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International Trends In The Deployment Of Female Soldiers

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CHAPTER FOUR

International trends in the integration of female soldiers

In this chapter I will briefly outline, by means of example and for the purpose of comparison, the integration of women in the international military. This outline is not intended to be an exhaustive history. It focuses primarily on the British and American experience since the end of the second world war. I have chosen the British and American armies as they are those armies with which the PDF has had most contact in terms of training and cultural exchange. In the first section of this chapter, I briefly examine the roles of women in a number of major and regional conventional conflicts, in uniform, as regular members of standing military formations. In the second section, I briefly examine the role of women in terrorism and low intensity conflict, or non conventional operations. The purpose of this outline is to provide well-documented examples of the actual combat experience of women. This provides a corrective to that construct of combat as an exclusively male or 'masculine' activity as discussed in the introduction and theoretical outline. It also provides a basis of comparison for the following chapters on the integration of female personnel to the PDF. The purpose of this chapter is two-fold: It is intended to establish beyond doubt for the reader the precedent of female combatants – in uniform – as a widespread phenomenon. It is also intended that this chapter serve as a context setter for the following chapters on the PDF giving them a wider perspective.

4.1 Modern conventional warfare from World War Two to operation Desert Storm

The trend for women's participation in regional conflicts, post world-war, has grown dramatically. This is true across all cultural boundaries including what are often described as the most machistic or patriarchal and fundamentalist of societies. From Asia to Latin America and in Africa and the Middle East, women are becoming involved in combat in ever increasing numbers.

Emerging from strict Islamic seclusion, Algerian women were very active in the war of independence from France (...) (T)he men began to include women because they needed them enough to overcome the weight of tradition for both sexes. (They were) captured, imprisoned and raped repeatedly by the "civilised" French, they were also hideously tortured. Two women, Djamila Boubired and Djamila Boupacha became heroines because they held firm under torture. (French, 1988: 231)

The participation of women outside of a strictly prescribed way of life has been noted in other fundamentalist societies in times of upheaval and conflict. As a consequence of the revolution in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen:

(T)here has been a major effort to erode purdah restrictions and to encourage women to enter all areas of public life, including the militia, politics, the legal profession, and other areas of activity formerly closed to women.
(Molyneaux, 1979:8)

In the Iran/Iraq conflict, Iranian fundamentalists trained female combatants for war. (Hiro, 1989: 150) Elsewhere, women's involvement in conflict and warfare has grown. In Vietnam, the North Vietnamese Army used female troops in all support and combat formations. In the heavily infiltrated south of the country, thousands of women were members of the Viet Cong. Many of these women died in action against the Army of the Republic of Vietnam, (ARVN) and in continuous clashes with U.S. troops. In this conflict, over 40% of North Vietnamese Army commanders were female (Jones, 1997: 34-35). The Vietnamese had many female role models in battle. Among them were Nguyen Thi Ba who poisoned 400 French troops in 1931, and the Commander Madam Dinh, who at Ben Tre in 1937 repelled a force of 13,000 French troops. Notions of girlishness or feminine passivity quickly evaporate when confronted with Din Le Tunn's sniper school for girls which operated out of Min Top during the U.S. occupation. These women, in the interests of concealment and economy, specialised in a technique of killing U.S. troops with one shot, often beating survivors to death with their own weapons (Jones, 1997: 35). Initial surprise and a 'culture shock' for U.S. troops in encountering a female adversary were quickly tempered by the knowledge that man, woman or child, the enemy of either sex was equally deadly.

At present, women total roughly 11% of British and U.S. army strengths. Fifteen per cent of all NATO active military forces are women. Nine per cent of Canadian forces are female. (Stanley and Segal, 1988) The dramatic increase in the numbers of women enlisted to the armies of the West in the eighties and nineties is attributed in the literature to two main factors. Political pressure from an equality of opportunity agenda, allied with equality legislation in the 1970's, led to the initial increase in numbers of women participating in the military structures of the west.

As time wore on, and women began to occupy a greater variety of military appointments, both combat and line, the military authorities began to realise that these highly educated, highly motivated troops were indispensable to the military machine. At a time of falling numbers wishing to enlist, women proved of benefit to military planners. Still, emotive arguments based on patriarchal assumptions about the role of women were used in opposition

to this trend. At a congressional debate about the enlistment of women into the U.S. military, Senator Ervin made his famous statement of opposition:

To prevent sending the daughters of America into combat to be slaughtered or maimed by the bayonets, the bombs, the bullets, the grenades, the mines, the napalm, the poison gas and the shells of the enemy.
(Binkin, 1977: 42)

Despite this and similar protestations, the integration of female personnel into the U.S. military has continued apace. Over 100 women served in Korea as nurses, clerks, aides and interpreters. Seven thousand five hundred women served in Vietnam, mostly as nurses. Eight of these women were killed in the course of their duties and their names are engraved on the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial in Washington. One woman, Dr. Doris Allen, (Intelligence Officer, 519th Military Intelligence Battalion, 1967-1970) remarked on her Vietnam experience: "Vietnam was a war with no battle lines; everybody was subject to be blown up no matter where you were, so that kept the adrenaline pumping" (Haynes, 1994: 2). In 1983, about 200 army women participated in the invasion of Grenada (Maginnis, 1992: 26). During the Libyan air strikes in 1987, women performed essential operational tasks servicing and refuelling the strike aircraft. The in-flight refuelling was managed by a female airborne refuelling pilot. The deployment of these female personnel was vital to the viability of this operation. Eight hundred female troops were involved in the invasion of Panama in 1990. Some were involved in ground combat with the infantry and notably as helicopter pilots ferrying troops into and out of the combat zone (Schneider, 1992; Moskos, 1990).

During the invasion of Grenada, an operation which the Americans called 'Operation Urgent Fury', a female military police captain became involved in a firefight with hostile armed elements. The involvement of Captain Linda Bray in this action drew the attention of the media who proclaimed the event as the first time a female officer had led U.S. troops in combat. This media-hyped incident sparked a further debate in Congress as to the appropriateness of having female personnel in combat situations. Consequently, Congress formulated a policy on 'Combat exclusion' based on the vague 'function, co-location and level of danger' rules. (Goldman and Weighland, 1982: 238) Based on this definition, combat was defined as follows:

To close with the enemy by manoeuvre, or shock effect, to destroy or capture, or whilst repelling assault by fire, close combat or counterattack. (U.S. National Defence Authorisation Act).
(Maginnis, 1992: 27)

The legal definition was found to be irrelevant on the modern battlefield which, being highly mobile and fluid, does not lend itself to tidy definition. Rear echelon elements may at any time be subject to attack, counterattack, bombardment or nuclear, biological or chemical (NBC) contamination. As such, the battlefield in a modern 'total war' is said to comprise the entire 'Theatre of Operations'. In short, "now all residents of a state at war are potential targets" (Goldman and Weighland, 1982: 238).

U.S. Congress Statutes (Title 10, USC 6015, and 8549) - the Navy and Air Force Statutes, along with the Department of Defence 'Risk Rule' (Function, Co-location and level of danger) combined to form the Direct Combat Probability Coding (DCPC) in 1983.

Under the DCPC, every position in the Army is evaluated based upon the duties of each MOS (Military Occupation Specialities) (...) (T)he Unit's mission, tactical doctrine and the battlefield location. Positions are then coded based on the probability of engaging in direct combat. The DCPC closes many positions to female soldiers.
(Maginnis, 1992: 27)

As was evidenced by Captain Bray's encounter with armed elements, the DCPC would appear to be an inadequate barometer for predicting likely contact with the enemy. The DCPC does not 'protect' women from contact with the enemy. With the huge increases in the numbers of female military personnel, many occupying key combat appointments, it was inevitable that their involvement in direct combat would occur. Forty one thousand female troops were involved in operations 'Desert Shield' and 'Desert Storm'. Eleven women were killed in combat in the Gulf War. (Schneider 1992) The thorny question of whether women would be in theory engaged in direct contact with the enemy was answered on the battleground, "It's not going to be a controversy, it's going to be a necessity". (Schneider, 1992: 160)

The diktat of the Gulf War battlefield certainly did not answer the combat question. To begin with, Logistics Units, which would have had a traditionally low DCPC, did not operate from the rear. Logistics Units manoeuvred hundreds of miles ahead of the armoured assault and deep into hostile Iraq. There, they covertly assembled petrol oil and lubricant, (POL) dump sites in order to permit a rapid advance. This rapid advance prevented the Iraqi Republican Guard from mounting a re-organisation and counterattack. Many of these Logistics personnel were women, operating within enemy territory. "The men and women of the 2nd Forward Marine Support Group dug into the desert close to Iraqi Occupied Kuwait (...) were as prepared (for combat) as any professional marines could be". (Holm, 1993: 493)

The DCPC was further undermined by the deaths of twenty eight personnel (including three women) in the "rear". The twenty eight, all members of a combat support unit, the 14th QM Detachment, were based in Dhahran in Saudi Arabia. Their post was hit by an Iraqi scud missile. In modern conventional operations there would appear therefore to be no "rear" or safe haven from long range dedicated armaments.

Iraqi long range artillery and (...) surface to air missiles were unisex weapons that did not distinguish between combat and support troops.
(Holm, 1993: 446)

In the Air war, arguably the most technologically advanced area of operations, and traditionally a last bastion of male dominance, women more than held their own.

Airman (sic) First Class, Kimberley Childress, a 27 year old (...) assigned to an Air Force A-10 "Warthog" tank killer squadron said she wanted to come, "It's my job".
(Holm, 1993: 443)

Female pilots participated fully in the action and some such as Major Marie T. Rossi, Commander of 'B' Company, 18th Army Aviation Brigade, lost their lives. It is ironic that the DCPC designed to 'protect' women from a perceived threat actually increased their risk of becoming casualties.

Female pilots of the 101st Airborne Division 'Screaming Eagles' flew BlackHawk and Chinook helicopters loaded with supplies and troops 50 miles into Iraq as part of the largest helicopter assault in military history. To the Iraqis, the 'non-combat' helicopters flying over the battlefield were as much targets as any Apache and probably a lot easier to hit.
(Holm, 1993: 447)

Many women became involved in direct combat in the Gulf. Examples abound of female personnel who executed their duties to lethal effect. Captain Sheila Chewing, Weapons Controller, participated in the destruction of two MiG 29 Interceptor fighter jets. Lieutenant Phoebe Jeter, Commander of an otherwise all male Patriot Missile Unit (Delta Battery) successfully engaged and destroyed Iraqi scud missiles. Many women were decorated for their service.

Captain Cynthia Mosley (30), commanded Alpha Coy of 24th Battalion, Forward, 24th Infantry Division (Mechanised) (...) (was) awarded the Bronze Star medal for meritorious combat service.
(Holm, 1993: 452)

Women were also taken prisoner. This fact drew considerable media interest. Specialist Melissa Rathbun-Nealy and Major Rhonda Cornum (Army Flight Surgeon, 2nd Battalion,

229th Aviation Regiment) were both captured in action. Major Cornum was on board a helicopter shot down by Iraqi fire. She survived this ordeal with a broken arm and leg to assume the dubious honour of becoming a feted "female" POW.

The performance of women in the British Army mirrored that of their American counterparts.

The 1,000 female officers and other ranks serving with the 1 (UK) Armoured Division in the Gulf powerfully changed the image of servicewomen.
(Mack, 1993: 33)

The Gulf War was, amongst other things, a media event. The CNN Report described the opening shots of the war from Baghdad as being like "July the fourth". One interesting outcome of the coverage of the war, and the presence in theatre of 41,000 women was the use of language. For the first time since World War Two, women were included in and associated with a national struggle or crisis. Women were "re-discovered" by the media. Saddam Hussein's "Mother of Battles" was to quote journalist Kate Muir, (Mack, 1993: 34) "a Battle of Mothers". (There were also grandmothers involved in the operation.) Many newspapers headlined with "Mom goes to war", etc.

The language of state also changed to include women. Announcing the commencement of the ground offensive on Thursday 17th January 1991, President Bush declared, "No president can easily commit our sons and daughters to war". In June 1991, Peter Williams, U.S. Chief Defence Spokesman declared:

One of the lessons we've learned from Operation Desert Storm is the extent to which the nation accepted the significant role of women (...) Until then there had always been a concern that having women involved in combat would be traumatic for the country.
(Mack, 1993: 34)

The overall Commander of Forces in the Gulf was asked about the performance of women in the conflict by a Congressional Delegation led by Congressman Ford. "How did they do? The CINC (Schwarzkopf) said. "Great!" (Schwarzkopf, 1993: 569)

The overall British Commander had this to say about his female troops.

I think this will make a number of people sharpen themselves up because they are going to find they are nothing like as good as the girls who are competing with them.
(Mack, 1993: 37)

The bottom line would appear to be that with 195,000 women serving in U.S. Armed Forces Line Appointments (including ten Army Generals, five Naval Admirals, six Air Force Generals and a female secretary of the Air Force), women have become crucial to the success of any military operation (Defence Issues, Volume II, No. 31, March 1996). Indeed, the Gulf War could not have been fought without women. The Defence Secretary for the Bush Administration at the time of the Gulf War acknowledged this fact. "Women have made a major contribution to this (war) effort. We could not have won without them" (Holm, 1998: 67-68).

The experience of the Gulf War led to Secretary for Defence, Les Aspin, rescinding the DCPC and the so-called Risk Rule from October 1st 1993. (Los Angeles Times, Jan 14, 1993: 18) It has been argued that the Risk Rule analysis and DCPC merely reflected the puerile fears on the part of a male dominated military that the admission of women into certain MOS would in some way dilute their perceived masculinity (D'Ann Campbell, 1993: 321). As demonstrated in the theory chapter, the link between the military and the patriarchal dynamic has been observed elsewhere (Wheelwright, 1991:213; Segal, 1987: 169; Delphy, 1992: 2; Hansen 1992: 296; Herbert, 1994:25). Weatherill reiterates the point:

Our society has clearly defined "acceptable" and "unacceptable" behaviour for both males and females, but these definitions are not even handed (...) especially (in) the Army (...) undoubtedly one of the strongest bastions of male dominated attitudes beliefs and practices.
(Weatherill, 1996: 43)

A chaplain to a U.S. Army Reserve Unit, (29 Infantry Division, Virginia National Guard) reveals such 'male dominated attitudes' and 'beliefs' in an article expressing opposition to women in the military.

The traditional paradigm of the regular soldier is exclusively masculine... this invocation of monastic fraternity also calls to mind the traditional *male* (sic) character of Christian clergy.
(Webster, 1991: 27)

It is a classic patriarchal posture that posits women a fundamentally weaker sex, by reason of sex alone. From pre-history through to the Gulf War, women's de facto performance in combat flies in the face of the "ideology of a sexual division of labour" supported by "the ideology of sex difference" (Hakim, 1996:202) and difference as deficit ideology identified in the theory chapter. Howes and Stevenson show the power of this dynamic in the military setting:

When we talk about woman and the use of force, then we are digging at the roots of what simultaneously makes women feminine and men masculine. Not a biological determinism that make males aggressive and females passive, but how we as human beings have constructed and continue to interpret the world.
(Howes and Stevenson, 1993: 20)

Several recurring arguments are used to prop up this patriarchal construction of womanhood and the question of combat. They constitute myths surrounding a hypothesised conflict involving women. Reality and the de facto experiences of women would appear to render them irrelevant and untrue. Holm (1993) identifies these myths as follows:

1. "Military women are protected from exposure to combat".

The DCPC and Risk Rule analysis have been proven to be irrelevant. The modern fluid battlefield and long range technologies expose all personnel to enemy fire and combat.

2. "During mobilisation for war, women could not be counted on to deploy for war".

Forty one thousand women deployed to the Gulf. Countless thousands have overcome religious and cultural taboos, prejudice and fear of torture and death to fight for their beliefs.

3. "Women would not be able to perform in the pressure of the combat environment".

Women have performed as well as their male counterparts on the battlefield. Actual tests show gender integrated units out-perform single sex units. In the proving ground of actual combat, women have shown themselves equal to the challenge of the combat environment. For example, Lily Litvak (the "White Rose of Stalingrad") shot down twelve male German pilots in the pressure of the combat environment. (Anderson, 1990:313)

4. "Women are too accustomed to their 'creature comforts'; they would not be prepared to cope with the tough primitive living conditions and the physical demands of the combat zone".

Women's performances in the Gulf showed no degradation in efficiency due to menstruation, personal hygiene or personal administration in the field. A brief look at the history of partisan warfare in Greece and Yugoslavia amongst others, show women to have been prized for their stamina and ability to survive in extremes of conditions. (Studies have shown women lose about half as much service time as men due to the latter's absenteeism, desertion, alcohol and drug abuse).

5. "The presence of women in the Combat Area would destroy male bonding".

As was proved in the Gulf and as was the case during World War Two, the presence of women did not affect "male" bonding and in fact helped achieve a more efficient unit cohesion.

6. "Men and women could not work together in a Combat theatre without sex getting in the way".

Sex was not an issue for women in the Soviet Army fighting the Germans, nor for partisans engaging an occupying force (French, 1988; D'Ann Campbell, 1993). It did not pose a problem in the Gulf. On the contrary, when troops are segregated by sex and trained separately for different jobs, the incidence of sexual harassment, assault, and rape increases.

7. "Enemy soldiers, Arabs in particular, would rather die than surrender to a woman".

According to Sergeant April Hanley, 503rd Military Police Battalion, U.S. Army: "They (Iraqis) couldn't surrender fast enough" (Holm, 1993: 463).

8. "The public would never tolerate women being taken prisoner or coming home in body bags".

This emotive argument was shown to be incorrect during the Gulf war. It becomes irrelevant when one considers the vast numbers of women killed in action over the last number of wars, or killed during saturation bombing raids, or systematically tortured, raped and murdered in ethnic cleansing. Field Commanders continue to find that the performance of female personnel far outstrips jaded stereotyped predictions based on bias. In the words of Mc Knight, (1982:20-1) a U.S. Army battalion commander with experience of commanding a 'gender integrated' infantry unit:

To begin and as a general comment, female soldiers occupying "traditional" roles, (i.e. typist and medic) were outstanding. Those female soldiers who were in "non-traditional" jobs such as military police, heavy equipment operators (...) proved to be equally outstanding (...) (T)hese comments apply not only to the narrow concept of "duty performance" but also to the more important "total soldier" concept (...) (M)y overall conclusion is that female soldiers are as dedicated, motivated, and professional as their male counterparts.
(McKnight, 1982: 20-1)

The reality of war has required military planners to lay aside any stereotyped views of women and to realise their full potential. The constructed masculinity of military service alluded to in

the introduction and theory chapter seems to be overlooked in the heat of battle. In time of war, necessity overcomes culture and social constructs of reality:

The reality of conflict bears no relation to peacetime conditions, values, laws, standards of living and conditions of work".
(Searle, 1997: 39)

In essence, women through a strategically determined necessity have become a de-facto part of the military.

4.2 Non conventional warfare

As well as participating in conventional warfare as armed and uniformed members of standing armies, women have also come to the fore in terrorist organisations. Women across Europe have become involved in armed struggle against the state. In Spain, ETA has many female members, in Germany and Italy women were heavily involved with the Red Brigades, with some of them, like Ulrike Meinhof, achieving international notoriety.

Women appear very frequently in leftist groups on a basis of apparent equality, even to the point of carrying weapons, planting bombs and killing (...) the implication here is that the leftist revolutionary terrorist is breaking with a prevailing cultural pattern through political principle.
(Segaller, 1986: 81)

Further afield, women have overcome cultural and religious barriers to actively participate in armed struggle. In the autonomous territories in Israel, young Arab girls and women took an active role in the intifada. "They were experts in the tactics of street warfare and were treated as equals by the boys" (MacDonald, 1992: 72). In September 1970, another Arab woman, Leila Khaled, hijacked an El Al flight from Tel Aviv to London.

She became a sex symbol for her violence; she shattered a million and one taboos overnight, and she revolutionised the thinking of hundreds of other angry young women around the world.
(Ibid.: 97)

If there was hostility to women who assumed non-traditional roles during World War Two, their latter day activities as terrorists have provoked outrage. This outrage seems directed not only at the act of violence itself, but the 'unnaturalness' of encountering women behaving counter to their gender role. After a female member of the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) assassinated a part-time member of the UDR (Ulster Defence Regiment) in

1990, the condemnation contained a double message: condemnation of the act, and revulsion that a woman would act outside her 'gender norm':

It is hard to believe that a woman who, under God, can give birth to a new life, can be so twisted and warped by hate that she can bring forth death to an innocent victim.

(MacDonald, 1992: 133-4)

Despite the expression of revulsion that a woman would behave in a manner considered inappropriate to her sex, the British authorities have never been shy of using lethal force to counter a 'feminine' threat. Máiréad Farrell was shot dead by the SAS in Gibraltar in 1988. The authorities have, on one hand, always taken very seriously the threat of violence from women while on the other denying their lethal potential and blocking positions to them in the military. When women do operate outside the rigid confines of the 'natural' role prescribed for them by patriarchal thinking it poses a threat (Delphy, 1984: 23).

This threat is a perceived threat to the established power relation between the sexes. Patriarchal society's angry reaction to female killers is not an expression of dismay at a loss of innocence, a violation of biologically pre-determined behaviour, but a knee jerk reaction to behaviour which challenges deeply held beliefs about the role of women, and by extension men. Female killers are held up as aberrations of their sex. They must be demonised in order to maintain the status quo. They offend:

(T)he presumption that 'men' and 'women' exist as biologically based categories prior to and independently to the power relationship which currently exists between them.

(Delphy, 1984: 8)

Society found it very difficult to accept the idea that women would go on active service with the PIRA. They were held up to be less than human, and demonised in the press.

When the Price Sisters were arrested for their part in the 1973 bombing campaign in London in which 180 people were injured, they were called "the sisters of death".

(MacDonald, 1992: 135)

It is interesting to note the cultural schizophrenia that on the one hand defines women as helpless and passive and then on the other hand demonises them as soon as they deviate from the culturally assigned roles. Not only did the Price sisters challenge authority but they challenged it as women - double jeopardy it would seem. They are reviled for their sex as they threaten the patriarchal order.

Despite the harsh treatment meted out to female republican prisoners, despite society's demand that girls remain somehow innately peace loving, earth-mothers who are 'reluctant to fight for the group', (Tiger, 1969), there would appear to be no shortage of women capable of carrying out acts of violence 'inappropriate' to their sex.

Dr. Rose Dugdale was charged with hijacking a helicopter with the intention of dropping milk churns full of explosives on to RUC posts. Marion Coyle was imprisoned for her part in the kidnapping of Tiede Herrema in 1975. (The Dutch industrialist later remarked he was unable to establish a rapport with his female captor, a chilling departure from classic counter-insurgency doctrine and the 'Stockholm Syndrome'). Anna Moore received life imprisonment for the infamous Ballykelly 'Droppin Well' bombing which claimed the lives of seventeen people. In 1986 Ella O'Dwyer and Martina Anderson were given life sentences for their part in a plot to bomb London and a number of seaside resorts (MacDonald, 1992:136-166).

The list goes on and on. Evelyn Glenholmes was the subject of an extradition attempt on foot of charges relating to the Chelsea Barracks nail bomb, and the murder of a British Army Bomb Disposal Officer in London. Rita O'Hare, charged with the attempted murder of two British soldiers, was shot in the head during her arrest.

It is interesting to note the 'progressive' use of female volunteers within the PIRA and the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA). These organisations operate a policy of complete gender integration and all appointments and positions within these organisations are open to women. The intelligence gathering network of An Garda Síochána and the PDF (Permanent defence forces) acknowledge this and I have been present at briefings which outlined the threat assessment posed by both male and female members of PIRA/INLA.

Soldiers on the ground certainly have no illusions as to the potential of female terrorists. This would appear to be backed up by accounts given by protagonists in the 'troubles' in Northern Ireland. Mac Donald (1992: 144-5) quotes from an interview with a former female republican prisoner:

The Brits treat women volunteers just the same as they do men. There was a woman who appeared in court with bruises and a black eye. I saw her being dragged up the steps and battered. When I was in Castlereagh on the evidence of a supergrass, I was deprived of sleep, kicked off a chair and beaten up. The Brits know that the women are just as dangerous as the men.

The SAS on covert surveillance operations tracked and ambushed both male and female targets. "Suspected male provisionals were reported as 'cocks' and female suspects as 'turkeys'" (Murray, 1991: 73).

It is common policy for Special Forces and anti-terrorist units to regard female terrorists as a priority target. It is argued that having to overcome one's passive sex-role stereotype, and then to take up arms, requires leadership traits and a force of personality and conviction. Many books contain accounts and typologies of terrorist organisations which prove women's 'hyperactive' role in terrorism and violence (White, 1991: 10-13; Cutterbuck, 1990). For this reason, it is considered an imperative to neutralise female antagonists as quickly as possible. They will tend to have a command function. This is probably the *raison d'être* behind GSG9 (the German Anti-Terrorist Unit) S.O.P. (Standard Operating Procedure) to "shoot the women first" (MacDonald, 1992: 111; Dobson, 1986: 134). The German authorities found women to be persistent and recidivist in their violent tendencies.

Of the male German terrorists who had been sentenced to long prison terms, not a few disassociated themselves from terrorism (...) There are few known cases of women terrorists willing to admit that their acts of violence were wrong. (Laqueur, 1987: 80)

Many of these women committed suicide in prison rather than be 'rehabilitated'. (The activities of these women remain topical and whilst I was researching this subject, the Irish Times featured an account of the controversial suicide of Gudrun Ensslin in Stammheim Prison, in 1977. (Irish Times, 22 April 1998: 11))

Thus, women would appear to have a well documented and hyperactive role in non-conventional or paramilitary organisations world-wide. Their increased participation in non-conventional or low intensity conflict appears to mirror their increased participation rates in the standing armies, navies and airforces that engage them.

4.3 Chapter Summary

In the first section of this chapter it was intended to chart the increase in the numbers of women in the U.S. military and their increased participation as combatants in major conflicts world-wide. The section outlines the integration of women in the U.S military from the segregated formations, or 'women's service corps' of World War Two, to their integration

into mixed units by the 1970's. The literature highlights two main reasons for this increase in the numbers of women participating in U.S. military structures; the equality of opportunity agenda, which was to the fore at that time and the sweeping legislative changes affecting the military during this period. This increase in numbers in the U.S military had a parallel in European armies in the NATO alliance. The percentage of women serving in the military has now reached 15% in most NATO armies. The effect of the political agenda and equality of opportunity legislation, particularly employment legislation enacted during the period, appear to have produced tangible results in terms of an increase in the numbers of women participating in the military. This increase in numbers would appear to confirm the outcome hypothesised by liberal feminists who advocate such legislative changes in order to increase women's participation in the workforce.

This increased participation rate has a parallel in the numbers of women being deployed to combat - from 200 in the invasion of Grenada in 1983, to 800 in the invasion of Panama in 1990 and 41,000 in the Gulf War. With a total of 195,000 women serving in the U.S. military, the literature suggests that the original motive for mobilising women, that of equality of opportunity, has been superseded by an awareness that women are now considered vital to the success of military campaigns by military planners. This is emphasised by the rescinding of the Direct Combat Probability Coding or DCPC in 1993, which makes all combat appointments accessible to U.S. female military personnel.

Section two endeavours to give a documented account of women's involvement in non-conventional or low intensity conflict during the same period. The section charts the increased participation of women in paramilitary organisations world-wide and also the hyperactive role assumed by female members in these organisations. The sections combined are not intended as an exhaustive historical account of military campaigns since the Second World War, but are intended to situate the workplace setting under study in a wider context. The chapter is included for the purposes of comparison, in order to gauge how 'in-step' with the international military the PDF are, in terms of the status and roles assigned female soldiers.

In the course of researching this topic, I encountered a number of secondary sources dealing with the role of women in the War of Independence and Civil War in Ireland. These sources prompted me into an examination of my grandmother's Cumann na mBan record contained in Military Archives, Cathal Brugha Barracks, Rathmines. Arising from this examination of Maire Ni Bheaglaoch's Cumann na mBan file, I discovered an amount of data relating to the activities of Cumann na mBan during the war of independence and the civil war. I have

decided to include this data in an appendix rather than in the body of the text. Given that the focus of this thesis is on the PDF today, I felt the comparison with other contemporary armies to be more salient than a historical comparison. Nonetheless, I felt it important to include it as relevant background information.

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