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From Camp Followers to Leaders: A Historical Evolution of the Role of Women in the Military

IZVLEČEK

OD SPREMLJEVALK TABOROV DO VODITELJIC: ZGODOVINSKI RAZVOJ VLOGE ŽENSK V OBOROŽENIH SILAH

Članek predstavlja zgodovinski razvoj vloge žensk v oboroženih silah, ki so v tisočletjih človeškega obstoja v oboroženih silah opravljale različne naloge. Sprva so se priključevale oziroma so bile priključene vojskam na pohodu, kjer so spremljale vojake in predvsem izvajale podporne naloge. V starem in srednjem veku se je vloga žensk bolj malo spremenila, kljub temu pa so se občasno pojavile ženske vojaške voditeljice. Šele v novem veku se je vloga žensk pričela spreminjati: sprva so pridobile formalno vlogo v vojaško-zdravstvenem sistemu, nato pa so začele prevzemati tudi bojno-podporne vloge. Med prvo in drugo svetovno vojno so ženske postale pomemben člen vojaške industrije in organizacije, vključno z neposrednim sodelovanjem v spopadih in oblikovanjem popolnoma ženskih bojnih enot. A šele po drugi svetovni vojni so pričele prevzemati tudi vodstvene funkcije v oboroženih silah.

Ključne besede: oborožene sile, ženske v oboroženih silah, vojaška zgodovina, resolucija Varnostnega sveta Združenih narodov 1325, delavska zgodovina

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ABSTRACT

The article traces the historical development of women's roles in the armed forces, emphasising their participation in various military tasks throughout human history. Originally, women were attached to armies on the march, accompanying soldiers and mainly performing support roles. In Antiquity and the Middle Ages, women's roles in the military remained relatively unchanged, despite the occasional emergence of female military leaders. It was only in modern times that this began to shift. Initially, women were assigned formal roles within the military medical system, while later, they also took on support roles in combat. During World Wars I and II, women became an essential part of the military industry and organisation, and they started to participate directly in combat operations. The first exclusively female combat units were established. However, it was not until after World War II that women started to take on leadership roles within the armed forces.

Keywords: armed forces, women in the armed forces, military history, UNSC Resolution 1325, history of labour

Introduction

Women's roles in the military have never been static, but they have generally been overlooked historically. This article contends that the broader development of this role is neither straightforward nor unavoidable. The inclusion of women has been influenced by the evolving nature of warfare, various social and legal changes, and, in recent decades, institutional decisions within the armed forces. By examining this progression – “from camp followers to leaders” – the article demonstrates how women's participation has grown in scope (from informal support to command positions), depth (from spontaneous contributions to formalised military careers), and significance (from auxiliary roles to a professional identity).

In Antiquity, women were seen as a supplementary part of the military: the so-called “camp followers”, consisting of wives, traders, laundresses, nurses, and entertainers, who accompanied armies during their campaigns. Historically, their efforts were structurally invisible yet essential, particularly in provisioning, care, and morale. Such an unofficial status of women in the military was common in the era of pre-industrial warfare. Some women also joined the military ranks, often disguised as men. In the early modern era, women officially took on certain roles in the military, following the specialisation and unification of education and the professionalisation of some jobs. Initially, women were included to provide nursing and medical support, aligning with the professionalisation of military health services, where women played prominent roles,¹ though usually without parity with their male counterparts or clear paths to command.

1 For example, see Sharon S. Dittmar et al., “Images and Sensations of War: A Common History of Military Nursing,” *Health Care for Women International* 17, No. 1 (1996): 69–80, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07399339609516221>.

Full mobilisation of entire societies during the world wars transformed both the demand for and the perception of women's military capabilities. From taking on various jobs in the military industry to being included in auxiliary and combat-support branches (communications, intelligence, logistics, air defence), women eventually also formed all-female combat units.² During World War II, Soviet women, in particular, served as snipers, pilots, and partisans, while resistance movements across occupied Europe relied heavily on their contributions.³ After World War II, women were once again largely excluded from combat duties, though their roles in combat support were gradually expanded and formalised. The social changes in the second half of the 20th century led many armed forces to open most occupational specialisations to women and to begin, though again unevenly, addressing the previously limited or even non-existent promotion of women and filling leadership positions.⁴

A key geopolitical milestone in this development was United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), which articulated the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. The UNSCR 1325 redefined women not only as victims needing protection but also as vital participants in peace processes and security organisations overall.⁵ This included the military, which developed national action plans, enhanced gender advisor roles,⁶ set integration standards in peace operations and military services, specialities, or branches,⁷ and started training on gender perspectives in planning and rules of engagement.⁸ The Resolution also had a broader social influence, as seen

2 For example, see Jeremy A. Crang, *Sisters in Arms: Women in the British Armed Forces during the Second World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020). Beate Fieseler, M. Michaela Hampf, and Jutta Schwarzkopf, "Gendering combat: Military women's status in Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union during the Second World War," *Women's Studies International Forum* 47 (2014): 115–26, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2014.06.011>. Ursula von Gersdorff, *Frauen im Kriegsdienst, 1914–1945* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1969).

3 Kristal L. M. Alfonso, *Femme Fatale: An Examination of the Role of Women in Combat and the Policy Implications for Future American Military Operations* (Maxwell Air Force Base: Air University Press, 2009), 7–19. Anna Krylova, *Soviet Women in Combat: A History of Violence on the Eastern Front* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010). Rochelle Nowaki, Nachthexen: Soviet Female Pilots in WWII, *Hohonu* 13 (2015): 56–62. Ingrid Strobl, *Partisanas: Women in the Armed Resistance to Fascism and German Occupation (1936–1945)* (Edinburgh, West Virginia: AK Press, 2008).

4 Sandra Carson Stanley and Mady Wechsler Segal, "Military Women in NATO: An Update," *Armed Forces and Society* 14, No. 4 (1988): 559–85.

5 For example, see Marius-Emanuel Caragea, "Modern Challenges to Military Management. UN Security Council Resolution 1325 'Women, Peace and Security,'" *Management & Marketing* 21, No. 2 (2023): 312–27. Jane Derbyshire, "An Analysis and Critique of the UNSCR 1325 Resolution – What are Recommendations for Future Opportunities?," *Sodobni vojaški izzivi* 18, No. 3 (2016): 83–93, <https://doi.org/10.33179/BSV.99.SVI.11.CMC.18.3.7>.

6 For example, see Megan Bastick and Claire Duncanson, "Agents of Change? Gender Advisors in NATO Militaries," *International Peacekeeping* (2018): 1–24, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13533312.2018.1492876>.

7 For example, see Pablo Castillo Diaz, "Military Women in Peacekeeping Missions and the Politics of UN Security Council Resolution 1325," *Sodobni vojaški izzivi* 18, No. 3 (2016): 23–34, <https://doi.org/10.33179/BSV.99.SVI.11.CMC.18.3.3>. Nadja Fulan Štante, "Strenghts and Weaknesses of Women's Religious Peace-Building (in Slovenia)," *Annales* 30, No. 3 (2020): 343–54, <https://doi.org/10.19233/ASHS.2020.21>. Jovanka Šaranović, Brankica Potkonjak-Lukić, and Tatjana Višacki, "Achievements and Perspectives of the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the Ministry of Defence and the Serbian Armed Forces," *Sodobni vojaški izzivi* 18, No. 3 (2016): 65–81, <https://doi.org/10.33179/BSV.99.SVI.11.CMC.18.3.6>. Suzana Tkavc, "Some of the Best Practices in Gender Perspective and the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the 25 Years of Slovenian Armed Forces," *Sodobni vojaški izzivi* 18, No. 3 (2016): 45–63, <https://doi.org/10.33179/BSV.99.SVI.11.CMC.18.3.5>.

8 For example, see Jamie Leonheart, "Gender Perspectives for Operational Effectiveness – An Opportunity for U.S. Forces Japan and the Japan Self Defense Forces," *NIDS Commentary*, No. 333 (2024).

in military scholarships for women and various related gender issues. These scholarships highlight aspects such as the effectiveness and cohesion of military organisations in which women served;⁹ the organisational culture related to women in the military;¹⁰ the career advancement of women in the armed forces;¹¹ and civil-military aspects, especially regarding the role of politics.¹²

Although these scholarships initially concentrated solely on women, they later expanded to include research on gender roles¹³ and integration in specific operational units,¹⁴ the effects of military service on health,¹⁵ the roles of veterans,¹⁶ military

- 9 For example, see Uzi Ben-Shalom, Eyal Lewin, and Shimrit Engel, "Organizational Processes and Gender Integration in Operational Military Units: An Israel Defense Forces Case Study," *Gender, Work & Organization* 26, No. 9 (2019): 1289–1303, <https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12348>. Robert Egnell, Petter Hojem, and Hannes Berts, *Gender, Military Effectiveness, and Organizational Change: The Swedish Model* (Houndsmills, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). Mady Wechler Segal et al., "The Role of Leadership and Peer Behaviors in the Performance and Well-Being of Women in Combat: Historical Perspectives, Unit Integration, and Family Issues," *Military Medicine* 181 (2016): 1–28, <https://doi.org/10.7205/MILMED-D-15-00342>.
- 10 For example, see Melissa T. Brown, "A Woman in the Army Is Still a Woman": Representations of Women in US Military Recruiting Advertisements for the All-Volunteer Force," *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy* 33 (2012): 151–75. Nadja Furlan Štante, "Ženske v oboroženih silah: Med nasiljem in ranljivostjo," *Sodobni vojaški izzivi* 18, No. 3 (2016): 95–105, <https://doi.org/10.33179/BSV.99.SVI.11.CMC.18.3.8>.
- 11 For example, see J. Norman Baldwin, "Female Promotions in Male-Dominant Organizations: The Case of the United States Military," *The Journal of Politics* 58, No. 4 (1996): 1184–97. Nani Kusmiyati and Hady Efendy, "The Leadership of Women in Military on Military Organization," *International Journal of Human Resource Studies* 7, No. 4 (2017): 165–74.
- 12 For example, see Bradford Booth, William W. Falk, David R. Segal, and Mady Wechsler Segal, "The Impact of Military Presence in Local Labor Markets on the Employment of Women," *Gender & Society* 14, No. 2 (2000): 318–32. Joan Chandler, Lyn Bryant, and Tracey Bunyard, "Women in Military Occupations," *Work, Employment & Society* 9, No. 1 (1995): 123–35.
- 13 For example, see Cati Connell, *A Few Good Gays: The Gendered Compromises behind Military Inclusion* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2023). Mael Embser-Herbert and Bree Fram, eds., *With Honor and Integrity: Transgender Troops in Their Own Words* (New York: New York University Press, 2021). Pavel Vuk and Saša Galičič, "Socialna diverziteta v luči inkluzivnosti istospolno usmerjenih pripadnic in pripadnikov v slovenski vojski," *Teorija in praksa* 59, No. 2 (2022): 568–88, 596, 597. Pavel Vuk, "The Slovenian Armed Forces Faces the Challenge of Inclusion of Their Homosexual Members," *Journal of Homosexuality* 71, No. 5 (2024): 1231–52, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2023.2169088>.
- 14 For example, see Frank Gasca, Ryan Voneida, and Ken Goedecke, "Unique Capabilities of Women in Special Operations Forces," *Special Operations Journal* 1, No. 2 (2015): 105–11, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23296151.2015.1070613>. Karmen Poklukar and Pavel Vuk, "Vključevanje žensk v specialne sile," *Sodobni vojaški izzivi* 22, No. 4 (2020): 85–105, <https://doi.org/10.33179/BSV.99.SVI.11.CMC.22.4.5>.
- 15 For example, see Morgan K. Anderson et al., "Effect of Mandatory Unit and Individual Physical Training on Fitness in Military Men and Women," *American Journal of Health Promotion* (2016), 1–10, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0890117116666977>. Beverly P. Bergman and Simon A. St J. Miller, "Equal Opportunities, Equal Risks? Overuse Injuries in Female Military Recruits," *Journal of Public Health Medicine* 23, No. 1 (2001): 35–39. Carissa van den Berk Clark, Jennifer Chang, Jessica Servery, and Jeffrey D. Quinlan, "Women's Health and the Military," *Primary Care: Clinics in Office Practice* 45, No. 4 (2018): 677–86, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pop.2018.07.006>.
- 16 For example, see Julia Baumann, Charlotte Williamson, and Dominic Murphy, "Exploring the Impact of Gender-Specific Challenges during and after Military Service on Female UK Veterans," *Journal of Military, Veteran and Family Health* 8, No. 2 (2022): 72–81, <https://doi.org/10.3138/jmvfh-2021-0065>. Valerija Bernik, "Veteranke druge svetovne vojne," *Sodobni vojaški izzivi* 19, No. 2 (2017): 71–87, <https://doi.org/10.33179/BSV.99.SVI.11.CMC.19.2.5>. Alison S. Fell, *Women as Veterans in Britain and France after the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

families,¹⁷ and more. Such research is often linked with other social determinants, such as age, race, and education.¹⁸ Additionally, a new area of study has emerged concerning sexuality: issues like sexual violence in armed conflicts,¹⁹ sexual violence within the military,²⁰ military prostitution,²¹ and related topics.

This article's contribution is twofold. Firstly, it provides a synthetic historical narrative that connects the logistics-heavy yet unofficial roles of camp followers to leadership positions in modern militaries, emphasising institutional learning. Secondly, it promotes the institutional-process model that links external influences (such as total war, legal mandates like UNSCR 1325, and technological advances) to internal reforms (including occupational access, training standards, and evaluation and promotion rules) and, ultimately, leads to women attaining leadership positions in the military. Methodologically, by analysing the literature discussing the various roles of women in armed forces, the article fulfils both descriptive and explanatory objectives regarding the long-term transformation of women's roles in the military throughout history, particularly in the contemporary era.

Followers of Military Camps

In ancient times, women's roles in the military could be divided into two categories: camp followers who accompanied military units during campaigns, or residents based in or near (semi)permanent military installations.

The perception of women in military matters in the Ancient Greek world stemmed from the division between public and private life, with military affairs regarded as part

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- 17 For example, see Donabelle C. Hess, "Military Family Readiness: The Importance of Building Familial Resilience and Increasing Family Well-being Through Military Community Support and Services," *Sodobni vojaški izzivi* 22, No. 2 (2020): 89–99, <https://doi.org/10.33179/BSV.99.SVL.11.CMC.22.2.5>. Ljubica Jelušič, Julija Jelušič Južnič, and Jelena Juvan, "The Relevance of Military Families for Military Organizations and Military Sociology," *Sodobni vojaški izzivi* 22, No. 2 (2020): 51–67, <https://doi.org/10.33179/BSV.99.SVL.11.CMC.22.2.3>. Jelena Juvan, "Usklajevanje delovnih in družinskih obveznosti v vojaški organizaciji," *Socialno delo* 48, No. 4 (2009): 227–34. Kairi Kasearu et al, "Military Families in Estonia, Slovenia and Sweden: Similarities and Differences," *Sodobni vojaški izzivi* 22, No. 2 (2020): 69–87, <https://doi.org/10.33179/BSV.99.SVL.11.CMC.22.2.4>. Janja Vuga Beršnak and Bojana Lobe, "Socioecological Model of a Military Family's Health and Well-being: Inside a Slovenian Military Family," *Armed Forces and Society* 50, No. 1 (2024): 224–52, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X221115679>.
 - 18 For example, see Bradford Booth, and David R. Segal, "Bringing the Soldiers Back In: Implications of Inclusion of Military Personnel Market Research on Race, Class, and Gender," *Race, Gender & Class* 12, No. 1 (2005): 34–57. Sandra Bolzenius, "Asserting Citizenship: Black Women in the Women's Army Corps (WAC)," *International Journal of Military History and Historiography* 39 (2019): 208–231.
 - 19 For example, see Sabine Hirschauer, *The Securitization of Rape: Women, War and Sexual Violence* (Houndmills, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). Inger Skjelsbaek, "Sexual Violence and War: Mapping Out a Complex Relationship," *European Journal of International Relations* 7, No. 2 (2001): 211–37.
 - 20 For example, see Vicki J. Magley et al., "The Impact of Sexual Harassment on Military Personnel: Is It the Same for Men and Women?," *Military Psychology* 11, No. 3 (1999): 283–302, https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327876mp1103_5. John B. Pryor, "The Psychological Impact on Sexual Harassment on Women in the U.S. Military," *Basic and Applied Social Psychology* 17, No. 4 (1995): 581–603, https://doi.org/10.1207/s15324834basp1704_9.
 - 21 For example, see Hata Ikuhiko, *Comfort Women and Sex in the Battle Zone* (Lanham, Boulder, New York, London: Hamilton Books, 2018). Erik Ropers, "Representation of Gendered Violence in Manga: The Case of Enforced Military Prostitution," *Japanese Studies* 31, No. 2 (2011): 249–66.

of the public life, which was the domain of men. Naturally, women were indeed present during military sieges of cities. For example, during the siege of the Greek city of Gela in Sicily in 405 BC, women and children “actively helped the defenders, particularly by taking part in restoring damaged sections of the town walls”. The women’s role in military activities at home could include cooking, weaving, and fulfilling other basic needs of soldiers, as well as participating in the military “industry” by manufacturing ammunition (spears, arrows) and armour. Later, women started to follow soldiers during their campaigns. Thucydides writes that during the Peloponnesian War, “roughly one woman was assigned to prepare food (and presumably to take care of other non-combatant tasks) for every four men,” thus women made up one-fifth of the campaign personnel. Ancient Greek sources also report that women cared for wounded warriors and were involved in disinformation operations. For example, during the siege of Sinope around 379/78 BC, “the townswomen clad themselves in dummy armor and joined their men on the walls, making the defenders look more numerous than they actually were”. The involvement of ancient Greek women was a result of the total war concept, where the entire community was “involved in the military affairs of the community”.²²

The ancient Roman military had a complex relationship with sutlers, who could be slaves or free people. They followed the legions or lived near or inside military camps due to familiar connections or economic reasons, including peddlers, merchants (also known as sutlers), prostitutes, artisans, prophets and diviners, and foragers for food and firewood, among others. During peacetime, the presence of women was not an issue. However, during combat operations or in cases of poor discipline, female sutlers could be expelled from the vicinity of military units. Generally, sutlers offered logistical support but could also be a burden. Senior military officers had the privilege of having their families live with them in military camps.²³ Civilian supporters, especially merchants, played a crucial role in connecting legionnaires with the local community and beyond.²⁴ Roman legionnaires sometimes encountered female warriors when fighting against foreign tribes. One famous example was Boudica, a queen who led a failed revolt by the British Iceni tribe against Rome in AD 61 or 60.²⁵ Interestingly, women fought alongside and against men as gladiatrices.²⁶

22 Jorit Wintjes, “‘Keep the Women Out of the Camp!’ Women and Military Institutions in the Classical World,” in Barton C. Hacker and Margaret Vining, eds., *A Companion to Women’s Military History* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2012), 21–30.

23 Penelope M. Allison, “Mapping for Gender. Interpreting Artefact Distribution Inside 1st- and 2nd-Century A.D. Forts in Roman Germany,” *Archaeological Dialogues* 13, No. 1 (2006): 1–20, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1380203806211851>. Chiara Cenati and Peter Kruschwitz, “Poetic Baggage: Representations of Camp Followers in the Latin Verse Inscriptions,” *Electrum* 31 (2024): 153–83, <https://doi.org/10.4467/20800909EL.24.012.19162>.

24 Ben Kolbeck, “A Foot in Both Camps: The Civilian Suppliers of the Army in Roman Britain,” *Theoretical Roman Archaeology Journal* 1, No. 1 (2018): 1–19, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.16995/traj.355>.

25 Valentine J. Belfiglio, “Women and the Ancient Roman Army,” *Journal of Clinical Research and Case Studies* 1, No. 1 (2023): 2. Graham Webster, *Boudica: The British Revolt against Rome AD 60* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1993), 46.

26 Stephan Brunet, “Women with Swords: Female Gladiators in the Roman World,” in Paul Cristesen and Donald G. Kyle, eds., *A Companion to Sport and Spectacle in Greek and Roman Antiquity* (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2016), 478–91.

Similarly, medieval armies included women as well. The Viking raiding parties that invaded Britain also had female camp followers, who could either be free or slaves.²⁷ Female warriors, known as shieldmaidens, and mythical figures like Valkyries were also known to participate in raids. It is possible that some female warriors enjoyed high status, as shown by their burial arrangements.²⁸ Reports from the Rus' court noted that each warrior in the King's retinue had two slave girls.²⁹ Byzantine sources also mentioned the active participation of female warriors during the battles of Dorostolon (also known as Silistra) in 971, when Byzantine troops laid siege to Dorostolon, a Kievan Rus' fortress. After the fortress fell, the Byzantines "found women lying among the fallen, equipped like men; women who had fought against the Romans [e.g., Byzantines] together with the men".³⁰

Early Modern Militaries and Women

Women were also a common sight in the early modern armies. As before, they cooked, cleaned, laundered, and provided nursing care to soldiers. When stationed in camps or settlements, they were responsible for housing, food, and other supplies. Their presence was necessary as they eased additional burdens on soldiers caused by logistical issues. During this period, women as queens or regents supported or led their armies in military campaigns. For example, Isabella I of Castile (1451–1504) actively supported the army of her husband, Ferdinand II of Aragon (1452–1516), while it was on the battlefield. She organised "a collection of supplies, the hiring of mercenaries, and the establishment of field hospitals" and visited the troops. Sometimes, in her husband's absence, she also commanded the soldiers. Similarly, Queen Elizabeth I of England (1533–1603) was involved in military administration and propaganda efforts. Even noble women would supplement or take over their husbands' roles in military administration.³¹

It was rare for women of humble (peasant) origins to join military campaigns and attain leadership positions. One example was Joan of Arc (1412?–1431). During the Hundred Years' War, in March 1429, she persuaded the French dauphin Charles to let her join his army in an effort to rescue the besieged town of Orleans. The victorious Battle of Orleans led to a new campaign aimed at capturing the Loire.

27 Dawn M. Hadley et al., "The Winter Camp of the Viking Great Army, AD 872–3, Torksey, Lincolnshire," *The Antiquaries Journal* 96 (2016): 54, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003581516000718>.

28 Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir, *Valkyrie: The Women of the Viking World* (London, New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020), 7–19. Neil Price et al., "Viking Warrior Women? Reassessing Birk Chamber Grave Bj.581," *Antiquity* 93, No. 367 (2019): 192–94, <https://doi.org/10.15184/aqy.2018.258>.

29 Ben Raffield, Neil Price, and Mark Collard, "Polygyny, Concubinage, and the Social Lives of Women in Viking-age Scandinavia," *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia* 13 (2017), 190, <https://doi.org/10.1484/J.VMS.5.114355>.

30 John Skylitzes, *A Synopsis of Byzantine History, 811–1057* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 290.

31 Mary Elizabeth Ailes, "Camp Followers, Sutlers, and Soldiers' Wives: Women in Early Modern Armies (c. 1450–1650)," in Barton C. Hacker and Margaret Vining, eds., *A Companion to Women's Military History* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2012), 61–71.

Later, in September 1429, Joan took part in the unsuccessful attack on Paris and in the campaign for Compiègne in April–May 1430. On 23 May 1430, she was captured and sold to the English. She was then tried and burned as a heretic (for wearing male clothing) on 30 May 1431.³²

The beginning of the 17th century marked a shift in Europe from aggregate contract armies to state commission armies, resulting in better professional logistical support and reducing the need for female camp followers. However, garrison communities persisted, along with women who followed various mercenary bands. Especially while attached to these bands, women began to take on non-traditional roles, such as “the custodians of the books and the money in small business”, and managing plunder. During sieges, women assisted with more physically demanding tasks, such as “binding fascines, filling ditches, digging pits and mounting cannon in difficult places.” With the professionalisation of armies, (unmarried) women, particularly prostitutes, became unwelcome and were even banned from military units. Soldiers’ wives remained and performed traditional roles as laundresses, seamstresses, and nurses.³³

Formalisation of Women’s Roles

In the late 18th century, women were still present as camp followers, often as “soldiers’ wives or consorts who more than earned their keep with foraging, cooking, laundry, needlework, and nursing.” However, the Napoleonic Wars brought about many changes. The adoption of professional armies with extended military service resulted in smaller standing forces compared with the earlier mass conscripted armies. As a result, the presence of women within the military was greatly diminished, although they still supported soldiers as laundresses and canteen managers, particularly in permanent establishments. Another major factor contributing to the reduced number of women accompanying military units was industrialisation, which created more opportunities for women in factories and cities, while combat became more manoeuvrable and fast-paced. Whereas, in the past, camp followers were predominantly women of lower social standing, by the mid-19th century, more noble ladies, involved in advancing medical science and services, began appearing on the battlefield.³⁴

During the Russo-Turkish War in Crimea, where the British forces supported Russia in the fight against the Ottoman Empire, public attention quickly turned to the terrible battlefield conditions and the inadequate medical services provided to the

32 Deborah A. Fraioli, *Joan of Arc and the Hundred Years War* (Westport Connecticut, London: Greenwood Press, 2005), 97–101.

33 John A. Lynn II, “Essential Women, Necessary Wives, and Exemplary Soldiers: The Military Reality and Cultural Representation of Women’s Military Participation (1600–1815),” in Barton C. Hacker and Margaret Vining, eds., *A Companion to Women’s Military History* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2012), 94–113.

34 Barton C. Hacker, “Reformers, Nurses, and Ladies in Uniform: The Changing Status of Military Women (c. 1815–c. 1914),” in Barton C. Hacker and Margaret Vining, eds., *A Companion to Women’s Military History* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2012), 137–41. Jan Kilián, “A Soldier and a Townsman during the Thirty Years’ War. Coexistence – Confrontation – Cooperation,” *Przegląd Zachodniopomorski* 63, No. 4 (2019): 51, 52, <https://doi.org/10.18276/pz.2019.4-02>.

sick and wounded soldiers. The British Secretary of War asked Florence Nightingale (1820–1910) to organise a volunteer group of female nurses to improve these conditions. She was accompanied by 38 women, a priest, and a courier. With their help, she laid the foundations for modern military nursing. Nightingale's team improved sanitary conditions in military hospitals, particularly addressing outbreaks of infectious diseases, and began ordering essential supplies to improve medical treatment. While her companions focused on nursing, Nightingale was mainly involved in health management, education, and administration. Interestingly, battlefield conditions affected both sides to reach the same conclusion; only some days after Nightingale's arrival in Crimea, on the Russian side, Grand Duchess Helena Pavlovna (1806–1873) formed the Community of the Cross of the Sisters Caring for the Wounded and Sick Warriors, the Russian equivalent of Nightingale's group.³⁵

The World Wars

During World War I, women's roles in military contexts expanded significantly, reflecting the unprecedented mobilisation of entire societies. Along with the changing structure of militaries and the expanding bureaucracy of military administration, the need for essential tasks such as nursing, medical support, communications, and logistical support provided new opportunities for women. Apart from working directly within the armed forces, even more women replaced male workers in related industries, especially munitions production.³⁶ Following Nightingale's example, volunteer organisations such as the Voluntary Aid Detachments in Britain and the American Red Cross successfully organised and deployed tens of thousands of women to frontline aid stations and hospitals. Many female physicians worked behind the frontlines, caring for sick and wounded soldiers. In France, female radiology assistants managed stationary and mobile X-ray units. Some countries granted temporary officer ranks to female physicians. Although there were cases of women joining the military in disguise, some served openly as women. Such rare instances were accepted in Russia, where individual women were initially allowed to serve unofficially in medical, reconnaissance, cavalry, infantry, and artillery units. Then, in 1917, a Women's Battalion of Death was formed; while later, several other all-female military units were established. Military intelligence services also began employing women as clerks, historians, translators, cryptographers, couriers, and intelligence agents. Another important development was the creation of numerous paramilitary and volunteer organisations, enabling women to contribute to the war effort from the home front. While World War I encouraged

35 Fatima Jasim Mohammed Ali, "The Russo-Turkish War in Crimea and Nightingale's Role in It (1854–1855)," *World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews* 18, No. 2 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.30574/wjarr.2023.18.2.0746>. T. S. Sorokina, "Russian Nursing in the Crimean War," *Journal of the Royal College of Physicians of London* 29, No. 1 (1995): 57–63. Ugurgul Tunc, "Lessons from the Crimean War: How Hospitals were Transformed by Florence Nightingale and Others," *Infectious Diseases & Clinical Microbiology* 1, No. 2 (2019): 110–18, <https://doi.org/10.36519/idcm.2019.19020>.

36 Urška Strle, "K razumevanju ženskega dela v veliki vojni," *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* 55, No. 2 (2015): 103–25.

the professionalisation of certain roles, especially in military medicine, the traditional structures continued to hinder women's advancement and limited their command opportunities.³⁷ Interestingly, in the Kingdom of Serbia, Milunka Savić (1892–1973) joined the Serbian Army in disguise already during the First Balkan War in 1912. Her gender was revealed after she was treated for wounds sustained in combat. Due to her skills, she was permitted to remain in military service. She continued serving throughout World War I and became the most decorated female soldier of that war.³⁸

Most newly formed (para)military organisations in which women participated during World War I were disbanded afterwards. Typically, women left their military positions and jobs in the military industry, although some continued serving in the traditional military occupations like nursing and administration. When World War II broke out, the story of women's participation in the military effort was repeated, but on a much larger and more diverse scale. In the United Kingdom, all-female auxiliary military organisations were established, such as the Women's Auxiliary Air Force, the Auxiliary Territorial Service, and the Women's Royal Naval Service. Over 600,000 women joined these organisations, serving in various roles: cooks, clerks, orderlies, equipment assistants, drivers, balloon fabric workers, storewomen, writers, communication workers, and more. Some women even joined mixed anti-aircraft batteries and intelligence units. They played such a vital role in the war effort that after the conflict and demobilisation, these female branches became permanent (Women's Royal Air Force; Women's Royal Army Corps; Women's Royal Naval Service), offering women opportunities for military careers beyond nursing.³⁹

After the United States entered the war, they followed the British example by establishing female branches such as the Women's Army Corps, Women's Reserve of the Naval Reserve, Women's Reserve of the Coast Guard Reserve, and Marine Corps Women's Reserve, as well as female organisations supporting the war effort (like Women Airforce Service Pilots). These women performed similar duties to their British counterparts but faced additional challenges due to racial segregation.⁴⁰ In the Soviet Union, they also followed the example from World War I. Soviet women served

37 Kimberly Jensen, "Volunteers, Auxiliaries, and Women's Mobilization: The First World War and Beyond (1914–1939)," in Barton C. Hacker and Margaret Vining, eds., *A Companion to Women's Military History* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2012), 189–223. Janet Lee, "Sisterhood at the Front: Friendship, Comradeship, and the Feminine Appropriation of Military Heroism Among World War I First Aid Nursing Yeomanry (FANY)," *Women's Studies International Forum* 31 (2008): 16–29. Margaret Vining and Barton C. Hacker, "From Camp Follower to Lady in Uniform: Women, Social Class and Military Institutions before 1920," *Contemporary European History* 10, No. 3 (2001): 353–73, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777301003022>.

38 Vidoje D. Golubović, *Dobrovoljka Milunka Savić: Srpska heroína* (Beograd: Udruženje ratnih dobrovoljaca 1912–1918, njihovih potomaka i poštovalaca, 2013), 10ff.

39 Crang, *Sisters in Arms*, 25f. Helen Fry, *Women in Intelligence: The Hidden History of Two World Wars* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2023). Gerard J. de Groot, "Combatants or Non-Combatants? Women in Mixed Anti-Aircraft Batteries during the Second World War," *RUSI Journal* (1995): 65–70.

40 Bolzenius, "Asserting Citizenship," 210ff. Fieseler, Hampf and Schwarzkopf, "Gendering combat," 119–22. Laurie Schrivener, "U.S. Military Women in World War II: The SPAR, WAC, WAVES, WASP, and Women Marines in U.S. Government Publications," *Journal of Governmental Information* 26, No. 4 (1999): 361–83. Margaret Vining, "Women Join the Armed Forces: The Transformation of Women's Military Work in World War II and After (1939–1947)," in Barton C. Hacker and Margaret Vining, eds., *A Companion to Women's Military History* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2012), 254.

as nurses, participated in labour and logistical roles, operated anti-aircraft guns, and served on the frontlines as snipers, fighter and bomber pilots, scouts, riflemen, partisans, among others. All-female military units were also formed.⁴¹ Even the British princess, the future Queen Elizabeth II (1926–2022), joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service in 1944 when she turned 18 and was trained as a mechanic and driver.⁴²

The resistance movements fighting the Axis forces also accepted women. In these groups, women were not limited to traditional roles such as logistics, nursing, and communication, but also served as fighters and political commissars, and operated within the intelligence services. Some even rose to the rank of commanders.⁴³

The story of women in the Third Reich was similar: although officially barred from military service, women worked in the military industry, as nurses, communication operators, clerks, air-defence personnel, and so on.⁴⁴

The Integration of Women into the Military

While postwar demobilisation decreased women's military presence in most countries, the war highlighted their operational effectiveness across various domains, shaping future integration policies and the development of gender roles in armed forces.

The United States Women's Army Corps (WAC), established during World War II, continued operating after the war ended. Female soldiers took part in the Korean and Vietnam Wars. Influenced by the women's rights movement and the professionalisation of armed forces, a political debate arose about the role, function, and future of the WAC. In the final years of these Corps, they began to shut down some of its subordinate units, until in October 1978, the WAC was abolished. With this act, the United States Army addressed accusations of discrimination against women and subsequently fully integrated female soldiers into the military organisation.⁴⁵

Other Western militaries also adopted similar solutions, transforming their forces into fully professional armed forces. Although compulsory military service persisted for men, women were excluded from it. For instance, in the former Yugoslavia, military service was mandatory only for men, while women had the option to voluntarily join the territorial defence forces, which were subordinated to the Yugoslav People's Army

41 Roger D. Markwick and Euridice Charon Cardona, *Soviet Women on the Frontline in the Second World War* (Houndmills, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 20ff.

42 Vikki Hawkins, *A Princess at War: Queen Elizabeth II During World War II*. *The National WWII Museum*, 2021, accessed on 5 September 2025, <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/queen-elizabeth-ii-during-world-war-ii>.

43 Valerija Bernik, "Ženske v slovenski partizanski vojski (1941–1945)," in Ljubica Jelušič and Mojca Pešec, eds., *Sekszim v vojaški uniformi* (Ljubljana: Obramboslovni raziskovalni center, Generalštab Slovenske vojske, 2002), 106–26.

44 Gersdorf, *Frauen im Kriegsdienst*, 27ff.

45 Bettie J. Morden, *The Women's Army Corps, 1945–1978* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 1990), 10–397.

(YPA). Between July 1983 and July 1985, the YPA even conducted a trial military training for women.⁴⁶

The only Western country with compulsory military service for both men and women is Israel, mainly because of its smaller population compared to its hostile neighbours. While during the Israeli War of Independence, women took part in combat roles, later, in 1952, their military careers were largely restricted to educational and administrative positions. Another legal change implemented in 2000 opened 90% of positions in the Israeli Defence Forces to women as well, including combat roles (light infantry, search and rescue, etc.), and women even accounted for more than half (56%) of junior officer ranks.⁴⁷ In 2000, the Caracal Battalion was established as a mixed-gender operational infantry battalion.⁴⁸

Another Western country, Norway, initially (1957–1978) allowed women to serve in its reserve forces, while in the event of war, they would replace men in administration, communication, or health services. In 1976, women could join Norway's regular forces, and by 1985, they had access to all military positions, including combat roles. As recently as 2015, mandatory military service was extended to women, although it is not universal like in Israel, as not all draftees are called to serve.⁴⁹

In Western countries where most positions have been opened to women, the next step towards full integration involves including women in combat roles, similar to Israel, including the most specialised units like special forces.⁵⁰ Norway pioneered this effort when, in 2014, an all-female platoon of conscripts was trained as special forces. Since then, the *Jegertruppen* has specialised in urban special reconnaissance and close-quarters combat.⁵¹

Lately, participation in recent armed conflicts (e.g., the Global War on Terror) has led to female military members unintentionally being exposed to or involved in combat, often when their unit or base was ambushed or attacked.⁵² On this occasion,

46 Maja Garb, "Ženske na služenju vojaškega roka v JLA," in Ljubica Jelušič and Mojca Pešec, eds., *Seksizem v vojaški uniformi* (Ljubljana: Obramboslovni raziskovalni center, Generalštab Slovenske vojske, 2002), 128–31.

47 Ephrat Huss and Julie Cwikel, "Women's Stress in Compulsory Army Service in Israel: A Gendered Perspective," *Work* 50, No. 1 (2015): 38, <https://doi.org/10.3233/WOR-141930>. Tair Karazi-Presler, Orna Sasson-Levy, and Edna Lomsky-Feder, "Gender, Emotions Management, and Power in Organizations: The Case of Israeli Women Junior Military Officers," *Sex Roles* 78 (2018): 573–86, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-017-0810-7>.

48 Luke Carroll, "Raising a Female-centric Infantry Battalion: Do We Have the Nerve?," *Australian Army Journal* 11, No. 1 (2014): 40.

49 Sanna Strand, *The 'Scandinavian Model' of Military Conscription: A Formula for Democratic Defence Forces in 21st Century Europe?* (Vienna: Austrian Institute for International Affairs, 2021), 7–11, <https://www.oii.ac.at/cms/media/policy-analysis-scandinavian-model-of-military-conscription.pdf>.

50 Anne Fieldhouse and T. J. O'Leary, "Integrating Women into Combat Roles: Comparing the UK Armed Forces and Israeli Defense Forces to Understand where Lessons can be Learnt," *BMJ Military Health* 169, No. 1 (2023): 78–80, <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjilitary-2020-001500>. Gasca, Voneida, and Goedecke, "Unique Capabilities." Poklukar and Vuk, "Vključevanje žensk."

51 Ingunn Helene Landsend Monsen, *Female Integration in Jordan's Special Forces – an Empirical Analysis of the Project's Content and Value for Norway and Jordan* (Oslo: Norwegian Defence Research Establishment, 2025), 25, 26.

52 Thomas A. Bruscino, "Palm Sunday Ambush, 20 March 2005," in William G. Robertson, ed., *In Contact! Case Studies from the Long War: Volume I* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2003) 59–82. Amy E. Street, Dawne Vogt, and Lissa Dutra, "A New Generation of Women Veterans: Stressors Faced by Women Deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan," *Clinical Psychology Review* 29 (2009): 686, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2009.08.007>.

a new type of women-focused military unit was established: the so-called female cultural support teams. In these teams, female military personnel were tasked with establishing contact with local women to help improve civil-military relations with the local population.⁵³

Military Leaders

Another significant aspect of the full integration of women concerns leadership roles. For instance, in the United States, in 1920, women nurses were granted officer ranks but did not enjoy the same privileges and rights as their male counterparts. In 1942, women could hold leadership positions but only within the WAC. In 1967, restrictions on promoting women were lifted, and the following year, the first woman attained the highest enlisted rank of command sergeant major. By 1970, the first two women – Anna Mae Hays (1920–2018), Chief of the Army Nurse Corps, and Elizabeth P. Hoisington (1918–2007), Director of the Women's Army Corps – were promoted to the rank of general (brigadier general). At that point, women were permitted to command men, except in combat units. The first woman granted a combat command was Captain Linda Bray (1960), in 1989, who commanded a company during the invasion of Panama. In 2008, the first woman achieved the highest military rank during peacetime: Ann E. Dunwoody (1953) was promoted to the rank of general (OF-9) and simultaneously took command of a major United States Army unit. She was the first woman to do so. As recently as 2021, the first woman became a commander of a geographic combatant command when Laura J. Richardson (1963) assumed leadership of the United States Southern Command.⁵⁴ To date, no woman has been appointed to command a military branch or the entire armed forces of the United States.

In the Slovenian Armed Forces, female officers commonly held command of lower-level military units, up to the size of a company, while higher positions were generally inaccessible to women. Simultaneously, research indicated a preference for appointing male commanders to limited command roles.⁵⁵ However, in Slovenia, Alenka Ermenc (1963) made history within NATO militaries as the first woman to assume the highest military position, serving as the Chief of the General Staff of the Slovenian Armed Forces. In 2006, Ermenc became the first female to command a battalion (the 5th Intelligence-Reconnaissance Battalion). She was also the first woman

53 Naomi Head, "Women Helping Women': Deploying Gender in US Counterinsurgency Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan," *Security Dialogue* 55, No. 2 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1177/09670106231203839>. Rosellen Roche et al., "The Unseen Patriot: Female Cultural Support Team Members and Combat Definition," *Journal of Veteran Studies* 7, No. 1 (2021): 271–79, <https://doi.org/10.21061/jvs.v7i1.285>.

54 Army Women's Foundation, *Army Women In History*, accessed on 16 August 2025, <https://www.awfdn.org/army-women-in-history/>.

55 Liliana Brožič and Mojca Pešec, "Ženske v oboroženih silah – primer Slovenske vojske," *Teorija in praksa* 54, No. 1 (2017): 123–25. Pavel Vuk and Ela Tonin Mali, "Pripadnice Slovenske vojske na poveljniških dolžnostih na mednarodnih operacijah in misijah," *Teorija in praksa* 57, No. 3 (2020): 736–38.

promoted to the rank of brigadier (2011), followed by the rank of major general (2018). In the same year, she was appointed Deputy and subsequently Chief of the General Staff of the Slovenian Armed Forces.⁵⁶

Contemporary Warriresses

Outside the regular militaries, in the 21st century, women participated in non-state (para)military organisations. One such organisation is the Women's Protection Units (YPJ), an all-female militia that is the counterpart of the Kurdish-majority People's Defence Units (YPG), involved in the Syrian Civil War. The first mixed-gender units within the YPG that fought against the Syrian regime and Islamist rebel groups were formed around 2011, while the YPJ was officially established in April 2013. Although primarily composed of Kurdish women, women of other ethnicities also joined their ranks and fought alongside the YPG in many operations and battles. The YPJ established Women's Military Academies in each of the three cantons in the Rojava region, which provided comprehensive training for women.⁵⁷

The latest armed conflict in Europe, the Russian invasion of Ukraine (2014–), once again shows that wars are the natural outcome of women's evolving roles in the military, as personnel requirements demand greater inclusion of the population. In 2014, nearly 50,000 women served in the Armed Forces of Ukraine, with 16,500 of them directly in military units. Most were medical and communications specialists, accountants, clerks, and cooks. However, after the Russian invasion, their numbers grew by 40%, and by January 2024, over 62,000 women made up about 7.3% of all personnel. Currently, 45,500 women serve in military units, with more than four thousand deployed on the frontlines. This increase in the ranks was also a result of the 2015 mobilisation, which included women aged between 20 and 50. Next year, women will be permitted to take on certain combat roles. In 2018, a law was enacted allowing women to participate in all military positions, including combat roles. Presently, women serve as drivers, tank and armoured vehicle crews, reconnaissance units, machine gunners, snipers, and unmanned aerial vehicle operators, among other roles. In 2021, the first woman, Tetiana Ostashchenko, was promoted to the rank of brigadier general and appointed commander of the Medical Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.⁵⁸

56 Andreja Rakovec, Ermenc, Alenka, *Slovenska biografija* (Ljubljana: ZRC SAZU, 2013), accessed on 14 August 2025, <http://www.slovenska-biografija.si/oseba/sbi1024520/#novi-slovenski-biografski-leksikon>.

57 Valetina Dean, "Kurdish Female Fighters: The Western Depiction of YPJ Combatants in Rojava," *Globalism*, No. 1 (2019): 11, <https://doi.org/10.12893/gjcp.2019.1.7>.

58 Daryna Hrysiuk, *How Many Women are Defending Ukraine Against Russia's Invasion?*, 26 March 2024, accessed on 14 August 2025, <https://war.ukraine.ua/articles/how-many-women-are-defending-ukraine-against-russia-s-invasion>. Jessica Trisko Darden, "Ukrainian Wartime Policy and the Construction of Women's Combatant Status," *Women's Studies International Forum* 96 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2022.102665>.

Fewer women served or are serving on the Russian side. While the Russian Armed Forces permit women to serve, they are excluded from “certain military positions, considered harmful to their reproductive abilities”. According to the Russian Ministry of Defence, in March 2023, approximately 1,100 women participated in combat operations against Ukraine, making up less than half a percent of all Russian military personnel. Later that year, the Russian Ministry of Defence increased the recruitment of women, including women in prisons. Such recruitment efforts were also undertaken by Russian private military companies, which seek women for combat roles.⁵⁹

Conclusion

The historical development of women’s roles in the military shows both continuity and change. From the often-invisible camp followers who provided essential logistical and emotional support to armies in Antiquity, through the gradual professionalisation of medical and auxiliary services in modern times, to the visible leadership of women in today’s armed forces, the story of women in the military illustrates a progressive evolution of the military organisation as an institution influenced by social, political, and operational needs. The periods of intense armed conflict, especially the two world wars, repeatedly demonstrated that women are not only capable but vital in combat support and, at times, also in frontline roles. However, the demobilisations following these conflicts reveal how inclusion was often viewed as a temporary measure, emphasising the ongoing gender bias within military organisations.

The adoption of UNSCR 1325 represented a turning point, embedding women’s participation in security as a normative principle and catalysing reforms in recruitment, training, and promotion. Its influence reinforced the notion that women are not just passive beneficiaries of protection but active contributors to effectiveness, legitimacy, and leadership within armed forces. The more recent experiences of Iraq, Afghanistan, and particularly Ukraine since 2014 demonstrate how contemporary conflicts have once again accelerated women’s integration, both in combat and command structures.

Ultimately, the long evolution “from camp followers to leaders” affirms that women’s military contributions are not mistakes but have been essential to the history and future of warfare. Recognising and institutionalising these roles is not just a matter of equality but of operational necessity. The challenge ahead is not in proving women’s capability – which history has repeatedly confirmed – but in ensuring that the structures of promotion, command, and culture genuinely reflect that reality.

59 Egle E. Murauskaite, *Russian Women in the Face of War Against Ukraine*, Foreign Policy Research Institute, 26 March 2024, accessed on 14 August 2025, <https://www.fpri.org/article/2024/03/russian-women-in-the-face-of-war-against-ukraine>.

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Klemen Kocjančič

OD SPREMLJEVALK TABOROV DO VODITELJIC: ZGODOVINSKI RAZVOJ VLOGE ŽENSK V OBOROŽENIH SILAH

POVZETEK

Članek obravnava dolgotrajen in zapleten razvoj vloge žensk v oboroženih silah. Od antike do zgodnjega novega veka so ženske nastopale predvsem kot spremljevalke taborov, kjer so opravljale logistične, negovalne in moralne naloge, večinoma brez formalnega priznanja. V novem veku so se njihove naloge začele formalizirati, zlasti na področju zdravstva in oskrbe, kar ponazarjajo pionirke, kot je Florence Nightingale. Prelom sta pomenili prva in druga svetovna vojna, ko so ženske vstopile v vojaško industrijo, pomožne enote, obveščevalne službe in celo sodelovale v boju, s čimer so dokazale svojo usposobljenost in nujnost v vojaški službi. Čeprav je sledila povojna demobilizacija, so kasnejše družbene spremembe prinesle postopno integracijo, okrepljeno z resolucijo VS ZN 1325, ki je ženske prepoznala kot aktivne udeleženke varnosti. Sodobni oboroženi konflikti, zlasti trenutni v Ukrajini, kažejo na njihov pomen v vlogi zdravstvenega osebja, ostrostrelk, poveljnic in generalk. Razvoj dokazuje, da ženske niso obrobni, temveč bistveni del preteklosti, sedanjosti in prihodnosti vojaških sil.