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The Deployment of Female Personnel Within The Irish Armed Forces

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CHAPTER SEVEN

The deployment of female personnel within the Irish Armed Forces

This chapter deals with the deployment of women throughout the Defence Forces over its primary (combat) and secondary (support) roles. It is intended on this basis to establish whether or not a gender division of labour exists within the PDF. It is intended to examine this phenomenon through an examination of PDF policy on deployment at home and abroad, and the Defence Forces Board Report on policy for the deployment of female personnel. This documentary analysis of PDF policies is complemented by a simple analysis of deployment statistics provided by enlisted personnel section at DFHQ. These statistics are then reviewed in light of a number of audits of the work carried out by female personnel of the PDF. These audits were carried out in two main phases, April 1997 and October 1999. These audits allow for an analysis of the de facto deployment of female personnel on the ground. The fact that the audits took place two and a half years apart allows for a simple analysis of any change in the pattern of women's deployment, over the period of the study.

This chapter on deployment explores the scope and range of military "experience" (Reskin and Padavic 1994) assigned women by the military authorities. In assessing this aspect of PDF culture, use has been made of documentary and archival material in discussing policies on the deployment of female troops (other ranks and officers). The documentary material examined also extends to a detailed treatment of PDF policies, practices and aspirations in the area of the deployment of women soldiers at home and overseas. There is a consideration of the law in relation to these policies in the section on 'legal aspects'. This discussion of the deployment of female personnel in light of the law, functions in parallel with chapters four and nine, in situating the study within the context of the aspirations, policies and practices outside of the setting. It gives the chapter a wider perspective.

The chapter concludes with a summary of the findings generated by the data. There is also much use made of the data gathered by interview revealing women's attitudes and insights to the deployment policies and practices of the military authorities.

7.1 Defence forces policy on the deployment of female personnel

Within the spirit of liberal feminism's advocacy of legislative and educational measures to promote equality, the equality of opportunity literature strongly recommends an examination of those policies and guidelines for equality present within the workplace in order to assess the equality environment. At present, no such set of guidelines or policies exists within the Defence Forces. A documentary and archival analysis of the setting reveals the absence of equality policies within the body of Defence Forces Regulations, standard operating procedures, memoranda, letters of instruction, administrative instructions, and orders. Apart from a memorandum issued by the Chief of Staff in 1992, which states an aspiration for equality of opportunity for female personnel, there is no coherent or explicit body of guidelines, instructions, or recommendations, which might be termed an equality policy. The documentary and archival search conducted by the author within the setting did, however, reveal the existence of a document dating from 1990 and titled 'Policy on the deployment of females in the Defence Forces'. (DFHQ, 1990, Confidential) An examination of this document gives an insight into the dynamic determining the status and roles assigned Irish female soldiers. The Adjutant General's 1990 policy document on the deployment of females represents an official blueprint for the status and roles to be assigned female personnel in the Defence Forces. The policy document begins:

Except in cases of direst necessity, European and Western cultural norms have excluded women service personnel from direct combat roles.

(Introduction, Para (a), Policy Statement, Confidential)

The opening statement acknowledges the role of women in combat and is followed by a further statement, which indicates an explicit commitment to equality of opportunity within the Defence Forces:

The General Staff acknowledge (...) and fully supports the concept of equality of opportunity in the areas where women are to be employed. Where possible female personnel are encouraged to participate on an equal footing with their male colleagues in areas where they serve together.

(Introduction, Para (b), Policy Statement, Confidential)

This statement is qualified as follows:

Specifically (women) will not be posted to units in the Infantry, Artillery, Air Corps, nor to the ARW (Army Ranger Wing), Brigade Operations/Intelligence Staffs, nor in the case of officers to Operations Sections at Command H.Q., or D.F.H.Q (...) Women N.C.O.s and Privates may serve on Operations/Intelligence Staffs at Command H.Q. or D.F.H.Q.

(Areas of participation, Para (b), Policy Statement, Confidential)

(It is interesting to note here that the military authorities in 1990 did not see the value of women as members of Intelligence Staffs. Sixty nine years previously the Divisional Intelligence Officer of the I.R.A., Northern Division, actively endorsed female intelligence staffs). (See appendix six)

The document makes explicit and official a set of organisational expectations, which would confine women to certain roles within the organisation and which would effectively subordinate and segregate women within the PDF. The document contains many provisions that are at variance with the opening statement of the document and the Chief of Staff's 1992 stated position of recognising "equal opportunities in all aspects of Defence Forces activity". Some of the many examples include:

ARMY:

- (i) The employment of women in (signal) corps duties at an operation headquarters, where arms are carried for self protection only will not be prohibited.
- (iii) Women M.P.s will not serve in the No. 1 Garrison, M.P. Company at Government buildings. They will not carry out gate security duties, nor pay escort duties, both of which essentially require the carrying of arms.

(Service Corps and Special Establishments, Para (c), i Signal Corps and iii MP Corps Confidential)

The stipulations in relation to the Air Corps are also interesting:

AIR CORPS

- (iv) Women will not be eligible to serve as pilots in the armed support role, nor take part in flying operations in ATCP (Aid to the Civil Power Operations - Anti Terrorist Activities).

(Para (c), (iv) Air Corps, Confidential)

These stipulations are at variance with the policies and practices of the international military as outlined in chapter four. In the case of flying duties in particular, the following international

precedents apply. Female pilots fly U.S. Naval Marine F16's or F18's on combat assignments. (U.S. Navy News Service, 28-04-93: 1) (Air Force Times, 12 April 1993: 7). In the Royal Air Force, due to the implementation of the Army 'Equal Opportunities Directive' in December 1995, there are now 17 qualified female pilots in their three services including two "fast jet" or combat pilots (Statement on the Defence Estimates, 1996: 78). Elsewhere, the Israeli Air Force employ women as pilots for both manned (sic) and unmanned (drones) aircraft (Egozi, 1990: 31). The Air Corps have ignored the provisions of the 1990 policy document and to date, (in common with other air forces) have trained and commissioned one female pilot (1998). This female pilot is flying search and rescue duties.

Similarly in the Army, women have, since 1992, been assigned to units in the combat corps of infantry, artillery and cavalry. Women are also serving in the headquarters and formations listed in the paragraphs quoted from the policy document. There are no women as yet serving in the Army Ranger Wing. It would appear therefore that there is a trend towards integration evident in the appointments assigned to women which exists despite the provisions of the 1990 policy document. In sections five, six and seven of this chapter, a detailed examination of the roles assigned female personnel is provided. This examination of deployment practices is of vital importance given the lack of an up to date policy document on deployment. The de facto deployment practices of the Defence Forces in relation to women will be examined in detail in order to establish if these ad hoc practices reflect the aspirations of the equality of opportunity agenda.

In relation to the Naval Service, there is some documentary evidence of an attempt to plan for the integration of women. Subsequent to the 1990 policy on women in the PDF, a board of enquiry was established in 1993 to examine the question of female service in the Naval Service. The board of enquiry would appear to have examined the integration of male and female personnel in other forces in order to gain an international perspective. Reference was made to experience gained by the Royal Navy who have for some years been operating with what they term "mixed gender crews". There are at present some 700 women at sea in surface ships of the Royal Navy from the Adriatic to the Gulf to the Antarctic (Statement on the Defence Estimates, 1996: 78).

In other Navies, reports have shown that gender integrated crews perform as well as those with all male crews.

(Board Report on Employment of Females in the Naval Service, 1993: 15, Confidential)

The United States Navy has at present four women in command of Surface combat vessels. (U.S. Navy News Service, 28 Apr 93: 2) (U.S. Navy Times, 05 April 1993: 4). The Board recommended the "recruitment of females into all areas of the Naval Service", (Board Report, 1993: 29). This and all other recommendations of the Board were fully endorsed by the Flag Officer Commanding the Naval Service, (FOCNS). No qualifiers were attached to the recommendations of the Board by the Naval Authorities. The Board, (consisting of three male Naval officers and one female Army officer) concluded:

The Board accepts that military organisations are essentially social institutions and that the ideas and attitudes of the community at large will permeate the Naval Service (...) (with the) employment of women in other Navies a definite trend emerges towards a fuller integration of female personnel into all roles.

(Board Report, 1993: 27)

Examples of gender-integrated naval crews on full operational duties abound. In one tragic incident, four sailors (including one female) lost their lives in the engine room of H.A.M.A.S. 'Australia' on 5 May 1998. The four were sealed into the engine compartment and burned by fire and a CO2 'drench' in order to save the ship. The incident puts paid to the myth that commanders will not knowingly put female personnel at risk in a life and death scenario. In this case the ship's captain was prepared to sacrifice the lives of four sailors regardless of sex. (Sky News, 5 May 1998)

It is significant that the Board report into the Naval Service drew from the actual experience of agencies outside of the PDF to inform its findings. The Naval Service has since begun recruiting female personnel for all duties and the first female naval officers were commissioned in 1997. This represents a trend towards the integration of female personnel into the Naval Service in line with international trends.

An analysis of the 1990 policy document and the Naval Service board report into the employment of female personnel reveal a set of aspirations for the service of female personnel within the army, air corps and naval service. The 1990 policy document contains many provisions designed

to limit the range of appointments open to female personnel within the army and air corps. The appointments closed to them are mainly operational appointments attracting higher rates of pay in the form of operational allowances such as flying pay, border allowances, security duty allowances and army ranger wing allowances. The de facto situation in all three services however appears at variance with the provisions of the 1990 policy document. In both the Army and Air Corps, ad hoc deployment policies have evolved which reflect a trend towards the greater integration of women within the Defence Forces. The latter sections of this chapter examine these ad hoc deployment policies and assess the equality ethos reflected in these practices. The Naval Service board report contains no restrictive provisions on the deployment of female personnel and contains an explicitly stated aspiration for equality of opportunity and full integration for women within the Naval Service.

7.2 Defence forces policy on the deployment of female personnel to overseas appointments

The Irish army has a world-wide commitment to United Nations (U.N.) peacekeeping and peace enforcement missions. Latterly, PDF personnel have also been involved in North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), Stabilisation Force (SFOR), Kosovo Force (KFOR), Organisation for Security Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and Western European Union (WEU) led missions. Given that overseas service is a key criterion for promotion for all ranks, overseas service is crucial to one's career prospects. Overseas missions are categorised in three ways:

1. Forces HQ Missions (Staff Officers "A" and "Q" Force HQ)
2. Troop Serving Missions (Command of Troops, Line/Combat)
3. Observer Missions (No troops. U.N. Military Observer)

It is interesting to note that in the last twenty years only one female officer has been nominated for a lucrative and prestigious observer mission, (Western Sahara). (This is despite the precedent of female Gardai doing similar work). According to the 1990 policy document:

Women will not serve with U.N. (United Nations) Forces abroad except at a designated Forces H.Q. i.e. UNIFIL HQ (United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon Headquarters) Naquora (Lebanon) and UNFICYP HQ (United Nations Force in Cyprus Headquarters), Nicosia (Cyprus) excluding service in IRISHBATT (Irish Battalion in Lebanon), UNIMOG MP Company (United Nations Iran, Iraq, Military observer group Military Police Company). (Policy Statement, Para (b) Areas of Participation, Overseas, Confidential)

This provision clearly limits the nature of overseas service open to women. These provisions were explained by a May 1994 memorandum from the Adjutant General's branch:

2. No formal Policy Document has been issued by UNNY (United Nations, New York) in relation to female officers serving in appointments with either Peace-keeping Missions or Observer Missions. However UNNY has stated in writing that no distinction is made with regard to the deployment of males and females in Peace-Keeping or Observer Missions. The decision on whether to assign females to duty with U.N. Missions is one for the Government of the troop contributing countries concerned.
3. The Defence Forces Policy on the deployment of females is based on the Principle of Equality of Opportunity, therefore no individual is precluded from selection for overseas service on the basis of gender. However Defence Forces Policy must not conflict with host nation policy or U.N. policy (as laid down for a particular mission).
4. In relation to service with Overseas Missions the following points will be addressed when considering the assignment of females:
 - (a) Location and Host National Policy
 - (b) United Nations Policy (if any)
 - (c) Policy and Practice of other troop contributing nations
 - (d) National and local culture and religious norms
 - (e) The Role of Women in the particular society.

(Memo, Adjutant General's Branch, ORS/OS/A13, 31 May 1994, Confidential)

To argue that "local culture may dictate that it is inappropriate" that female officers should serve is misleading. For many years, female Norwegian platoon commanders and female troops have served in UNIFIL (United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon) in South Lebanon in appointments 'in the hills' or outside of force headquarters. This has been the case despite 'national and local culture and religious norms'.

I worked in the former Yugoslavia in Serb-held Prijedor (near Banja Luka) in September/October 1996. Whilst in Bosnia I saw Czech, Canadian, British and American female troops operating on routine patrols. Indeed, females have fought in Bosnia as in the case of the Danish tank gunner who engaged a Serb gun position expending all of her ammunition. (Brower, 1996: 13) Female members of An Garda Síochána are serving as observers in former Yugoslavia, and this despite the much publicised treatment of women in that conflict.

A number of female personnel are now serving with the PDF in former Yugoslavia. As of October 1999 there are female PDF personnel serving with SFOR (Stabilisation Force) in Sarajevo as military police, with KFOR (Kosovo Force) in Kosovo as drivers in the Transport Company and in Prevlaka as observers for ECMM (European Community Monitoring Mission). Despite the provisions of such a policy document, the military authorities have to some extent recognised the potential of these female personnel and have ignored those provisions of the 1990 policy document which would deny them such service.

In relation to the issue of access to overseas appointments, of the forty-three women interviewed in the purposive sample, all forty-three felt they were discriminated against in their access to overseas appointments. Of the seventeen interviewed in the random sample, sixteen stated that they felt they were discriminated against in terms of access to overseas appointments. Therefore, despite evidence of women being deployed overseas contrary to the provisions of the 1990 policy, there is still a very strong feeling amongst those female personnel interviewed that the ad hoc practices which have evolved regarding the deployment of women overseas discriminates against women. Fifty-nine of the 60 women interviewed expressed misgivings about their access to overseas missions. This almost unanimous feeling amongst the women interviewed, is typified by the following responses:

They have a ban on women going to the hills. They have restrictions on all sorts of postings. The reason we're given is the customs of the country. I think this is just bullshit. And overseas appointments will have an effect on the promotion competition. It goes back to a time when a stereotyped idea of women dictated we not go.
(Interview No. 4, 14/4/99)

It was so frustrating not to be allowed go overseas. It was soul destroying to see junior guys going over and back ahead of you. Such a waste of years. When I eventually got out, the transport officer processed my 154. He only saw my initials. When he saw me he tore it up. He said, "there'll be no female drivers in my section". I ended up in the orderly room. In an office. I joined the army to get away from office work.
(Interview No. 10, 16/4/99)

Women lose out on money. Male lieutenants can go out twice while the female waits for the admin job. We lose money. And then they give the admin job to a male officer. I suppose that's their version of equality.
(Interview No. 12, 19/4/99)

We're not allowed to serve in the hills. They say it's to do with the local culture. If they followed that to its logical conclusion then you'd only have Arabs going to the Leb. In my experience with the Battalion, I met the Hezbollah looking for bodies. They didn't care that I was a female. They were just interested in bodies. The military authorities don't credit these people enough.
(Interview No. 24, 11/8/99)

We're not allowed to the hills because there's no toilets for women. There's no toilets in the Glen of Imaal. I was sent there often enough.
(Interview No. 27, 24/8/99)

Of the forty-three women interviewed at home, forty stated that all overseas appointments should be open to both men and women on an equality of opportunity basis. Of the seventeen interviewed in the Lebanon, all seventeen stated that all overseas posts should be open to both men and women on an equality of opportunity basis. Therefore, out of a total of sixty women, fifty-seven felt that restrictions on access for women for overseas postings should be lifted.

The three who were opposed to this open access cited the following reasons:

The situation in the Lebanon doesn't lend itself very well to women. There are social problems in the Battalion. Women get corralled. It's not a good place for women. That's my own personal view, and I guess that's the official view.
(Interview No. 7, 15/4/99)

Women aren't suited for overseas. We're homebirds I think.
(Interview No. 11, 19/4/99)

In principle I suppose women should have equal access. Yes. In practice though there are problems I think. I feel that it would be unfair to send a seventeen or eighteen year old woman to a post with four or five men. It wouldn't be fair on her. And it wouldn't be fair on them. But at Battalion and Company Headquarters, there'd be no problems. If anything happened to her it'd be her word against theirs and vice versa. If she made a false allegation, you know, you're just leaving yourself wide open. You're just raising issues that could best be avoided.
(Interview No. 23, 10/8/99)

It is worth noting that only one of these, the second cited, "blames" women's 'nature' for this lack of suitability. The other two indirectly blame the social context, which would deter women from such postings. Many of the women (fifty-seven) who were in favour of opening up access to all appointments overseas on an equality of opportunity basis cited the example of other nationalities doing so. (Many of the female Irish Personnel serving overseas, confined to

Battalion and Company Headquarters, would have direct experience of encountering female troops of other nationalities carrying out operational duties in the area of operations)

The other nationalities are doing it. I don't see why we can't. We need more women overseas.

(Interview No. 6, 14/4/99)

They say the culture there is different. But the other armies have women out there. What's the big deal with a woman on a checkpoint? A woman could easily man the GPMG (General Purpose Machine Gun).

(Interview No. 14, 20/4/99)

They say that for religious reasons women can't go on VCPs (Vehicle Check-Points) or Ops (Operations, Patrolling etc). So therefore they can't serve in the companies. But they would get used to us. They're used to the women in the other contingents. The religion thing is just an excuse. I could do any job in the Battalion, and I'd stand in the road any day. (Checkpoint Duty)

(Interview No. 30, 29/8/99)

Many of the women's responses at interview, in endorsing the principle of opening up all overseas appointments to women, also passed comment on the PDF's policy in this regard:

Of course the hills should be opened up to women. All the jobs in the Battalion in fact. They say it's for cultural reasons why we're not allowed serve in the companies. That's rubbish. The higher ups think they are protecting the little girls. They're afraid of a bad press. They're covering their asses. No one wants to be the CO that says, okay, put a woman on a checkpoint. In case anything might happen. I trust my buddies. I know the lads would back me up on a checkpoint. They know I'd back them up. But the CO, it seems like he doesn't trust us.

(Interview No. 41, 11/9/99)

We should serve overseas in all the jobs. We end up in the officers' mess or the orderly room. There it is. It's just unfair. The army isn't fair about it when it comes to overseas. They don't treat us like soldiers, they treat us like little girls.

(Interview No. 44, 11/9/99)

The army's policy in relation to women's overseas service stinks to high heaven. From 1985 to 1989 no women were allowed overseas. I got a reply to my application, which stated that the Lebanon "was an unsuitable place for women". The situation has improved a little – by necessity. They need I.T. qualified people, so they'll take a woman as signals officer – out of desperation. But it's still not fair. They wouldn't let me serve in Naqoura with my husband in Israel. Even though male officers can have their wives in Israel. They said it was too dangerous. They were just afraid of setting a precedent.

(Interview No. 8, 15/4/99)

Given the unanimity of the women's expressions of dissatisfaction with the practice of denying women certain overseas appointments, (fifty-nine out of sixty) and their overwhelming desire, (fifty-seven out of sixty) for such appointments to be officially opened to women, the PDF ought to examine this issue and produce an explicit policy on the issue to replace the 1990 document and the ad hoc practices which have evolved.

7.3 Legal aspects

The 1990 PDF policy on female personnel contained provisions which would be considered discriminatory in relation to the deployment of female personnel. The ad hoc policies which have evolved in relation to the deployment of women at home and abroad give some cause for concern. This is borne out by the figures in relation to their deployment and from the interview data contained in this chapter. In the absence of a replacement policy for their deployment, it is useful for comparison to examine the 1990 policy in the light of the law. Contrary to Constitutional Law, the policy on female personnel purports to exclude women from certain duties and appointments. According to Article 40 of the Constitution, "1. All citizens shall, as human persons, be held equal before the law". Effectively, Article 40 forbids discrimination against women on the basis of their sex. In addition to Constitutional Law, the Defence Acts from 1954 to 1990 make no distinction between members of the Defence Forces on the basis of the sex of such members. The wording of the Defence (Amendment) (No. 2) Act of 1979 is of particular importance.

The provisions of the Defence Acts 1954 to 1979 and of any Statutory Instruments made thereunder shall apply to women members of the Defence Forces holding Commissioned or Non Commissioned rank and accordingly all words in those Acts and those Instruments importing a reference to a person of the Male sex, shall be construed as importing a reference to persons of either sex.

Given that officers of the Defence Forces are subject to both constitutional and statutory law, no member of the general staff, (or the minister for that matter), may promulgate a policy which discriminates against certain personnel on the basis of their sex. The 1990 policy is in direct breach of several international treaties and covenants and also Irish statute law. Among them are as follows:

- (a) The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (U.N.) 1948 states: "Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country" and "everyone without any discrimination has the right to equal pay for equal work".
- (b) European Social Charter (1961), (Council of Europe)
- (c) The Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (U.N., 1967).
- (d) Geneva Conventions 1949.
- (e) Article 235, E.E.C. Treaty. Directive (EEC 76/207) states, The implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion and working conditions.
- (f) The Anti Discrimination (Pay) Act 1975.
- (g) The Employment Equality Act, 1977.
- (h) The Employment Equality Act, 1998.

The Geneva Conventions Act (1962) incorporates the Geneva Conventions and gives them legal effect within the state. This Act distinguishes between combatants and non-combatants on the basis of membership of the Armed Forces. Members of the Armed Forces when party to a conflict (other than medical or religious personnel as defined) have the right to participate directly in hostilities. The definition or status 'combatant' is based solely on a soldier's function. Certain classes of soldiers are considered 'non-combatant', i.e. medics and religious ministers (chaplains). The sex of the soldier is irrelevant. It is completely erroneous in both military and legal terms to label female troops as 'non combatant'.

The 1990 PDF policy in relation to its female personnel could be considered therefore to be discriminatory in that it is in contravention to the legislation mentioned. The situation is sufficiently pointed as to have moved the Equality Commission to recommend that the Minister for Labour make an Order under Section 12 (2) applying the Acts to the Defence Forces. In June

of 2000, I enquired of the Department of Defence whether such an order had been made. I was informed by the Minister for Defence that the matter was the responsibility of the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform. I contacted the Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform on the matter and was referred to the equality unit. I was informed that such an order had not been made as the Defence Forces were as of October 1999 covered by the provisions of the Employment Equality Act of 1998. This new legislation they stated, superseded all previous equality legislation, making an order applying previous acts to the Defence Forces unnecessary.

Under the provisions of the 1998 Employment Equality Act, a number of points arise in relation to the Defence Forces. The Act according to the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform “extends protection to the Defence Forces for the first time in Irish law” (Guide to Employment Equality Act 1998, 1999:3). The Defence Forces does not qualify for any exemptions from the legislation except the manner in which personnel may claim redress. In this respect, members of the Defence Forces may only seek redress from the Director of Equality Investigations specifically in relation to ‘recruitment’ after seeking such redress through the Minister for Defence (Employment Equality Act, Pt VII, Section 77, (3) (a) and (7) (c)). Aside from this exemption, the Defence Forces are covered by every provision of the Employment Equality Act of 1998. This includes all provisions in relation to positive action (gender) in relation to access to paid employment (recruitment), vocational training, and promotion (Guide to Employment Equality Act 1998, 1999:3). The Act also makes compulsory the adoption of the Equality Authorities recommendations on harassment and bullying within the workplace (Ibid: 4).

Given the provisions of the recent Equal Status Act and the Employment Equality Act, the 1990 deployment policy and the ad hoc deployment practices which have evolved since 1990 would appear to be in contravention of the law.

7.4 The Defence Forces' board report on policy for the deployment of female personnel.

The 1990 policy document was drafted on the 22nd of August 1990 but remained confidential and its contents were not made known to female personnel until the 31 May 1991. This document, and the manner in which its contents were made known led to a number of submissions and queries from female personnel.

The pressure of redress from female personnel forced the Chief of Staff to issue a convening order on the 30 September 1991 for a board to examine and report on the "Employment of Females in the Defence Forces", (Chief of Staff, Convening Order 30-09-91). The board assembled on 7th October 1991. It consisted of eight members, seven military and one civilian, nominated by the Secretary of the Department of Defence.

The board which subsequently became known in army circles as "the beauty board" sought views in the form of written submissions from General Officers Commanding, Commanders and Staffs at all levels, Branch Heads and Directors. According to the Board Report:

Specific opportunity was afforded to the maximum available female serving personnel to express written and verbal viewpoints to a special subcommittee of the Board.
(Board Report, 20 March 1992: 2 Confidential)

Of the sixty female personnel I interviewed, none were invited to make submissions to this board.

The Board's recommendations were as follows:

1. The withdrawal of the current policy statement on the role and service of women in the Defence Forces.
2. The enunciation of a new policy statement which will allow for the full participation of women over a period of time in all aspects of Defence Forces activity to include participation in operational work.
3. The full integration of women in relation to access to the military career educational system and to promotional opportunity in the Defence Forces.
4. A transitional period to plan and implement the recommendations of the Board.
(Ibid: 3, Confidential)

The Board's conclusions led to the Chief of Staff's Memo of 16th November 1992, which stated:

Females will have opportunity of employment in all aspects of Defence Forces activity including Operational and Ceremonial on the same basis as their male counterparts. (Memorandum, Office of Chief of Staff, 16.11.92, Restricted)

The Board's recommendations and the Chief of Staff's statement give a clear and explicit aspiration for equality of opportunity for female personnel. As of June 2000, there is as yet no equality policy or deployment policy formulated to replace the 1990 policy. Nor is anyone tasked with formulating such policies. The Strategic Planning Office of the Chief of Staff's Branch has no plans to address this issue. The latter sections of this chapter will examine in detail the deployment of female personnel in order to assess the pattern of their employment in light of the legacy of the 1990 document, the subsequent board report and the absence of any clear and coherent policy in this area.

The Board's deliberations and certain annexes to the report make for some interesting reading. References from members of the Chief of Staff's Branch to the original idea of a Women's Service Corps indicate that the Defence Amendment Act of 1979 provided for 277 appointments. (Board Report, 20-03-92: 3 section 3, Para 2 (a)). The military authorities, through their recruitment policies, by accident or design, in 1997 had capped the numbers of women at 177 and by 1999, twenty years later, had only recruited a total of 367 women. On the question of redressing the imbalance of women's representation, the Board concludes:

3. The numbers of females in all ranks (currently 0.8% of total strength) should continue to reflect the normal balance evident throughout Defence Forces Rank Structure. Recruitment of personnel is *governed by vagaries of financial and personnel policy neither of which presently indicate any specific trends for the foreseeable future.* (My italics)

(The Board Report, 20-03-92: Section 7, Para 3 - Confidential)

The board indicates in this statement that the situation vis a vis promotional prospects for women as outlined in chapter eight is tolerable and that there would not appear to be a requirement for the recruitment of more women. The inclusion of the provisions 'vagaries of financial and personnel policy' abdicates responsibility for these matters and indicates no intention of proactive action in these matters. The following paragraph seems to endorse the view that there were sufficient numbers of females in the PDF (0.8%) and there is the suggestion of a link between operational effectiveness and the numbers of females:

4. Current female strength in the Defence Forces would not cause an imbalance in Operational task detailing, given the range of other appointments currently successfully filled by them.

(Ibid.: 8, para 4 - Confidential)

Overall the Board Report seems to suggest that an 0.8% level of female participation is acceptable. There is a strengthening of the implied link between the female presence and operational efficiency, in para 5:

5. Consistent with ongoing control measures and professional discerning leadership within the Defence Forces, the aspirations and ability of women who elect for a military career will find expression. Posting authorities, commanders and staff must exercise discretion and sound professional judgement. This should ensure that personnel posted to operational units are made fully aware of inherent risks and practices pertaining to service in such units, and that military efficiency is NOT (sic) adversely affected.

(Ibid.: 8, Para 5,- Confidential)

Para 5 would appear to reveal a residual doubt over the bona fides of female personnel. Despite the Chief of Staff's stated commitment to equality of opportunity, the Board Report still urges caution when dealing with these 'other' members of the PDF. Para 6 gives a further insight into the domain assumptions of the Board members:

6. The principle of female personnel participating in Operational employment within an Irish Defence Forces milieu will not be contrary to American, Western European or Australian cultural norms.

(Ibid: 8, Para 6 - Confidential)

Paragraph 6 expresses the view that the deployment of female personnel ought to be consistent with such practice in the international military as listed. The paragraph suggests that the military authorities ought to be cognisant of such norms and ought to incorporate these norms into policy and practice. As no such policy exists, only those ad hoc practices as evolved by the Defence Forces can be assessed by comparison with international standards. The latter sections of this chapter concentrate on the deployment patterns evolved, with chapters 4 and 9 functioning to place these patterns in a wider context. Paragraph 6 makes no mention of the norms for the deployment of women applying in Ireland amongst those involved in terrorist and non conventional operations. Paragraph 6 seems to ignore the fact that Irish and British prisons

contain a number of female terrorists (capable no doubt of 'adversely affecting' 'military efficiency').

On the matter of overseas service, the Board concludes that:

This is an area in which UN policy implies certain restrictions on the employment of women, which must be adjudged on a continual basis by the General Staff.

(Ibid: 9, Para 8 - Confidential)

"The Role of women in the particular society", (Ibid.: 9, para 8, (5) Confidential) is again cited as a reason to debar women from operational duties in Lebanon. This is despite the participation of women in such duties in the neighbouring Norwegian battalion. The issue of this 'cultural' reason for barring women from well-paid jobs in the Lebanon was rejected as a valid argument by a total of forty-two of the sixty women interviewed. This aspect of the interview data was not anticipated by the author, nor was the virulent rejection by women of the "role of the women in the particular society" argument. Of the forty-three women interviewed at home, twenty-nine specifically mentioned and rejected this 'cultural' rationale for refusing women access to certain appointments in the Lebanon. Of the seventeen women interviewed in the Lebanon, thirteen specifically mentioned and rejected this argument.

Their observations were extremely interesting and I feel are a fair reflection of female soldiers' views on this aspect of PDF policy. The following examples are typical of their responses. Some of the women raised the issue of the culture of the PDF:

The cultural argument we're given is just a convenient excuse for not putting in the infrastructure for women. What am I saying? I'm beginning to sound like them! The infrastructure is there, it's just they don't want women. It's jobs for the boys. This is more to do with our own cultural problems than any aspect of Lebanese culture.
(Interview No. 18, 23/7/99)

You know the army likes the idea of itself having a few women soldiers here and there. They wheel us out for the cameras. They say of course we can't do the job in the Leb because of their culture. But it's really our problem. The Irish army is very backward on this. They train us as soldiers, then send us to the kitchen.
(Interview No. 21, 28/7/99)

We cannot serve in the hills. They say it's to do with the local culture. If they followed that to its logical conclusion, then you'd only have Arabs going to the Leb.
(Interview no. 24, 11/8/99)

The culture thing is crap. They just want to keep the numbers of women low. On the chicken runs (P.T. runs with security), the locals are well used to us. It's the Battalion that's not used to woman. It's like our fellas getting away from their missus. One of the girls was stopped going from her room to the Comcen for a call from Ireland because she was wearing a T-shirt. The Battalion is worse at enforcing this type of thing, culture if that's what you call it, than the Lebbos.
(Interview No. 38, 8/9/99)

The Arabs don't have a problem with the women. It's the Army itself that has a problem with women. The Arabs I met didn't give a damn that it was a woman cleaning their wounds. Some of the shitheads in the Battalion won't let us take blood from them. And these are the same shitheads that call the Arabs niggers. I'll tell you who the real niggers are. They're running this camp.
(Interview No. 43, 11/9/99)

Only one of the sixty women I interviewed expressed misgivings about local culture with regard to women's service:

I don't know if I'd trust the Arab men on a checkpoint. If the army wanted to put a woman on the checkpoint, I wouldn't like to be the experiment.
(Interview No. 55, 22/9/99)

There were many women however who were happy to share the dangers of checkpoint duty with their male colleagues:

I'd do the checkpoint if I got the chance. I'd prefer it to the officers' mess.
(Interview No. 36, 8/9/99)

I already do camp security. I'd prefer the road to the mess. I hate the mess. I'd do checkpoint at the drop of a hat. The locals wouldn't give a damn.
(Interview No. 37, 8/9/99)

Given the subjective views of these women, and the objective examples of other nationalities deploying female personnel in operational appointments, (Finnish Battalion, Norwegian Battalion, Polish Battalion, in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) forces, Stabilisation Force (SFOR) and Kosovo Force (KFOR)), perhaps the PDF should reconsider their position on this matter and exercise their

discretion in a positive, equality of opportunity manner. This would be more in keeping with the Chief of Staff's stated commitment to equality of opportunity and international trends in the deployment of women.

The board concludes under 'Recommendations' and states:

The Board does not consider amendments to Defence Forces Regulations to be necessarily resultant from the recommendations contained in this report.

(Ibid.: 10, Section 5, Para 3 - Confidential)

Subsequent to the conclusion of the board's deliberations on the Employment of females in the Defence Forces, the Chief of Staff convened a working group in December 1992 to "Evaluate progress in regard to the implementation of the report". (Females in the PDF, Implementation Board Report 23 Dec 92: 1, Confidential)

The board consisted of five members, all male. One of the members, a Commandant, Officer Commanding Personnel Resources, in effect the Army's Human Resources Manager, submitted a report to the Board entitled: "Physical Capacity, Personnel of the Defence Forces". (PDF, PHY. PRS. 04 Feb 93: 1 Confidential)

In it he states:

- 3 There is a tendency to compensate for physical weakness in females by not detailing them for the most strenuous tasks. Added to this in the tactical training situation is an overly protective attitude from male colleagues.
(Ibid.: 1, Para 3)

This officer who wrote this statement never trained with female personnel. Having trained with female personnel and having trained female personnel I would contend that the 'over protective attitude' cited simply does not exist. (A set of protective attitudes develop during training for all members of the group, male and female – that is one of the purposes of military training).

He goes on to state:

There is no doubt that some male officers and male enlisted personnel are physically weak. This may be due to their small stature.
(PDF, PHY. PRS. 04 Feb 93: 2 - Confidential)

The Officer Commanding Personnel Resources goes on to add:

We set a minimum height of 5' 2" for female cadets and 4' 10" for enlisted personnel. There is no gainsaying the fact that females of these sizes are at a definite disadvantage compared to their male counterparts. One only needs to contemplate a 4' 10" female driving an APC (armoured personnel carrier) or a Man Diesel Truck, or the credibility of a 4' 10" Platoon Sergeant to realise that some females will NOT (sic) be suited to a variety of appointments because of their physical stature.
(PDF., PHY, PRS/ 04-02-93: 1, Para 4, Confidential)

Given the history of women in combat, at home and abroad, the Officer Commanding Personnel Resources comments could be said to reveal certain biases against women and people of shorter stature. While the Officer Commanding Personnel Resources was putting pen to paper regarding the notion of women driving 4 wheel drive ManDiesel trucks, a female member of Depot Supply and Transport Corps was driving a 6 wheel drive articulated truck, at times under fire in Somalia with UNOSOM (United Nations Operation in Somalia). As a human resource manager, and contributor to a Board Report on the employment of Women in the Defence Forces, the attitude of the Officer Commanding Personnel Resources reveals a set of domain assumptions which is anti-woman. The Implementation Board made a number of recommendations in their report. They included a commitment to addressing the training gap left by separate male and female training syllabi:

14. Female soldiers in service will undergo a short course in tactics and internal security to bring them up to the same standard as their male counterparts.

(Implementation Board Report, 23 Dec 92: 2, Para 14 Confidential)

Selection for overseas duties would still remain "subject to U.N. Policy" (as adjudged by the General Staff), (Ibid.: 2, Para 15, Confidential). It was recommended that service in Operational Units be open to female personnel, "does NOT imply that females will in the future be afforded any preference over their male counterparts" (Ibid.: 2, Para 16, Confidential).

The Implementation Board concluded their Report with a caveat:

28. Two difficulties have been encountered by other armies in the integration of females particularly in to the operational sphere.

(a) the non acceptance by male comrades that females are capable of performing "the duties associated with the job".

(b) the risk to the "completion of the mission" due to male personnel being over protective of their female comrades.

(Implementation Board Report, 23-12-92: 4, Para 28, (a), (b), Confidential)

The Report implies that Para 28, a, b, are justification for a 'softly softly' approach to be adopted in the area of equality of opportunity. It is up to the General Staff to show leadership and initiative in demonstrating confidence in female personnel. Any institutionalised notions about women as at 28 (a) should be robustly challenged. To use the excuse at 28 (a) to delay change is to blame and punish the victim.

The assertion at 28(b) has been proven time and time again over the history of conflict to be incorrect. It does not seem to affect the effectiveness or mission of terrorist organisations such as the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA). It would seem that our military leadership is not paying attention to a conflict being fought under their very noses.

One can only conclude that the Board Report on the Employment of Females in the PDF and the subsequent Implementation Board Report were ill conceived, ill informed and ill disposed to the interests of women. Their net effect as evidenced by a study of the actual employment of female personnel, would appear to be negligible. The reports contain no proactive recommendations in terms of greater recruitment for women, affirmative action in deployment policies, promotion, or personnel support in terms of equality officers or agencies.

There has been some improvement in the area of deployment. I feel that this has occurred despite the best efforts of the military authorities. It has occurred because of the effects of wider societal change. There are now women in our Naval Service, and women training to be pilots in our Air Corps. Women are going overseas in ever-greater numbers. This is to be welcomed. However all developments should be scrutinised carefully to avoid the tokenism and lipservice to equality highlighted in the equality of opportunity literature. For example, in December 1996, there were ten female privates serving at Battalion Headquarters in Lebanon. This was one of the largest cohorts of female personnel to serve with UNIFIL. On the face of it, this was an example of more progressive deployment policies and a personnel decision based on equality of opportunity. Closer examination reveals the following:

- 3 were serving as waitresses in the Officers Mess.
- 2 were Members of the Pipe Band
- 1 was a Switch Operator (Telephonist) Battalion HQ
- 2 were Switch Operators (Telephonist) A Company
- 2 were Switch Operators (Telephonist) B Company

In September of 1999, I interviewed seventeen women serving overseas with the 85th Battalion. They were employed as follows:

- 6 waitresses (Officers' Mess)
- 5 Signals (Switch Operators)
- 3 Clerks
- 2 Medical Orderlies
- 1 Driver

In relation to overseas service, females (other ranks) are permitted to serve only at Company or Battalion Headquarters. At these headquarters, in practice they are serving as medical orderlies, clerks, drivers, signals personnel (in the Communications Centre of the switchboard/radio room) or as waitresses in the officers' mess. The women I spoke to expressed dissatisfaction at being "corralled" at Battalion headquarters into a single sex dormitory. This dormitory was supervised by a male NCO (sergeant) despite the fact that a female NCO (sergeant) was also present on that floor:

The same guy who paraded us and warned us about having affairs with married men, halfway through the trip he had us all taken out of our accommodation and put into an all female block. They even put a sergeant, a guy from headquarters company in to watch us. There wasn't a problem when we were integrated.
(Interview No. 49, 12/9/99)

Whilst in the Lebanon I enquired as to why the female personnel were now segregated into a single sex block. The senior officer responsible for the decision told me to ask the medical officer. I asked the medical officer the same question. He told me that at a conference he had remarked on the rise in the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases amongst male troops in the battalion. On hearing this, it was decided by a senior officer to segregate the women in order 'to terminate this increase in the spread of sexually transmitted diseases amongst the men'. The Medical Officer told me he had pointed out to the senior officer in question that these infections

were most likely acquired by male troops whilst on leave. The decision to 'corral' the female personnel went ahead. This was despite the fact that there was no objective evidence or reporting of such infections among female personnel.

The women interviewed in general expressed satisfaction with the work assigned them in the Battalion. The women who worked in the officers' mess, however, spoke very strongly against the policy of employing only female privates as waitresses in the officers' mess. The following are quotes from these women:

I would describe my work in the officers' mess as degrading. It's all women serving, with a male sergeant to oversee us. You never get a male private detailed for here. They still even have to have a man in charge. The Arab workers in the dining complex even talk down to us. I didn't join the army to serve tables. I'm supposed to be here peacekeeping, but instead I'm checking the freezer for ice-cream.
(Interview No. 35, 7/9/99)

It's degrading to work in the officers' mess. It wouldn't be so bad if it was broken down to males and females. But it's the Irish way of thinking – let the girls do the washing up. It pisses me off. I'm never coming out to this again.
(Interview No. 37, 8/9/99)

I'd much prefer to be working in a line job. The waitressing lark is cracking me up. There shouldn't even be an officers' mess in the Leb. It's the same food. Why can't they just queue up like the rest of us?
(Interview No. 40, 11/9/99)

When I put in for overseas, I was told I'd be going to the officers' mess. I wasn't given a choice. It annoys me that the lads aren't working in the officers' mess. We're all trained the same way.
(Interview No. 42, 11/9/99)

These views of this type of work were shared by women interviewed at home:

Looking for overseas, I can only apply for the officers' mess or signals. Signals is what we all hope for. No one wants the officers' mess. As a dogsbody. Cleaning up. It's wrong. It's all females that do it. Women haven't progressed at all. They're in the kitchen. I don't object to the work, it's just the fact that it's only the women who are detailed.
(Interview No. 32, 1/9/99)

You really have to scratch around to get the signals job. I'd hate the officers' mess. There's not many could hack waiting tables on officers for six months. But it's always the women. Never again.
(Interview No. 31, 31/8/99)

The younger women don't know what's in for them when they apply for overseas. I mean, signals is okay, but most of the first timers end up in the officers' mess. Basically as skivvies. No matter how desperate I was to go overseas, there's no way I'd do it. I just couldn't. No way. I'd prefer a hundred Hezbollah than the whinging and bullshit from the officers and their precious fucking mess.
(Interview No. 21, 28/7/99)

I've had one overseas trip. I worked in the officers' mess. I worked as a skivvy, serving up dinners to officers. I hated it. I used to lie to my family about what I was doing. I was so ashamed. When I got home I made up stuff about seeing villages and going on patrols. If you didn't laugh about it, you'd cry.
(Interview No. 1, 12/4/99)

There is evidence in these responses of resentment for deployment into what could be considered a 'feminine' role in the work place. The status and roles assigned these women have been clearly interpreted by the women themselves as those of "skivvy" or "dogsbody".

There is evidence, however, of some flexibility on the part of some members of the Battalion in relation to the detailing of women only for these duties:

I'm tech qualified in signals. I did an apprenticeship in electronics. I fix radios. When one of the girls in the officers' mess went on leave, the BSM (Battalion sergeant major) asked our CS (Company sergeant) for "one of your girls" to replace her. The CS told him to fuck off. We were delighted.
(Interview No. 38, 8/9/99)

My CO promised me I'd go to a clerk's job. When I got here, the BSM told me that I was going to the officers' mess. I refused. I refused point blank. He threatened to charge me for refusing to follow a lawful order. I was scared shitless. But I thought, to hell with them, send me home. I stuck to my guns and guess what? They put me in the orderly room.
(Interview No. 44, 11/9/99)

We must be careful to ensure that as ambassadors for our country, in terms of our employment policies we do not export a prejudicial view of women's place in the world of work. This chapter, through an examination of the roles assigned female personnel at home and abroad, highlights a gender division of labour. The data gathered at interview demonstrates an almost unanimous

level of dissatisfaction with PDF practices in this area. The pattern of women's deployment also has serious implications for the promotion prospects, or power within the organisation. This issue is dealt with in the next chapter.

7.5 The deployment of female personnel (other ranks) within the defence forces

The official position of the military authorities in relation to deployment is outlined in the memorandum of 16th November 1992, wherein the Chief of Staff states:

1b. Females will have opportunity of employment in all aspects of Defence Forces activity, including Operational and Ceremonial on the same basis as their male counterparts.
(Memorandum, Office of the Chief of Staff, 16.11.92, Restricted)

In order to ascertain the reality on the ground in terms of the deployment of female personnel, I surveyed two important documents. The Defence Forces Gazette, (DFR A17, Para 5, Adjutant General's Branch) and SR1 (Strength Return 1). SR1 compares the strength versus the establishment of personnel in the PDF. By examining these documents I was able to determine the distribution of female Officers, N.C.O.s and privates through the various corps and appointments of the PDF. The findings relate to appointments held by women as of 30th September 1996. There were one hundred and seventy seven female personnel in the army. Table (v) supplied by Enlisted Personnel Section, Defence Forces Headquarters, (EPS, DFHQ) gives the breakdown by rank of all 177 women in the PDF at this date. The table consists of two columns and seven rows. The left hand column contains the rank held by female personnel with the most senior rank (Commandant) in the top row and the remaining ranks in descending order with the most junior rank (Private) in the bottom row. The right hand column contains the numbers of women holding each rank. The bottom row contains the total number of female personnel in the Defence Forces.

Table (v): Ranks held by Female Personnel of the PDF as of 30.09.96.

Commandant	6
Captain	30
Lieutenant	13
2 nd Lieutenant	5
Sergeant	9
Corporal	26
Private	88
Total	177

Source: Enlisted Personnel Section, DFHQ, (SR1) Confidential.

Table (v) gives an indication of the status of female personnel within the PDF in terms of rank held within the organisation. In assessing the role assigned female personnel, I examined the appointments held by female personnel. This examination would in effect involve an examination of the gender division of labour within the PDF. In examining this gender division of labour, I have placed those appointments held by female other ranks under two headings:

1. Line or Combat Appointments

These appointments involve Line or Regimental duties in the 'combat' corps of Cavalry Artillery, Infantry, Naval Service and Air Corps. These appointments would be in areas considered 'operational' or the 'primary' role of the PDF; "to defend the state against internal and external aggression".

2. Admin/Logistical/Support Appointments

These appointments involve clerical, administrative, or logistical/technical support, duties at corps headquarters or in any of the support corps. (i.e. Supply and Transport Corps, Engineers, Signals, Military Police, Medical Corps etc.) These duties would be considered as secondary or in support to the PDF's primary role

By referring to SR1, as on 30th September 1996, the following breakdown by numbers and appointments held was obtained and compiled into table (vi) as supplied by Enlisted Personnel Section, DFHQ as of 30.09.96. The left hand column lists in the seven rows those units of the

PDF which would be considered line or combat appointments. The remaining two columns on the right hand side give figures for male and female personnel respectively holding these appointments. The bottom row of the table contains the total numbers of male and female personnel holding line appointments.

Table (vi) Combat (primary) Appointments – Male and Female personnel (all ranks) 30.09.96

Combat Appointments	Male	Female
Infantry Corps	3,823	45
Artillery Corps	719	8
Cavalry Corps	562	3
Naval Service	991	NIL
Air Corps	1,062	13
79 Battalion UNIFIL (Lebanon)	533	5
No. 1 Security Company	15	1
Totals	7,705	75

Source: Enlisted Personnel Section, DFHQ, (SR1) Confidential.

Table (vi) gives the breakdown of those operational or combat appointments held by male and female personnel. These figures drawn from SR1 represent the ‘official version’ of those appointments held by male and female personnel. Table (vii) gives the breakdown of administrative and logistical appointments held by male and female personnel. Table (vii) is similar in organisation to table (vi) with three columns and thirteen rows. The left hand column contains those areas of activity and units within the PDF which would be considered secondary or support roles within the organisation. The right hand columns respectively contain totals of male and female personnel holding the various appointments as listed in the left hand column. The bottom row of the table contains the totals of female and male personnel holding such appointments as of 30.09.96.

Table (vii): Support (Secondary) Appointments (Male and Female) as of 30.09.96.

Admin/Logistic/Support Appointments	Male	Female
DFHQ Staffs	261	10
Brigade and Command Staffs	628	27
Engineer Corps	549	3
Signal Corps	422	19
Ordnance Corps	457	2
Supply and Transport Corps	664	6
Medical Corps	310	16
Military Police Corps	391	11
Observer Corps	14	NIL
Special Establishments (Schools etc.)	64	3
33 Irish Component (Naqoura, Admin)	75	5
Totals	3,835	102

Source: Enlisted Personnel Section, DFHQ, (SR1) Confidential.

Therefore, using the figures supplied by DFHQ, on paper at least, 66.7% approximately of the total male population of the PDF are employed in its 'fighting' arm, with 33.3% in Administrative or Support roles. For women, on paper at least, 42% approximately are gazetted into the fighting arms, with 58% in Administrative or Support. This is almost an inverse proportion in the deployment of personnel based on sex.

These figures taken from SR1 display a pattern of deployment of female personnel that shows them to be more likely than their male peers to be deployed to secondary roles within the organisation. I considered it useful for the purposes of the study to conduct a number of audits of the work assigned female troops in order to examine the pattern of their deployment more closely.

Once gazetted to a Unit, a soldier can be assigned tasks as deemed fit by the local commander. The tasks deemed fit for female personnel (other ranks) show a clear gender division of labour. This tendency is more marked when one audits the actual work being done by women on the ground.

The first audit of the work assigned all of the women of the Defence Forces was carried out from January to April of 1997. It was similar to the audit undertaken by the Gleeson Commission, (1990, pp 18, 19, 78-97), in order to obtain a “snapshot” of the actual work being done by PDF personnel, to ascertain exactly who was doing what on a day to day basis within the military.

In order to obtain this information, I used the following procedure as outlined in methodology:

1. I ascertained the numbers of females in a unit by consulting SR1, which lists the entire PDF, unit by unit and gives the breakdown of male and female personnel in each unit.
2. I then contacted the unit by telephone and asked the detailing authority (the adjutant and sergeant major of the unit) to tell me the duties assigned those female personnel within the unit.
3. I then listed the duties actually being performed by these women, (as opposed to those duties allocated them in SR1) and divided them across the line and support, (primary and secondary) and roles of the PDF.

In obtaining the following information, I contacted every Unit, Army, Naval and Air Corps in the PDF to confirm the appointments and employment of these personnel. I conducted this audit during the first four months of 1997. The information given provides an insight into the actual work being done by women (other ranks) in the PDF at the time. I compiled the total numbers of women performing line and support tasks into two tables. The first table, table (viii) contains the total numbers of female personnel (other ranks) working in the combat corps or line appointments during the period of the first audit. The table consists of two columns and three rows. The left hand column details the type of line appointment with the right hand column containing the number of female personnel (other ranks) holding such appointments. The bottom row contains the total number of female personnel (other ranks) holding these appointments.

Table (viii): Combat (primary) Appointments – (Female, Other Ranks, April 1997)

General Duties (Line), (Artillery, Cavalry, Infantry)	17
Drivers (Artillery, Infantry, Cavalry)	4
Total	21

Source: Unit audit, Conducted January to April, 1997.

An examination of the roles assigned women in this audit gives us an insight into the division of labour amongst female personnel. As of the 30/4/97, twenty one, or 17.1% of the total were involved in what could be termed the core combat function of the PDF. The remaining 102, or 82.9% are involved in the support or secondary functions of the PDF as seen in table (ix).

Table (ix) consists of the total numbers of female personnel employed in the administrative or support/secondary roles within the organisation during the period of the first audit conducted for the study from January to April 1996. The table consists of two columns with a row dedicated to each category of administrative appointment as listed in the left hand column. The right hand column contains the numbers of female personnel employed in such appointments from January to April of 1996. The table is shown overleaf.

Table (ix): Support (secondary) Appointments – Female (Other Ranks, April 1997).

Clerk	29
Radio Operator	8
Waitress/General Duties Officers Mess	5
Waitress/General Duties Cookhouse	5
Gym Instructor	1
Air Hostess	2
Military Police	4
Groom	6
Tailor	1
Bandswoman	1
Instructor Administrative	3
Training staff	1
Air Traffic Control	3
Aircraft Technicians	1
Aircraft Technicians Apprentice	4
Dental Nurse	1
Information Technology	4
Signals Riggers	2
Signals Linesperson	4
Electricians	2
Cadets	2
Recruits	3
Totals	102

Source: Unit audit, Conducted January to April, 1997.

The ratio of female personnel involved in line to support roles within the Defence Forces is in the order of 17.1:82.9. (Unit audit) This 'teeth to tail' ratio is in the order of about 67:33 for male members of the Defence Forces. (Source SR1, September 1996 Confidential)

In October of 1999, I conducted a second audit of those appointments being filled by female personnel, (other ranks). The audit was made easier due to the ongoing compilation of a

computer database at enlisted personnel section in Defence Forces Headquarters. This database lists those female personnel in receipt of technical pay, and lists those with special qualifications and filling a vacancy such as clerk, or radio operator. The data base also lists, unit by unit, the numbers of women serving. It was therefore possible for me to simply contact the listed units and verify the work being carried out by those females not in receipt of technical pay, and not listed as specially qualified and filling a vacancy. Tables (x) and (xi) on the next two pages show the work being carried out by female personnel (other ranks) as of October 1999. Table (x) consists of two columns and three rows. The left hand column lists those line or combat appointments held by female personnel (other ranks) as of October 1999. The right hand column lists the numbers of female personnel (other ranks) employed in such appointments as of October 1999. The bottom row lists the total number of female personnel (other ranks) in such appointments throughout the PDF.

Table (x): Combat (primary) Appointments (Females, Other ranks, October 1999)

General Duties, Artillery, Cavalry, Infantry	65
Drivers, Artillery, Cavalry, Infantry	5
Seaman (Female) Naval Service	9
Total	79

Source: Enlisted Personnel Section, Unit Audit, Oct 1999, Confidential.

Table (xi) overleaf consists of two columns and a number of rows showing the support or secondary roles held by female personnel (other ranks) as of October 1999. The left hand column lists the categories of support or secondary appointments with the corresponding numbers of female personnel (other ranks) in the right hand column. The bottom row of the table shows the total figure for the Defence Forces as of October 1999.

Table (xi): Support (secondary) Appointments (Females, Other Ranks, October 1999)

Clerk	30
Radio Operator	15
General Duties/Waitress Officers Mess	5
General Duties/Waitress Cookhouse	9
Storesperson	37
Air Hostess	4
Military Police	10
Groom	8
Tailor	1
Bandswomen	2
Administrative Instructor	1
Training Staff	6
General Service Recruits	44
Cadets	6
Naval Cadets	7
Naval Recruits	7
Air Traffic Control	1
Aircraft Technicians	4
Apprentices	7
Radio Technicians	2
Naval Mechanic	1
Dental Nurse	4
Information Technology Section	5
Linesperson	3
Electrician	1
Driver	4
Audio Visual Technician	1
Cook	2
Total	227

Source: Enlisted Personnel Section, DFHQ and Unit Audit, Oct 1999, Confidential.

The results of the second audit are very interesting. Two and half years after the first audit, the numbers of women (other ranks) serving in the Defence Forces has gone from 123 to 306. This represents a two and a half fold increase in women's numbers over the period of this study. This is a significant development and represents a very positive trend for the PDF. In all, a total of 1,652 (male and female) recruits were recruited into the PDF from 1996 to July 1999. Of this total, 217 women were recruited during the period. When one factors in wastage from retirements and discharges, this accounts for the rise in numbers over the period from 123 to 306.

There is a change in the numbers employed in the line or combat areas of PDF activity. A total of 79 women are now employed on general line duties in the Artillery, Cavalry, Infantry and Naval Service Corps. This represents 25.8% of the total number of women serving in the PDF (other ranks). It is significant to note the advent of female "seamen" (sic) serving aboard Naval Service vessels.

Two hundred and twenty seven women or 74.2% of the total number of women are serving in support appointments. This represents a proportional decrease in the numbers of women serving in these appointments by comparison to the 1997 audit. The 1997 audit showed a total of 102, or 82.9% involved in these duties. This represents, by comparison with 1997 statistics, a drop of 8.7% in the number of women serving in support appointments in October 1999. This is certainly a positive phenomenon and may indicate evidence of some commitment in practice to the Chief of Staff's 1992 Memo on equality of opportunity. It is also interesting to note that, though not reflected in these figures, there has been an expansion of women's role in overseas missions. As of the 31st October 1999, in addition to the female troops serving in the Lebanon, there are two women soldiers serving in Sarajevo as military police officers with SFOR, one woman in Split serving as an EU monitor in Croatia, and one woman serving as a driver with the Irish Transport Company in Kosovo with KFOR.

The present "teeth to tail" ratio for female troops in terms of deployment is certainly an improvement. (25.8:74.2, 31/10/99, as opposed to 17.1:82.9, 30/4/97). There is however a way to go before this figure reflects the ratio for male soldiers in this regard (67:33, SR1, Sept. 1996). This trend has no doubt been helped by documents such as the Chief of Staff's 16 Nov 1992 memo on equality of opportunity and the dramatic increase in the numbers of female personnel in the PDF. The integration of female personnel over line and support roles has however, been hindered by the legacy of the 1990 policy on the deployment of female personnel, the subsequent

Board Report, the absence of an explicit equality of opportunity policy and the cultural interference created by discourses which function to construct military service as being essentially 'masculine'.

As of October 1999, it is clear from these figures that if you are a female soldier in the PDF, you are more likely than a male colleague to be in a job that does not attract border, security, seagoing, flying or ranger wing allowances. Roughly three out of every four women are employed in jobs that do not attract these allowances. Overall as a female soldier you therefore can expect to earn less than male colleagues. As a female soldier, based on the requirements of the IPMS system, you can expect poorer prospects for promotion as a result of army deployment policies.

This would certainly appear to be the case for women soldiers, a separate 'class' within a hierarchical organisation. This is evident in an apparent gender division of labour within the PDF as indicated by the unit audits. The pattern of deployment revealed deprives women of the 'experience' and 'education' (Reskin and Padavic, 1994) required for promotion or "strategic" power within the organisation. (Adler, 1994) Indeed this pattern of deployment fits the description in the literature of a segmented dual labour market (Barron and Norris, 1976), and with the hypothetical outcomes of an equality hostile workplace as described by the EEA (1998). (See also in this regard, Jacobsen, 1998:227-9; Shaw, 1995:114-5.)

In relation to the question of the deployment of female personnel at home in Ireland, the sixty women I interviewed had some interesting observations. Of the 43 women I interviewed at home in Ireland, 34 stated that they did not have the same choice of appointments as their male colleagues. Of the seventeen women I interviewed overseas, thirteen stated that they did not have the same choice of appointments at home as their male colleagues. Of the sixty interviewed therefore, a total of forty seven felt that they were discriminated against in terms of their appointments at home. These women, serving in the PDF, from first hand experience, expressed the view that they were denied the opportunity to obtain many career courses, (fifteen of the sample), and were denied command appointments (five of the sample), and denied operational appointments (twenty-seven of the sample) because they were female. Based on their experiences in the workplace, the responses of these women would seem to suggest that the military authorities, far from challenging a patriarchal stereotype for women in the military, are actually endorsing such a stereotype.

The following extracts from the interviews are typical of the women's experiences and their attitudes to this issue:

When I joined the army in 1981 at 19, I thought it would be different. I was very interested in overseas. From the interview and the advert it all sounded so exciting. But when I enlisted I got two choices, transport or clerk.
(Interview No. 10, 16/4/99)

The advert for us said you could go anywhere in the army as a woman. You could in your backside. You could either go to the orderly room, or go to hell!
(Interview No. 5, 14/4/99)

They've certainly barred women from the FCA appointments where one would be paid more. I don't know of any female Medical officers who have it. That is the de facto policy.
(Interview No. 22, 9/8/99)

You cannot serve where you choose as a woman. There are restrictive policies as they apply to women at DFHQ level.
(Interview No. 26, 13/8/99)

It's a fact. You cannot serve in all of the appointments in the infantry battalion. I put in a redress at not being allowed direct command of troops. I got a kiss my arse answer. The Board Report on Females was just a token gesture. It wasn't taken seriously.
(Interview No. 33, 31/8/99)

Of those forty-seven women who felt discriminated against in this way, the opinion was expressed by all ranks including the most senior individual, a Commandant and Medical Officer. It was interesting to note that the thirteen who did not feel they were discriminated against in this manner, were with one exception all private soldiers on a five year contract who had entered service in the last two years. All of these respondents had undergone fully integrated training, and a number of them, (three), were serving in operational units. Small though this number is, it suggests that changes are taking place slowly.

Of the forty-three women interviewed at home, forty-two felt all appointments at home both combat and support, should be open to both male and female personnel on an equality of opportunity basis. All seventeen of the women interviewed in the Lebanon felt all appointments, combat and support, should be open to women on an equality of opportunity basis. Of the sixty

women interviewed, only one respondent was of the opinion that certain posts should not be open to women. She stated:

I don't think that women would be able for a lot of the jobs in the army. Take the engineers for example, where you would be physically building things. A female just wouldn't be effective in that scenario. And I would say in some war situations women wouldn't be as good at making certain awful decisions. Women are more emotional. Take for example even, the sight of dead bodies. And anyway, there's no female has made commandant yet that could run a post or a unit. Maybe in times to come things will be different. But if some men find it tough to run a unit, I can't imagine a woman being able to do it.

(Interview No. 11, 19/4/99)

This respondent was the only one interviewed opposed to the full integration of women into all appointments within the domestic establishment. It should be pointed out that this particular respondent was a Direct Entry with a professional qualification. She has had no formal military training and has not served overseas or on exercises, on the ground with troops. Therefore, like the military leaders quoted earlier she is not speaking from the experience of integrated military training.

On the face of it, the PDF practice and previous policies are very much at variance with the aspirations of their female employees. From the data gathered from both the Unit Audit and the interviews, the PDF's practice in the deployment of female personnel at home appears at variance with the Chief of Staff's stated commitment to equality of opportunity. The pattern of their deployment, allied to the absence of a coherent policy document on equality of opportunity, suggest a non woman-friendly work culture.

7.6 The deployment of female officers within the PDF

I also examined the roles assigned female officers within the Defence Forces. I categorised those roles (as with other ranks) under two headings:

1. Combat/Line Appointments:

These appointments involve direct command of troops, and are found in the combat corps of Cavalry, Artillery and Infantry.

2. Support/Staff Appointments:

These appointments are Administrative ("A") appointments and logistics ("Q") appointments at Command/Brigade Headquarters (Comd/Bde HQ) or Defence Forces Headquarters level (D.F.H.Q.)

This survey of officers' appointments was similar to one I carried out for the MA thesis in 1995. In carrying out the survey for the PhD thesis, I consulted the Gazette for officers and updated the figures to apply to October 1999. It is interesting to compare the original figures from the MA thesis of 1995 with the figures which pertain today. The following tables reflect the situation vis a vis deployment for female officers in April 1995. As of 30 April 1995, there were one thousand, five hundred and forty five officers in total, fifty four of whom were female. Table (xii) shows the numbers of female officers employed in the combat corps as of 30th April 1995. The table consists of two columns. The left hand column shows the combat or line appointments held by these female officers with the corresponding numbers in the right hand column. The bottom row shows the total figures for female officers deployed to combat appointments in the PDF as of April 1995.

Table (xii): Combat (primary) Appointments (Female Officers, April 1995)

Infantry Platoon commanders	3
Artillery Officers (Line)	3
Cavalry Officers (Line)	2
Total	8

(Officers Records, DFHQ, Confidential, 1995)

Table (xiii) shows the staff and support appointments held by female officers as of April 1995. The table consists of two columns with those categories of support/administrative appointment

held by female officers listed by row. The right hand column lists the numbers of female officers holding these appointments. The bottom row shows the total number of female officers holding such appointments in the PDF as of April 1995.

Table (xiii): Support (secondary) Appointments (Female Officers, April 1995)

Medical Officers, Dentists, Pharmacists	13
Army School of Music, Instructor	1
Army Headquarters, Administration	2
Army Headquarters, Logistics	2
Information Technology	3
Assets Management, Quality Control	1
Command Welfare Officer	3
Command Catering Officer	4
Pay Officer	1
Command Headquarters Administrative	1
Command Headquarters Logistics	1
Customs Clearance Officers	1
Signals Officers	2
Signals Officers Logistics	2
Engineer Administration	3
Supply and Transport Administration	2
Air Corps Administration	1
Infantry Administration	1
Air Corps Training Administration	1
Cadet School Instructor	1
Total	46

(Officers records, DFHQ, Confidential, 1995)

With regard to male officers the figures as of 30/4/95 showed that of 1,491 officers (male), 688 or 46.14% held combat appointments. (Officers Records, DFHQ, April 1995, Confidential)

This contrasted with a mere 8 or 14.8% of female officers holding such appointments. Based on these figures, there would appear to have been a disproportionately high number of female officers employed in staff jobs. Many of these jobs were in those areas perceived as traditionally

‘feminine’ i.e., as Catering and Welfare Officers etc. In addition to being assigned those tasks initially envisaged for a WSC, these women were being paid less than their male colleagues. This is due to the fact that their assigned roles would not attract seagoing allowances, flying pay, FCA allowances, Army Ranger Wing allowances, or border allowances. This is attributable to policies which preclude such service for women. This situation is similar to that in civil employment, where men’s skills are valued and women’s undervalued in the gender division of labour. Recognition of this has led to the notion of “equal pay for the work of equal value”.

As stated earlier for other ranks, the military authorities through their deployment practices for officers, would appear to have been endorsing a segregated pattern of employment ensuring a gender division of labour. The trend has been noted elsewhere in the literature:

Most of these jobs can broadly be described as 'service' work, the 'caring' professions and socialised forms of domestic service. Many feminists have pointed out that the distribution of women in the employed workforce bears a striking resemblance to the division of labour in the family.
(Barrett, 1977: 157)

In October of 1999, I conducted a second audit of the work carried out by female officers and their deployment over the combat and support roles of the PDF. I obtained this information from the Gazette of officers’ appointments held at officers records, DFHQ. The figures in the following tables pertain to the 31st October 1999. Table (xiv) shows the primary or combat appointments held by female officers as of October 1999. The table consists of two columns. The left hand column lists row by row the combat or line appointments held by female officers. The right hand column lists the numbers of female officers holding such appointments with the total for the PDF as of October 1999 shown on the bottom row.

Table (xiv): Combat (primary) Appointments (Female Officers, October 1999)

Infantry Platoon Commanders	5
Artillery Officers (Line)	3
Cavalry Officers (Line)	3
Naval Service (Line)	4
Air Corps (Line)	1
Total	16

Source: Officers’ Gazette, Officers Records, DFHQ, 31/10/99 – Confidential.

Table (xv) similarly organised, shows the support or administrative appointments held by female officers as of October 1999.

Table (xv): Support (secondary) Appointments (Female Officers, October 1999)

Naval Service Administration	1
Medical Officers, Dentists, Pharmacists	11
Army School Music, Instructor	1
Army Headquarters, Administration	3
Information Technology	1
Brigade Catering Officer	1
Administration, General	2
Logistics Administration	1
Brigade Headquarters Administration	2
Signals Administration	4
Signals Logistics	1
Engineers Administration	1
Logistics Base Administration	2
Air Corps Administration	3
FCA Cadre Officer	1
Military Police Officer	2
Military College Instructor	1
Artillery School Instructor	1
Governor, Military Detention Barracks	1
Equitation School, Jockey	1
Administration Infantry	4
Total	45

(Source: Officers Gazette, Officers Records, DFHQ, 31/10/99 – Confidential)

The first phenomenon of note is the increase in the numbers of female officers during the four and a half year period 30.4.95 – 31.10.99. The number of female officers increased from fifty four to sixty one, an increase of seven officers over the period. This 13% increase in numbers is a lot less dramatic when compared to the almost two and a half fold increase in female (other

ranks) for the period 1997-1999. This is due to a number of factors. The recruitment of female officers since 1982 had been more or less steady with cadets enlisted at a rate of an average of four a year. This compares with a more staggered approach to the enlistment of female personnel (other ranks). After the initial intake of female personnel (other ranks) in 1982, there was no further enlistment until 1990. It has only been since 1994 that women have entered the PDF in significant albeit disproportionately moderate numbers. A number of female officers have retired their commissions consistent with the trend in recent years for officers of captain rank with third level qualifications to seek employment elsewhere. It could be argued, that had a quota system for the enlistment of female cadets not been in force in the eighties and nineties, and had female cadets been enlisted in proportion to the numbers applying, or strictly on merit, there would have been more female officers in the PDF by 31.10.99.

The numbers of women employed in command appointments in the combat corps stands at sixteen. This represents 26.2% of the total number of female officers and shows an increased participation of female officers in the combat corps of the order of 11.4% compared with 14.8% of female officers holding such posts in 1995. This participation rate of 26.1% mirrors the 25.8% of female personnel (other ranks) deployed in combat/line appointments. It still, however, falls far short of the 46.14% participation rate for male officers in line/combat appointments.

It is significant to note the arrival of female officers to the ranks of the Naval Service and Air Corps, seagoing and flying appointments. Despite the ban in the 1990 policy document on females working at sea or in aid to the civil power operations in the Air Corps, female officers are exercising command of naval vessels in the executive branch of the Naval service and flying search and rescue operations in Air Corps operations. As is the case with the figures relating to female personnel (other ranks), a trend of greater numbers of women participating in more of the primary functions of the PDF is now evident. This would suggest a positive indicator for increased participation rates across the combat and support roles of the PDF for female personnel.

It suggests some evidence of support for the commitment to equality of opportunity given by the Chief of Staff in his November 1992 memo.

This evidence however must be viewed in the light of the negative influences of:

- (a) the legacy of the 1990 policy document;
- (b) the negative tone of the subsequent board report and implementation group;

- (c) the lack of an explicit equality of opportunity policy document dealing with the issues of recruitment training, deployment and promotion;
- (d) the continued embargo on female officers' deployment to operational appointments in South Lebanon;
- (e) the continued imposition of a quota or ceiling on the numbers of female cadets enlisted annually;
- (f) the cultural interference caused by patriarchal discourses which would construct military service as being essentially masculine.

I believe that much of the integration of women into the combat appointments as listed has been due not to an altruistic desire on the part of the military authorities for equality of opportunity, but out of necessity and the simple rise in numbers of female personnel; this rise in numbers coupled with a shortage of qualified male personnel for combat appointment at lieutenant and captain rank has in short led to a "woman's effect" or form of "critical mass".

Looking starkly at the 73.8% of female officers still serving in the lower paid support roles, the work assigned these female officers suggests the military authorities have not taken the issue of integration seriously enough. A de facto 'Women's Service Corps' exists, a corps within a corps. There is an unseen and subtle division of labour despite the appearance of satisfying the requirement to have women admitted to the PDF. Care should be taken that the commitment demonstrated in the increase in numbers continues to increase and does not stop short of a true commitment to genuine equality of opportunity. The danger of tokenism should be taken into account to avoid a situation where these women would:

(C)onstitute not the cutting edge of a new occupation trend, but the sum total of that trend (...) and will remain tokens in a heavily male dominated profession - meaning scrutiny, scepticism and sexism.

(McIlwee, 1992: 4)

7.7 Resentment from peers

By being set aside for 'special treatment' in terms of their employment, some male officers as previously mentioned, see this as evidence of favouritism. This strains officer relations and further alienates women within the officer body. This sceptical scrutiny or tension between male

and female personnel within the Defence forces was much remarked upon by the women I interviewed. Within the purposive sample of forty three women interviewed, forty one of the women stated that they had experienced resentment from male superiors, peers or subordinates. Of the seventeen women interviewed in the Lebanon, fourteen stated that they had at one time or another, in some form or another, experienced resentment from their male colleagues for being female. Of the total group of sixty interviewed, five did not raise this issue.

Many of the women interviewed expressed the view that such 'resentment' was almost institutionalised, and was an accepted feature of their working lives. One officer stated:

You're not going to get through the army without experiencing this type of resentment. The cadet school was certainly a focus for this resentment. From fellow cadets and staff alike.
(Interview No. 26, 13/8/99)

Another officer stated:

You constantly get comments like, "go on and flutter your eyelids and you'll get what you want". But more significantly it's an acceptance thing. Colleagues will say to you, "oh you know, he's anti-woman". Matter of factly. Like it's normal to be anti woman. There is a general acceptance of this.
(Interview No. 18, 23/7/99)

Interviewee No. 10 had this to say:

When officers ring the unit looking for information they hear my voice and they say, "can I speak to one of the lads?" So I always say, "I am one of the lads". I've had a C.O. give out to me for issuing instruction to one course that we ran. He didn't like my tone he said. He said, "a woman shouldn't speak like that to people". It wasn't 'ladylike'. You should hear the guys.
(Interview No. 10, 16/4/99)

At the level of basic administration, one's army number, one's basic identity within the military, the distinction between male and female is made. All male officers' numbers begin with the letter 'O' followed by a four-digit number. This number denotes one's seniority within the organisation. For female officers, their number is prefixed by the letter 'OF', and the number allotted female officers is unrelated to the general order of seniority. (This system is under review)

For other ranks, one's army number consists of a six-digit figure. This six-digit figure denotes one's seniority. For female personnel, a separate six-digit coding was established. For all female other ranks, their army number begins with the numbers '300'. This means that when looking at a list of soldiers on paper, one can immediately spot the female troops. Their numbering system, being outside the consecutive seniority system adopted for male personnel, makes it more difficult to establish an order of merit for females. This generates a certain amount of mistrust and resentment for both male and female personnel competing for courses and promotion.

One officer expressed her misgivings as follows:

The whole numbering system for women is ludicrous. The way I see it, some guy is going around with my number. Our numbers are like the yellow star. They just show up you're a women; so they can skip over your volunteer status for overseas, or courses.
(Interview No. 13, 19/4/99)

In total, forty nine of the women who stated that they had experienced resentment for being female, mentioned competition for courses and promotion as foci for such resentment. The following quotes are typical of these responses:

When I got the Naqoura appointment which meant acting corporal, the lads in the unit said, typical woman. Like I got it because I was a woman. It had nothing of course to do with the fact that I have a national certificate in French.
(Interview No. 21, 28/7/99)

One officer summed up the seeming ubiquity of this resentment within a male dominated organisation as follows:

I think when you're on course, when you're getting a class place, when the element of competition enters into the equation, when there's perceived competition, then being female can become an issue with a lot of men in the army.
(Interview No. 16, 21/4/99)

Certainly, in a male dominated organisation, with the risk of competence being construed within the context of the constructed masculinity, which embodies military service, resentment for being female is evident from the women's responses.

The women are aware of such attitudes of resentment among male colleagues, as their comments show:

I'll never forget my first regimental sergeant major. In front of the whole company he roared at me, "I can't believe there's a woman on my square. Get off my square". I'll never forgive him for that. It was as much my square as his.
(Interview No. 2, 13/4/99)

The sergeant major used to treat the women terribly. He'd come down on parade and detail the women for cleaning details in the mess. He wouldn't let us drive even though we had 145's (Army Driving Licence). We asked him to allow us. He couldn't believe it. He said, "why are you complaining? - All you have to do is keep the place neat and tidy". When we took it further, he said he wouldn't impose female drivers on the Lebanese. "They've been through enough already".
(Interview No. 38, 8/9/99)

One medical NCO had this to say:

Some of the guys wouldn't let me take blood from them. They said it was because I was a woman. When they brought in (name of soldier killed in action), we had to get him ready for post mortem. They told me to go and make the coffee. They thought I wouldn't be able for it. I am a fully trained medic. I'm proud of it. How would you feel?
(Interview No. 43, 11/9/99)

This harmful dynamic or self-fulfilling policy of under-utilising the female asset has had a negative effect on morale. With the organisational expectations for women lower than those for men, division between male and female officers has occurred and unit cohesion and morale – essential for military efficiency – have suffered.

One factor has been demonstrated to have had both an adverse and positive effect on organisational morale; namely the quality of leadership.
(Edmonds, M., 1988: 32)

By deploying female personnel in this manner, the military authorities under the provisions of its Integrated Personnel Management System, have handicapped their chances of promotion. This is in contravention of the spirit of equality and legal guidelines:

Initial assignments and later career moves should be made in such a manner that all men and women have an equal opportunity to undertake a full range of tasks, including the most demanding duties of the grade. To this end, posts in any grade should not be identified as being more appropriate to staff of a particular sex or marital status, especially where one sex has been traditionally under-represented. Assignments to posts should be made without discrimination on grounds of sex or marital status...

Departments should encourage women to pursue career paths which will rectify under-representation, encounter the more demanding jobs, and maintain them on an equal footing with men when promotions are being considered.
(Equal Opportunity, Policy and Guidelines for the Civil (Public) Service, July 1986, para 17, *Placement and Mobility*: 70)

7.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter set out to chart the deployment of female personnel over the primary (combat) roles and the secondary (support) roles within the organisation. This deployment was charted by means of the unit audits concluded in April of 1997 and October of 1999. The data generated by these audits is examined in sections five and six of the chapter. The first four sections of the chapter focus on the documentary and archival search for policies on equality of opportunity or policies on the deployment of female personnel. No comprehensive body of equality of opportunity policy was detected within the setting. A policy document for the deployment of female personnel dating from 1990 was discovered along with a number of subsequent board reports, implementation reports and memoranda. It is in light of these documents and the section on current legislation on such matters that the ad hoc policies for the deployment of females are examined in sections five and six. The chapter concludes with a section on the impact such practices have had on the quality or tenor of service as experienced by female personnel. The chapter examines the background to the pattern of the employment of female personnel within the setting, examines that pattern in order to establish if a gender division of labour exists, and finally assesses the impact such a division of labour has on female personnel.

Section one contains an examination of the 1990 document titled 'Policy on the deployment of females in the Defence Forces'. This confidential document is the only document within the setting which articulates in a comprehensive way Defence Forces policy for the deployment of female personnel. It is therefore of importance to the study in that in the absence of any other policy document, its provisions may shed light on those ad hoc practices for the deployment of female personnel as examined in the latter sections of the chapter. The 1990 policy document is quoted from in section one with many of its restrictive provisions outlined. These restrictive provisions include bars on the service of female personnel in the combat corps of the infantry, artillery, cavalry, Air Corps and Naval Service. It is noted that such provisions are at variance with international military practice as outlined in chapter four of the study. It is also noted that practice within the PDF since the Chief of Staff's 1992 memorandum and stated commitment to

equality of opportunity, appears to ignore these restrictive provisions. There is evidence within the setting therefore of a trend towards the greater integration of female personnel. This evidence is to be found in terms of ad hoc deployment practices that have evolved within the setting and which are examined in sections five and six of the chapter. There is no evidence within the setting of a policy for the deployment of female personnel which supersedes or replaces the 1990 policy. There is no evidence of a comprehensive equality of opportunity policy as defined by the Equality Authority, the law, or the equality of opportunity literature within the setting. It is only in the case of the Naval Service that something approaching such a policy is found. This is contained in the board report on the employment of females in the Naval Service dating from 1993. For the Naval Service at least this represents a trend towards integration which is expressed both on the ground in terms of action and at the level of management in terms of an explicitly stated policy which is committed to equality of opportunity.

Section two examines the Defence Forces policy on the deployment of female personnel to overseas appointments. Policy on the deployment of female personnel to overseas service is of vital interest to the study in that overseas service is a key criterion for promotion within the setting. Therefore there is a direct link here between the roles assigned female personnel within the setting and the status to which they can aspire in terms of rank and promotion. The section shows that the 1990 policy document on the deployment of female personnel contains restrictive provisions with regard to the deployment of female personnel overseas. These provisions, unlike those in relation to service in other areas of Defence Forces activity such as the Air Corps, Naval Service, infantry artillery and cavalry, are still enforced. They are reiterated in the May 1994 memorandum from the Adjutant General's branch which re-states objections to women's service in certain appointments overseas on the basis of 'cultural' issues. PDF policy in this regard is shown in section two to be at variance with international military practice. Data obtained at interview reveals that 59 of the 60 women interviewed for the study feel discriminated against in terms of their access to overseas appointments. Fifty-seven of those interviewed felt that the restrictions to such service imposed by the military authorities ought to be lifted. Two key points emerge in section two. Overseas service is vital for promotion to higher rank. Women are denied access to such overseas service due to the provisions listed in the Adjutant General's 1994 memorandum which reiterate those restrictive provisions in this regard contained in the 1990 policy document. The Defence Forces have no equality of opportunity aspirations in this area in terms of a proactive or 'positive action' approach to the issue. There is an almost unanimous feeling amongst female personnel that they are discriminated against in this area. The data in

relation to overseas service for female personnel examined in sections five and six would appear to confirm these concerns.

Section three on 'legal aspects' lists all of the relevant legal provisions, national and international in relation to the deployment of female military personnel. Section three shows the 1990 policy document on the deployment of female personnel and any ad hoc practices which would function to discriminate against female personnel to be contrary to both the letter and the spirit of the law. The information obtained from the equality section of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform shows that the military authorities are not exempt from the provisions of the 1998 Employment Equality Act, which came into operation on the 18th of October 1999. The 1998 Act compels the military authorities to implement the full range of equality measures as recommended by the Equality Authority (including positive action) in relation to access to employment, conditions of employment, training, vocational training, and promotion (Guide to Employment Equality Act, 1999: 1). According to the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, "The Act extends protection to the Defence Forces for the first time in Irish Law", (Ibid:3). At the time of writing, no committee, board, or investigating authority has been promulgated within the setting to assess the impact of such legislation. Nor are there plans in the Strategic Planning Office of the Chief of Staff to do so.

Section four examines the Defence Forces' board report on policy for the deployment of female personnel. The board, which convened in October of 1991, recommended that the 1990 policy document be withdrawn and a new policy be formulated. This recommendation was followed in November of 1992 with the Chief of Staff's memo, which stated that "females will have equality of opportunity in all aspects of Defence Forces activity". Eight years later, there is as yet no replacement policy in regard to the deployment of female personnel. There is no equality policy or statement. The only manner in which it is possible to assess the equality environment of the PDF is by examining the Chief of Staff's 1992 memo, the board report of 1992, the implementation board report of 1992 and the Adjutant General's memorandum of 1994 along with the ad hoc practices which have evolved in relation to the deployment of female personnel.

The 1992 board report contained no recommendations for positive action in terms of the recruitment of female personnel and in section 7, paragraph 3 states that at 0.8% of strength, the numbers of women then present in the PDF did not suggest any specific trend for future recruitment. In section eight of the report, at paragraphs 4 and 5, it is implied that an increase in

the numbers of women in the Defence Forces would limit its operational effectiveness. The report goes on to state at paragraph 8 that any trends for the recruitment or deployment of female personnel would be in accord with ‘American, Western European or Australian cultural norms’. It is ironic to note that some of the board’s statements and many of the PDF’s evolved practices in this regard are very much at variance with these norms. On the matter of overseas service, the 1992 board report, at section 9, paragraph 8 reiterates once more the requirement for the military authorities to police and enforce what it terms UN policy restrictions on the deployment of female personnel overseas. This reiteration of the ‘local culture’ argument is roundly rejected by the women interviewed for the study. Forty-two of those interviewed specifically mention and reject the ‘local culture’ argument for denying female personnel access to overseas appointments.

Section four then goes on to consider the recommendations of the implementation board report of December 1992. In February of 1993, the officer commanding personnel resources wrote a report to the board outlining his concerns governing the ‘physical capacity’ and stature of female personnel. In his report the Defence Forces human resource manager ignores the reality of female personnel serving in Somalia at the time he drafted his report and speaks of the problems of credibility and acceptance that would make female personnel non effective on the basis of their height. It reveals a set of domain assumptions that consider female differences as deficits whilst ignoring the reality of their contribution to the military both at home and abroad.

The implementation board report conclude with a number of caveats in relation to the deployment of female personnel. Whilst the Chief of Staff’s memo of 1992 and the board report of 1992 contain aspirations in relation to equality of opportunity, the implementation board report seeks to qualify such aspirations on the basis of a number of observations which are inimical to the interests of female personnel. These qualifications are contained in paragraph 28, (a) and (b) wherein the implementation board states that there is a “non acceptance by male comrades that females are capable of performing the duties associated with the job” and that there is a “risk to the completion of the mission due to male personnel being over-protective of their female colleagues”. These observations reflect the domain assumptions of a board not cognisant of international trends in the deployment of female personnel, inexperienced in training with or training women, unaware of the de facto performance of women in combat, and inclined to reinforce and not challenge negative assumptions about female personnel. As pointed out in section four, such assertions as at paragraph 28 (a) and (b) of this report are a classic example of

victim-blaming and the reinforcement of stereotyped notions about female personnel with no basis in fact.

Section four goes on to examine the situation vis a vis female personnel serving overseas post the implementation board report. The findings of the author on the ground in south Lebanon in September of 1999 indicate a workplace culture which endorses the 1990 policy and the 1994 Adjutant General's memorandum, in terms of the adoption of restrictive policies and practices in relation to the deployment of female personnel overseas. The women interviewed expressed deep reservations about being tasked to work as waitresses in the officers mess in Camp Shamrock in Lebanon. Section four concludes by warning that the Defence Forces as ambassadors for Ireland, should not export a prejudicial view of women's place in the world of work. The section highlights that provision of the Adjutant General's 1994 memorandum which enforces a gender division of labour overseas. The data gathered at interview demonstrates a universal level of dissatisfaction amongst female personnel with PDF practices in this area. The pattern of women's employment with regard to overseas service has a negative impact on their prospects for promotion, or power and status within the setting. Thus, section four demonstrates an important link between role and status in the overseas appointments assigned to female personnel in the Defence Forces.

Section five deals with the deployment of female personnel (other ranks) within the Defence Forces. This section makes use of the data provided by the military authorities in Strength Return 1 or SR1 to establish the pattern of employment for female personnel in October 1996. The data obtained from SR1 indicates that in October 1996, 42% of female personnel were employed in combat appointments with 58% employed in secondary or support roles within the organisation. It is pointed out in this section that combat appointments attract higher pay in the form of allowances paid for such duties as security duties, border allowances, seagoing allowances, flight pay and army ranger wing allowances. The figures for male personnel obtained from SR1 as of October 1996 show that 66.7% of male personnel were employed in combat appointments, with 33.3% in support roles. A greater proportion of male personnel were therefore employed in the higher paying combat appointments than was the case for female personnel. This suggests a gender division of labour within the PDF on the basis of the official figures provided in SR1.

Section five then considers that data gathered by the author in the unit audits conducted in January to April of 1997 and October of 1999 to establish on the ground exactly those roles

assigned female personnel in the Defence Forces. The audits reveal the 'experience' open to female personnel by virtue of their assigned appointments and any trends towards integration revealed in a comparison of the data obtained in the audits. The audits covered all female personnel (other ranks) of the Defence Forces. The audits reveal that in 1997, 17.1% of female personnel (other ranks) were assigned combat appointments with 82.9% assigned support appointments. These figures compare unfavourably with the official statistics as provided in SR1.

The unit audit of 1999 shows that in October of 1999 the percentage of female personnel (other ranks) employed in combat appointments had risen from 17.1% in 1997 to 25.8% in October 1999. Similarly the percentage of female personnel (other ranks) employed in support appointments had dropped from 82.9% in 1997 to 74.2% in October 1999. The numbers of women had increased from 123 in 1997 to 306 in 1999. There was also evidence that over the period of the two audits, female personnel had been assigned appointments in combat appointments that had previously been closed to them particularly in the case of the Air Corps and Naval Service. The unit audits conducted in relation to female personnel (other ranks) indicate that a gender division of labour exists within the Defence Forces but that there is evidence of a trend towards greater numbers and integration for female employees. This integration however would appear to be as a result of ad hoc practices which have evolved and not through any programmed or policy driven initiative. Despite the trend towards integration noted in the unit audits, there is still evidence in October of 1999 a gender division of labour which is discriminatory towards women. Despite the increase in the numbers of women within the organisation, at roughly 3% of strength they are still seriously underrepresented within the Defence Forces by comparison with NATO averages (15%) and the numbers of women throughout the public service (48%). This would appear to be borne out by the data obtained at interview with forty seven of the sixty women interviewed expressing the view that they are discriminated against in terms of access to combat appointments within the PDF. Fifty nine of the sixty women interviewed stated that all such combat appointments should be open to female personnel on an equality of opportunity basis. The figures revealed in the unit audits would seem to indicate that this is not the case.

Section six examined the deployment of female officers throughout the Defence Forces. The section contains data on the deployment of female officers in 1995 provided by the military authorities through the gazette published at that time. The data from April 1995 shows that

14.8% of female officers were assigned combat appointments with 85.2% employed in support appointments. This compares less than favourably with figures for male officers from April 1995 which show that at that time, 46.14% of male officers were employed in combat appointments with 53.86% employed in support appointments. The audit of female officers appointments carried out in October 1999 reveals a trend towards the integration of female officers into all appointments within the Defence Forces which mirrors that trend detected for female personnel (other ranks) over the same period. The data obtained in October 1999 show that 26.2% of female officers are employed in combat appointments with 73.8% employed in support appointments. As was the case with female personnel (other ranks) female officers had been over the period of the audit assigned combat duties in the Naval Service and Air Corps. The data obtained in the audit of female officers showed a more modest increase in the numbers of female officers in the organisation over the period. The increase of 13% or seven officers is less dramatic than the increase for female personnel (other ranks) given the steady recruitment of female cadets throughout the eighties and nineties compared to the larger number of female personnel (other ranks) that were recruited to the organisation as a result of the lifting of the recruitment embargo in 1994. The data presented at section six in relation to female officers shows that a trend towards the greater integration of female personnel is evident over the period 1995-1999. This trend is, however, the result of the evolution of ad hoc practices as no policy document exists in this area. The data also indicates that despite this trend towards integration, a marked gender division of labour is evident in the roles assigned female officers in the Defence Forces. The data also suggests that female officers are underrepresented in numbers in the organisation by comparison with the international military and the remainder of the public service.

Section seven of the chapter deals with that data obtained at interview which reveals the impact of the deployment of female personnel on their experience of service in the Defence Forces. Fifty five of the sixty women interviewed for the study stated that they experienced as a matter of routine resentment for being female within a male-dominated organisation. The pattern of employment for female personnel imposed by the military authorities would appear to have had the effect of alienating women within the setting. This is one of the outcomes hypothesised in the equality of opportunity literature in describing work place settings without an equality culture.

The data gathered and presented in this chapter reveals a number of salient facts. There is no equality of opportunity policy present within the setting of the PDF as defined by and understood

in the equality of opportunity literature and the law. There are practices in the deployment of women that have evolved in an ad hoc fashion. Whilst there is some evidence of a trend towards the greater integration of women resulting from these ad hoc practices, the roles assigned female personnel show a marked gender division of labour within the PDF. This marked gender division of labour has serious implications for female personnel in terms of their being marginalised within the workplace and having less potential for promotion within the organisation. This is reflected in the opinions expressed by the women at interview with a universal and almost unanimous agreement amongst female personnel that they are the victims of routine and officially sanctioned discrimination.

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