmach Member,” in *Palmach—Sheaves and Sword*, ed. Yehi’am Weitz (Tel-Aviv: Ministry of Defense, 2000): 213–14. Original in Hebrew.
15. Elad, “‘Every Man to Arms’,” 214.
16. Meir Chazan, “The Struggle of Kibbutz Women to Participate in Guard Duties During the Arab Revolt, 1936–1939,” *Journal of Israeli History*, no. 31 (2012): 83–108, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13531042.2012.660380>.
17. Hanoch Patishi, *An Underground in Uniform: The “Hagganah” Organization and the Jewish Soldiers from Palestine in the British Army, 1939–1946* (Tel-Aviv: Ministry of Defense, 2006), 79–80. Original in Hebrew.
18. For example, see “The A.T.S. Are Doing Well,” *Palestine Post*, 11 May 1942, 4; “ATS Drivers to Parade in Jerusalem,” *Palestine Post*, 25 August 1943, 3; “Our A.T.S. in Italy: Doing Fine Work,” *Palestine Post*, 23 June 1944, 4; and “WAAFs Complete Course,” *Palestine Post*, 8 December 1944, 4.
19. The Haganah, established in 1920, was the largest self-defense organization of the Jewish community in Mandate Palestine. A nation-wide organization, it followed the orders of the Jewish Agency and had, therefore, left wing and socialist tendencies. It generally followed a moderate line, combining collaboration with the British government and covert preparations for independence. See Patishi, *Underground in Uniforms*, 80–83.
20. The Palmach served as the Haganah’s standing army; 1,000 of its 6,000 members were women. See also Elad, “‘Every Man to Arms’.”
21. Etzel (the Hebrew acronym for *Irgun Tzva’i Le’umi*, “National Army Organization”), established in 1937, and Lehi (*Lohamey Herut Yisrael*, “Fighters for Israel’s Freedom”), established in 1940, were smaller movements with right wing political leanings. These two groups generally took a more aggressive stance regarding the conflict with the Arabs and the British authorities.
22. Uri Dromi, ed., *Women in the Israel Defense Force: A Symposium Held on 21 November 2001 at the Israel Democracy Institute* (Jerusalem: Old City Press, 2003), 8.
23. Elad, “‘Every Man to Arms’,” 232–33.

24. Idit Shafran Gittleman, "Women Service in the IDF: Between a People's Army and Gender Equality," Israel Democracy Institute, accessed 23 May 2018. Original in Hebrew.
25. Edna Lomsky-Feder and Orna Sasson-Levy, *Women Soldiers and Citizenship in Israel: Gendered Encounters with the State* (London: Routledge, 2018), 16; also see Gittleman, "Women Service in the IDF"
26. Amos Har'el, "Gender Equality Reached the Egyptian and Jordanian Borders," *Haaretz*, 23 October 2016. Original in Hebrew.
27. Draft for the *1948 Yearly Police Report*, L-2143/8, Israel National Archive (INA). Original in Hebrew.
28. Zipora Shchori-Rubin, "Policing and Gender: The Integration of Women in the Israel Police, 1948–1981," *Cathedra*, no. 164 (2017): 150–52. Original in Hebrew.
29. Shchori-Rubin, "Policing and Gender," 161–62.
30. Carmel Herzelia Bulletin, 27 November 1969, INA.
31. Hirsch was the first Israeli woman to attain that rank at any security service.
32. For example, see Yoram Epstein and Yuval Heled, "Women Integration in Combat Roles: The Physiological Aspect," *Ma'arachot*, no. 460 (2015): 45–49, original in Hebrew; and Gat, "Women in War," 46–53. Original in Hebrew.
33. Gat, "Women in War," 51.
34. Rachel Tevet-Weizel and Ariel Weiner, "Storming Ahead, Despite All," *Ma'arachot*, no. 456 (2014): 38–40. Original in Hebrew.
35. Gat, "Women in War," 48–49; and Tevet-Weizel and Weiner, "Storming Ahead, Despite All," 39.
36. For example, the IDF journal, *Ma'arachot*, published several articles on the subject, arguing both for and against women integration. See, for example, Gat, "Women in War," 46–53, original in Hebrew; also see Anat Qedem, "Women and the Military—a Biological-Historical Analysis or a Gendered Opinion?," *Ma'arachot*, no. 383 (2002): 90–91, original in Hebrew; and Idit Shafran Gittleman, "Women in the IDF: The Challenge of an 'Integrated' Army," Israel Democracy Institute, 28 February 2018.
37. Tal Misgav and Alissa Chibotrayov, "A Woman of Valour Who Can Find?," Israel Border Police Museum (IBPM). Original in Hebrew.
38. On 29 October 1956, the first day of Israel's military operation against Egypt ("The Sinai War"/"Suez Crisis"), the Border Police were ordered to enforce curfew in several Israeli-Arab villages. In the village Kafr Qassem, the policemen summarily executed 49 civilians, who were returning to their homes after a day's work, unaware of the curfew. See Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881–2001* (New York: Vintage, 2001), 295.
39. For a discussion of the preferences of Jewish ethnic groups regarding military service, see Stuart A. Cohen, *Israel and its Army: From Cohesion to Confusion* (London: Routledge, 2008): 109–11.
40. Oriental Jews, whose families immigrated to Israel from Muslim countries, have adopted many of the cultural characteristics of the societies within which they lived. Therefore, members of this group tend to have traditional attitudes toward gender roles, similar to those prevalent in Arab society. For example, see Liat Kulik, "Examination of Gender Role Attitudes among Spouses: A Comparative Analysis," *Megamot*, no. 1 (2010): 81–102. Original in Hebrew.
41. Brynjar Lia, *A Police Force without a State: The History of the Palestinian Security Forces in the West Bank and Gaza* (Reading, UK: Ithaca Press, 2006).
42. *Israel Police Yearly Report, 1996*, 47, IPHC. Original in Hebrew.
43. *Israel Police Yearly Report, 1996*, 48. Original in Hebrew.
44. Erez Tadmor, "The Peace Formula Blood Test—The Oslo Accords and the People of Tomorrow," *Mida*, 14 September 2014. Original in Hebrew.
45. Misgav and Chibotrayov, "A Woman of Valour Who Can Find?"
46. *Dan Shilon Live*, 13 June 1996. Original in Hebrew.
47. At that time, female soldiers had to undergo a two-week basic training course conducted on gender-segregated bases.

48. “Quality Index” or “Quality Group” (*Kvutzat Eichut*, KABA) is the main personality index used by the IDF to assign its recruits. Scores vary from 41 to 56, 43 being the lowest allowed for recruitment. NCO candidates must have a Quality Index score of 48 and above, while officer and special operation unit candidates need a score of 52 or higher.
49. *Report on Women Recruitment*, Border Police Psychology Branch, 14 January 1997, IBPM. Original in Hebrew.
50. “In the Line of Fire,” Channel 2 News, 23 May 1996. Original in Hebrew.
51. Dikla Hanuqer, interview with author, 30 May 2018, IPHC. Original in Hebrew.
52. *Report on Women Recruitment*.
53. *Report on Women Recruitment*.
54. David W. Armstrong III et al., “Stress Fracture Injury in Young Military Men and Women,” *Bone* 35, no. 3 (September 2004): 806–16, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bone.2004.05.014>.
55. Hadas Shapira-Madmoni, interview with author, 3 June 2018.
56. *Report on Women Recruitment*.
57. Shapira-Madmoni interview.
58. Hanuqer interview.
59. “In the Line of Fire.”
60. “In the Line of Fire.”
61. Tank and artillery crews are qualified as Rifleman 03, while noncombat soldiers qualify as Rifleman 02.
62. *Report on Women Recruitment*.
63. *Report on Women Recruitment*.
64. *Report on Women Recruitment*.
65. *Status Report—Border Police Women Troopers*, 10 September 1997, IBPM. Original in Hebrew.
66. Hanuqer interview; also see *Report on Women Recruitment*.
67. Hanuqer interview.
68. *Report on Women Recruitment*.
69. *Report on Women Recruitment*.
70. *Report on Women Recruitment*.
71. Shapira-Madmoni interview.
72. “In the Line of Fire.”
73. *Status Report—Border Police Women Troopers*.
74. Misgav and Chibotrayov, “A Woman of Valour Who Can Find?”
75. Israel Sadan, interview with author, 30 May 2018.
76. Kahalani, a former IDF brigadier general, was appointed minister of public security in July 1996. For his gallant actions during the 1973 war, Kahalani was awarded the Israeli Medal of Valor.
77. *Dan Shilon Live*.
78. Shapira-Madmoni interview.
79. *Status Report—Border Police Women Troopers*.
80. *Dan Shilon Live*.
81. *Dan Shilon Live*.
82. *Status Report—Border Police Women Troopers*.
83. Hanuqer interview.
84. *Status Report—Border Police Women Troopers*.
85. Hanuqer interview.
86. The reason for this was to prevent strain fractures, which the women were more prone to. See *Report on Women Recruitment*.
87. Hanuqer interview.
88. *Report on Women Recruitment*.
89. For example, during his high school senior year, the author participated in a nationwide IDF preenlistment fitness program. The program consisted of groups of youths (all male) throughout the country, who met twice a week to exercise with a professional

- sports trainer. Participation was free of charge and was meant to prepare the trainees for the selection tests of elite units and the physical rigors of basic training.
90. *Report on Women Recruitment.*
  91. "In the Line of Fire."
  92. Hanuqer interview.
  93. *Status Report—Border Police Women Troopers.*
  94. *Status Report—Border Police Women Troopers.*
  95. Hanuqer interview.
  96. *Report on Women Recruitment.*
  97. Hanuqer interview.
  98. At the time, combat soldiers were granted "Warrior Status" by the IDF, which entailed different benefits, including a higher discharge grant and better accessibility to scholarships. See Orna Sasson-Levi, "Feminism and Military Gender Practices: Israeli Women Soldiers in 'Masculine' Roles," *Sociological Inquiry* 73, no. 3 (August 2003): 462, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-682X.00064>; see also Shapira-Madmoni interview.
  99. Hanuqer interview.
  100. Sadan interview.
  101. *Status Report—Border Police Women Troopers.*
  102. Shapira-Madmoni interview.
  103. *Status Report—Border Police Women Troopers.*
  104. *Status Report—Border Police Women Troopers.*
  105. Shapira-Madmoni interview.
  106. Shapira-Madmoni interview.
  107. *Report on Women Recruitment.*
  108. Shapira-Madmoni interview.
  109. *Israel Police Human Resources Division Yearly Report, 1998*, 51, IPHC. Original in Hebrew.
  110. Shapira-Madmoni interview.
  111. "In the Line of Fire."
  112. "In the Line of Fire."
  113. Shapira-Madmoni interview.
  114. "In the Line of Fire."
  115. Sasson-Levi, "Feminism and Military Gender Practices," 451–53.
  116. One of them was Dikla Hanuqer, who still serves today (2018). See "Women Service in the Border Police," 28 May 2000, IBPM. Original in Hebrew.
  117. Shapira-Madmoni interview.
  118. Col Hadas Shapira-Madmoni is one of them.
  119. The Border Police Women Patrol unit, established in 1999–2000, patrols the Jewish neighborhoods in Jerusalem to deter and detect terrorist attacks. Their role is similar to that of regular police officers, while the troopers' role resembles that of soldiers. Therefore, the women serving in this unit receive lower-level training than the troopers.
  120. According to Israeli Defense Service Law (1986), women are required to serve in military reserve units until the age of 36 (men serve until they are 40), or until they become pregnant.
  121. Amos Harel and Yaniv Kubovitch, "Border Police Is Now Israel's Most Popular Combat Unit Among New Recruits," *Haaretz*, 8 September 2016.

## **What Should We Expect from the Women of ISIS?**

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*Bombshell: Women and Terrorism.* By Mia Bloom. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011. Pp. 320. \$29.95 (hardcover); \$29.95 (e-book).

*Women in Modern Terrorism: From Liberation Wars to Global Jihad to the Islamic State.* By Jessica Davis. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2017. Pp. 192. \$74.00 (hardcover); \$37.00 (paperback); \$35.00 (e-book).

*Western Foreign Fighters: The Threat to Homeland and International Security.* By Phil Gurski. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017. Pp. 186. \$67.00 (hardcover); \$34.00 (paperback); \$32.00 (e-book).

*ISIS Defectors: Inside Stories of the Terrorist Caliphate.* By Anne Speckhard and Ahmet S. Yayla. McLean, VA: Advances Press, 2016. Pp. 372. \$24.99 (hardcover); \$9.99 (e-book).

At least 40,000 foreigners traveled to Syria and Iraq to participate in the conflict that spilled out of the Arab Spring uprising against the Bashar Assad regime. And while other wars in the past have attracted even greater numbers of foreign fighters, this instance was unique because one of the factions, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), also recruited civilians for the nation-building work of its self-declared caliphate. In addition to the local women who were coerced

into marrying ISIS fighters or were exploited in detention centers, more than 1,000 women from other countries volunteered to join, spending their own funds and defying authorities from North America to Southeast Asia to attempt to travel to the caliphate.

In addition to the puzzle of why women would join such a brutally misogynistic organization, the motivations of female ISIS supporters have become a pressing policy concern for governments worldwide now that many are trying to escape the wreck of the caliphate and return home. While some countries refuse to permit their citizens to return without going to prison, others permit reintegration and some were at least initially more lenient on female returnees. Men might be dangerous terrorists-in-waiting, but women who may have been just as extreme in their views were considered to be victims, particularly if they had children with them. And yet, it is clear that just as some men remain engaged in extremism, some women do as well. And some women have vowed to raise their children on ISIS ideology and continue the threat for another generation.

Female ISIS members are therefore a major security concern, but there has been relatively little research that permits an understanding of these challenges. Although there are a number of books that describe ISIS ideology, history, and operations, few of them make any mention of the women of ISIS. Among the books that focus on women as terrorists, and ISIS women in particular, there is some useful research that shines a much-needed light into this dark corner of the caliphate.

What follows is not necessarily a review of the work of women who research terrorism or jihadis, of which there is an extensive amount of literature available, but a review of ISIS-era books dealing with women jihadis, which is much more finite (and most of which has been written by women). Certainly, there are insightful works of relevant scholarship that fall outside of these parameters. For example, Mohammed Hafez's 2007 book, *Suicide Bombers in Iraq*, explores the gendered portrayal of the humiliation of Muslims that jihadi recruiters employ. These appeals to "courageous men or lions" emphasize the need to reclaim the honor of Muslim women against oppressors, and some use female spokeswomen to challenge young men to come and fight to defend them (pp. 143–58).

A few think tanks have produced reports on women who traveled to join ISIS. In particular, the London-based Institute for Strategic Dialogue interviewed 130 women who lived in the caliphate, and the data appears in two 2015 reports, *Becoming Mulan?: Female Western Migrants to ISIS* by Carolyn Hoyle, Alexandra Bradford, and Ross Frenett, and "*Til Martyrdom do us Part*": *Gender and the ISIS Phenomenon* by Erin Saltman and Melanie Smith. These reports portray the *mujahirat* (female immigrants) of the caliphate as fulfilling

different roles than their male counterparts but otherwise no different than other foreign fighters: they are motivated by propaganda, claiming that Sunnis are being attacked and debased and that it is necessary to fight back for survival. They view war crimes against prisoners and civilians as due vengeance, but they also have no love for the Syrian women of the Islamic State whom they feel discriminate against them. But these reports also argue that there is no single profile of mujahirat.

So what information do we have about women who become ISIS supporters that might be helpful in formulating national security policies to address potential threats? Two recent manuscripts on women in terrorism, written at opposite ends of the ISIS era, present general profiles of women in extremist groups that can be applied to female travelers to the caliphate who are requesting repatriation to the West.

Mia Bloom's 2011 *Bombshell: Women and Terrorism* offers an engaging overview of women in modern terrorism that was published at the very start of the Syrian uprising, so it references al-Qaeda in Iraq and its use of local women as suicide bombers during the international occupation rather than the would-be nation-building mujahirat who followed. The focus is on al-Qaeda and how "a new generation of women is emerging to help ensure the group's survival after all the drones and missiles have attacked the current leadership"—a topic that not only remains timely but is applicable to post-caliphate ISIS as much as to post-Bin Laden al-Qaeda (p. 32).

Chapter 1 is a historical overview that provides the reasons why women are particularly effective suicide bombers, mostly because they have been less likely to be suspected or searched by security personnel. The organizations that have used female bombers have enjoyed an average of eight times more press coverage per attack because of the seeming novelty of a female bomber. Further, their use demands security personnel scrutinize women more closely, further feeding the narrative of grievance that women are being dishonored. Bloom details this cycle in her case study chapters, which include not just jihadis but the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which relied heavily on female bombers. These case studies (Chechnya, Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka, and Palestine) are couched in large amounts of background detail and form the majority of the book, so readers interested solely in transnational jihadi groups may be more interested in focusing on the introductory and concluding chapters.

There are particularly rich insights, with *Bombshell* detailing push/pull factors in radicalization that are distinct to women in extremist groups. Bloom details how the even greater degrees of exclusion from political power and financial resources faced by women across societies where men are already denied mobility can make them especially receptive to injustice framing by recruiters. This will be especially acute in war zones and in occupied territories where



opportunities are already scant. But the problem of exclusion is also endemic to new democracies, particularly where religious parties take power in formerly secular states. So, it is important for Western governments to recognize the gendered dimensions of popular democracy when supporting regime change in fragile states (pp. 238–48).

Bloom argues that “terrorism does not end at the barrel of a gun,” stressing the importance of providing pathways for disengagement from extremism that meet the particular needs of women because repressive measures will generate the grievances that fuel radicalization. In the case of women, this also includes reducing the prevalence and stigmatization of sexual abuse that is the one different factor driving women to extremist groups when other social options are taken from them (pp. 27, 30).

Jessica Davis’s 2017 *Women in Modern Terrorism: From Liberation Wars to Global Jihad to the Islamic State* does not provide as many detailed case studies or policy recommendations as *Bombshell*, but it is probably the most comprehensive recent book on the subject, and her analysis has a quantitative basis with the data obtained through the Rand database of Worldwide Terrorism Incidents (RDWTI). Like Bloom, Davis presents an overview of the history of female terrorist but with a focus on suicide bombers, because that is increasingly how terror groups employ women. *Women in Modern Terrorism* tackles the questions of why there has been a sharp increase in female involvement in terrorism in recent years. While certain groups have begun to use large numbers of female suicide bombers—the majority of Boko Haram martyrdom operations are conducted by women—other groups such as al-Shabaab have continued to minimize participation by women. Davis therefore examines factors including the presence or absence of competing terrorist organizations, local culture, and whether female members are local or transnational volunteers (pp. 1–5, 45, 115).

Davis argues that social pull factors are more important in explaining the participation of women than men, although this seems to be based on the dearth of women who become lone actor terrorists more than any reported results. Davis acknowledges that female terrorists receive media coverage that emphasizes their personal stories over their political views, with the explanation that it would be a disservice to the agency of the women to attribute their extremist engagement to relationships (pp. 2, 44–45).

*Women in Modern Terrorism* further differs from *Bombshell* in that it is comprehensive rather than authoritative. It features a very useful literature review rather than a narrative history; it creates a framework for making sense of the empirical findings of a number of studies rather than highlighting original data. It is not clear whether any of the observations the author derived from the RDWTI dataset differ from the results of the other studies she cites or how they

relate to the case studies. The book makes a good introduction to its subject for students, but the author's contributions to the field as a scholar and practitioner deserve to be foregrounded in other work.

Both of these books, in detailing the phenomenon of the role of women in terrorist organizations and the motivations of individual women broadly, provide insights into women as suicide bombers and which push and pull factors impact radicalization pathways of women differently than men. But neither book directly addresses the mujahirat of ISIS, who were not combatants but still more enmeshed with the group than mere supporters who remain at home, or what might be expected of them when they return home. Most of the major books on ISIS likewise devote no particular coverage to the role of the mujahirat, although Jessica Stern and J. M. Berger's *ISIS: The State of Terror* (2015) does have a brief section on the role of women in ISIS, particularly in recruiting other Western women.

Phil Gurksi's *Western Foreign Fighters* attempts to answer the questions of why Westerners join jihadi groups and how their governments should respond, and chapter 5, "Women and Jihad," examines the recent unprecedented wave of more than 500 Western women who joined the caliphate. Like Davis, Gurksi's principal background is as a Canadian national security professional rather than a research academic, so most of the major observations that he presents are not novel. And some consider women as less prone to violence, an argument rejected by Bloom and Davis, a view that initially led to female ISIS returnees being treated as survivors rather than perpetrators and not being subject to the same levels of legal and security scrutiny. For example, he argues that "if you asked women across history if war is worth waging, I am fairly certain you would get a resounding no" because they have suffered more as civilians, and this view is joined with a discussion of the "pluses and minuses" of allowing women soldiers to serve in combat (pp. 93–94).

Although, as with all works on current issues, Gurksi's reported statistics are already out of date, they reflect ISIS at its peak before its rollback and raise interesting questions that bear on the future of its female members. Nearly one-quarter of Western "foreign fighters" were women, and in some countries the figure by the fall of Raqqa, Syria, was closer to one-half. Why did women come in such unprecedented numbers? The question may be asked of men as well, but it is less clear why women continued to arrive up until the end while the flow of men from Europe dwindled. Why was their defection rate back to the West only one-tenth that of males (pp. 96, 99)? It is important to distinguish ISIS from other groups in the Syrian conflict that also recruited large numbers of foreign fighters, but numbers were high for many groups and not just because of ISIS's social media outreach. And the question of why so few women returned while the caliphate was functional but came flooding back as

it collapsed could speak to ideology; however, it could have everything to do with the challenges facing any woman who could be seen through a window let alone one who was heading for the border.

Of all the scholarly manuscripts in print at the time of the fall of the caliphate in late 2017, the most comprehensive view of the experience of women living in the Islamic State is likely to be found in the interviews recorded in Anne Speckhard and Ahmet S. Yayla's 2016 *ISIS Defectors: Inside Stories of the Terrorist Caliphate*. Speckhard and Yayla conducted in-person interviews with 30 individuals who had left ISIS, including 2 European foreign fighters and the families of several others. Only one of the interviewees remained outwardly sympathetic to the jihadi cause and, aside from one woman who said she traveled to Raqqa only to remain with her husband, there is little material presenting the perspective of female ISIS supporters. For that, Speckhard's prior book, *Bride of ISIS: One Young Woman's Path into Homegrown Terrorism* (2015), may be more useful. But given that it is a fictionalized memoir of Shannon Conley, a Colorado convert who tried unsuccessfully to be a mujahirat, which presents a composite profile of female ISIS supporters, the approach may be too novel (no pun intended) for academic researchers to use as source material.

The value of *ISIS Defectors* is the insider accounts of how Western women lived in the Islamic State and how different their apparently privileged experiences were from those of local women who faced systematic abuse. The descriptions of these abuses—in particular, the detailed account provided by the guard at a detention center where hundreds of women at a time were raped by foreign fighters staying on the premises in hotel-like accommodations—are as appalling as media reports of ISIS war crimes that readers expect. Speckhard and Yayla note that the “sex now” promise offered by ISIS to foreign fighters is often overlooked in the discourse about the lure of “paradise” for jihadi martyrs. But, notably, pillage was offered only to mujahidin (foreign fighters). Local fighters, referred to as *ansar* (helpers) were informed that, if they wanted female slaves, they would have to go fight in Iraq or Libya. The “logic” of this system is not explained (pp. 79, 109, 245–48).

The mostly local defectors interviewed in the book had almost no contact with foreign women because of their social status and language barriers. There are a few mentions of women who traveled from around the Arab world—in some cases alone for economic opportunity—but most mentions of foreign women refer to Westerners. By all accounts, the Western mujahirat were afforded special privileges at every level. They kept their children with them in separate accommodations rather than losing their kids to youth training camps. While male foreign fighters performed executions and starred in propaganda, Western women were reportedly not tasked with joining the al-Khansaa Brigade morality enforcers, which were tasked with policing other women for transgressions

with intense physical punishments. Foreign women who arrived without husbands were married off immediately and pressured to remarry if their husbands died, but they were reportedly not enslaved as local women were, although the fates of a few high profile Western mujahirat call the accuracy of these accounts into question (pp. 61, 84, 102, 120, 166).

The mujahirat had their own command structure for online recruitment, which was their sole task, and unlike the local women of al-Khansaa, they were effectively answerable to no one. One ansar reported that Western women, uniquely, could walk the streets without chaperones, and other defectors claimed the Westerners were given the best houses, far more generous food rations, and other privileges. Speckhard and Yayla speculate that perhaps the mujahirat were willing to overlook the explicit extreme misogyny of ISIS because they were afforded positions at the top of the pecking order of the caliphate (pp. 166–67).

When Western and local opposition began to roll back ISIS from its captured territory, the influx of foreign fighters plummeted sharply. But while the male mujahidin dwindled off, the numbers of would-be mujahirat did not, so that women finally comprised 20 percent of European travelers and up to 40 percent of Dutch volunteers, according to Florence Gaub and Julia Lisiecka's 2016 report, *Women in Daesh: Jihadist "Cheerleaders, Active Operatives?"* One possible explanation is that the mujahirat did their jobs effectively despite battlefield losses, continuing their propaganda outreach targeting women with messages of grievances over life in the West.

But they may have been effective because their messaging was sincere based on a very different view of life in the Islamic State than most Western audiences saw. One—likely unintended—long-term consequence of ISIS policy toward mujhirat is that among the women who return to the West will likely be some who viewed their privileged status in the caliphate as halcyon days. There is then a good chance, particularly if they remain in their same social circles that facilitated radicalization, they will continue to maintain this paradigm and nurse grievances about the loss of the Islamic State even as they rear a new generation in the West.

In the meantime, the four books reviewed in this essay offer varying perspectives on women who engage with extremism. The authors ask different and challenging questions about female terrorists and their supporters, whether examining the phenomenon globally or focusing on dynamics particular to ISIS. Future scholarship on the women of ISIS will likely focus on this intergenerational aspect of the jihadi movement, the "lionesses" and their "cubs" as they were known in the caliphate. The ISIS era makes it inevitable that fears of deliberate indoctrination of children by their mothers will be the basis of forthcoming books on women in terrorism.

## **Reengineering Past and Present** **Lessons for the Opening Battles of a New Cold War**

Martin Edwin Andersen

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*Service in a Time of Suspicion: Experiences of Muslims Serving in the U.S. Military Post-9/11.* By Michelle Sandhoff. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2017. Pp 176. \$25.00 (paperback and e-book).

*Equal Opportunity Peacekeeping: Women, Peace, and Security in Post-Conflict States.* By Sabrina Karim and Kyle Beardsley. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017. Pp. 296. \$79.00 (hardcover).

*Gender, Sexuality, and the Cold War: A Global Perspective.* By Philip E. Muehlenbeck. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2017. Pp. 320. \$69.95 (hardcover); \$34.95 (paperback); \$9.99 (e-book.)

When growing up in the 1970s in a small industrial city in America's heartland, this reviewer was told a story—sworn by its teller to be true—that speaks to problems facing Americans at home and abroad, then and today. Tom Kennedy's family was part of the small Jewish community in violence-wracked Northern Ireland. When visiting his family in Belfast, Kennedy said a gang of street toughs accosted him along the local sectarian divide. "Are you a Catholic, or are you a Protestant?" spat their leader, seemingly ready to fight. "I'm neither," Kennedy responded. "I'm Jewish." After a split-second stony stare seemingly meant to size him up pre-eternity, the tough replied evenly, "Are you a Catholic Jew, or a Protestant Jew?" The belief and identity of a stranger—in this case

a misperceived “other”—located outside a local, conventionally accepted box could be both ethereal and potentially harmful. No impartiality was allowed when it came to “them” or “us.”

The three volumes reviewed here, *Service in a Time of Suspicion*; *Equal Opportunity Peacekeeping*; and *Gender, Sexuality, and the Cold War* offer key insights into a world today whose often-toxic divisions along ethnic, national, racial, religious, and sexual lines are both amplified and all-too-frequently distorted by social media, creating fundamental, and too frequently purposeful, misunderstandings. With U.S. leadership challenged on new and formidable military and security horizons, the perspectives offered in each of these works can give rise to a better, more thorough understanding about the global role played by American values and leadership, and how these may be ratified and/or necessarily reengineered to better confront an uncertain future.

A conflict erupting in early April this year over ROTC training held by UCLA and California State University suggests the explosive need to confront questions of political and religious freedom at home and how real conflicts challenge a diversity hailed by many as now firmly rooted in the U.S. military. The stereotyped Muslim attire used in that training appeared to promote cavalier attitudes about Islam that critics say perpetuate an Islamophobic mix of degrading jokes and terrorism stereotypes both damaging and unfair not only to Muslim Americans but also to the many other Muslim, Southwest Asian, and North African students studying in the United States.

It is into this post-9/11 petite maelstrom that military sociologist Michelle Sandhoff seeks to pose new questions, as well as offer new evidence and new (if tentative) answers, to just how many Muslim Americans in the armed forces have been able to serve this country honorably at a time that many colleagues—frequently ignorant when not ill-intentioned, and some even openly racist—deny their colleagues’ patriotism while questioning the fundamentals of their faith. In a short, powerful, and well-written book based on her research focusing on the stories of 15 Muslim American women and men, both active duty and retired and from various Service branches, Sandhoff lays out a necessary path for future discussions not only about the discrimination, lack of trust, and other unhappy experiences of those who have served their country as Muslims but also on how their service has in particular positively affected America’s role in regions where Islam is predominant. As subject matter experts, field operators, and even ad hoc teachers for colleagues about Islam, Muslim American soldiers offer vital perspectives, a cultural competence, needed to increase the chances for success in the field, often with a unique ability for winning hearts and minds abroad beyond that of the average American soldier.

Beyond its unique importance to Muslim Americans, Sandhoff shows, how they are treated while in uniform becomes both a Rorschach test on American

values, as well as a sort of miner's canary on the health of this country's civil discourse. It was the armed forces that led the way for racial progress (though not gender and sexual orientation diversity) within the federal government in the period following World War II, she points out. "Diversity is crucial for the social legitimacy of the U.S. military," she underscores. "Because the military is a powerful social institution that controls the legitimate uses of violence, civilian society prefers a military that resembles the society as a whole" (p. 45).

Negative stereotypes and behavior at the unit level against uniformed Muslim Americans, Sandhoff found, are in evidence even among those who have been educated and trained about Islam and the reasons for its powerful religious and social influence on peoples and lands extending far beyond the Middle East. In some cases, she explains, the negative attitudes about people and peoples in conflict can be attenuated through the deployment of a theory now referred to as the "contact hypothesis," that is, a resolution through communication and subsequent understanding. The contact hypothesis, she notes,

argues that contact between different backgrounds is a means of breaking down prejudice. Since prejudice and group conflict are often based on stereotyping, the opportunity to communicate with members of another group can lead to greater appreciation and understanding of alternative perspectives and experiences, and thereby diminish prejudice (p. 36).

Successful resolution does, in fact, more generally help to implement what Army General Martin E. Dempsey, the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has celebrated in his new book, *Radical Inclusion: What the Post-9/11 World Should Have Taught Us about Leadership* (2018), which, as evidenced by its title, *Radical Inclusion*, is the urgent adaptation and incorporation of those tools leaders need in the competition for the trust and confidence of those they lead.

As a central component of U.S. military culture, Sandhoff riffs, leadership involves using social influence to get a group of people to accomplish a given good; it plays a central role in the success or failure to integrate mutual respect, equal opportunity, and diversity in our armed forces. Leaders are role models, shaping through example as well as command the behavior of other members of the team. She makes an important additional point: "When diversity is left unmanaged, existing social categorizations can overpower the shared military aims and lead to splintering." The challenge, she added, "involves leaders being proactive in managing diversity-related conflicts, and *being fair in their use of rewards and punishment. . . . Leaders communicate through their actions and attitudes what behaviors are expected and acceptable*" (pp. 65–66; emphasis added).

In *Equal Opportunity Peacekeeping*, Sabrina Karim and Kyle Beardsley focus on concrete ways to make United Nations peacekeeping more effective using a



smart and long-awaited effort to remove the barriers to both women's participation and their leadership. The book introduction shows the dichotomy of what is known to work for ridding bias and what are still the facts on the ground. While more women are at the helm of foreign policy in a growing number of countries, and defense forces around the world show greater gender equality, they ask bluntly: "Are blue helmets just for boys?" Their examination is not conducted in a superpower vacuum; U.S. ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley has announced that one of her goals in that position focuses on reforming international peacekeeping. As the authors point out, "Research consistently shows that gender equality contributes to peace or the cessation of violence and human rights violations" (p. 1).

Karim, an assistant professor in government at Cornell University, and Beardsley, an associate professor of political science at Duke University, offer factually fulsome arguments about how gender equality in peace operations can actually improve their operation for all well-meaning actors involved (in headquarters as well as in the field), rather than engage in the academic parlor game of postulating pie-in-the-sky propositions for the already convinced.

The need is there: the gross sexual exploitation and abuse associated in some UN missions have dominated the headlines all too often. In response, for the last three years the emphasis has been on "naming and shaming" those countries whose police and troop contributions seem to endemically include personnel found to engage in such conduct. Part of the response is found in bureaucratic mantras, such as how problems are being solved through changes to increase the participation of women in peacekeeping operations, as evidenced by the ever-increasing numbers of women incorporated into service for these missions.

The authors offer critical ideas that go far beyond that, emphasizing the need for changing the culture at the UN that is clearly necessary if real progress is to be made. They look past the numbers to show that female uniformed peacekeepers tend to be deployed in the safest missions—such as Kosovo and Liberia—rather than those where the UN itself says they are most needed due to levels of sexual violence, such as the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. "Women are less likely to be sent to missions that have experienced high levels of conflict-related violence, particularly sexual violence, and are located in countries with low levels of development," they write. "While it is arguably in such countries that peacekeeping is most needed to improve the security environment, women are being systematically excluded from these important missions" (p. 87). A so-called "gender protection norm"—the idea that women in the military or the police need special protection—also means that too many are in practice shunted into office work when their skill sets, and host country needs, clearly show they should be in the field.

Other major contributions by Karim and Beardsley are focused on how women in UN peacekeeping are themselves the victims of discrimination and harassment and how “masculine traits” of being more competitive and natural warriors are consistently preferred over “feminine traits,” such as abilities to empathize, listen, and communicate. Once deployed, women find even those talents are underutilized, their most frequent complaint being that they both lack mobility and are unable to engage with the communities that they are supposed to be protecting. “They appear to be relegated to safe spaces. Given that such interaction and collaboration are necessary to inspire local women, promote gender equality, and legitimize institutions, if women are unable to forge these relationships, they may not realize well the objectives they have for themselves” (p. 134). They note that the “*ability for men to fully serve as effective peacekeepers is also constrained to the extent that they are not commended for doing the types of important activities traditionally associated with femininity*” (p. 134; emphasis added).

While an “old boy’s network” gives male colleagues free rein to socialize after work, rules and the lack of access to vehicles often mean women colleagues cannot. Determined to stay on the straight and narrow, Karim and Beardsley also slay a much-promoted UN assumption that merely having women peacekeepers guarantees that the mission will be able to communicate with local women and that, therefore, related problems will be solved. In practice, they note:

gender focal points, units, and advisers have the potential to represent an “add women and stir” approach. Most often the positions are held by women, and the gender units are composed mainly of women. We argue that gender mainstreaming may be an important tool [for] dismantling gender power imbalances but that the approach must be much more than adding female bodies to different parts of the mission in the form of technical advisers. (p. 188)

Nor does the mere increase in numbers of female peacekeepers, they point out, mean that the levels of sexual exploitation and abuse in the mission will be reduced.

*Gender, Sexuality, and the Cold War: A Global Perspective* is the latest academic contribution by its editor, Philip E. Muehlenbeck, whose earlier work includes the similarly ambitious *Religion and the Cold War: A Global Perspective* (2012). The George Washington University history professor’s book, *Betting on the Africans: John F. Kennedy’s Courting of African Nationalist Leaders* (2014) on how President Kennedy—based on his earlier insights on how the Cold War could be won or lost depended upon whether Washington or Moscow won the

hearts and minds of the Third World—made changing the image of America in Africa a top priority of his administration. Kennedy’s views on Africa and the fight against the Soviet Union are also key to understanding the 35th president’s slow but soulful embrace of civil rights at home.

By examining the contributions of “gender and sexuality . . . in manifesting anxieties during the Cold War and . . . the post-Cold War,” Muehlenbeck and his contributors break new, if uneven, ground on the history of a nuclearized half century; this as a second Cold War, one whose primary antagonist is again a resurgent and bristling Russia, is in many ways already upon us (pp. 2–3).

*Gender, Sexuality, and the Cold War* is an important addition to Cold War studies, its contributors providing previously unexamined issues that need to be included in that time’s official historical narrative, which has been to date monopolized by diplomatic, military, and economic history. “Despite the centrality of gender and sexuality in human relations, their scholarly study has played a secondary role,” Marko Dumančić writes in an appropriately titled introduction, “Hidden in Plain Sight.” Possibly the best indication of that trend, he notes, is that “the three-volume *Cambridge History of the Cold War* (CHCW) discusses gender only in terms of women, and women only in terms of consumerism. Equally telling is that CHCW does not index or address sexuality as a field of inquiry.” Yet, the study of gender and sexuality “reveals much about the character and trajectory of the Cold War” (p. 3).

As might be expected of a very academically diverse group, whose combined research spans 15 countries across five continents, Muehlenbeck’s wide-ranging study does not tightly tie together its diverse contexts, attentions, and schools. In providing pioneering work for incorporation in that heretofore distant master narrative, it does both offer a truly global perspective on themes of sexuality (five chapters), femininities (six chapters), and masculinities (two chapters), with large swaths of insight and knowledge offered reserved for those countries that were not the two superpowers. An intersectional academic approach is not entirely missing, either, as shown by the work of Valur Ingimundarson, chair of the Center of Excellence in Critical Contemporary Research at the University of Iceland. His “Patriarchy and Segregation: Policing Sexuality in US-Icelandic Military Relations” examines how U.S. soldiers were—in the early Cold War period in which institutional racism in the military was being dealt with head-on in many other areas at home and abroad—“segregated” in Iceland to eliminate possibilities for “fraternization” of Icelanders and Americans (p. 41). “Racial purity” was a primary argument used by Icelanders to ban “black soldiers” from serving on the island, while the “policing of sexuality” included the labeling of women as “national traitors for consorting with troops” (pp. 43, 35). A “secret racist ban” was imposed by the Icelanders on U.S. black soldiers, evidence of how even those engaged in fighting for liberty around the world against the

Soviet empire were engaged in local practices violating those principles (p. 36). “Despite the vast power disparities between the United States and Iceland,” Ingimundarson writes, “the Americans were never in a position to dictate the terms of civil-military relations. On the contrary, because of the controversy of the military presence, the United States had to accept strict segregation policies enforced by the Icelandic government” (p. 37).

In the “Sexuality” section, Patrizia Gentile, an associate professor in the Institute of Interdisciplinary Studies at Carleton University, offers a look into the “Queering Subversives in Cold War Canada,” in which the government treated gays and lesbians as born troublemakers suffering “personality defects” and “character weakness,” whose very identities threatened nation-state stability (p. 63). Although sharing with its neighbor to the south anti-Communist efforts to purge government of “homosexuals” they worried were vulnerable to Soviet blackmail, the Canadian government did not incorporate U.S.-style public campaigns against gays and lesbians but instead initiated secret “surveillance” efforts to staunch the supposed threat (p. 56). As Dumančić writes in the book’s introduction, Cold War myths about “deficient masculinity” or “soft masculinity” created even greater angst about the “homosexual threat” (pp. 6–7).

In America’s most important ally in South America, such attitudes could be fatal, as Benjamin A. Cowan, an assistant professor of history at George Mason University shows in “‘Non-religious Activities’: Sex, Anticommunism, and Progressive Christianity in Latin Cold War Brazil.” There political policing was framed by sexuality “via a climate of suspicion surrounding and conflating so-called subversion, sexual and gender behavior, young people, pedagogy, and the emergence of progressive Christianity. Youth, religion, social justice-oriented politics, teaching, and sex formed a nexus of anxiety for Brazil’s powerful—and fearfully abusive—Cold Warriors in the 1970s” (p. 69). In May, the tale became even more chilling in the context of press reports about a memorandum sent by the then-CIA director, William E. Colby, that informed Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger about how Brazilian Army General Ernesto Geisel, who ruled from 1974 to 1979, personally approved the summary execution of his regime’s perceived enemies.

Kathleen A. Tobin’s essay “Manning the Enemy: US Perspectives on International Birthrates during the Cold War” shows the way in which the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and other government agencies viewed population growth in the developing world as threats to regional stability and thus to U.S. national security. “In the Cold War of the 1970s and 1980s, US attention was drawn to population rates in Latin America, South Asia, and the Middle East. In less developed countries of those regions, the United States feared that poverty, masses of youth, and radical politics could threaten access to resources needed to maintain geo-

political dominance” (p. 89). American efforts, she wrote, “were rooted in economics and a desire to preserve and expand the US global position in the name of national security” (p. 103).

An essay in the “Femininities” section, “Africa’s Kitchen Debate: Ghanaian Domestic Space in the Age of the Cold War,” examines the “postcolonial non-alignment” in Ghana, where kitchens served as liberating territory for women, while “Global Feminism and Cold War Paradigms: Women’s International NGOs and the United Nations, 1970–1985” offers both an interesting measure of earlier international impact of American feminism, as well as an excellent context for better understanding the challenges faced today in *Equal Opportunity Peacekeeping*. “The ‘global feminist’ movement is no more unified today that it was during the Cold War era,” Karen Garner, professor of historical studies at SUNY Empire State College, concludes.

Nonetheless, the United Nations continues to provide important forums for international exchange among national feminist representatives, and, by providing material resources and visionary leadership, it has strengthened its bureaucratic offices that research and monitor women’s human rights and socio-economic status in countries around the world. (p. 240)

Perhaps the most entertaining essay, and one that goes to the heart of questions raised both then and today about sexuality and definitions of manhood, is the essay of Erica L. Fraser, a Russian and Soviet history scholar at Carleton University, titled “Yuri Gagarin and Celebrity Masculinity in Soviet Culture.” The first person to successfully orbit the earth, astronaut Yuri Gagarin was “not selected for any particular skill on the flight deck . . . [he] was rather a man ‘straight out of Soviet central casting’—a handsome, articulate, and charismatic young military officer with a famously bright smile” (p. 270). Gagarin was chosen specifically because of his archetypal representation of masculinity.

Gagarin’s domestic and global image drew on understandings of masculinity that anchored Cold War ideology both for Soviet audiences and a variety of global publics. Those understandings included the security of the family, the primacy of military experience, and the diplomatic acumen to peacefully navigate the new world order. (p. 271)

Gagarin’s selection came as the Soviet Union seemed to have the odd man out in the lineup of national leaders, the image of the aging and frumpy Nikita Khrushchev cast in contrast with “a wave of new, young leaders [who] took power in several geo-politically strategic states: John F. Kennedy in the United States, Fidel Castro in Cuba, Gamal Nasser in Egypt, and (if only symbolically)

Queen Elizabeth in the United Kingdom” (p. 280). Although in some ways a seeming forerunner to Russia’s current president, Vladimir Putin, documentary state films showing him sunbathing, throwing stones into the surf, swimming and rowing—“all without a shirt”—the astronaut’s image as “a family man was a crucial theme to his celebrity” (pp. 278, 276).

While visiting Britain in 1961, Gagarin dined with Queen Elizabeth, at one point leaning forward to touch her leg under the lunch table. Though an obvious transgression, “As he was with so many other global leaders, Gagarin was portrayed as the queen’s equal, perhaps even her superior, an experienced and charming diplomat. After touching her knee, Gagarin received no rebuke but only a smile from the Queen over her coffee cup” (p. 282). Another epoch perhaps, but it provides anecdotes with some profound lessons as we prepare for yet another long war.

*Fighting for Credibility: US Reputation and International Relations.* By Frank P. Harvey and John Mitton. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017. Pp. 312. \$75.00 (hardcover); \$27.95 (paperback and e-book).

On 21 August 2012, President Barack H. Obama warned President Bashar al-Assad against unleashing chemical weapons during the emerging crisis in Syria. “We have communicated in no uncertain terms with every player” in the Middle East “that that’s a *red line* for us,” Obama declared, “and that there would be *enormous consequences* if we start seeing . . . the use of chemical weapons” (p. 6; emphasis in original). A year later, Assad authorized lethal sarin nerve gas assaults against rebel strongholds in the Ghouta agricultural belt east of Damascus, where 1,400 Syrians, including 400 children, were slaughtered. Desperate to restore U.S. international credibility, Obama secured congressional approval for limited, punitive air strikes in Syria, which compelled the Assad regime to capitulate: it “acknowledged for the first time Syria’s possession of chemical weapons, signed the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) prohibiting further production and deployment of proscribed weapons, provided details to” international inspectors about the precise locations of chemical weapons stockpiles, and liquidated about “98 percent of the regime’s stockpiles over the following months” (pp. 22–23, 187).

The Obama administration was lambasted by critics for bungling the Syrian crisis, but Frank P. Harvey and John Mitton, the coauthors of *Fighting for Credibility*, laud the U.S. fight to restore American credibility in Syria. Harvey and Mitton argue that Obama “needed to strike the Assad regime in order to demonstrate Washington’s resolve to follow through on its deterrent threats,” which sent “a strong signal to Assad and [Russian President Vladimir] Putin that the use of chemical weapons was unacceptable and risked US military retaliation” (p. 13). The military intervention by the United States was necessary because “in the absence of any response by the US, Assad’s regime would likely have escalated the use of these weapons, and the international norm against their use would have suffered a serious blow” (p. 221). By compelling the Assad government to dismantle its chemical weapons stockpiles, they conclude, the Obama administration achieved its paramount objective in Syria.



Writing for academics and policy makers, Harvey and Mitton make a persuasive case that reputation and credibility continue to play a prominent role in international relations. Relying on rational deterrence theory, as well as three case studies of asymmetric, protracted crises in the wake of the Cold War—Bosnia-Herzegovina (1992–95), Kosovo (1998–99), and Iraq (1991–2003)—Harvey and Mitton labor to debunk “the emerging consensus” during the Syrian crisis “that reputations and past actions are irrelevant to credibility . . . that reputations are independent, non-transferable, and, therefore, never worth fighting for,” a school of thought best embodied in the works of Daryl Press, Jonathan Mercer, and Ted Hopf (p. 3). On the contrary, Harvey and Mitton argue that “our goal is to extract important lessons about the theory and practice of coercive diplomacy based on evidence from over two decades of crisis behavior, drawing out the causal implications of what happened in Syria,” they explain. “Our objective is not to access the foreign policy legacy of the Obama administration” in Syria (p. 5).

After outlining the merits of rational deterrence theory in chapter 2, Harvey and Mitton examine “US reputation building” case studies in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Iraq in chapter 3. In summary, “rational deterrence theory predicts that past actions (and inactions) by US officials *do* have an impact on how adversaries perceive Washington’s interests and resolve to use power.” “Perceptions of US credibility and resolve are transferable across time both within a protracted crisis and across essentially similar crises, which means the Syria case does convey some relevant information to” North Korean officials, who aspire to develop offensive nuclear capabilities (pp. 232–33). Though adversaries often miscalculate American resolve, “they nonetheless *use* past behavior” to prognosticate U.S. decision making in future crises (p. 95). Marshalling historical evidence to augment rational deterrence theory, Harvey and Mitton distill the central lesson from the three case studies: “whenever US officials failed to respond to probes and challenges, the violence escalated. When resolve was demonstrated through mobilizing military forces or air strikes, escalation was controlled.” “If not buttressed by credible threats over time,” Bosnian Serb general Ratko Mladić, Yugoslavian president Slobodan Milošević, and Iraqi president Saddam Hussein “continued to probe for weaknesses in resolve and commitments, and began to contemplate the utility of challenging again” (p. 108).

In the remaining chapters, Harvey and Mitton employ rationale deterrence theory to analyze the Syrian crisis, outlining the pitfalls of “confirmation bias in the field of international relations” (p. 28). They are careful not to overstate the applicability of rational deterrence theory; however, “to say that US behavior *anywhere* matters to allies and adversaries *everywhere*,” they clarify, “is to oversimplify and exaggerate the role of reputation as a component in calculating

credibility” (p. 13). Relying on the lessons gleaned from the crises in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Iraq in chapter 4, Harvey and Mitton claim that Syrian officials, who underestimated Obama’s dedication to enforce the “red line” proclamation, “launched additional chemical weapons attacks until a tipping point was reached” during the Ghouta massacre (p. 149). Chapter 5 provides a succinct overview of the U.S. domestic political context during the crisis, especially the role of Congress, and chapter 6 examines how the Syrian episode should influence the American quest to deny Iran and North Korea offensive nuclear weapons, concluding that signaling U.S. resolve to Tehran and Pyongyang was a subsidiary objective during the American intervention in Syria. After debunking the pervasive assumption that Obama should have backed down in Syria in chapter 7, Harvey and Mitton warn of the dangers of confirmation bias in chapter 8, which led to a “*premature closure of inquiry . . . during the Syrian debate*” in the United States (p. 31; emphasis in original).

Ultimately, *Fighting for Credibility* is a compelling, well-crafted narrative that reveals the continued saliency of credibility and reputation in international politics. Based on a thorough examination of U.S. strategic decision making in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Iraq, and Syria, Harvey and Mitton provide a deft defense of rational deterrence theory, which offers an effective theoretical framework to guide American policy makers in future asymmetric, protracted military-security crises, such as the current tinderbox in the Korean Peninsula. Despite the overwhelming merits of *Fighting for Credibility*, rational deterrence theory neglects the significant role of personality—human agency—in driving international relations. Rational deterrence theory, for example, posits that Assad studied how Washington managed similar crises in Kosovo and Iraq to predict how the Obama administration might respond to the use of chemical weapons in Syria, but the theory ignores the possibility of Assad concluding that Obama may have reacted differently to the unique set of circumstances in Syria than President Bill Clinton or President George W. Bush. In conclusion, Harvey and Mitton demonstrate that rational deterrence theory remains useful for academics and government officials, especially those amenable to utilizing theory to comprehend and predict the complexities of international relations.

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*Danger Close: My Epic Journey as a Combat Helicopter Pilot in Iraq and Afghanistan.* By Amber Smith. New York: Atria Books, an imprint of Simon & Schuster, 2016. Pp. 288 \$25.00 (hardcover); \$16.00 (paperback); \$11.99 (e-book).

Few memoirs from the Global War on Terrorism cover the total myriad of experiences that soldiers and Marines face. *Danger Close* is such a memoir. *Danger Close* is the story of Amber Smith's journey from enlistment in the United States Army to becoming a warrant officer and helicopter pilot who served in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Smith grew up in a family of service. Her sisters served in the military, and her parents were pilots as was her grandfather during World War II. Guided by her patriotism, Smith enlisted in the aftermath of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks.

One of the many strengths of the book is that Smith had, however brief, a period of enlistment that exposed her to the life of ordinary soldiers. Her enlisted experience forced her to pay attention to the smallest of details; a quality that would help her to be a better officer and writer. During basic training, Warrant Officer Candidate School, pilot training, and deployments, Smith wants to fit in with "the guys" but above all desires to complete the mission and serve. She is motivated for combat and proficient in her duties. By refusing to give up, and being willing to listen to those leaders with greater experience, Smith becomes a leader herself. Indeed, the theme of leadership is prevalent in *Danger Close*.

Failures of leadership are covered, such as the CYA ("cover your ass") syndrome or the mission commander who refused to help a ground force that was in need. Another failure of leadership covered is when Smith was interrogated and seemingly blamed for an accident that she did not cause and was actually the victim of. A fellow warrant officer, who had a problem with women, is also chronicled. The warrant officer told Smith to give up her seat next to him simply because he did not want a woman sitting near him. Smith refused to back down. The officer then threatened to hit her. Again, Smith refused to back down. The other warrant officer stormed off and the incident ended with Smith winning greater respect from her peers.

There is also positive leadership in *Danger Close*, such as the kind that relentlessly pushed Smith to be a better pilot, regardless of her gender, and ingrained in her that she and the other pilots were there to support the individuals on the ground. When Smith proved herself, her leadership allowed her, even though the duration was brief, to spend time with her sister who was also serving in Afghanistan.

Though the folks on the ground sometimes decry those in the air, Amber Smith fills the gap between flyer and grunt and somewhat between officer and enlisted; perhaps appropriately, she was a warrant officer. This is because the experiences Smith had as an enlisted member, such as pulling guard duty, trash detail, and the like, did not end when she became an officer. If one was reading *Danger Close* with ranks deleted, it would be hard to tell if Smith was an officer or enlisted, save the flying references.

Throughout *Danger Close*, Smith's strength of purpose shines. She under-

stands that ultimately it is those on the ground who fight and win wars, and it is her job to protect them. Smith is not focused on being a trailblazer. She is focused on being a soldier and trusts her often intense training. The training was such that one pilot remarked to Smith, "I just want to hurry up and deploy so things will slow down." They got their chance in Iraq and Afghanistan and did well.

In regard to Iraq and Afghanistan, the culture of Iraq is barely touched upon in *Danger Close* as interactions with the locals were somewhat limited, though interactions with camel spiders and sandstorms were not. Afghan culture was discussed a bit more in the book. Afghanistan is described as a place back in time, where the people often treat their animals badly, and their women were often treated worse than animals. Afghanistan is truly the wild west, as when Smith described coming upon a gang of military aged men with weapons who, strangely, did not fire upon her aircraft. What she had stumbled upon was not the enemy but a tribal war.

*Danger Close* is a short book, but not a page is wasted, and it is one of the better personal memoirs to come out of the current conflict. The chapters often follow from a mission to what happens between missions. Not all war memoirs are written in such a fashion, but in putting *Danger Close* in such a format, Smith captures the reality of war from its mostly few intense moments, to the many hours spent outside of combat to include other clean-up duties, watching movies, giving haircuts, the jokes that are no longer funny, watching the same movies again, to finally troops being sick of each other and handing off items that are no longer needed upon redeployment. The sad irony of war also is, literally, brought home in *Danger Close*. Smith makes it through safely, only to see a close comrade killed at home.

*Danger Close* is valuable for officers and enlisted of all ranks, including those support flyers, or for those who are interested in the supporting role of air combat to the ground. In particular, the text will be of interest to those who wish to know what life is like for helicopter pilots, including training and the experiences of women in the armed forces. As a fellow pilot said to her, "You've really changed my perception of women pilots in the Army" (p. 142). Amber Smith, aka Annihilator Two-Four, did well in her service to America and in writing *Danger Close*.

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*Dictators without Borders: Power and Money in Central Asia.* By Alexander Cooley and John Heathershaw. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017. Pp. 312. \$25.00 (hardcover). \$20.00 (paperback).

Most of us know about Central Asia for its proximity to Afghanistan or as part of the greater “-stans.” Alexander Cooley and John Heathershaw have demonstrated in *Dictators without Borders* that the region ought to be understood in much more complex terms. Shedding light on the study of the illicit global economy, especially as it relates to Central Asia, this book examines four case studies of authoritarianism and crony capitalism. These case studies involve Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. The fifth Central Asian country, Turkmenistan, is dealt with sporadically throughout the book, but there is no case study or explanation of why the authors do not offer a case study on this country.

The title of the book is a play on Doctors, Educators, Dentists, or Reporters without Borders. With this title, the authors suggest three points from which Central Asian dictators (used interchangeably with authoritarian) are “without borders”: first, they are not impinged on by any moral or legal limits; second, they operate *beyond borders*, cultivating “international authoritarianism and authoritarian cooperation,” including possessing foreign accounts and engaging in extraterritorial repression; and third, they operate *across borders*, which is reflected in the “cosmopolitan networks” that enhance and protect the status of Central Asian elites (pp. xii–xiii).

The authors note that access to and interpretation of sources was a challenge. Nevertheless, British court records, Wikileaks, the Panama Papers, and a great many academic studies provided the authors with the necessary material. They handle it deftly. With this detailed interrogation of sources, Cooley and Heathershaw document a sobering look at Central Asia.

One aspect of the corruption in Central Asia that we see across the board is the involvement of elite families. Central Asian strongmen and politicians do not harbor wealth and influence for themselves alone, but they extend opportunities to family members and close inner circles. This is one area where Cooley and Heathershaw might have addressed corruption in Turkmenistan in greater detail, especially since President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow micromanages the country, involving his family at the various levels of power and influence. Moreover, he favors his own Akhal-Teke tribe, which dominates the official Turkmen scene.

Three of the case studies in this book involve children of the president. Since the end of Tajikistan’s civil war in 1995, the Tajik state has been in the hands of one man, his family, and an inner circle. Most notable among these actors is Rus-

tam Emomali, President Rahmon's son. With respect to activities in Tajikistan, the authors write, "Corruption is a constant in Tajikistan's state family" (p. 110).

Gulnara, former Uzbek president Karimov's daughter, once the "single most hated person in the country," was involved in payoffs and money laundering involving "every lucrative business in a spectacular rise in the 2000s" (p. 118). Scandalized by the degree of his daughter's illegal activities, President Islam Karimov authorized the security services to crackdown on Gulnara, and she ended up under house arrest (p. 127). Perhaps Gulnara's fault lay not in her amassing wealth (albeit hundreds of millions of dollars) but in that she at one point was considered the top candidate to succeed her father politically.

In Kyrgyzstan, Maxim Bakiyev, the "Prince," who was the heir apparent to his father President Kurmanbek Bakiyev (2005–10), became in just a few short years "the most powerful businessman in Kyrgyzstan . . . a product of authoritarian politics, liberal banking laws and global financial connections" (p. 135).

One study revolves around an individual who is not a member of the presidential family but who held office himself. While in Kazakhstan all politics revolve around President Nursultan Nazarbaev, Cooley and Heathershaw's case study from Kazakhstan focuses on billionaire tycoon Mukhtar Ablyazov, who is suspected of stealing billions of dollars from the bank that he once ran.

Offshore banking and tight control over the domestic political situation allow for the egregious kleptocracy described by Cooley and Heathershaw in this detailed study of greed and power. The authors make the dizzying array of specifics manageable for a reader interested in the region or in the topic of corruption. One does not need to have a background in Central Asian history or politics to read this book.

*Dictators without Borders* also offers a chapter on "new offshore silk roads." Activities concerning the United States and China include the Northern Distribution Network (NDN) (2009–15) and China's One Belt, One Road initiative, both of which involved fantastic sums of overseas investment, "insider arrangements, opaque networks and offshore structures that link private and government interests under a geopolitical imperative" (p. 177).

The final chapter discusses the authors' most disturbing findings. These concern political elites and extraterritorial repression. The authors have compiled the Central Asian Political Exiles (CAPE) database, which focuses on the extraterritorial pursuits by Central Asian governments of political dissidents. Three appendices relate to this, itemizing attacks, assassination attempts, and rendition of journalists and political and religious activists.

*Dictators without Borders* is an aptly named, thought-provoking, and challenging book that makes a significant contribution to the study of Central Asia and of corruption more generally. The thoroughly documented details provided

in this book are copious, perhaps more than the average reader might require, but a service to serious scholars who wish to follow this research.

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*Newsworthy: The Supreme Court Battle over Privacy and Press Freedom.* By Samantha Barbas. Stanford, CA: Stanford Law Books, 2017. Pp. 352. \$26.00 (hardcover).

The U.S. Constitution is a model of ambiguity—necessary for its drafting and ratification in the political process, but frustrating for its application to law and politics in the centuries that have followed. By text and by implication, the founding document enshrines competing liberties and rights that have been left to judges to weigh and balance. That equilibrium has been a source of contradiction and conflict in some areas—the religion clauses, for example; for others, jurisprudence has been more decisive. In *Newsworthy*, Samantha Barbas details the turn by which the Court settled on an interpretation of a virtually unlimited press at the expense of individual privacy.

Barbas's narrative focuses on the case *Time, Inc. v. Hill* (1967) and begins with a striking retelling of “the Whitmarsh incident,” in which James and Elizabeth Hill and their children, a family of relative privilege, were held captive in their Pennsylvania home by three escaped convicts. During their captivity, the Hills were physically unharmed as the men helped themselves to baths, shaves, and the husband's expensive executive suits. They invited the family to join them in a three-course dinner they asked the wife to prepare. The intruders were conversational and complimentary of the children's manners. By all accounts, the convicts behaved like “perfect gentlemen” (p. 16). By the next morning, nearly 24 hours after it all started, the convicts took a traveling bag with changes of clothing and fled in one of the Hill's new Pontiacs. On discovering their departure, James Hill called the police and soon state and federal authorities—and the press—swarmed their home.

As Barbas describes, “the truth was stranger than fiction,” so two years after the incident, when media coverage had faded, a languishing writer, Joseph Hayes, wrote a novel loosely based on the events (p. 18). The novel was adapted into a Broadway play and, shortly thereafter, a Hollywood film. That was



enough to revive interest in the Hill family and with it memories they would rather have put behind them. Press attention culminated with a photographic essay published by *Life* magazine, the most popular periodical of the day, naming the Hills as the true-story inspiration for the book and film. Along the way, the article embellished certain descriptions (e.g., stating that the daughters had been raped), and the renewed attention took a toll on the family's physical and emotional condition. Within a week of the article, James Hill, seeking to push back against the sensational media intrusion, filed suit to set the record straight. As nothing in the novel, play, film, or even article was defamatory, libel was not an appropriate claim; counsel focused instead on the privacy interest, an "individual's dignity, autonomy, and sense of self—the ability to avoid unwanted publicity and control how he or she appeared in the public eye" (p. 59).

Thus began litigation that reset jurisprudence in favor of press freedom. In subsequent parts, Barbas details the legal arguments of the Hills's lawsuit, the trial, and appeal through the New York courts, ultimately reaching the U.S. Supreme Court. She presents an animated telling of oral arguments, featuring Richard Nixon arguing on behalf of the Hills, as well as the court's deliberations, which held that without a finding of malicious intent, even false and inaccurate publications are protected under the First Amendment. Her conclusion is a sweeping analysis about the legal, social, and political implications of the case.

Barbas is at her best when she contextualizes this controversy in light of the legal history of both press and privacy. In this, the scope of the book is comprehensive and presents an overview of these competing forces. One purpose of the book is to illustrate the fluctuating importance of these values in American life. Press liberties expanded in the 1930s and 1940s as a response to crackdowns on subversive speech a decade earlier. But as mass media expanded in the post-war period, with publishers competing for an audience by turning toward the sensational, privacy torts developed as a response. Public opinion data from the time demonstrates support for press restrictions amid what Barbas describes as a nation-wide "privacy panic" (p. 127). Although *New York Times v. Sullivan* (1964) supported an expansive press freedom, the court's decision in *Griswold v. Connecticut* (1965)—handed down during the *Hill* appeal—gave precedent to the Hills's privacy argument and awakened the political and social climate to privacy concerns.

Drawing from detailed and as yet unexamined sources, such as personal interviews and archives, including the correspondence of Earl Warren, Hugo Black, and Abe Fortas, Barbas assembles a compelling trove of evidence to support her argument. Her analysis is organized and written in an exciting narrative that challenges academic convention. As such, readers will find *Newsworthy* not only a human story about the law's effects on individual lives but also a significant legal treatise on the competition between fundamental rights of pri-

vacy and press made all the more relevant by the contemporary debate about “fake news” (p. 7).

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*Integrating the U.S. Military: Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation since World War II.* Edited by Douglas Walter Bristol Jr. and Heather Marie Stur. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017. Pp. 264. \$29.95 (paperback and e-book).

Compared to sociologists and political scientists, historians have contributed relatively little to the field of post-1940 civil-military relations in the United States. Not until recent decades have substantial numbers of them explored the ways in which the modern armed forces both affect and are shaped by American culture. *Integrating the U.S. Military* demonstrates the extent to which this state of affairs has improved. It also offers a cautionary tale for chroniclers of the past.

Every one of the 10 contributors to this volume is a historian. Most are relatively early in their academic careers. Nine have already published one or more book-length monographs. None appear to have served in uniform, but all make good-faith efforts to understand military institutions without condescension or disdain. The book consists of nine well-researched essays about the integration into the U.S. armed forces of African Americans, Japanese Americans, women, and gays. The chapters are arranged in rough chronological order, starting from the Second World War and going to the present.

Although only one of the nine focuses on gays in the military, the introduction by Beth Bailey and the conclusion by Douglas Bristol and Heather Stur concentrate on this issue. They emphasize the aptness of linking the more recent pushes for acceptance of open homosexuality to the older movements for gender and racial equality. “To sum up,” the editors say, “we have argued it is valid to compare the military experiences of African Americans, Japanese Americans, women, and gays because there are important parallels between them.”<sup>1</sup>

This part of the book has drawn criticism from one of the field’s most influential scholars, sociologist John Sibley Butler. He says in a review for the journal *Armed Forces & Society* that it “violates the scientific process (classification) by comparing a racial category with a behavior category and adding an ‘openness’ variable.”<sup>2</sup>

Butler’s concerns aside, Bristol and Stur’s conclusion is problematic as a

work of history. They have imposed a narrative that failed previously as a political tactic and remains contested. Consequently, they must go to considerable lengths to justify it. Their labors might be warranted if all or even most of the articles in the collection were about gay rights, but that is not the case. By forcing this interpretation, the editors have diverted attention away from the book's merits.

The contributors offer significant insights into the ways in which the social composition of the military evolved. Contrary to popular belief, change did not come from the top down by fiat despite the hierarchical, authoritarian structure of the institution. Military policies reflected and adapted to the prevailing civilian culture. Dissident organizations and individuals exerted pressure from the outside. Internal opposition sometimes came, ironically, from higher-ranking women and racial minorities who had benefited from previous changes but now feared for their careers. Lower-ranking servicemembers, having less to lose, were often more willing to suffer consequences for resisting inequities. The challenges they raised created contradictions within the bureaucracy that accumulated until resolution became necessary. The armed forces subsequently adjusted.

Editor and contributor Douglas Bristol lays out this argument on page 30 at the end of the first chapter in which he chronicles how African American soldiers resisted racism during World War II and, with the help of civil rights leaders, set the stage for desegregation. The eight essays that follow, he says, provide additional support. They do indeed.

The heroic exploits of the Japanese American soldiers of the 442d Infantry Regiment are well-known. James McCaffrey adds to that story in the second chapter by highlighting the discrimination the *nisei* witnessed and experienced while training in Mississippi and fighting in Europe. They encountered prejudice when they returned to the United States, but their combat performance overseas had gained them allies.<sup>3</sup>

In her essay about the Army Nurse Corps, Charissa Threat describes how senior-ranking female officers worked to exclude male caregivers. Ultimately, manpower needs prevailed over the entrenched leadership. Tanya Roth shows in "An Attractive Career for Women" how evolving civilian notions of femininity shaped military recruitment efforts during the course of the Cold War. Dissent came from lower-ranking women who fought regulations requiring expectant and even adoptive mothers to be discharged. Kara Dixon Vuic discusses how the military handled issues of family planning as birth control pills and abortion became widespread and as sexuality became more open.

James E. Westheider argues that young African American draftees and civil rights groups like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and the Black Panthers led protest efforts during the Vietnam War while black

generals remained quiet.<sup>4</sup> Editor and contributor Heather Marie Stur traces how ideas about masculinity shifted during the 1970s as both men and women questioned ideas about gender identity at the end of the Vietnam conflict. Prominent among them were draftees and veterans who opposed the war.

Isaac Hampton makes superb use of oral history in “The History of the Defense Race Relations Institute” from 1974 to 2014. Steve Estes explains, somewhat wistfully, how gay rights activists enjoyed greater success fighting Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell when they argued on the basis of efficiency rather than casting their grievances in terms of the black civil rights movement.

The similarities speak for themselves. The essays in this fine volume demonstrate the value that historians add to the field of civil-military relations.

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## Notes

1. Bristol and Stur, *Integrating the U.S. Military*, 228.
2. John Sibley Butler, review of *Integrating the U.S. Military*, in *Armed Forces & Society*, 27 September 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0095327X17728043>.
3. This essay contains a few minor errors. A senator from Utah did work to ensure that PFC Sadao Munemori received a posthumous Medal of Honor, but not in 2010 as stated on page 51. The senator, whose name was Elbert Thomas rather than Albert Thomas, died in 1953. Contemporary newspapers report that Munemori’s mother accepted the medal on behalf of her son in 1946.
4. This essay contains a few minor errors on pages 101 and 105. Isaac Woodard’s last name contains only a single letter “w.” His military personnel file, preserved by the NAACP, indicates that he received service medals but no military decorations. The incident that resulted in his blinding occurred in Batesburg, not Aiken, SC. Camp Casey is located in South Korea instead of Vietnam.





