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**"WE ARE THE GIRLS BEHIND THE BOYS BEHIND THE GUNS:"
MILITARY WOMEN AND THE CANADIAN FORCES**

by

Danielle Hards

**A thesis submitted to the Faculty of
Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
in Canadian Studies**

Carleton University

OTTAWA, Ontario

March 1, 1994

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**"We are the Girls Behind the Boys Behind the Guns"
Military Women and the Canadian Forces**

**submitted by Danielle Hards, B.A., Hons. B.A.
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts**

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Thesis Supervisor

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**Director
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Ottawa, Ontario

April 1994

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the status and roles of Canadian servicewomen during the twentieth century. In particular, it focuses on the historic barriers to role expansion for military women.

This thesis postulates that stereotypical attitudes, antiquated notions, and both structural and informal barriers have been and still are responsible for the marginalization of servicewomen. Furthermore, it demonstrates that changes in the Canadian Forces' employment policies, as they relate to women, occurred primarily when events external to the institution (e.g. legislation, Royal Commission, and Parliamentary Committee) forced the organization to alter its policies.

..

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In a very real sense, a thesis is a team effort. Many people have contributed time, advice, efforts and encouragements so that this project could come to fruition.

I am grateful to Katherine Arnup, my supervisor, for her guidance and patience. Her exacting standards kept me "on my toes" and her friendship made the thesis-writing experience a very pleasant one.

I am also thankful to many people related to DND. I particularly want to thank the staff at DGPA and at DND Directorate of History who have allowed me access to an impressive array of documents. I want to thank Isabel Campeau for her help, her advice and her enthusiasm for this project, and express my gratitude to Jocelyne, Albert and Sue for listening to me, encouraging me and for asking the right questions.

I also owe a debt to Lt-Colonel (Retired) Shirley Robinson for providing me with information and advice, for reviewing this thesis, and for her willingness to share her time and experiences with me. Thank you.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to my friends Sharon, Mike, John and Steve and to my sister Kathy for their interest and their support.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFC	Armed Forces Council
CAF	Canadian Armed Forces
CDS	Chief Of Defence Staff
CF	Canadian Forces
CFAO	Canadian Forces Administrative Orders
CHRA	Canadian Human Rights Act
CMC	Canadian Military College
CMR	College Militaire Royal
CREW	Combat Related Employment Of Women
CWAAF	Canadian Women's Auxiliary Air Force
CWAC	Canadian Women's Army Corps
DCDS	Deputy Chief Of Defence Staff
DND	Department Of National Defence
DPSL	Director Procurement And Supply (Land)
DWP	Director Women Personnel
EWSG	Employment Of Women Steering Group
HMCS	Her Majesty's Canadian Ship
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCM	Non-commissioned Member
NCO	Non-commissioned Officer
NDHQ	National Defence Headquarters

MFSP	Military Family Support Program
MMR	Minimum Male Requirement
MND	Minister Of National Defence
MSFRC	Multi-service Family Resource Centre
QR&Os	Queen's Regulations And Orders
RCAF	Royal Canadian Air Force
RCN	Royal Canadian Navy
RCSW	Royal Commission On The Status Of Women
RMC	Royal Military College
SAGE	Semi-Automatic Ground Environment System
SBS	Social And Behavioural Science
SWINTER	Service Women In Non-traditional Environments And Roles
Wrens Or WRCNS	Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service
WW I	World War I
WW II	World War II

INTRODUCTION

In this thesis, I will examine the roles and status of past and present servicewomen of the Canadian Forces (CF)¹. I will review the general participation of Canadian² women in the defence of the land now called "Canada" prior to and during the twentieth century, and I will provide both an evaluation of the CF's changing employment policies as they relate to women and a critique of the "combat" issue. Finally, I will examine current impediments to a fulfilling and rewarding career for servicewomen. Specifically, I will address two principal questions:

1. How did change with regards to servicewomen's status and roles occur in the CF? and,
2. What barriers to the full participation of military women still exist today?

Literature on the subject of Canadian servicewomen is rather sparse. Some historical periods have been well-examined such as the participation of military nurses since the Northwest Rebellion of 1885 (Nicholson 1975), the overall participation of women during World War II (Gossage 1991 and Pierson 1986), and the history and the work of various women's military corps during WWII (Ziegler 1974 and Conrod 1983). Moreover, a considerable body of literature

exists on the subject of women in combat since the issue has been hotly debated, at home and in the United States, in newspaper, journal articles, published papers and in academic and political circles. However, thus far, there has been no published substantive academic analysis of women in the Canadian military and no one has examined the period extending from 1946 to 1993 either in terms of the participation or the employment opportunities of servicewomen.

Given the dearth of published books, studies and articles on the subject of Canadian military women, I have used the documents and statistics provided by various Directorates of the Department of National Defence (DND) for background information and as sources of data for this thesis. Those documents were memoranda, letters, minutes of meetings, studies conducted by the Department and by outside agencies, policy papers, official reports about servicewomen, and other historical material held by DND Directorate of History and by the National Library. I also utilized newspaper clippings, journal articles, conference papers, transcripts of speeches and of interviews, and the few books written on servicewomen. Finally, I took advantage of my own eighteen-year experience as a Canadian military woman as a source of knowledge and information.

LIMITATIONS AND SCOPE OF STUDY

Originally, I had expected to incorporate some comparative material in this thesis so that the status and roles of Canadian servicewomen could be contrasted and compared to those of women serving in the armed forces of France, Britain, and the United States. In doing so, I had hoped to find similarities and differences which could have helped analysis and evaluation. Regrettably, there was little historical or contemporary literature on these armed forces and their servicewomen readily accessible. France and Britain did issue an invitation to do research at their respective archives but this was not an economically feasible option. While considerable information about servicewomen in the American armed forces exists, most of this material deals with only a particular aspect of women's roles or cannot be directly compared either because of important differences in the definition of certain basic terms (e.g. combat, front-line) or because of fundamental differences between the ways Canadian and American armed forces are regulated by their respective government. For example, the justification for the exclusion of women from combat in the United States is a constitutional one, while in Canada, until 1989, women were excluded because the military had decided that they should be so excluded. For Canada, the combat issue for women was not a matter of law

but one of military policy. It will, therefore, have to be left to future researchers to conduct such a comparative study.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

It would be naive to believe that any research can be "objective" and "value free"³. The topic chosen, the questions posed, and the methodology used, are all reflections of one's interests, life experiences, educational background, and personal beliefs and values. Since these factors cannot be neutralized, one must at least make them apparent to the reader so that she/he can evaluate the findings of the study and assess its merits accordingly.

I have been a member of the CF for over 18 years and in many ways the institution has been like a parent to me. It has guided, educated and trained me, and has taken care of all my basic needs. I have enjoyed my career and I do intend to continue with the organization for some years to come. Having said that, I must also mention that I find the CF to be more like a benevolent father than like an enlightened institution working to advance the position of servicewomen. I was not consciously aware of that fact until I undertook the research necessary to write this thesis. At times, I was disappointed to uncover so many

documents written by my superior officers which were blatantly sexist and paternalistic in their assumptions about women's abilities and "proper" sphere of endeavour. However, research also demonstrated that changes have occurred and that many men and women have worked tirelessly to ensure equality of opportunity for all serving members of the CF.

Despite my affection for and strong sense of affiliation with the institution, this thesis is, on the whole, critical of the CF. However, I believe that criticism can be positive and constructive and my intent here is to point out the fallacy of certain assumptions held by some members of the CF, so that those assumptions can be re-evaluated and changed, and to bring to the forefront some of the existing problems so that they can be dealt with. Unlike Mary Odorico (1983), I do not believe that women are not wanted in the CF but I do believe that they are not wanted in some of its units and to me this is unacceptable.

Finally, the fact that I am a woman, a serving member of the CF, and a feminist means that I have a particular perspective on the subject and that specific concerns have guided my selection, interpretation, and evaluation of the data for this study. This, however, does not negate this thesis or any of its findings and conclusions. At the very least, this might be taken as a small corrective to the male

and the "civilian" perspectives that have traditionally dominated studies on the armed forces.

A NOTE ON HISTORY

In order to analyze changes in the status of Canadian women in general and of Canadian servicewomen in particular, over a fairly extensive time frame, it was imperative that some kind of historical background be established so that the reader could contextualize the data and information presented. Ideally, one would make some time-specific general statements intended to give a fairly accurate representation of epochal values, mores, and overall atmospheres. However, in reality, it is extremely difficult and perhaps even foolhardy to attempt to make such generalizations about eras and countries since the latter are made up of millions of individuals - each with her or his own abilities, aspirations, hopes and limitations - are organized through countless institutions such as governments, churches, schools and communities, and are inspired by different fears and beliefs. Moreover, valid, or at least plausible, generalizations are nearly impossible to advance because ideas, feelings and beliefs are rarely universal, even among a fairly homogeneous group: for any sexist, racist and classist attitudes held by any segment of a society, a contrary set of attitudes often exist amongst

other segments. Still, for all of their shortcomings and imperfections, general statements will have to be made in order that one may get some kind of feeling for the manner in which the status of women and servicewomen have generally evolved in Canada over the twentieth century. The pronouncements are not meant to represent all women's and all men's lives, experiences and beliefs: they are only the most fragile and most general threads to be found in the web of Canadian culture.

Finally, dividing history into centuries or even decades is rather an unsatisfactory way of looking at events and states of mind since beliefs and attitudes do not neatly germinate and die in any one year or decade. The reasons women earn less money than men in Canada in the 1990's or the reasons why the female gender is deemed to be the primary (often the only) caretaker and nurturer of children by many Canadians cannot be found by looking at any specific time period per se. Societal dictates, manners of organization, and gender constructions are the result of a nearly infinite number of different influences, some traceable to a specific times and geographical areas but most visible only as end results and without any clear indication of their genesis. The Canadian society of the 1990's is undoubtedly the result of thousands of years of evolution, of millions of individual and common beliefs, of

influences coming from every continent of the world, and of countless religious traditions, ideologies and beliefs about the roles of the state and the government. But, for the sake of brevity and order, time periods had to be arbitrarily chosen so as to provide some kind of framework for the task at hand.

A NOTE ON GENDER CONSTRUCTIONS

The Canadian Forces (CF) are, in some ways, a microcosm⁴ of Canadian society since they draw upon its every stratum for their membership. As such, the institution has embodied society's values, prejudices, goal of "good government, law, and order", definitions of appropriate sex roles, and beliefs about the essence of femininity and masculinity, prevalent in any particular time period. For the most part, it could be argued that the CF have, over the years, allowed women to perform roles sanctioned by society and have treated them according to an unwritten set of rules which dictated the amount women were to be paid, the benefits they were to receive, and the type of training and work they could undertake. This is an important realization because it contextualizes many of the scenarios and arguments presented in this paper: one cannot examine past decades using only modern values, mores, and knowledge.

Over the twentieth century, gender constructions⁵, mostly created and validated by males, have stated that women were subordinate to men, that they needed protection, that they were too emotional to lead business, the armed forces, or the country, and that their rightful place was in the home, away from the public eye and public recognition. Gender constructions explain, at least in part, why women have been largely marginalized in Canada, why they have not been officially allowed until 1989 to serve their country as warriors, and why historians have not generally documented their contributions to the growth and protection of this country.

A comprehensive discourse on gender constructions would undoubtedly provide most answers regarding women's status, or lack thereof, and invisibility. It might explain why and how men and women came to be perceived as inherently and nearly completely different beings, how those perceived differences came to mean that men were powerful and that women were subordinate, and how that power-gap became institutionalized and defined as God-given or natural. Such a discourse would have to include an examination of institutions such as the family, the economy, and the state, phenomena such as patriarchy and capitalism, and notions such as socialization, conditioning, and punishment for deviance from the norm. Such an exhaustive explanation,

however, is beyond the scope of this thesis. It is sufficient at this point that one be aware of the concept of gender construction, of its dynamic nature⁶, and of its inherent presuppositions and fallacies so that one can differentiate between assumptions and facts, between what women are "supposed" to do and what they can do, and between what women are imagined to be and what they really are. In our society, as in most others, gender has been used as a principle of social organization, not as a property of individual: as such it explains and proves nothing about women and their abilities or psychological make-up. One of the underlying goals of gender constructions has been to make women believe that things are the way they are because they have been so naturally ordained and because, in the end, the status quo is in women's best interest. The reader will recognize all of these assumptions in the arguments presented time and time again by the CF as legitimations for their discriminating employment policies and practices.

ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

In chapter 1, I will document the historical participation of women in the defence of the geographical space now called Canada over the last four centuries as a means of refuting the myth that women as a group have not

actively participated in the defence of "Canada". In addition, I will examine the historical trends in the employment of women, in and out of the military, over the twentieth century. More specifically, I will look at the parallel evolution of Canadian society's concept of the "proper sphere" for women and the changing roles of servicewomen in the CF from 1900 until 1970. I will briefly survey the status and roles of civilian and military women during the first four decades of this century with a special emphasis on the Great War years, and more completely examine women's participation in the defence of Canada during World War II, the subsequent disbandment of the women's units, and the limited re-enlistment of women in the 1950's and 1960's. Finally, I will demonstrate that the CF consistently viewed and used women only as a reserve army of labour.

In chapter 2, I will examine the expanding roles of servicewomen over the last twenty years. I will assess the impact on military women of the report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women (RCSW), of the 1978 Canadian Human Rights Act, and of the 1985 Parliamentary Committee on Equality Rights. I will use two concrete policy examples - the policy which allowed women into military colleges and the policies on the employment of servicewomen - to demonstrate that the CF used

manipulative techniques to forestall changes in the roles and status of servicewomen and that members of the organization were sometimes disingenuous when interpreting and reporting on female-positive data revealed by their trials and studies. Furthermore, I will demonstrate that the CF affected changes on these policies only when forced to by external forces.

In chapter 3, I will examine the debate surrounding the issue of women in combat and combat-support units up to its resolution by a Human Rights Tribunal's decision in February 1989. I will present the "reasons" and "proofs" put forth by the CF during the Human Rights hearing and I will show that those arguments were based primarily on fanciful and untested hypotheses and on unfounded and outmoded prejudices and concepts of womanhood.

In chapter 4, I will examine the assumption that the aforementioned Human Rights Tribunal's decision did in fact establish full equality between the serving women and men of the CF. I will look at the progress made by women in previously closed trades and occupations and attempt to determine whether or not the "full integration of women" ordered by the Tribunal has taken place. To establish whether or not unofficial barriers to full participation of women do exist in the CF, I will examine two reports submitted to the Minister of National Defence by the

Minister's Advisory Board instituted by order of a Human Rights Tribunal. Finally, I will show that the most significant barrier still faced by servicewomen is the negative attitude of some servicemen, an attitude which is demonstrated by a high incidence of harassment against Canadian servicewomen.

I will conclude the thesis by speculating about the changing Canadian workforce and about the consequences these changes might have for the Canadian Forces. I will make some recommendations which might help the CF deal with their current and future problems and I will suggest some areas in which further research could be undertaken. Finally, I hope that this work will be a stepping stone for further studies.

ENDNOTES

¹ The Canadian Forces are the armed forces of Her Majesty raised by Canada and now consist of one Service called the Canadian Armed Forces. Prior to unification (1966), the CF included the Royal Canadian Air Force, the Royal Canadian Army, and the Royal Canadian Navy.

² In this introduction, Canada is used to refer to this land prior to and after Confederation, that is the term is used to mean New France, British North America, Upper and Lower Canada and Canada.

³ For a good discussion on the "ineliminability of the subjective view" see chapter 6 of Colin McGinn. The Subjective View. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983, and for good definitions of "subjectivity" and "objectivity" see Roger Poole. Towards Deep Subjectivity. London: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1972. The gist of these books is that meaning and interpretation are inseparable and that the meaning attributed to any situation or data varies according to individual characteristics (including all previous experiences). Hence, it is argued that pure objectivity, that is observations detached from the mind, is not possible.

⁴ It would be erroneous to state that the CF are a perfect microcosm of Canadian society since the institution is made up of only people aged 16 to 55 years old and since 90% of its personnel is male. Still, I believe that the military is fairly representative of the values and beliefs of most Canadians of comparable ages.

⁵ Gender constructions predate the twentieth century: characteristics of femininity and masculinity have been dictated by society for centuries. Many good books are available on phenomena such as the evolution of separate spheres for men and women and the development of gender and sex-roles stereotyping. Suggested reading include Linda McDowell and Rosemary Pringle. eds. Defining Women: Social Institutions and Gender Divisions. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992; James A. Doyle, Sex and gender: The Human Experience. Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Publishers; 1985, and Joyce McCarl Nielsen, Sex in Society: Perspectives on Stratification. California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1978.

⁶ For example, before the Second World War, most women were deemed unsuitable for most jobs outside the home, with the brief exception of World War I. Ten years ago, a female as Provincial Premier or as the Prime Minister of Canada would have appeared incongruous and maybe even as an impossible abstraction to many men and women living in this country. Also, until only four years ago, women were thought unfit for combat duties. A long series of trials and hearings has changed that last perception for some people, at the very least for the women now enrolled in combat units, and today women as combatants are a fait accompli. I am not implying that the whole female gender has been totally reconstructed over the last century, I am only stating that the roles deemed appropriate for some women have greatly expanded since 1900 and are continually "under review".

Constructions of gender have altered for many reasons such as the continuous efforts of the women's movement, new legislation, the changing needs of the labour force, and crises such as wars and natural catastrophes. Some changes in definition have been totally internalized, such as the right of women to vote, while others have been brought about mostly for the convenience of the ruling gender and only for a limited amount of time. For example, during both World Wars, the need to use women's labour outside the home brought about a reconstruction of the identity of women. However, as Pierson (1986) pointed out in her analysis of women and World War II, this redefinition was short-lived and understood, at least by men, to be only for the duration of the war.

It is often the case that reconstructions of gender means reconstruction of "females" only. Again, Pierson remarked that the shift in sex/gender lines of demarcation during WWII "took place exclusively in the public sphere . . . Women could don military uniforms, but not even for the war emergency were husbands/fathers to don aprons." (Pierson, 1986:220). Social constructions of gender may be dynamic in the long term but they rarely alter rapidly or completely. Certain attributes (Passivity, nurturing) and roles (housekeeping and child care) have been steadily defined as female over the last century.

CHAPTER I

Canadian Women and War: A Long Tradition¹

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I will review the overall participation of women in the defence of the geographical space now called Canada and I will show that, prior to the twentieth century, women had resorted to armed combat to defend themselves, their families and their properties and that female nurses had been a part of military contingents both at home and overseas during armed crises. It is hoped that this preamble will firmly establish the fact that women were and are indeed suited to the rigor and demands of military life.

I will also examine the roles and status of females during the first two decades of this century, including the induction of the Canadian Nursing Service into the Canadian Army Medical Corps in 1901 and their participation in the First World War. I will demonstrate that the acceptance of nurses into the armed forces did not deviate from the prevalent concept of gender constructions since these women were simply allowed to "perform an essentially private sphere function within the public sphere." (Symons, 1991:479).

I will subsequently examine the period from 1920 to

the beginning of World War II in order to evaluate the gains, or lack thereof, made by women as a group after their significant contribution to the war effort and their acquisition of franchise. This first phase of the historical review is necessary in order to contextualize women's societal position at the onset of the Second World War.

In the second half of this chapter, I will deal with the formation of the women's corps in the early 1940s. I will demonstrate that the way women were recruited, employed and treated is a "perfect paradigm of the prejudices, preconceptions, and preoccupations which rise to the surface when there is any question of integrating women into some particular aspects of a man's world." (Marwick, 1977:85). Finally, I will show that, despite women's endless contributions during WW II, the great majority of service women were summarily demobilized at the end of the hostilities and basically told to go back home: their participation was no longer needed nor welcomed.

This pattern of letting women in only when there was a shortage of manpower² and of releasing them when conditions changed, was sustained for the twenty-five years following the resumption of peace. "The ebb and flow of women in uniform was determined [solely] by the increased or diminished requirements for manpower - last hired, first

fired." (Simpson et al., 1978:4).

In essence, this chapter will seek to provide answers to the following questions: why were women, with the exception of nurses, not directly involved in the military during the Great War even though their "traditional" skills as cooks, laundresses, etc., were certainly used extensively by the institution? Why were women called upon to serve in relatively large numbers during World War II and subsequently summarily dismissed in 1945? And, why were their employment opportunities in the CF and their numbers so severely restricted during the 1950s and 1960s?

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION PRIOR TO 1900

Contrary to popular belief and mythology, women as defenders of the land have a long history in this country.

As Chenier (1984) points out in Oracle:

War has always affected the lives of women. History shows that women in Canada have a long and active tradition of wartime participation. Women took up weapons to defend home and country, supplied male combatants with food, ammunition, and moral support, and cared for the wounded. (1984:1).

Indeed women have borne arms and have defended their families and land from countless invaders and threats for centuries.

The myth of women as defenseless beings has been fueled by the fact that, on the whole, their exploits and

achievements have been overlooked by historians. "For the most part throughout our history, women were nameless and faceless wartime participants." (Chenier, 1984:2). Still, enough tangible proof remains so that the premise that today servicewomen are but a part of a long tradition of females dedicated to the preservation of this country's territorial integrity and of its values and institutions, can be sustained.

The first women to defend this land were the Native women.

Early travellers and settlers in Canada observed and recorded the direct involvement of Indian women in warfare. John Rowand, master of Fort Edmonton, in a letter to a friend, relates the story of his son's encounter with an Indian warrior called "Queen of the Plains". She was at the head of a war party of 1,000 men and 200 women from an unidentified tribe. (Chenier, 1984:2).

Other pioneer accounts also indicated that women from a diversity of cultural and ethnic backgrounds fought as warriors: "There is . . . evidence of Iroquois women . . . engaging in warfare along with their men." (Prentice *et al.*, 1988:32).

Immigrant women who heard the promise of a new life and who came to settle the land in the seventeenth century "were often called upon during enemy attacks." (Chenier, 1984:2). These women "occasionally found that the fur trade or the war or both had arrived on their very doorsteps." (Prentice

et al., 1988:50). At such times, circumstances required them to become leaders and combatants during armed conflicts.

One such leader was Marie Jacquelin de la Tour who, in 1645, took charge of the defence of Fort La Tour. She was defeated and forced to witness the execution of the fort's men after its capture. In 1692, Madeleine de Verchères, at the age of fourteen, assumed command of the fort in which she lived and successfully defended it against Iroquois attack. Madeleine's mother had defended the same fort two years earlier. Prentice et al. note that "although not all came to grief in such a traumatic way, most seventeenth century women of New France probably experienced warfare at first hand." (1988:50).

Little has been written about women defending this land in the eighteenth century. At the very least, one can surmise that they contributed to New France/British North America's expansion and security by feeding and clothing the soldiers, by running their households and businesses single-handed so that men could fight, and by caring for the wounded. It is probable, however, that their duties also included the armed defence of their homesteads and communities.

Some women were more directly involved in armed conflicts during the nineteenth century. The War of 1812 saw the concrete and direct contribution of females to the war

effort.

Many of the battles during the War of 1812 were fought virtually on the doorsteps of people's homes. These circumstances led some women to take up arms against the invaders in order to protect themselves and their property. Other women who accompanied their soldier husbands fought alongside them as the battle was waged. (Chenier, 1984:2).

A heroine of that war was Laura Secord who, having overheard U.S. soldiers discussing an attack on Beaver Dams, walked 32 kilometres through enemy lines, dangerous woods, and swamps to warn Lieutenant James FitzGibbon of the plan. (Prentice et al., 1988:101). Because of her courage and determination the entire American detachment made up of 400 men was captured. Her bravery was not, however, rewarded by any medal, reward, or commendation.

The Rebellion of 1837 in Lower Canada saw the birth of the "Association des dames patriotiques du comté des Deux-Montagnes." These Quebecois women organized against the oppression of Britain: they started a campaign to boycott the goods of British merchants, "made flags, manufactured armaments, lent their homes for meetings, and even carried arms." (Prentice et al., 1988:101). After the fighting ended, they worked to assist the prisoners and to win better treatment for them.

The following years were a period of fundamental changes and adaptation as British North America started to

develop economically and politically. Factories began to take over household production as industrialization and urbanization spread out from Europe to Canada. It was also primarily a peaceful time with the exception of the Northwest Rebellion of 1885.

The Northwest Rebellion saw women engaging in combat and combat-related activities, on both sides of the conflict. While I could not locate any specific information regarding Native women's involvement in the Rebellion per se, in light of earlier wars and contributions, it is plausible that they were actively involved in one capacity or another during the upheaval. At the very least, they took care of their communities while the men fought. It is probable, however, that they were directly involved in some of the fighting, in plan making, in arms manufacturing, and in caring for the wounded.

The records are somewhat clearer about the participation of white women. For the first time in Canadian history, women were officially recognized as part of the military force. Twelve²¹ military nurses were dispatched alongside the soldiers to care for the wounded. The women had volunteered for the assignment and their contributions were highly praised by the commanding officer in charge of the military operation. He wrote that:

. . . the ladies of Canada who have been so

worthily represented by the party of nursing sisters who are now returning at the conclusion of their self-imposed duty have given all practical evidence of their willingness to share the privations and possibly the dangers inseparable from hospital work on active service. (Nicholson, 1975:27).

The Nursing Sisters, as the nurses were called¹, were awarded the campaign medal "North West Canada, 1885" and subsequently released from active duties.

Three years later, four nurses were part of a military contingent sent to keep peace and order in the Yukon. They took care of military and civilian personnel alike. These nurses were not members of the armed forces: they had no rank or commission, they received no medal, and the army neither paid nor equipped them (Nicholson, 1975:32). However, they did serve faithfully at the side of Canada's soldiers and their efforts made it possible for these soldiers to carry on their assigned tasks. There is no doubt that their work contributed to the welfare of the army personnel and, by association, to Canada's.

At the outbreak of the Boer war, Canadian men and nurses were asked to volunteer to go fight for the Empire. When the first group sailed off on October 30, 1899, four nurses accompanied the men to the war zone (Nicholson, 1975:33-24). These Nursing Sisters had the distinction of being the first Canadian women to serve overseas. Even though the nurses

were designated as non-combatants, they experienced the same horror, bloodshed, and front-line terror as combat soldiers. For the duration of that war, the women were, in fact, part of the armed forces. They were issued a khaki uniform, commissioned to the rank of Lieutenant, and received the pay and allowances of that rank (Nicholson, 1975:38). By the time the war ended, at least in the minds of Western authorities, eight women had served in South Africa. They had endured countless hardships: unsanitary living conditions, lack of food and heat, long hours on duty, numerous transfers, and the stress inherent to that kind of environment. None died or was wounded but one contracted enteric fever and dysentery and had to be sent home (Nicholson, 1975:39).

The professionalism of these women convinced Canadian authorities of the need to create a military nursing service. On August 1, 1901, the Canadian Nursing Service became an integral part of the Army Medical Corps (Nicholson, 1975:41). The creation of the Nursing Service was endorsed by the commander of the Canadian Militia, Major-General R.H. O'Grady Haly. Praising the service rendered by the first two groups of Nursing Sisters, who had done "work no less creditable than the troops whom they went out to nurse," he agreed that cadres of a nursing service should be inaugurated with Canada's military forces, "and

positions therein offered to these Nursing Sisters." (Nicholson, 1975:41). Nurses have been a continuous part of the Canadian Forces since they first served their country in 1885.

Nurses were allowed into the Canadian military long before any other female was admitted to other roles because their profession did not challenge the prevalent sexual division of labour. Nurturing was considered their exclusive domain: women were supposed to be the mothers and the nurses of the world. Being a military nurse, therefore, allowed a woman to fulfill her "natural" destiny without calling into question prevalent stereotypes and gender definitions. "Nursing does not expand the nature of women's social participation: it merely permits women to perform an essentially private sphere function within the public sphere." (Symons, 1991:479).

Moreover, while nurses held the commission and the pay of officers, their real influence was restricted to the walls of hospitals. They did not give orders to male soldiers beyond the motherly advice of eating and sleeping; they did not participate in decision-making beyond deciding where to keep the bandages or how best to clean the operating rooms; and, more importantly, nurses remained subordinated to military doctors who were, without exception, male. Thus nurses were allowed in the military

because they performed a very traditional role and presented no threat to conventional gender constructions, to military ideology or to "manhood". Moreover, the effect of granting military rank to these women was minimal and was only felt during times of war. In peacetime, their numbers and influence was small and their work routine. Indeed, at the outbreak of World War Two, there was only one matron and four nursing sisters on active duty (Odorico, 1983:15-16).

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION 1900-1920

As previously proposed, it is difficult to make any generalizations about Canadian women's status and roles during any particular era. Regional disparity, class differences, race, ethnicity, religious affiliation, and the rural/urban division existing during the first two decades of the twentieth century meant that women had different concerns, hopes, opportunities, alternatives, and life-styles. Nevertheless, it is also true that, up to a point, "gender cut across regional, class, and ethnic divisions, for women participated fully in the economic transformation of Canada in all regions and in all groups." (Prentice et al., 1988:108). Therefore, some general statements about the "feminine condition" of that period may be tentatively formulated.

During those early decades, women's lives were marked

by both continuity and change. Most women were still getting married, having children, maintaining households and finding ingenious ways to make money from their homes, but some also found paid work outside the home, in manufacturing enterprises and in fields such as teaching, nursing, and clerical work (Prentice et al., 1988:113). However, if industrialization opened new doors to women, it also accentuated the division between paid and unpaid work, between the public and the private domain, and between the proper spheres for men and women, so that, as women started to find outside paid work, other than as domestic workers, "an increasing acceptance of the idea that it was the husband's responsibility to bring home a 'family wage'" (Prentice et al., 1988:121) started to emerge and solidify. "Workers believed that if a family wage was paid to men, women would not need to seek paid employment. They could remain in their proper sphere - the home." (Prentice et al., 1988:138).

If for the "respectable" working-class family, it became a sign of status that the "wife did not have to go to work, but that she kept a tidy house and turned out decently dressed children," (Marwick, 1977:16) the reality for most families was that the income earned by men was usually insufficient and that women's wages were "often crucial for the continuing well-being of the family" (Prentice et al.,

1988:121). This chasm between reality and ideal created tension in society as a whole and in women's lives in particular. To be a good mother and wife, they were supposed to stay home and create a haven for their husband and a moral and educational refuge for their children; however, circumstances were such that many women had no choice but to seek paid employment.

Women's entry in the workforce created great ambivalence and some resentment on the part of men. Many of them were intimately aware of the need for women to work while others feared that women were competitors for their jobs and that they caused wages to be low (Prentice et al., 1988:137). This debate was put aside for a time with the outbreak of World War I when "the recruitment of thousands of young men into the armed forces resulted in serious labour shortages." (Prentice et al., 1988:139). At that time, rural women were called upon to assume a more substantial part of farm work and urban females moved into the labour market in large numbers. They found work in war industries and in milieux which had traditionally been the preserve of men such as the steel and cement industries and certain clerical positions. What the Great War did for women, besides finally giving them the vote, was to establish the propriety of working for wages before marriage (Prentice et al., 1988:140).

The Canadian Forces also recognized the potential for women's work but not as full-fledged military members. Following the precedent established by the Boer War, the only women they accepted within their ranks were nurses (Prentice et al., 1988:141). The Military Nursing Sisters served in England, France, Russia, Egypt, Greece and Canada. They performed their duties in cities, on battlegrounds, and on ship hospitals. They died, were wounded, got sick, became prisoners of war, and earned awards, decorations, and citations.

During the First World War, 3141 nursing sisters wore the badge of the Canadian Army Medical Corps, 2504 of these in the Overseas Military Forces of Canada. There were forty-six who gave their lives while serving. Six were killed or mortally wounded on land; fifteen met death from enemy action at sea. Eighteen died of disease while serving overseas, and seven more in Canada. (Nicholson, 1975:98).

The Nursing Sisters dealt with an uncomfortable array of hardships: fleas, rats, lice, flies, and mosquitoes, weather that was either too cold or too hot, unceasing rainfalls, lack of food, and water, unsanitary conditions, long hours, bombing and shelling, and high noise levels. They nursed all kinds of wounds, physical and psychological, witnessed countless amputations - some brought about by frostbite and gangrene - and dealt with many life-threatening diseases such as dysentery, influenza,

meningitis, and pneumonia. The nurses served well, both at home and overseas: they made a praiseworthy contribution to the cause of humanity, and proved that women were not the frail, weak, and hysterical creatures they were believed to be. By the end of the war, 328 nurses had been decorated by George V; 50 had received foreign decorations; and, 169 had been mentioned in dispatches (Gossage, 1991:18). Their efforts paved the way for future Canadian women who would choose to serve their country by enrolling in the Armed Forces.

Other women were employed by the CF but not as servicewomen. Documentation on their contribution is rather sparse, however, and the main source of information on these "civilian" soldiers were historical documents held by DND Directorate of history. A report entitled Employment of Women with the Canadian Forces in the Great War 1914-1918 states that "in the Great War, 1914-1918, women were employed in various capacities with the Canadian Forces, fulfilling duties that released a number of men for other work." (DND, Employment of Women, undated:1). The Canadian and British women employed full-time by the armed forces and paid by the Canadian government were used as drivers, clerks, stenographers, cooks, storekeepers, nurses, nurses aides, batwomen, and laundresses (DND, Employment of Women, undated:1-2).

"Ordinary" Canadian women also learned to economize and recycle, bought victory bonds to finance the war, took over the complete running of their households and of their businesses, knitted socks, made bandages, sent care packages to the soldiers, and manufactured war equipment and ammunitions. "Spurred on by personal economic need as well as patriotic fervour, thousands of women entered the paid workforce, filling jobs vacated by enlisted men." (Prentice et al., 1988:204).

Furthermore, they directly supported the soldiers by offering their houses as hospitals, by establishing "Maple Leaf Clubs" for servicemen on leave, and by providing financial help and advice to families of enlisted men. They also assisted in recruitment efforts, badgering men who did not enlist. As well, they responded to national emergencies such as the devastating Halifax explosion (Prentice et al., 1988:204-206). Women took on a double-shift burden: they did their work and that of the men (at reduced wages) and the country ran as smoothly as could be expected during those turbulent times. Finally, many women went overseas as volunteers in the Canadian Red Cross, the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire (IODE), and the St-John Ambulance (Gossage, 1991:19). There, they provided support and comfort to Canadian and Allied soldiers.

The full participation of Canadian civilian women during the Great War was very extensive and cannot be dealt with thoroughly in this thesis. These brief paragraphs on their contributions, however, should be sufficient to demonstrate that the war had galvanized women in some very significant ways. It had let them "out of the cage" and given them a taste of financial independence and freedom of movement. It had allowed them to "prove" themselves once more, prove that they could carry on without the men, prove that they could do for their country what they had been doing for their families for years: manage it, feed it, protect it, and participate in its defence, prosperity and growth.

Women's wartime contribution, both within and outside of the military, was one of the principal arguments used to justify (in men's eyes) the granting of the federal franchise to the majority of females in Canada in May 1918 (Prentice et al., 1988:213). It has often been said that Canada became a nation of its own right during the Great War; the same could be said of women. Many, for the first time, realized that there was more to life and to the world than their individual households, and they found a new, strong sense of self-worth and self-confidence. For them, life would never be the same again, not so much because their roles in society had changed - for the most part

they had not - but because of what they had learned about themselves and their true worth. As well, many would pass on their vision of women's rights and abilities to their daughters.

One further point needs to be made about women's participation and contribution to the Great War, namely that it would be erroneous to suggest that all Canadian women felt the same way about the event. While a majority of women were, if not pro-war, at least desirous to do what they perceived to be their duty as citizens to support the government and the soldiers, others strongly and vocally expressed their belief that war and violence were antithetical to the feminist ideology. Flora MacDonald Denison and Nellie McClung were among the prominent woman reformers to publicly condemn all forms of war. In 1915, McClung wrote:

But although men like to fight, war is not inevitable. War is not of God's making. War is a crime committed by men and, therefore, when enough people say it shall not be, it cannot be. This will not happen until women are allowed to say what they think of war. Up to the present time women have had nothing to say about war, except pay the price of war - this privilege has been theirs always. (Prentice et al., 1988:206-207).

The issue was not simple, however, and even these two women found themselves torn between their personal consciences and the reality of their lives and times: both

had beloved sons serving with the military. In the end, both women came to support the Allied cause. Only a few women were able to maintain their pacifist position for the duration but they found themselves increasingly isolated (Prentice et al., 1988:207).

Interestingly, it appears that most women did not attempt to enrol in the Canadian forces or in paramilitary groups during the Great War. A DND document does mention the fact that some unofficial women's groups such as the Winnipeg Women's Volunteer Reserve and the Canadian Women's Emergency Corps No. 1 (Montreal) were associated with the Forces but it does not expand on their functions or membership. I also located a book entitled Ontario and the First World War 1914-1918 which states that some Ontarian women "were determined to play a more active and masculine role in the defence of their country" (1977:lxxxvi) but it does appear that the groups they formed were short-lived. It is possible that other cities and women attempted to organize paramilitary units but documentation on the subject is either incomplete or non-existent. In any case, it does not appear that the desire to join the military or like-minded groups was strong amongst women at that time, at least not as strong as it would be at the onset of World War II.

This lack of interest is not really that surprising if

one considers the following. First of all, in 1914 women were only just beginning to have some kind of a public voice and some minimal acceptance for their roles as workers outside the home. The ideology of women as nurturers, as dependent beings, and as members of the weak gender in need of protection was very strong in Canada as in the rest of the Western world. This ideology was a powerful influence on both women and men. The concept of women in uniform may well have appeared preposterous to most males and many females. One must also remember that women at that time were not considered fit to vote or even recognized as "persons". Given those facts, it is hardly surprising that neither women nor men seriously considered the military as a possible career for women. Secondly, it is plausible that most women did not perceive themselves as directly needed by the institution or even as able to provide direct military services. Finally, the First World War was the first major war in which Canada participated. No one could have guessed that it was going to last so long and be so deadly. In 1914, the general feeling was that the "boys" would be home for Christmas. In people's mind there should have been no need for all men to go to war and no need for any women, except nurses, to volunteer.

Surprisingly though, it seems that the Canadian authorities did consider the possibility of enlisting women

in capacities other than nurses. A DND document entitled, Employment of Women with the Canadian Forces in the Great War, 1914-1918, states that: "The formation in Canada of a Corps based on the lines of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, Imperial Army, was discussed by Militia Council on 30 May, 1918." (DND, Employment of Women, undated:4). The question was referred to a sub-committee which presented its report at a Militia Council meeting held on 11 September 1918. The report recommended that a women's corps be organized and named the Canadian Women's Corps. It was to recruit women to work in sex-typed occupations such as typists, clerks, accountants, cooks, waitresses, housemaids, laundresses, drivers, packers, issuers, messengers, switchboard operators and postal clerks (DND, Employment of Women, undated:4). The Militia Council decided to hold the matter in abeyance pending further consideration. A week later, the group arrived at the following decision:

The principle of the formation of a Canadian Women's Army Auxiliary Corps was approved, and the Honourable the Minister stated that he would take this question up with the Right Hon. the Prime Minister, and would also discuss it with the Honourable Dr. Roche, the Chairman of the Civil Service Commission. (DND, Employment of Women, undated:6).

A note at the bottom of the report states that the decision was confirmed on 25 September 1918, "following which there

is no further record of any action being taken." (DND, Employment of Women, undated:6).

In all fairness, it is possible that no follow-up actions were ever taken because the probability of peace appeared high at that time. Nevertheless, one has to wonder about whether or not any discussions ever really ensued after the September 18 meeting and about the tone of the discussions if they did take place. Given the resistance to the idea of servicewomen expressed by the Canadian authorities in 1940, it is difficult to imagine that the formation of a women's corps in 1918 could have met with approval.

At the end of the war, most military nurses were demobilized and the majority of civilian women left the labour force so that veterans could return to their jobs.

Many of the trends in women's employment were reversed at war's end. Women were treated essentially as a "reserve army of labour". When there were labour shortages, women were pulled into the workforce, including into jobs from which they had been traditionally excluded. But when the special need was over, the traditional gender division of work roles was re-established. (Prentice et al., 1988:141).

The war had given women the vote but little else in terms of real emancipation or equality of opportunities.

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION 1920-1940

The 1920s were years fraught with ambiguity and contradiction. Many Canadians clung to traditional values and institutions while they became increasingly conscious that the past was irretrievable. As far as women were concerned, there was much ambivalence of beliefs and assumptions about their proper roles and their "inherent" nature. "Almost everyone still assumed that femininity, innocence and passivity were the true characteristics of women, and that sexual differences determined and defined political and economic roles." (Vipond, 1977:117). Incredibly, perhaps, the war experience had not significantly altered these sexist assumptions.

Since, according to William Henry Chafe's study, The American Woman, "the image of women does not shift until the reality of their lives does" (as cited in Vipond, 1977:116), it is significant to look at the way women were portrayed in the mass circulation magazines of the 1920's. According to Vipond:

The image of women as feminine, ladylike, and maternal continued to thrive. Women were . . . delicate creatures who were morally superior to men, purer and more noble. They were also more excitable, highly-strung, liable to hysteria and attack of "nerves", temperamental, irrational, conservative, more primitive and more ruled by instinct than men. They preferred to be protected and cared for by men; "primarily" they were "mothers of men". (1977:122).

In fact, the image of femininity and the proper sphere of women was not changed in any significant manner by the right to vote and by the entrance of women into the labour force, and World War I had not had the "broad effect on the reality of women's lives for which it has sometimes been given credit." (Vipond, 1977:116). As Condell and Liddiard note:

Having achieved in wartime a new and more public relationship with the state, with society, and with men, women in peacetime found that the urgency had gone, and they were now being pushed back into the private sphere. War after all was seen as an abnormal and temporary state, the women's role in it was viewed in the same light. (1987:157).

While it is true that opportunities for education and outside employment for women were greater in the years following the Allied victory, these new alternatives were tempered by the fact that they "continued to be concentrated in traditionally female occupations and by the reality that marriage remained the career of most women." (Vipond, 1977:116). Moreover, the rationale for these new opportunities was not that they would lead to equality or to the betterment of the lives of women but rather that education and pre-marriage employment would make women more efficient home-makers, more companionable wives, and better balanced mothers (Vipond, 1977:118 and Prentice *et al.*, 1988: 254).

The War, then, had not fundamentally altered society's

beliefs about the proper roles and spheres for women. "Most Canadians remained convinced that women's primary place was in the home," and that, after the war was over, married females, at least, should have cheerfully surrendered their newly acquired positions in the workforce. (Prentice et al., 1988:218). Young single women were urged to "seek 'feminine' areas of employment where they would not threaten the position of male workers." (Prentice et al., 1988:218). It was understood that these women should work only for a few years until they married and fulfilled their destinies as mothers.

Those women for whom gainful employment was considered acceptable were ghettoized into domestic service, the textile, clothing and food industries, clerical work, teaching and nursing. The common denominators for these jobs were low pay, poor working conditions and very limited opportunities for growth and promotion. The rationalization at that time was that it was a waste of time and money to train women for responsible positions since they would inevitably get married, have children and leave the workforce (Prentice et al., 1988:225).

The expanding economy of the mid- to late-twenties had made the "family wage" a reality for some men. This, in turn, had increased the criticism directed at married women in the workforce. Their labour force participation was

seen as unnecessary and ill-advised (Prentice et al., 1988:214). This feeling grew even stronger after the New York Stock Market collapsed in October of 1929 and plunged Canada, along with the rest of the Western world, into a deep recession which would last until the outbreak of World War II.

As the crisis grew and the national unemployment rate mounted to almost one-third of all workers, resentment against wage-earning women increased. The deep-seated prejudice against married women working outside the home intensified, and the appropriateness even of single women working for wages, widely conceded during the 1920's, was now called into question. (Prentice et al., 1988:234).

In sum, then, from the industrial revolution to the onset of World War II, woman's status remained largely unchanged: a woman's sphere was her home, her career was motherhood and wifehood, and her nature was to be pure but weak, nurturing but in need of protection, and loving but irrational. The First World War and the Depression had done little to alter her economic, political and social reality.

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION DURING WORLD WAR II

The history of servicewomen, with the exception of military nurses, actually starts with the beginning of World War II. At that time, many women organized into paramilitary groups and demanded the right to serve in the Canadian Armed Forces. They were determined to play a more

direct and active role in the defence of Canada and Europe than they had during "the war to end all wars". They wanted the privilege and responsibility afforded citizens to fight for their country and their beliefs.

As early as 1938, groups of women had begun to make preparations in the event of hostilities. In October 1938, some women from British Columbia formed the Victoria B.C. Ancillary Corps. One of the original members recalled that: "There was much enthusiastic marching about and drill in the big armouries . . . It was obvious to all of us that there was going to be a war and we jolly well better start preparing for it - women as well as men!" (Gossage, 1991:22).

Throughout the rest of 1938 and until the war was formally declared in September 1939, similar groups sprang up in British Columbia. The women who enrolled in the different corps received instruction in military drill, in map reading and in telegraphy, engaged in physical training, and learned skills such as driving, motor vehicle maintenance, first aid, home nursing, and office administration. "A few corps even offered rifle practice and squad drill with arms." (Pierson, 1982:182). These organizations were self-supporting and they outfitted themselves. Most wore some kind of recognizable uniforms and their leaders took on military ranks. "Obviously such

women were attracted by the mystique of the military and regarded much of its regimentation, structure, trappings and tasks as not incompatible with their womanhood." (Pierson, 1982:182).

Representatives from these organizations were sent to Ottawa in September 1939 to obtain official acknowledgment of their Corps as army auxiliaries. Their request was denied without explanation (Gossage, 1991:23-24). However, the women remained undeterred and continued to organize and petition the government for recognition. "The campaign for official recognition reached its peak with a nation-wide tour to assess the strength of the women's paramilitary movement carried out by two leaders of the B.C. Women's Service Corps." (Pierson, 1982:183). The women then presented a brief to Ottawa "outlining the extent of Canadian women's preparedness." (Pierson, 1982:183). Women also continued to organize and by July 1941, they had formed between eighty to ninety such groups across Canada, involving some 17,000 members (Gossage, 1991:24).

The women literally mounted an "attack" on Ottawa, and "bombaraded" politicians with letters, briefs, telegrams, phone calls, and personal visits: they effectively put Ottawa under siege (Gossage, 1991:25). It was a long drawn-out battle for the recognition of their right to serve but the "onslaught" had a positive effect. It forced

Canadian authorities to begin considering the possibility of employing women other than nurses in the Armed Forces. This eventuality was not readily accepted in military circles. The position of the army "brass" was "thanks but no thanks" for the moment but "should the situation overseas alter drastically, the idea might - possibly - be reconsidered." (Gossage, 1991:25). However, women's demands started to sway some members of Parliament. C.L. Church, MP for Broadview, "strongly supported the idea of women in a more active role" (Gossage, 1991:27) as did MP John Diefenbaker. The MP's requests for action on the "women's question" were not immediately successful but they helped make the idea more palatable to the people at Canadian Military Headquarters (CMHQ).

As I have already stated, this type of demand from women was relatively new. No such major campaign for the inclusion of females in the military had been mounted during World War I. Many factors probably prompted women to offer their services to the Armed Forces in 1938. First, Canada had just been through a devastating depression and the military represented paid employment. Second, Canadians had learned how deadly a long drawn out world war could be. It is probable that some women felt that by helping their country fight the war, they might be in a position to shorten its duration. Third, a generation of children had

grown up listening to "war stories" from relatives who had served in World War I. My own father is a veteran of the Korean war and I know the type of stories these young people might have been subjected to. If their experiences were comparable to mine, then they heard primarily about the romance and the adventure of war. It is plausible that these new potential recruits wanted to be participants in an event which had been glorified and rendered heroic. Fourth, the war promised a change from the drudgery and bleakness which had characterized the Depression years. Fifth, some women had probably wanted to remain in close physical proximity to their fathers, brothers, husbands, and boyfriends and the military offered this remote possibility. There can be no doubt, however, that some women were moved to join the military out of deeply felt patriotism. Finally, it could have been the case that women wanted a voice, a say in the manner in which Canada would wage war.

Regardless of the reasons why women wanted to enroll, in the end, it was not their determination and motivation which allowed them to gain entry into the military. As Pierson stated, had women's demands "not coincided with the developing manpower shortages in the armed forces, it is doubtful whether women's services would have ever been formed." (1986:13).

It certainly was not the case that women were kept out of the military because the Armed Forces honestly believed that they could not use their skills and labour.

By the summer of 1940 the question of the Army being able to use female labour had become almost academic. Authorities in Military District No. 11 had been using female voluntary labour since September, 1939 The Canadian Army had also been using paid female labour. At National Defence Headquarters and District Headquarters a considerable number of civilian women were employed as clerks, typists and stenographers. (Odorico, 1983: 19).

Women were signed on to free men to fight when it became obvious to some (not all) men in government and in the military that the only way to get more soldiers into combat was to replace non-combatant males by females. Women were also enlisted because having them wear a uniform came to be viewed as an expedient and as a cost-cutting measure by CF. Women's military status meant that female labour was more completely at the disposal of the Forces and that overtime simply became duty and no longer required additional wages. "Greater control was the main advantage the Army stood to gain from enrolling women." (Pierson, 1986:101). Faced with these two considerable benefits to be gained by admitting women, the Armed Forces relented on their original decision to keep women out and in 1941, the government resolved to enrol women volunteers for full-time military service. "Zero hour", as one senior Royal

Canadian Air Force (RCAF) officer called the induction of women into the forces, had arrived (Gossage, 1991:31).

In July 1941, the Royal Canadian Air Force Women's Division received official sanction through the Order-in-Council (P.C. #4798) and the Army received its sanction on August 13, 1941 (P.C. #6289). The Navy moved more slowly, preferring "to observe the experience from the bridge for a while." (Gossage, 1991:35) Finally, Parliament approved the formation of the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service (WRCNS or Wrens) on July 31, 1942 (P.C. #56-6775). Thus by mid 1942, women were serving in all three branches of the Armed Forces (Gossage, 1991:35). As Pierson (1982) points out: "The decision to create women's corps entailed more of an abandonment of the male exclusiveness of the military services than the presence of nursing sisters had. The step was taken gradually and not without reluctance." (Pierson, 1982:183).

The Air Force was the first branch of the CF to open its door to women and its women's corps was made an integral part of the Service from the beginning, despite its original designation as the Canadian Women's Auxiliary Air Force (CWAAF). This name was changed to the Royal Canadian Air Force, Women's Division (RCAF)(WD) in February 1942 (Pierson, 1982:183).

Initially the Canadian Women's Army Corps (CWAC) was

set up as a separate entity, operating as an auxiliary rather than as an integral part of the Army. The implications of this decision for Army women were numerous. "So long as the CWAC was not legally military, its officers could not be commissioned and their titles and badges of rank had to be different from those authorized for military use." (Pierson, 1982:184). Army women were originally marginalized and kept on the periphery. It soon became apparent, however, that the supplementary status of the CWAC created more problems than it resolved and was administratively cumbersome; nevertheless, "the Major-General in the office of Adjutant-General was committed to preserving the male exclusiveness of the military." (Pierson, 1982:184). Fortunately for the females who had enrolled and who would enroll in the Army, his replacement "in February 1942 by a man more flexible on that question smoothed the way to incorporating the C.W.A.C. within the Canadian Army." (Pierson, 1982:184). Finally, on 13 March 1942, a new order-in-council abolished the separate status of the CWAC and they became an integral part of the Defence Forces of Canada (Pierson, 1982:184). The Army demonstrated less willingness and more reluctance to the formation of an Army Women's corps than the other two branches of the CF. It will be shown later that this attitude is still very prevalent in the 1990s.

The Navy waited a full year longer than the Air Force to establish its women's service. Nevertheless, having learned from the experiences of its counterparts, it ensured that the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service (WRCNS, but given the acronym WRENS) were officially recognized as part of the Navy from the beginning (Gossage, 1991:37). It appears, however, that this decision on the part of Navy authorities was more of an administrative one, at least in the beginning, than one borne out of any recognition of equal status for women. As Pierson (1982) notes: "Although the W.R.C.N.S. was not an auxiliary service it tended at the beginning to remain a separate organization . . . Only by degrees were . . . misgivings dissipated and the Wrens absorbed into the general scheme of things." (1982:184). Throughout the war, the Navy remained the smallest and most selective of the three women's services.

Once the decision had been made to enlist women, recruiting began in earnest. Each branch of the military was anxious to attract "quality" women. Recruiting posters appealed to women's patriotism, urging them to enrol so that men might fly or fight (Gossage, 1991:39). Thousands of women answered the call.

While recruitment drives were often successful, enrolling was not always a problem-free proposition. The most obvious hurdle some young women had to surmount was

the disapproval they encountered from society in general, from the men already serving, and from their families. To counteract this disapproval from parents and society, the CF made a point of stressing the femininity of servicewomen. The public was reminded that military women were always women first, workers second, and never soldiers. "The term 'soldier(s)' was . . . reserved for male other ranks . . ." (Pierson, 1982:195). Recruiting campaigns' pitches emphasized that "servicewomen were not called upon to do anything un-womanly" (Pierson, 1982:187) and that it was not the case that women were doing men's work but rather that servicemen, prior to enlistment of women, had had to do "women's work" (Pierson, 1982:187). This emphasis was used to make the idea of women in uniform acceptable to society and to achieve "a speedy return of women to the status of private woman, female nurturer and protected after the war." (Holder, 1988:69). The exceptional enrolment of females was orchestrated so as to maintain the two major pillars of male dominance: a division of labour based on sex and the public man/private woman split.

As the war progressed, servicewomen also had to deal with malicious gossip and with a "whispering campaign" which portrayed them as "camp followers" and as women of loose morals. Pierson's research clearly demonstrates the fallacy of such rumors⁴. The Armed Forces, to their credit,

took immediate and "swift disciplinary action against any servicemen found guilty of spreading rumors defaming women in uniform." (Pierson, 1982:194). The Wartime Information Board explains the imputation of immorality historically:

Sexual respectability was "woman's vulnerable point, the traditional focus of attack by those who resent any extension of her prerogatives." Wearing a uniform, marching, standing at attention and saluting were all traditionally masculine behaviour. The woman who behaved so appeared unconventional, "unwomanly", and it was thus easy to assume that she would have broken with moral convention as well. (as quoted in Pierson, 1982: 193).

Marwick (1977) arrived at the same conclusion in his book, Women at War, where he reports that this type of rumors had been spread by British soldiers about British servicewomen during World War I. He writes that letters home from the soldiers had been a source of negative rumors about the morality of women serving in the military. He imputes those rumors to "the unworthy jealousy of men dislodged from non-combatant tasks." (1977:127). Despite objections and rumors, thousands of Canadian women, spurred on by the desire to be a part of the action, by a spirit of adventure or one of patriotism, and sometimes by the opportunity to get away from home, joined the CF and served their country.

Since the sole purpose of uniformed women personnel was to release men for combat duties, as the war progressed and as the pool of available personnel diminished, the scope of

employment for women was broadened to include a large portion of military tasks, including those of a technical nature.

By the war's end the list of trade training possibilities for service women had expanded almost beyond belief from the original eight or nine categories to well over fifty trades and occupations. As well, the rates of pay had been readjusted to equal that of a man performing a similar function. (Gossage, 1991:87).

It is important, however, to contextualize this last quotation. First, most women remained segregated in communication, administrative, logistic and medical fields. "By and large, the overwhelming majority of uniformed women employed by the Army, Air Force or Navy, were assigned to jobs which has already become female niches in the civilian labour market or were extensions of mothering or housework." (Pierson, 1982:188). It was only a small minority of enlisted women who were trained in the more technical trades⁵. Second, this expansion of roles was directly related to the need to free more men for combat and did not reflect any desire on the part of this institution to offer new career alternatives or greater equality to women. It should be noted, however, that "it remained as much the exception to the rule for a servicewoman to desire a non-traditional job as for the Services to assign her to one." (Pierson, 1982:189). This confirms the fact that

gender constructions affect women and their self-definition nearly as much as they affect men's perception of women's abilities. It usually takes time, encouragement and role models before a substantial number of women perceives a new field as a viable alternative. In fact, National Defence was "acting in harmony with social convention and conviction," and the conventional wisdom of the time decried that "men were by nature suited to dangerous, life-risking jobs while women were naturally adapted to monotony and behind-the-scenes support work . . ." (Pierson, 1982:189).

Women were cast in subsidiary roles by the armed forces. The slogans and mottoes used to attract females were clear about the functions they were to serve. The mottoes stated that "We are the girls behind the boys behind the guns"; that "We serve that men might fly"; and, that "We serve that men might fight." Moreover, there was never any intention on the part of military authorities to have women play a role as combatants: the battlefields were not deemed to be a proper women's sphere at any time during the conflict. Combat remained a male preserve, then and up to 1989, and the prevalent sexual division of labour was strictly adhered to. "Women had penetrated that sacrosanct male preserve, the military, but had not broken the male monopoly on the primary purpose of the military, the provision of an armed fighting force." (Pierson, 1982:189).

Women were not only ghettoized into specific types of employment, they were also paid less than men, and they originally received no trades pay or dependent's allowances, benefits to which men were entitled. The latter discrepancies were finally removed when the CF realized that they had a negative effect on recruiting of females (Pierson, 1982:191). However, for the duration of the war, servicewomen were always paid less than servicemen.

The rationale for paying servicewomen less than servicemen was that it would take three women to do the job of two men. Of course, this is non-sensical. If two males were employed as drivers, it is difficult to see how it would take three females to drive the same two vehicles. The same argument could be repeated ad infinitum about cooks, clerks, laundresses, etc. In the end, it was proven that replacement worked out to one for one in most trades and that "in a few instances two airwomen were able to replace three airmen." (Pierson, 1982:192).

The inclusion of women in the military had the potential of reversing established norms about femininity and sex role stereotypes but this potential was never realized because of prejudicial societal beliefs and gender constructions.

Although the creation of women's services was heralded at the time as a history-making event, women's entry in the armed forces of Canada during

the Second World War was a less revolutionary effect on gender relations than might have been expected . . . in retrospect, one can see that women's admission into the military was cautious and circumscribed. The caution and circumscription were dictated as much by the larger society as by the military men's interest in preserving a male monopoly of key posts in the services (Pierson, 1982:202).

The reluctance of the CF to accord women equal status was illustrated by differential pay scales and benefits for male and female, by the ghettoization of women into "female" occupations, and by the exclusion of women from combat duties. Nevertheless, despite the lack of revolutionary opportunities for growth and of a chance for a permanent career, by the war's end, 21,000 females had enrolled in the CWAC, 16,000 in the RCAF (WD), 6,600 in the WRENS, 2,500 in the Nursing Service, and 38 as medical doctors (Prentice et al., 1988:303). Many were in "for the duration" and most were devoted to their duty as protectors of the nation. They proved that the military was indeed a place for women, that they could do the job and do it bravely.

In summary, women had been cautiously allowed to join the military out of necessity: their paramount purpose had been to free men for combat. Servicewomen were not given equal access to jobs nor were they accorded the same status as their male counterparts. They were discriminated against in terms of employment opportunities, power, and pay and

benefits. Their corps were seen as forming a reserve army of labour from their inception to their demise and their services had been "tolerated" only for the duration: they had simply been a wartime expedient. The expendability of servicewomen was clearly demonstrated at the end of the Second World War when they were demobilized en masse: only a few nurses and messing officers (i.e. dietitians) remained. The military services then returned to being an almost all-male institution (Pierson, 1982:204).

The status and roles of civilian women during this period had been comparable to those of servicewomen. They were mobilized to send parcels to soldiers, to knit socks, to buy war bonds, and to economize. "It was in the name of patriotic duty that women's voluntary services were at first spontaneously offered and later, once government became involved, officially recruited for the war effort." (Pierson, 1986:41). They were also enticed out of their homes by economics, by appeals to patriotism, and by massive government recruiting efforts. Propaganda and policies were used to get women to take employment in every kind of industry; they were also careful, however, to remind women that these new opportunities were "as temporary . . . as combat was temporary for men." (Pierson, 1986:11). Females were needed only "for the duration" and changes in policies "represented no concession of the principle of

women's right to work." (Pierson, 1986:11). Effectively, as soon as the war ended, enabling policies such as those concerning daycare and more advantageous taxation scheme' were rescinded. Priority was once again given to the male as breadwinner and women were strongly encouraged either to return home or to seek employment in traditionally female occupations such as domestic service, nursing and teaching. Dorise Nielson, in her 1944 book New Worlds for Women, warned that this would probably be the attitude adopted by men after the war. She writes that: "After the war we may expect, from those who want to go back to the good old days, much flowery talk glorifying home-making and a lot of talk about 'taking men's jobs'." (1944:35). She was right. As Pierson notes: "The war's slight yet disquieting reconstruction of womanhood in the direction of equality with men was scrapped for a full-skirted and domesticated post-war model, and for more than a decade feminism was once again sacrificed to femininity." (1986:220). The war years had emphasized the obligation of women to work, not their right to do so and had left unchanged both the assumption that women's primary responsibility was to the domestic sphere and the belief that men were primary wage earners.

If the rhetoric of sexual equality had had any substance at all, one might have expected women's wartime gains to be consolidated in post-war

plans. What occurred, however, was a use of the planning apparatus to confine women to traditional occupations more reminiscent of the pre-war period. (Pierson, 1986:94).

The war had not been a social revolution and "Rosie the Riveter" had had no permanent impact on women's status in Canadian society.

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION DURING THE POST-WAR PERIOD

There does not appear to have been any serious consideration given to the retention of women in the CF after the war was over. According to a statement made by the Honorable Brooke Claxton, the Minister of Defence, to the House of Commons on April 24, 1951, authorities briefly considered the possibility of retaining servicewomen at the end of World War II but the idea was quickly dismissed because it was thought that "career opportunities were not likely to be great enough to attract women having the necessary qualities of leadership to meet a large increase in the event of war." Canada - House of Commons, 1951:1). A 1946 Navy memorandum set out the arguments for and against retaining WRCNS. On one hand, the memorandum pointed out that "retention of WRCNS would provide a cadre, on the basis of which a force could be built up rapidly in war-time . . . and would furnish the Navy with skilled personnel to do those jobs for which women have been seen to have a greater

aptitude." (DND - Keith, 1969:6). On the other hand, the Navy held the conservative, and prevailing, view that peacetime Navy was an "unnatural life for a woman", that it would be difficult to attract "high quality women", and that trained women would be lost when they decided to marry (DND - Keith, 1969:6-7). No more consideration was given to the employment of females in the military until war broke out in Korea.

In 1950, the Korean conflict forced the CF to mobilize - it went from less than 42,000 members in March 1949 to over 95,000 in March 1952 - and to consider employing women in the armed forces (DND - Douglas, 1986:5). "Bearing in mind the female contribution in the Second World War and the increased requirements for manpower, the employment of women in uniform was recommended to the Cabinet." (DND - Davis, 1966:4). Once again women were temporarily needed to release men for combat.

Very little has been written about servicewomen and the Korean war. It is known that nurses served during that conflict but I was unable to locate any references to Canadian women, other than nurses, who had been deployed with the NATO force. The lack of written information may be frustrating but it is not particularly surprising. Historians' accounts of wars have tended to concentrate on traditional military and diplomatic topics and have

generally subsumed soldiers, male and female, under aggregate statistics.

In April 1951, the Minister of National Defence announced that there was now "a real need for a limited number of women to carry out duties for which they are specially fitted. Clerks and stenographers," he emphasized, were "obvious illustrations" of those duties. (Claxton, 1951:1). "Accordingly", he stated, "we have decided to recruit a limited number of women for the regular Air Force and for the reserve forces of the Navy, Army and Air Force. . . . It is expected that recruiting will commence this summer." (Claxton, 1951:2-3).

The Cabinet imposed certain conditions governing the employment of women in the CF. First, "there would be no women in uniform employed as clerks in any headquarters." According to Davis (1966), this condition was later interpreted to mean that no servicewomen would be employed in service headquarters in Ottawa. Obviously, whether intentional or not, this interpretation effectively meant that women were kept away from the centre of command and from key staff positions. Second, they could be employed only in "trades which could obviously be done quite satisfactorily by women and would not replace civilian employees" - this meant no non-traditional roles such as combat and combat-support trades. Third, women would take

only positions that "would otherwise be filled by men" - this meant that women would not increase the established quota for the whole of the CF. Finally, "there would be no special women's units." (Davis, 1966:4-5).

In 1951, the RCAF was the first of the three services to enrol women in both its regular and its reserve components. The initial establishment of 5,000 women for its regular force was reduced to 2,500 in 1955 because of recruiting shortfalls and the advent of new technology (Douglas, 1986:6). As time went on, this technology, namely the Semi Automatic Ground Environment (SAGE) system, reduced the requirement for airwomen at radar stations; therefore, recruiting of women was suspended in 1963. Without new female intakes into the service, the number of women gradually decreased to approximately 530 by 1966 (Davis, 1966:9). The Air Force had maintained the CF's tradition of offering careers to women only when obliged to by circumstances. It had obviously forgotten its enthusiastic claim that "as far as the RCAF is concerned, women are here to stay." (DND - News Release, 1950:4).

The Army, traditionally the service most opposed to the employment of women, was granted authorization to enrol 90 females in 1954. However, true to its nature, the Army limited the number of its military women to 11 officers and no other rank. Their rationale was that since women counted

against their overall quota, employing them meant that it would lose needed manpower to meet its combat commitment to NATO: it was therefore, against its "interest" to employ women. However, in 1955, the Service realized that nursing assistants were required to provide medical care for the dependents of Army personnel posted to isolated establishments. More women were hired to perform that duty. These CWAC were employed until many of these isolated stations closed down in 1963 and their role was made redundant. The Army resolved the redundancy problem by discontinuing recruiting. By 1966, there were only 9 female Army officers (probably nurses) and 29 nursing assistants left in the Service (Davis, 1966:8-9).

Cabinet authorized the enrolment of 400 navywomen in 1955. The Navy, however, did not wish to have a high number of women in its ranks. Its aim was to create a highly trained nucleus of women which could be rapidly expanded should the need arise. The service employed women in what Davis has called "fields . . . in which women have a natural aptitude," namely communications, secretarial and accounting duties, and as nursing assistants (Davis, 1966:6).

This brief outline of women's employment in the three services shows that policies governing the utilization of females in the post-war era were similar to those in place

during the war. Women's numbers were arbitrarily kept to less than 2 per cent of the total force and their area of employment was severely restricted. "Women were utilized when there was a need, and disregarded or disbanded when that need disappeared." (Odorico, 1983:31-32).

CONCLUSION

This chapter has reviewed the historical participation of women in the defence of Canada prior to 1900 to illustrate the fact that women have always served the military in some ways when the country, or part thereof, was at war or in a crisis situation. The status and roles of women, in and out of the military, from 1900 to the end of World War II were then examined so that certain trends in employment and in the utilization of women's skills could be discerned. It was also shown that the initial role of servicewomen in 1901 and during World War I was to care for wounded men: a traditional female function. This role was reluctantly expanded during World War II so that more men could be freed for combat. Still, the women primarily filled positions which they already occupied in civilian life; they did not seriously challenge the prevailing gendered division of labour. Moreover, it was shown that even though females were admitted into the military, they were not considered full-fledged members of the forces.

They were grouped in "female" services and ghettoized in "female" employment. They were also paid less than the men and they did not receive equal treatment nor benefits. Finally, as the need for their services declined, they were rapidly demobilized.

This pattern of "last hired, first fired" was maintained for the 25 years following the end of the Second World War. When the war in Korea broke out or when they were needed to work in remote and isolated postings, women were recruited. When the war ended or when new technology was developed, recruiting ceased and the number of servicewomen was allowed to decline substantially. The military had been careful during those 70 years to circumscribe women's roles and to ensure that females did not rise to prominence by using them as support personnel with little real power. This ideology of women as a subordinate army of labour was clearly illustrated in a speech given in 1966 by Lieutenant-Colonel Lois Davis, a past Director of Women Personnel. She concludes her speech by stating that:

Women in uniform have and continue to make a valuable contribution to Canada's Defence Forces. Their main advantage being the flexibility which they have provided as a source of manpower in time of need. The contribution which they have made should not be minimized. As has been reiterated many times servicewomen, past and present are cheerful, willing and conscientious and a credit to Canadian womanhood. (DND - Davis 1966:16).

No significant expansion of the status and roles of Canadian servicewomen occurred until the Royal Commission on the Status of Women tabled its report in 1970. This proposition will be examined in the next chapter, in which I will demonstrate the impact which the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, the 1978 Human Rights Acts, and the 1985 Parliamentary Committee on Equality Rights had on the careers of Canadian servicewomen.

ENDNOTES

¹ This is the title of an article written by Chenier for the Oracle (1984).

² The term is used literally. Only men were wanted.

³ According to Lt-Col (Ret'd) Shirley Robinson, the term Nursing Sisters was borrowed from the British. While it is difficult to ascertain the origin of the term, it is thought that it might originally have come from the religious orders and then later evolved as a term of endearment by British soldiers who referred to the nurses as their sisters.

⁴ For more information on the issue of femininity and sexual morality of servicewomen see Ruth Roach Pierson "They're Still Women After All" The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1988.

⁵ Pierson documented the fact that of the 11,706 CWACs serving as of March 28, 1945, 5729 were employed as drivers, laundress, medical orderly, batwomen, canteen helper, waitress, and office orderly. Of the remaining 5977 armywomen: 62.4% were clerks, 8% were cooks, 6.9% were storewomen, 4.5% were switchboards operators, 2.7% were postal sorters, 2.2% were dental assistants, and 1.9% were driver mechanics. The remaining 11.4% were distributed among the other forty-six trades opened to women (Pierson, 1986:110).

⁶ During World War II, women of the Canadian Army, Navy, and Air Force received 113 medals for bravery.

⁷ For an excellent discussion on these wartime incentives see Pierson (1986) chapter 1.

Chapter II
Policy Changes During the 1970s and 1980s:
Progress or Illusions?

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I will examine some "milestones" of the last two decades, namely the 1970 report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women (RCSW), the 1978 Canadian Human Rights Act (CHRA), and the 1985 report of the Parliamentary Committee on Equality Rights, and I will evaluate their respective impact on the status and roles of servicewomen. I will argue that these events provided the primary impetus for change in the policies and practices of the CF. To illustrate this point, two main policy decisions will be considered in some detail: whether women should be educated in military colleges and whether all classifications and trades should be opened to servicewomen. These two policies will be discussed separately so that the elements at play in their formulation and implementation can be better understood. However, it should be noted that the CF's arguments all stem from the same underlying assumptions about woman's nature and proper sphere.

I will demonstrate that the Forces' "positive" public stance on the issue of servicewomen was often disingenuous

and that the institution's efforts remained concentrated primarily on the maintenance of the status quo. I will show that the military hierarchy manipulated its external environment - the Canadian Government and public and, to a point, the legislative system - through small concessions and through the employment of lengthy trials in order to forestall change with respect to the status and roles of female personnel.

ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Since their "acceptance" into the Canadian military, women had been marginalized and relegated to peripheral support roles. For the most part, however, no one made an issue of the inequalities faced by servicewomen: their subordinate position and the discriminatory policies of the CF remained largely unchallenged. The one exception to this statement is the brief period during the Second World War when servicewomen protested against the fact that they were paid only two-thirds the salary of servicemen for performing the same tasks (Pierson, 1986:113). There was, therefore, no real impetus for the military to amend its policies.

It should be noted that servicewomen were prevented, to a large extent, from bettering their working conditions by the rules and regulations of the CF which prohibit its

members from engaging in political activities. Civilian women, however, were not so restricted. Dissatisfied at society's continuing discrimination and double standard, women used their hard-earned political knowledge and acumen to "convince" the Canadian government to establish a Royal Commission on the Status of Women. They lobbied hard to get "their" Commission and were successful. It is doubtful, however, that their efforts were the only factor at work at the time. Prentice et al. write that there were political reasons to respond to women's demands. First, females were voting at approximately the same rate as men. Second, the issue was used by the Opposition as a weapon against the governing Liberals. Finally, the request for a Royal Commission was "ideally suited to the double purposes of getting the necessary information about fully integrating women into the workforce while appeasing and, if necessary, defusing feminists complaints." (Prentice et al., 1984:347-348). It is after all the Canadian way par excellence to silence or divert complaints by "royal-commissioning" them to death.

Regardless of the motives of the different participants, the establishment of the Royal Commission was a very important step in the future broadening of the roles and status of all Canadian women, including servicewomen. The number and roles of military women remained circumscribed

until the tabling of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women's report in 1970. It was only then, when obliged to do so by external forces, that the CF re-examined and expanded, albeit to a limited degree, the roles and status of its female members.

Given the impact of the Royal Commission on military policies affecting women, it is worthwhile to briefly summarize its mandate. Its general mandate was to "inquire and report upon the status of women in Canada, and to recommend what steps might be taken by the Federal Government to ensure for women equal opportunities with men in all aspects of Canadian society." (Prentice et al., 1988:348).

The commission reported in 1970, having expanded its mandate to cover the many important areas of policy under provincial jurisdiction, such as health, education, and family law. Its report spelled out four principles: (1) women should be free to choose whether or not to take employment outside their homes; (2) the care of children is a responsibility to be shared by the mother, the father, and society, (3) society has a responsibility for women because of pregnancy and childbirth, and special treatment related to maternity will always be necessary; and (4) in certain areas women will for an interim period require special treatment to overcome the adverse effects of discriminatory practices. (Prentice et al., 1988:349).

The first thing the report did for women in the military was to acknowledge that there was a servicewomen issue and to make the Government, the CF, and the public

aware of their unequal status within the institution. Six of its 167 recommendations were directly related to the policies and practices affecting women in the CF. They read as follows:

- 55) We recommend that all trades in the Canadian Forces be open to women.
- 56) We recommend that the prohibition on the enlistment of married women in the Canadian Forces be eliminated.
- 57) We recommend that the length of the initial engagement for which personnel are required to enlist in the Canadian Forces be the same for men and women.
- 58) We recommend that the release of a woman from the Canadian Forces because she has a child be prohibited.
- 59) We recommend that the Canadian Forces Superannuation Act be amended so that its provisions will be the same for male and female contributors.
- 70) We recommend that women as well as men be admitted to the military colleges operated by the Department of National Defence.
(Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, 1970: 402, 404).

The report also made some general statements about servicewomen and the CF. It remarked that women represented only 1.6 per cent of the total strength of the military and that their employment was primarily restricted to jobs in the nursing, administrative, technical, and paramedical fields. It was the opinion of the commission's members that "restrictions on the number of trades open to women

generally reflect the concept of women as a group rather than as individuals." (Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, 1970:136).

Moreover, the report noted that the entrance requirements of the CF were higher for women than they were for men - females had to be 18 years old and to have a Grade 10 standing while males were only required to be 17 years old and to have a Grade 8 standing (Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, 1970:136). Surprisingly, the commission made no recommendation about the necessity to change the discriminatory recruiting practices of the institution and neither did it suggest that the prevalent low ceiling put on female participation be removed. It is possible that the members felt that the mere mention of inequalities would lead the organization to action: they might have wanted to give the institution a chance to prove their "good intentions". In fact, this is what happened. In 1971, the CF standardized their enrolment qualifications and in 1974 they "officially" removed their self-imposed ceiling on the total number of women allowed in the military. "Officially" is emphasized here because the CF put in other types of rules and regulations which effectively limited the number of servicewomen. This will be discussed later on in this chapter.

The RCSW's report forced the CF to look at their

policies and practices. In July 1971, the Defence Council introduced "equal terms service" which effected changes in accordance with recommendations 56, 57, and 58. Recommendation 59 was fulfilled in December 1975 when the CF Superannuation Act was amended. The implementation of the recommendations to admit women into the Canadian Military Colleges (CMCs) and to open all trades to females were not readily accepted by the institution nor quickly implemented: it took the CF nine years to open the first CMC to women and 19 years to open all trades to all of their service members (Black, 1990:14-16 and 19-20). The reluctance of the military to act on both these recommendations stemmed from the fact that both seriously challenged the traditional and institutional division of labour and both had the potential to disturb the "old boys' network": the CMCs and the combat trades and units had always been "men only" institutions.

The implementation of these two recommendations will now be examined in greater detail because both clearly illustrate the CF's aversion and resistance to change. They provide evidence to support the propositions that the organization must be compelled to adapt to changing social demands and mores by external forces, and that, at times, it has lacked candor when dealing with the issue of servicewomen's right to equality.

ADMITTANCE OF WOMEN INTO MILITARY COLLEGES

After the tabling of the Commission's report, the Defence Council directed that, while women were to remain ineligible for education at military colleges, they would, however, be eligible for subsidized education at civilian universities. The reasons given at the time for their exclusion were that the colleges were prime sources of combat-ready officers and that suitable facilities for women were presently lacking (Odorico, 1983:159). As a graduate of one of the CMCs, I find it difficult to believe that, in 1971, graduates from the colleges were deemed "combat ready" simply because they had received their Bachelor of Arts from such an institution. The colleges are accredited universities and their curricula are very similar to those of civilian Canadian universities. While it is true that some military training is given to cadets during the academic year, it is doubtful that this training alone made the young men ready for combat. Any instruction directly related to combat was more likely to have been acquired during the summer period when students were sent on classification training courses¹ or assigned to work with a unit compatible with their future military occupations. Therefore, it was not the colleges per se which made cadets combat ready: this task was accomplished through summer

training.

The second observation, namely that appropriate facilities were lacking, was, at best, a poor excuse. Firstly, society cannot allow a principle such as equality to be dependent on cost. Secondly, in the early 1970s, Canadians had a fairly liberal attitude towards co-ed accommodation and many universities managed unisex dormitories. Moreover, by 1975, the year I joined the institution, the CF themselves had mixed-gender barracks. It is, therefore, difficult to understand why the CMCs could not accommodate female students. The "cost" argument was refuted in 1980 when two of the Colleges finally opened their doors to women without undergoing extensive renovations or new construction².

One has to wonder, then, what the actual reason for the refusal of the CF to enroll female cadets at the colleges was. It appears to have been the negative attitudes of certain men, in and out of the military. In an 1980 interview, Barney Danson (by then no longer the Minister of National Defence), stated that "many defence 'brass' were against the move, arguing that there was no need for female participation and that military roles were not suitable 'for a proper lady'." (as quoted in Odorico, 1983:175). He also cited the controversial position of the Royal Military Club of Canada (a high profile group comprised of RMC graduates),

the opposition of the Commandant of the Royal Military College, and the non-enthusiasm of senior military advisors as major barriers to the inclusion of females into military colleges (Odorico, 1983:175).

The issue remained dormant until 1977 when the Minister of National Defence asked the Joint Military Colleges Advisory Board to re-examine the question. The Board recommended that women be allowed to enter the colleges. This recommendation probably took into account two factors. First, that women had been enrolled in American academies in 1976: this refuted the military's claim that its gender policies were in keeping with those of countries with whom Canada was militarily aligned. Second, that it seemed highly probable that the Canadian Human Rights Act (Bill C-25) would shortly become law which meant that the Forces' policy could be challenged in a court of law. In 1979, the CF announced its new admittance policy for women and in the Fall of 1980, the first female cadets were enrolled at RMC in Kingston, Ontario, and at CMR in St-Jean, Quebec.

Once again, the military institution was forced by outside forces to react and to alter its policy. It could have made the decision to enrol women into the CMCs in 1970 when this policy was recommended by the report of the RCSW. Instead, it chose to forestall the issue by making a small

concession - subsidized university education for females - and by using the combat issue as a justification for exclusion. The CF were finally obliged to act when it ran out of excuses and when it became apparent that it could no longer cater to outdated notions about women's proper sphere to the detriment of servicewomen.

OPENING OF ALL TRADES TO WOMEN

The recommendation to open all trades to women was the most contentious of the six recommendations made by the RCSW. It would take nearly 20 years, a Human Rights Act, a Parliamentary Committee on Equality Rights, and a challenge before a Human Rights Tribunal before the military was compelled to definitively act on it.

In July 1971, the Defence Council directed that there would be "no limitations on the employment of women in the Canadian Forces, other than in the primary combat role, at remote locations and at sea." (Simpson et al., 1978:2). The Council substantiated its decision by stating that it was "in keeping with social mores existing in Canada and countries with whom we are militarily and politically aligned." (DND - News Release, 1972:1).

This policy statement by the Council requires some analysis. Its first part proposes that women can be employed in every trade while its second half re-introduces

restrictions. How, one wonders, can a policy be unrestricted and restricted at the same time? Actually, it was a rather clever statement since it seemed to imply that most trades were in effect either open or soon-to-be open and that restrictions were few. In fact, these restrictions were much more far-reaching than they might first appear to have been. Not only did they signify that women could not be employed in combat roles but they also meant that the number of women in almost all trades would have to be restricted since servicewomen could not be sent to isolated establishments or to sea. For example, not all clerks or cooks or medical assistants could be females since both ships and isolated bases need clerks and cooks and medical assistants. In reality, this policy meant that women had either no access or only restricted access to most military occupations.

To meet the exigencies of that policy, namely that no occupations would be "burdened" by an over-supply of females, the CF introduced minimum male requirements ("MMRs") quotas for most of its trades. The stated purpose of the "MMRs" was to ensure that enough men would be available, at any time, for transfer to combat positions. "Unlike affirmative action quotas, those quotas serve to place a ceiling on the number of women employed in these classifications." (Human Rights Tribunal Decision 3/89:12).

The MMRs not only restricted females from entering combat trades (in those trades MMRs were 100%), they also threatened their positions in trades considered to be "traditionally female". In a 1985 memorandum, Colonel Sheila Hellstrom, the serving Director of Women Personnel (DWP), wrote that "in four . . . trades, women either exceed or are within five percent of the MMR . . . together, these trades contain 27% of the servicewomen now in the CF." (DND - Hellstrom, 1985:1). She also stated that continuous "fine tuning" of the MMRs could further reduce positions available to women in nine predominantly female trades which together contained 60% of servicewomen (DND - Hellstrom, 85:2)³.

Many rationalizations were offered to support the 1971 Defence Council's decision to restrict women. In a memorandum to the Minister of National Defence (MND), General F.R. Sharp (CDS) noted that all the trades and occupations of the CF could not be opened to women because historically, the employment of women in combat within the North American and Western European contexts has been almost totally unacceptable. "The traditional rationale for this prohibition appears to be based upon conventional concepts of the capacity of women to wage war in terms of physical capability, and emotional and psychological suitability." (DND - Sharp, 1971:Annex A, 3). The CDS might have been

describing the prevalent male mentality and male values of the Canadian and other Western military organizations of the early 1970s regarding women's abilities, but he was not accurately reporting historical facts. Women throughout the world had distinguished themselves in combat on many occasions during World War II, the American Revolution, and the War of Independence (Israel), to name only a few (Jacobsen, 1979:284). The CDS did, however, partly recognize the idiosyncratic nature of this societal belief about appropriate gender roles. He wrote: "These considerations ignored the fact that there are a significant number of men who are unsuited to combat duty for precisely the same reasons." (DND - Sharp, 1971:Annex A, 3). Only "partly recognized" because the General failed to realize that any set of characteristics could not possibly apply to over half the human race. General Sharp was also concerned by another related factor. He feared that having women in combat roles would reduce the credibility of the CF as a deterrent against enemy aggression and as a reliable ally.

Current defence policy dictates that a fundamental role of the Canadian military is the prevention or control of violence either in terms of internal security and aid to the civil power, or international peacekeeping. This role requires the establishment of a creditable military presence and, regardless of capability and competence, it is considered that there are a significant number of situations and geographical areas where this presence could not be provided by a woman. With regard to one's allies, it is

considered that as long as a significant number of combat personnel are committed to duties in direct support of international alliances whose other members do not recognize the concept of the employment of women in combat or combat support, women cannot be so employed in the Canadian Forces. Regardless of their military capability, women would not be permitted for political reasons to make a full and equal contribution to Canadian participation in international alliances and liaison duties. (DND - Sharp, 1971:Annex A, 3).

General Sharp's arguments had some validity, even though one could argue that international and national bigotry should not dictate Canadian defence policy. The 1971 CF's employment policies did reflect the values and mores of a segment of Canadian and of Western society. The problem, however, with this type of rationalization is that it assumes that the male point of view constitutes a "legitimate" majority view. The second problem is that the CF did not review their perception about women's abilities: this was demonstrated in 1989 when the institution presented similar arguments to a Human Rights Tribunal in an effort to keep women out of combat roles and units. These arguments will be more completely analyzed and challenged in the next chapter.

The 1971 edict remained the employment policy throughout the 1970s and part of the 1980s. In 1974, DND completed a review of the job classifications that could be filled by women using the previously established policy.

The review led to the promulgation of a definitive list of closed and restricted classifications, trades, and units. According to the Decision of the 1989 Human Rights Tribunal, the results of this review were dramatic.

Over two-third of all classifications were, in principle, made accessible to women; approximately 30,000 positions were theoretically open to both sexes while 40,000 were reserved to men only, because of the limitations on the employment of women established by the Defence Council . . . (Human Rights Tribunal Decision 3/89:18. My emphasis).

This might have appeared "dramatic" to the members of the Tribunal but, in reality, it was inconsequential that 30,000 positions could be filled by women since there were less than 1500 women in the military at the time. It must be remembered that the ceiling on women was only abolished in 1974. The policy statement made in 1971 and the 1974 review were primarily "window dressing": they were designed to silence critics and to delay change.

As a result of the 1974 review, six classifications and 33 trades were opened to women. These included: Chaplains (Protestant), Meteorologist, Security Officers, Radio Technicians, Radar Technicians, and Instrument Electrical Technicians. Many of the trades were in areas in which civilian women had worked during World War II (ammunition technicians, vehicle technician, avionics technicians, metals technicians, etc.) and in areas in which

they were now employed. In all cases, there were no obvious reasons as to why females should have been excluded in the first place'. The public was given the impression that women were being given greater opportunities but, in fact, little had changed.

The CF's policy on women's employment was not addressed again until a new external force shook the institution: the 1978 Canadian Human Rights Act (CHRA). The Act was more problematic for the CF than the Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women had been because the Act had legislative power and could, therefore, be used as the basis for a legal challenge.

The Act prohibited discrimination in employment on the basis of sex but provided that it was not a discriminatory practice if a restriction was based on a bona fide occupational requirement. (Human Rights Tribunal Decision, 3/89:18).

The Forces responded to the CHRA by implementing a series of trials known as the Servicewomen in Non-Traditional Environments and Roles (SWINTER) trials (Symons, 1991:18). These tests were conducted between November 1979 and October 1985. Their raison d'être was to establish that the CF's employment policies were not illegal because they were based on a bona fide occupational requirement - "operational effectiveness" -: a requirement sanctioned by Section 14 of the Act (Human Rights Tribunal

Decision, 3/89:1).

THE SWINTER TRIALS

The stated aims of the trials were to:

compare individual effectiveness of men and women; compare the effectiveness of groups of women and of men and of integrated groups versus all male groups; to assess the behavioural and social impact of servicewomen on trial units, including the sociological impact on immediate families; to assess the degree of acceptance of the public and Canadian allies on the employment of women in non-traditional roles and environments; and to determine the resource implications of the expanded participation of women in the CAF. (Human Rights Tribunal Decision, 3/89:21).

The objectives clearly stipulated that men and women were to be tested together but "as the acronym implies . . . it was really the women who were on trial." (Robinson, 1991:3).

Five different trials were undertaken⁵. The testing involved assigning women to near-combat roles in land, sea, and air units, and to "Alert", a military station in the high Arctic, all areas from which they had previously been excluded (Robinson, 1991:3). As can be deduced from the words "near-combat" and "areas", the trials were primarily designed to test women in new environments, not in new trades.

At the end of the testing period, it was found that the limitations of the trials, the research methodology, and the design of the tests had made the "results" less

definitive than many had hoped. Moreover, only about 300 women had been directly involved, authentic combat experience had not been simulated, and the male staff conducting the testing had not been properly indoctrinated and trained for their jobs as evaluators (Human Rights Tribunal Decision, 3/89:18-28).

The trials also demonstrated that the CF's concerns over the integration of women into previously all-male units had some merit. The problems did not stem from women's capabilities and willingness to work, but rather, the difficulties were the outcome of the nature of the trials, of prejudicial attitudes, of uninformed or intentionally neglectful leadership, and of poor definition of the responsibilities of commanding officers during SWINTER (Symons, 1991:483).

However, according to Symons, the trials "provided positive evidence that women and men were able to work and live together" (Symons, 1991:482) - something military nurses had known since 1885. Units tasks were accomplished and members' performance was satisfactory. Most Branches of the Service experienced few, if any, problems. "The Air trial was perceived as having been so successful that moves were made to eliminate all formal barriers to women's integration in the air force." (Symons, 1991:482). The results of the Arctic trial were also conclusive and when it

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ended servicewomen were "posted to the base at Alert on a regular basis and were able to enter the previously all-male Communicator Research trade whose members serve primarily on radar stations/isolated posts." (Symons, 1991:482). The sea trial was also considered to be a success, and women were permitted to serve on board the HMCS Cormorant and alterations were made to Naval Reserve ships to allow women to serve on them as well. Finally some reports by senior personnel involved in the land trials indicated that servicewomen were not detrimental to unit operational effectiveness and that mixed groups performed as well as all-male groups (Symons, 1991:482).

After reviewing the material entered as exhibits by the CF, including the SWINTER trials' reports, the members of a Human Rights Tribunal also concluded that the Alert and the Air trials had been successful but opined that the Sea and Land trials revealed a more problematic result.

Women were judged to perform jobs competently at sea . . . but neither there nor in the land trials was there satisfactory social integration . . . Women complained of the fishbowl effect. Men asserted that women lacked the necessary physical stamina and combat motivation . . . The Unit's report strongly suggested that many of the problems could be traced to initial poor selection and training, lack of identification of special skills needed, inadequate job definitions, and poor organizational or management preparation. (Human Rights Tribunal Decision, 3/89:26-27).

From these evaluations, one gets the impression that most of the problems encountered were administrative in nature or imputable to the poor design of the trials and to a lack of pro-active leadership, and that they were not directly related to gender. Usually, these types of problem could have been attributed to factors such as the novelty of the trials or the inexperience of the leaders, but in this case, such a generous attribution would be both premature and erroneous. This assertion is based on and illustrated by the content of a briefing presented by Admiral Falls to the Armed Forces Council in September 1978, by the official, and at the time confidential, final NDHQ's report on the SWINTER trials, and by other documents obtained from DND Directorate of History.

First, according to Admiral Falls, the trials would:

- 1) increase the Canadian Forces chances of retaining the initiative in satisfactorily resolving this problem;
- 2) likely be accepted by the Human Rights Commission and the Media as a responsible and reasonable course of action;
- 3) provide empirical data, albeit limited, on the ability of women to perform such employment (we have none at all now);
- 4) gradually condition our Allies and our male personnel as to the possible future employment of women in the military;
- 5) avoid seeking an amendment to the Human Rights Act at least at this time. (As cited in Odorico, 1983:167).

"Moreover, the question of employing women in primary combat need not be addressed until after the trial period, if at all." (Odorico, 1983:167. My emphasis).

These statements make the Forces' intentions appear disingenuous. They seem to imply that the institution planned the trials as a mean of getting information that would legitimize its position rather than as a tool for the integration of women. Moreover, statement two clearly proposes that the trials would make the organization appear to hold a positive and responsible attitude towards service women in non-traditional roles and environments while statements one and three demonstrate that the CF's aims were really to diffuse the issue, to retain control, and to forestall the inevitable.

Second. NDHQ's official final report on the trials was, to say the least, amazing and disturbing. It was sexist, biased, and on the whole, it did not honestly reflect the content of all of the reports filed by unit commanders and by DND researchers. Moreover, the CF knew its final report was flawed even before it was published. In a confidential (since de-classified) memorandum to the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) - the highest ranking military officer of the CF and the approving authority of the report - the Deputy Chief of Defence Staff (DCDS) wrote that the

document should be "categorized as an internal working document, that it retain its confidential classification, and that it not be released outside the Department for at least the period permitted by the Access to Information Act." (DND - Brodeur, 1986:1).

A critique of the report written by Colonel M.K. Kee, the Director of the Charter Task Force set up in 1985 to deal with the Parliamentary Committee on Equality Rights, stated that:

- 1) The body of the report uses selected excerpts of the environmental reports, many of which are sweeping generalizations or taken out of context;
- 2) The body of the report does not support the conclusions;
- 3) The report cites little empirical evidence and is not likely to support a defence of . . . reasonable limitations;
- 4) The report would be dangerous if released to the public; and
- 5) The report does not tie the Task Force's hands concerning future recommendations. (DND - Kee, 1986:1).

Kee's critique was not the only document attesting to the bias of NDHQ's report. Lieutenant-Colonel D.E. Toole, in a "minute sheet" to the Director of Women Personnel, wrote:

- 1) As you know, this report represents a "compromise" to simply get it finalized and

approved. The danger of the report is that its contents may be accepted as factual by those who are not well versed on the SWINTER trial reports and SBS [Social and Behavioural Science] evaluations. Accordingly, some effort will be needed to temporize this report and dispel some of the distortions/statements taken out of context when employment opportunities are widened as a result of the Charter Task Review.

- 2) It is claimed that the report as written has been derived from a review and analysis of all trial reports. Basically, the results reported for the land trial flow from the final land trial report . . . The latter is seriously flawed, leaning heavily on anecdotal type of information . . . The semi-annual units reports consistently indicated that their unit operational effectiveness was not compromised/decreased . . . weaknesses in the final land report . . . have been allowed to stand in this final NDHQ report The cited problems are based on isolated instances
- 3) Continued reference to personnel management/resource issues (i.e. pregnancy and single parent families) cloud the air force trial results. As a group, women who participated in the aircrew trial successfully demonstrated their ability to meet required standards
- 4) The report continues to generalize on the women's performance inferring that no women were as capable as men and that only the women's performance negatively impacted on unit morale and cohesion.
- 5) . . . overview of the SWINTER SBS Evaluation provide somewhat different perspectives on social integration to those contained in . . . the NDHQ report . . . (DND - Toole, July 1986:1-2).

Others also believed the Land Trial Report was flawed.

Colonel G.B. Glenn, the Director Procurement and Supply (Land) (DPSL), reviewed the Land Report and wrote that:

As an initial reaction, I have rarely seen a report as obviously biased, and whose major conclusions and recommendations bear so little relationship to the preceding interim reports. To my mind, the report really calls into question the validity of conducting such trials. I am extremely concerned that the task force might place undue weight on the SWINTER trials. There is little resemblance between SWINTER and a scientifically-conducted, objective experiment To summarize my serious concerns, I believe that. . . the SWINTER trial . . . was unscientific in terms of objective, candidate selection and conduct and was repeatedly "tampered with". (DND - Glenn, May 1986:1-4).

Such documents inevitably lead one to believe that at least some high-ranking members of the CF had a hidden agenda from the onset of the trials: to "prove" that women could not succeed in non-traditional roles and environments. When extensive data supporting the "undesired" conclusion surfaced, NDHQ ignored it and "tailored" its official report to suit its primary objective. This supports the thesis that the biggest problem with the trial concept might have been the fact that the results were to be interpreted by those with a vested interest in excluding women from combat roles and units.

That military "interpretation" was a major weakness of SWINTER was demonstrated in November 1985, a month after the trials concluded. Vice-Admiral Brodeur, the DCDS, wrote to

the Assistant Deputy Minister (Personnel) (ADM Per) that:

- 1) Although the analysis of the overall results of the SWINTER trial is still ongoing, I believe that some important conclusions may even now be drawn from which a Departmental position may be taken.
- 2) I doubt that women can be excluded from combat trades on grounds of physical capability . . .
- 3) I also do not believe that we can exclude women from combat on the grounds that some may be killed or maimed . . .
- 4) The SWINTER trials have produced contradictory results . . . I suspect that analysis will show that when and where they succeeded it was the result of special additional effort on the part of those in authority and where they failed it was because that additional effort was lacking. In other words the requirement to incorporate women into those units introduced new complications which demanded to be addressed.
- 5) There is no evidence that introducing women into ships and formations reduces the efforts that their superiors and commanding officers must make to promote team unity or that it frees the commanders to devote more resources, time and effort to produce a combat capable unit.
- 6) This then raises the issue of what armed forces are all about . . . Those who recognize that we must be ready for combat cannot accept anything which detracts from our preparedness to do so.
- 7) In my military judgement, the introduction of women in combatant units will inevitably weaken those units; not because the women would not be capable; no, because they would not be ready to fight or die if need be; but because their presence will inevitably complicate the commanders' problems and thereby divert them from the all-out effort essential to attain full combat readiness.

(DND - Brodeur, 1985:1-2. My emphasis).

Statements such as those coming from the third highest hierarchical position of the CF are both disappointing and telling. Brodeur readily admitted that women could do the job (he had no choice in that matter since this was the conclusion of most of the SWINTER reports); nevertheless, he still did not want them to be a part of his "male" units. In order to justify his position, he "rewrote" the objectives of the trials. Women were no longer supposed to have proven that they could function in non-traditional roles and environments; Brodeur had decided that they should have demonstrated that their inclusion would reduce the efforts needed from their male leaders. Moreover, it appeared that servicewomen had played no roles in the success or failure of the trials: positive and negative results were to be credited to the commanding officers. Ironically, Brodeur did not seem cognizant of the fact that his evaluation of the trials and their outcomes could easily be construed as meaning that male commanding officers of combat units were not very effective and able leaders. He seemed to believe that they could not handle problems which the rest of mixed-gender unit commanders had been coping with since 1885. Brodeur's memorandum clearly demonstrated his personal bias and prejudices: simply stated, he did not

want females in combat units regardless of the fact that they could do the job. He relied on assumptions, on generalizations, on revisionism, and on dishonest analysis to support his own subjective views on women.

This behind-the-scenes manipulation of the trials succeeded to a degree. After SWINTER, women became eligible to serve in Alert, in most air units, and on some ships. In essence, they were allowed to perform their traditional trades in new environments. Most of the changes were only "geographic" in nature since most previously restricted trades remained closed to servicewomen.

THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON EQUALITY RIGHTS

The CF did not get the chance to "sit" on their latest policies on the employment of women for very long. Almost as soon as the SWINTER trials were over, the Parliamentary Committee on Equality Rights issued its report, Equality For All, with the recommendation that all trades and occupations of the CF be open to women.

The Committee's mandate - to inquire into and report on equality rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms - was activated in April 1985, the third anniversary of the Charter's enactment, and the date upon which Section 15 of the Charter with its clear support of the principle of equality between the sexes, became

operative (Human Rights Tribunal Decision, 3/89:29).

An Equality Rights sub-committee travelled coast to coast listening to approximately sixty presentations. The CF did not fare well at those hearings: two-thirds of the presentations concerned the organization and all of them except one were critical of the institution's policies. Most of the groups took exception to the way the CF infringed upon women's and homosexuals' rights.

The CF was aware of and concerned by the accusations levelled against them. In a meeting of the NDHQ Steering Group for the Employment of Women (EWSG) held in June 1985, the Chairman, Brigadier-General A.C. Brown, stated that "he sensed a general feeling of negativism toward CF policies across the nation." (DND - Minutes of meeting, June 1985:2). The General's statement was, to say the least, an understatement.

At a later meeting of the Steering Group, held in October 1985, much of the discussion centered around the possible recommendations of the Parliamentary Committee's report. It was felt that recommendations would include the removal of all limitations on the employment of women and the admittance of homosexuals. Brigadier-General A. McLellan stated that a paper explaining the rationale for current CF's policies on these issues had been prepared and Brigadier-General J.E.P. Lalonde added that the Armed Forces

Council (AFC) had discussed these subjects and had agreed to defend the status quo for each item (DND - Minutes of Meeting, October 1985:2). The CF was obviously getting ready to fight so that the institution's policies could remain unchanged regardless of changing social mores and of the law of the land. This stance was remarked upon by Rear-Admiral Hotsenpiller who wrote that "the 'can do' attitude which normally characterizes the CF's response to implementation of government policy has been replaced by a 'wait and see' attitude, lengthy trials and an unwillingness to accept an expanding role for women in the forces." (DND - Hotsenpiller, 1985:2).

The CF had accurately anticipated the recommendations of the Equality Rights Committee whose report advocated the full integration of women in the forces and stated that the reasons given by the institution as grounds for the combat exclusion of females⁶ did not amount to a bona fide occupational requirement. It concluded that "the Canadian Armed Forces must revise its present policy, a process that has begun but is proceeding all too slowly." (As cited in the Human Rights Tribunal Decision, 3/89:30). According to a Human Rights Tribunal, this report was "the most important externally imposed incentive [on the CF] to formulate and execute a new policy regarding female employment." (Human Rights Tribunal Decision, 3/89:29).

The Government responded by pledging to allow servicewomen to compete for all trades and occupations, with the stipulation that the goal should be accomplished "in a manner consistent with the requirement of the Armed Forces to be operationally effective in the interest of national security." (Symons, 1991:484). No explanations were offered as to the perceived correlation between gender and operational effectiveness and national security.

The CF, in turn, established a Charter task force:

to determine the effect on CAF policies of the Government response concerning the employment of women . . . ; to examine relevant information (such as SWINTER trial reports); and to develop options so as to meet Government policy objectives . . . within requirements of operational effectiveness and efficiency. (Human Rights Tribunal Decision, 3/89:30).

Given the way DND had previously dealt with the SWINTER trial reports and given the aforementioned memorandum which stated that the AFC intended to defend the status quo, it is difficult to believe that the CF set up the Charter Task Force in good faith: it is more logical to assume that this "effort" was only their latest stalling tactic.

The CF were put under increasing pressure by the media, politicians, the public at large, and a group called the Association for Women's Equity in the Canadian Forces (AWEFCF)⁷ to update their employment policies as they related to servicewomen. They decided to act quickly, and

to publish a new Canadian Forces Administrative Order (CFAO) which laid out general employment policy for the Forces before the Task Force's report was completed. The Order reiterated the organization's justification for the exclusion of women in some units and occupations. It stated that:

Empirical evidence gained throughout the history of warfare has proven that the operational effectiveness of an armed force is decisively affected by a combination of human factors. In particular, members of an armed force whose primary role is the engagement of the enemy in battle are faced with severe hardship, degrading living conditions, capture and death. The stresses encountered in battle drive members of the units to their physical and psychological limits. The ability to continue to perform effectively under these extreme conditions requires a high level of physical and mental strength and stamina. Most importantly, effectiveness in battle is vitally dependent on a strong bonding among the members, which is essential to units' cohesion and morale. Empirical evidence has shown that human stresses are compounded by the added complexities of mixed-gender groups. Concern that such additional stress would seriously jeopardize operational effectiveness has resulted in every major nation in the world maintaining limits on mixed-gender composition in their armed forces, particularly in units which are most likely to face an enemy directly in battle. Consequently, in order not to jeopardize the operational effectiveness dictated by the needs of national security, the composition of some units will remain single-gender male. As a result, a number of military occupations will be restricted to men, and in a number of others, there will be a minimum male component. (As quoted in Human Rights Tribunal Decision, 3/89:32).

The Annex to this order listed 21 units and 40 military

occupations as male-only and 71 occupations as requiring a minimum male component.

This policy requires analysis. First, it was published three months before the Task Force delivered its conclusions and recommendations. One has to wonder why the CF thought it necessary to "jump the gun". The only hypothesis I can propose is that the organization strove to retain control of the issue by appearing to "amend" its policy in a pro-active way.

Second, I find the content of the Order to be highly questionable. It keeps referring to some existing "empirical evidence" but it never states what that evidence is. It will be shown in the next chapter that such conclusive evidence does not, in fact, exist. What did and does exist are suppositions, generalizations, biased viewpoints, and "notions" about women's abilities.

Third, the Order paints women as a "handicap", as a disruptive influence. It implies that servicewomen negatively affect cohesion and morale. Colonel Toole (DWP) also took exception to the wording of the Order. She responded by writing that the CF's newest policy arbitrarily closed some units to women because: "the dreaded 'woman in our midst' will supposedly cause degradation of effectiveness resulting in grave consequences to the war effort." (DND - Toole, Feb 1986:1). She ironically proposed

that "it is obviously inconceivable that any action could be undertaken to ameliorate attitudes and foster positive action to facilitate integration of women into single-gender male units." (Toole, Feb. 1986:1). Finally, Colonel Toole was disturbed by the "secretive" way the annex to the Order had been approved. She writes:

It is interesting to note that approval of changes to the Annexes of the proposed CFAO are made by the Armed Forces Council, where no record of proceedings/minutes are maintained, as opposed to DMC [Defence Management Committee] where policy decisions on the employment of women have previously been made (and for which there are minutes). (DND - Toole, Feb 1986:2).

Given that the Administrative Order had already been published, it was rather "convenient" that the task force findings and recommendations, published in September 1986, stated that: "all occupations and units were to be opened to women, subject to the need to preserve "operational effectiveness." (Symons, 1991:484). This meant that the CF did not need to review its earlier policy since the report supported it. The timing involved in this situation raises questions about the candor of the organization. It makes it appear that the Task Force served no other purpose than the justification of the status quo. In the end, no fundamental change occurred since the CF had, once again, given themselves the permission to discriminate against women by using some subjective and difficult-to-assess ideal of

"operational effectiveness."

After the Task Force Report was published, the military decided to hold another round of trials. In 1987, the Minister of National Defence announced that new mixed-gender trials called CREW (Combat Related Employment of Women), would be conducted to "assess the risks involved in employing women in all units and occupations now closed to them." (Human Rights Tribunal Decision, 3/89:35). The CREW trials were set to begin in the fall of 1989 but they were preempted by the Human Rights Tribunal decision in February of that year.

Even if the CREW trials per se were not conducted, preparations and preliminary studies were done. Some servicemen did not relish this newest round of trials and their possible outcomes. In a presentation to the Chief of Defence Staff, a group of Chief Warrant Officers - the highest rank possible for non-commissioned members - stated that:

Bluntly, our group was unanimous that females should not be employed in combat related roles at this time. While this may be interpreted as chauvinism by some, we assure you that our misgivings are founded on fact (sic) and our ingrained desire to protect our [male] military system. We feel that neither society nor the military is prepared to handle such a departure from service norms. Although melodramatic, it has become readily apparent to us that continuation of the CREW program will certainly undermine our ability to maintain the combat attitude of our soldiers, sailors and airmen. Discussions at our

home units and on the mid course field trips indicate a vast majority of our serving members, male and female, are in tune with these opinions. Let's hope cool heads prevail. (DND - Presentation to the Chief of Defence Staff, 1987:10).

This presentation speaks for itself. Its writers were right: their stance and opinions can be interpreted as chauvinistic. Their arguments are without foundation in fact and tiresome. It would have been more honest of them to state directly that they did not want females in their units because they are chauvinists and because they desire to retain their male bastion and their total control over the armed might of the country instead of attending to fictitious "facts".

The series of trials to which servicewomen were subjected needs serious questioning. Most obviously, one should ponder the reasons why women were constantly required to prove themselves when men have never been so tested. After all, until the Gulf War, Canada had not engaged in combat for nearly 40 years, and yet generations of "untested" and "unproven" males have been unconditionally accepted in combat units. Why should women not simply "be enrolled and judged on the same individual basis as men, without undue consideration being given to their sex?" (Robinson, 1991:5). I believe that the trials were an indication of the prejudiced attitudes and of the

antiquated notions about women held by the male hierarchy of both the CF and the Canadian Government. SWINTER and CREW cast serious doubts upon the sincerity of both institutions' motives and commitment to the cause of equal opportunities for women in Canada.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have reviewed the impact, or lack thereof, of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, the Canadian Human Rights Act, and the Parliamentary Committee on Equality Rights, on the status and roles of servicewomen. I have shown that the CF used diverse means to avert changes and delay compliance, including small "cosmetic" alterations, trials, and deceit.

Two policies have been reviewed in detail: the acceptance of women into military colleges and the opening of new trades and occupations to females. I demonstrated that the CF allowed women into its colleges only because their option not to do so had been legislated away and because they could no longer rely on the argument that their policy was in line with those of other Western nations since their largest ally, the United States, had opened its academies to females. It was also shown that the male military hierarchy simply did not want women in its combat units and trades. It used lengthy trials to defuse

the issue and it tampered with the results of those trials when they ended up proving that women could function in non-traditional environments and roles. The CF forestalled changes in employment policy for two decades by utilizing the ill-defined concept of "operational effectiveness". When change was forced from the outside and became unavoidable, the military responded by cautiously implementing small revisions without fundamentally changing its traditional beliefs and stance. Finally, it was shown that this reluctance to change was due, at least in part, to a systemic and subtle informal barrier, one which cannot be legislated away - the negative attitudes and prejudices of some military leaders.

Servicewomen's performance in a variety of roles since 1900 and the SWINTER trials should have been sufficient evidence in support of a policy of full integration of women in the CF by 1985. Such was not the case however. When four persons⁶ filed complaints of employment discrimination against the institution in the early and middle 1980's, the CF responded, not by rectifying the situation, but by putting forward highly debatable and largely groundless arguments to justify women's continuing exclusion (Symons, 1991:488). These arguments will be examined and challenged in the next chapter.

ENDNOTES

¹ Classification and trade training consist of one or more military courses designed to teach specific skills. For example, a Teletype Technician would be taught the basics of physics, how to read schematic diagrams, and how to repair specific piece of equipment. A Supply Officer would be taught the supply system of the CF, how to read reports, how to fill forms, and how to set up a supply section. Often times, formal courses are followed by periods of on-job-training (OJT). In the case of Combat Officers, they would be taught about different tactics, pieces of equipment, and the power of certain ammunitions and bombs. This training is given at different bases across Canada but classification training is not given at military colleges.

² Approximate college estimates for renovation: CMR = \$30,000 and RMC = \$130,000.

³ The trades mentioned are medical assistant, military police, administrative clerk, finance clerk, cook, steward, traffic technician, and driver.

⁴ Complete list of classifications and trades opened to women in 1974.

Classifications: Chaplains (Protestant), Land Ordnance Engineering Officer, Military Engineering Officer, Meteorology, Physical Education and Recreation Officer, Security Officer.,

Trades: Air Defence Technician, Radio Technician, Radar Technician, Vehicle Technician, Weapons Technician (Land and Air), Ammunition Technician, Electro-Mechanical Technician, Aero Engine Technician, Airframe Technician, Aviation Technician, Integral Systems Technician, Communication Systems, Radar Systems Technician, Avionics Technician, Instrument Electrical Technician, Construction Engineering Technician, Plumber Gas Fitter, Electrician, Construction and Maintenance Technician, Refrigeration and Mechanical Technician, Electrical Generating Systems Technician, Stationary Engineer, Water Sanitation Technician, Mechanical Systems Technician, Construction Engineering Procedures Technician, Firefighter, Military Police, Cook, Steward, Postal Clerk, Traffic Technician, and Mobile Support Equipment Operator (Driver).

⁵ Human Rights Tribunal Decision. The report on SWINTER is contained on pages 18 to 28 of the Tribunal's decision. It provides a good overview of what was done and of the final results.

⁶ The factors were those related to individual and group behaviour, stereotypical behaviour, lack of social integration, absenteeism, lack of privacy, danger to the cohesion of units, and societal displeasure at women's exposure to violence and danger.

⁷ AWECE was founded in 1985 by a group of women, some of them ex-military officers, concerned with the status of women in the CF. They actively lobbied the Government for changes in CF policies and practices, educated many politicians about the issues faced by servicewomen, gave speeches and interviews, and generally kept the issues alive in the media. They also put out a newsletter which they widely distribute. They consider their main function to be that of monitoring the monitors tasked with monitoring the integration of military women.

⁸ The complainants were: Isabelle Gauthier, Joseph G. Houlden, Marie-Claude Gauthier, and Georgina Ann Brown.

CHAPTER III

The Combat Issue: A Tradition unhampered by progress

"War is men's business, not ladies'."

(Gone with The Wind)

INTRODUCTION

The Canadian military has always been a male-dominated institution whose leadership has vigorously fought against the inclusion of females in combat units and trades, so that, in the end, "combat roles . . . have taken on the character of a Sanctum Sanctorum into which women are not allowed."¹ (Symons, 1991:478). As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the CF diligently and consistently controlled both the number of women allowed to enrol and the type of employment they were permitted to engage in. This control effectively prevented servicewomen from entering a large number of occupations, from serving on ships and in various units, from gaining admittance to military colleges until 1980, and from being promoted to the higher echelon positions of the organization. As a case in point, as of June 1993, out of 69 Generals, only one is a woman, out of 327 Colonels, only three are women, and out of 1140 Lieutenant-Colonels, only 16 are women. I believe that the combat exclusion is one of the main explanations for this extremely low female representation at the higher ranks of

the CF. Finally, by closing some trades to females and by instituting "minimum male requirements" (MMRs) quotas, the CF put an unofficial ceiling on the number of servicewomen even after the official one was removed in 1974.

The Royal Commission on the Status of Women and the Parliamentary Committee on Equality Rights both realized the extent to which this exclusion hampered servicewomen's advancements and opportunities and both recommended that this discriminatory systemic barrier be removed. The CF, however, were successful in retaining this last male bastion until a Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ruled, on 20 February 1989 and after two years of hearings, that: "the present policy of the CAF in designating certain specific occupations and units as male-only is a discriminatory practice." (Human Rights Tribunal Decision, 3/89:64). Having thus pronounced the military guilty of gender bias in its employment policy, the Tribunal made the following Order: all trials of women in combat duty and environment (units) were to cease immediately; all gender restrictions were to be removed (with the exception of Submariner) and new gender-free selection standards were to be designed and imposed immediately; internal and external monitoring of the policy were to be established immediately; and, the CF and the Canadian Human Rights Commission were to devise an implementation plan so that the integration of women could

proceed steadily towards the goal of complete integration within the next ten years. It further suggested that "minimum male requirements" be phased out and insisted that, as a matter of principle and of practice, full integration was to take place with all due speed (Human Rights Tribunal Decision, 3/89:64-65). The Canadian Government accepted the decision and waived its right to appeal.²

Until this historic decision was made, 29 out of 100 military's Regular Forces occupations had been closed to non-commissioned female servicemembers, and 6 out of 35 military occupations had been closed to female officers. Moreover, servicewomen had restricted-access-only to 55 non-officer and 16 officer occupations because of established "minimum male requirements" ("MMRs"). The Tribunal decision was far reaching since it affected nearly 80% of all military occupations. It "radically changed Canadian military policy." (Symons, 1991:478).

On paper, at least, the Forces complied with the Order, and, four years after the Tribunal's decision, all classifications (with the previously noted exception) are officially open to women. This is not to say that women are now fully integrated and accepted, or that they are now found in substantial numbers in any of the combat trades or units. This certainly is not the case and I will expand on

this point in the next chapter. Firstly, however, I want to investigate the arguments put forth by the CF's lawyers and officers to back up their claims that women should not be allowed to become combatants or join combat units, and to analyze their underlying assumptions. I will show that the CF's arguments were based on ancient paternalistic social constructs, unproven assumptions, and fallacious inferences regarding "innate" female characteristics, women's disruptive influence on male bonding, women's "rightful" place in the world, and female near-total responsibility vis à vis child rearing.

DEFINITION OF COMBAT

Before the rationale for excluding women from combat can be analyzed, "combat" and "combat units" should be defined. This requirement, however, is difficult to fulfill since no official definitions of these terms exist. Countries differ widely in their definitions of "combat" and, to further complicate matters, different branches of a country's armed forces sometimes define "combat" differently. The confusion is also compounded by international law which decrees that women in Armed Forces during war are regarded as combatant and as lawful military targets (Odorico, 1983:105-106).

Still a functional definition is required so, for the

purpose of this thesis, I drew upon Tuten (1982), Symons (1991), and the transcript of a Human Rights Tribunal to formulate useful definitions of "combat" and "combat units". According to these sources, "combat" involves direct action designed to kill or capture members of an opposing enemy force (Tuten, 1982:238) and "combat units" are those which engage the enemy directly. The main problem facing the CF, or any other armed forces, is in trying to determine which of their members might be in a position to "engage the enemy directly" since it can be logically argued that all military personnel are "liable to be involved in combat depending on the circumstances" (Human Rights Tribunal Decision, 3/89:7-8 and 12). This last point makes the above definitions problematic because they are rooted in the rather tenuous notions that there is a clear line between "combat" and "non-combat", and that there is a geographically real place called the "rear". As Symons wrote "it requires considerable semantic and symbolic agility to sustain the credibility of either notion." (Symons, 1991:486). Nevertheless, despite the vagueness of the proposed meanings, they still provide a sense of how the terms are used by the CF and they should help the reader comprehend the organization's arguments. Furthermore, it should be noted that the lack of official and precise definitions has given the military a great deal of freedom in excluding and including members in combat

roles and units.

THE CF'S ARGUMENTS

During the Tribunal's hearings, the CF did not deny the discriminatory character of their employment policy. Instead, they argued that: "the combat exclusion was justified as a bona fide occupational requirement consistent with s. 15(g) of the Canadian Human Rights Act because only through this exclusion could 'operational effectiveness' be guaranteed." (Symons, 1991:488-489). The Forces defined "operational effectiveness" as the "capability of a unit to attain its goals, maintain its efficiency and preserve its integrity under the stress of operations." (Symons, 1991:489). They stated that it is judged by the "final product", that is, how the system would work in war. The CF explained that the factors contributing to operational effectiveness were: physical capability, environmental conditions, satisfactory social relationships, and cohesion (Human Rights Tribunal Decision, 3/89:49).

The issue facing the Tribunal was to decide to what extent the presence of women in combat units would weaken any of these factors so that the total effect would become "an operational effectiveness that is less than satisfactory, or less than necessary, to meet the CAF's goal of providing a fighting force." (Human Rights Tribunal

Decision, 3/89:49-50). It analyzed each factor, the historical record of women in combat, the Forces' own female trials, and a report submitted by David Segal, an acknowledged expert in military sociology, to resolve the issue and make a judgement. Ultimately, it did rule for the complainants and against the CF; however, it did not analyze nor was it very critical of the underlying attitudes and assumptions inherent in the arguments presented. In the following sections, I will provide the missing critical analysis.

PHYSICAL CAPABILITY

The issue of the physical capability of its members has always been one of the overriding concerns of the Canadian Forces. They have used the "fact" that the average woman is not as strong or does not possess the same endurance as the average man, and the reality of the exclusively female ability to have children, as justifications to deny women the right to serve in combat units. The Tribunal confined its analysis and findings to the statement that accurate new tests now existed to evaluate physical strength and stamina, and that, as a result, "the risk of failure of performance by women has been eliminated." (Human Rights Tribunal Decision, 3/89:50). On the issue of childbearing, it found

that newly developed policy on that matter had resolved the problem and that consequently: "pregnancy was not an issue in the definition of risk to operational effectiveness but simply a matter of temporary 'disability' . . . for which leave was appropriate." (Human Rights Tribunal Decision, 3/89:50-51).

The over-emphasis and misleading importance assigned to brute strength, the stereotypes regarding women's physical abilities, and the myths attached to pregnancy and childcare, still remain to be dealt with analytically. On the subject of strength, two main points must be made: first of all, it is not the case that all women are physically too weak to meet the required standards and, secondly, most combat tasks do not demand "super strength". The latter can be substantiated by examining the ways in which the 1991 Gulf War was waged. The near totality of combat was conducted through aerial bombings and not through hand-to-hand combat. Today's military depends less on physical strength and more on intelligent, well-educated, and technically trained recruits. As Melinda Beck, a senior editor for Newsweek magazine, wrote: "war is high tech . . . Men aren't any better at video games than women." (Bender et al., 1991:55).

The "art of war" element is an important consideration of the debate because it alters what is realistic and

appropriate in terms of required physical standards. The counter-argument often presented is that one never knows when this "art" is likely to regress to the way it was during World War II, and that it is possible that the need for trench warfare might be felt again (Tuten, 1982:248-249). Indeed, anything is possible but one should deal with realistic probabilities instead of dwelling on fantastic possibilities. The fact is that Canada has not waged a "trench type" war for at least forty years.

Moreover, advances in weapon and transportation technologies have made personal weapons lighter and more efficient, have "computerized" war-waging to a large extent, and have reduced the need to carry heavy equipment. Jobs can also be redesigned and newer methods developed to allow performance by weaker people. Such redesigning was commonly done for factory work during World War II when women had to take over jobs previously done by men. As Paul Roush, a professor at the United States Naval Academy, notes:

It is well to remember that the equipment we use in the military was designed to accommodate the strength of men. It could have been made even larger and heavier and more difficult to manipulate so that most men could not handle it either. It could also have been designed so that women could use it effectively . . . Let's design it right in the future. (Bender et al., 1991:62).

Furthermore, "nations of smaller soldiers, like the Japanese

and Vietnamese, have designed weapons and equipment that suit them." (Symons, 1991:498). Obviously, this type of technological development may not be possible for all combat tasks now requiring great upper-body strength but it is conceivable that some progress can be made. What is needed is a willingness to do so. Present day obstacles should be viewed as challenges and not as one more reason to discriminate against women and to set up artificial barriers to entry.

Nevertheless, it remains true that the average woman today is weaker, in term of pure physical strength, than the average man. However, this should not and cannot be used as grounds for excluding all women. After all, many men cannot meet the Forces physical standards but that has not excluded all men from combat jobs. As Lieutenant-Colonel S. M. (Ret'd) Robinson writes:

The use of this facile comparison . . . to preclude women from combat roles, has been overdone and was challenged for several reasons. The degree of physical strength required for a particular job is simply one criterion among many - and it is not even the overriding criterion for all combat jobs. Rather than assume therefore, that all women are incapable of performing combat tasks because of the average woman's lack of physical capability, the specific job requirements - and not gender - should serve as the selection criteria. (Robinson, 1991:5).

Moreover, physical capabilities need not be construed as insurmountable impediments. Research studies have

demonstrated that, with time and training, almost everyone can improve their physical strength, and that the strength differential gap between the genders can be reduced (Robinson, 1991:6). The last proposition is grounded in undeniable empirical evidence. Trained athletes, in general, and Olympic athletes, in particular, are proof that performance differentials previously attributed solely to biological differences are affected by physical training. Over the years, both male and female Olympic athletes have improved their performances considerably, with women improving at a faster rate than men in the same sport (Segal, 1982:272). This betterment undoubtedly happened because the women trained hard and not because of gene mutation.

It is interesting that the CF should put forth such an argument in the first place since they are well aware of the benefits and results to be achieved with proper conditioning. They recruit their personnel without using any strength tests because they realize that the emphasis put on physical fitness during recruit training will bring most of the enrolled personnel up to the required standard. They know from experience that physical training can make most individuals reasonably fit.

One must also realize that physical strength is as much a matter of socialization as it is a function of biological

characteristics and of conditioning. Sex-role socialization plays a role in the way society perceives and develops the physical abilities of women. Historically, females have been discouraged from participating in most organized sports and have been totally excluded from specific ones. Until very recently, only a few physical activities had been considered appropriate for women (Segal, 1982:271). Since the 1970's, the situation has been changing and there has been a trend towards increased participation of females in organized sports and many have moved into areas previously defined as "for men only", such as boxing, wrestling, and weight lifting. If the trend holds, it is probable that women will continue to become more physically fit and stronger adults (Segal, 1982:271).

ENDURANCE

While it may be the case that the average man is stronger than the average woman, there is some evidence that, from conception to death, women endure better than men. Having researched the subject in some depth, Robinson notes that different studies have proposed the following: that about one third more male fetuses than female fetuses abort spontaneously; that boys are more likely to be born with congenital illnesses and brain disorders and that they are less likely to reach their first birthday than girls in

part because they are more vulnerable to infection; that by the age of 35, more males than females in Western countries have succumbed to infections, diseases, accidents, and suicides; that life expectancy for women in Canada is 79 years while it is only 72 for men; that sport researchers have noted that women show significantly less fatigue during exercise than men because they produce less lactic acid, which causes muscle fatigue; that researchers at the University of Toronto have contended that women may have an advantage in extremely cold weather because of their greater levels of subcutaneous fat, which keep them relatively warm and which enable them to survive longer than men on little or no food, and have provided evidence which suggest that women tolerate noise better than men (Robinson, 1991:6).

While this data may contradict other studies done on the subject, one must remember that research findings have often proven to be biased and that no one study can provide "truths" and information applicable to over 50% of the world's population.

According to a report released recently by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, subjects are usually approached from the man's point of view only and this has led to omissions, blind spots and biases which distort reality and may invalidate a research project and its findings. (Robinson, 1985:10).

Furthermore, it should be noted that today's Canadian women, or men for that matter, have not been in situations

where this endurance differential thesis could be proved or disproved and the "conventional approach in research and law is to assume that no difference exists between groups until a difference is demonstrated." (Segal, 1982:275). Given that no evidence exists about whether women are superior or inferior or equal to men in terms of their ability to withstand and endure the effect of combat, then there is no reason to assume that they are inferior (Segal, 1982:275).

PREGNANCY AND CHILD-RELATED ISSUES

These issues have been favorites of many patriarchal institutions, the Armed Forces included, for centuries. The fact that only women are physiologically able to give birth has often been used to deny them rights and privileges accorded to men. Pregnancy as an argument to exclude all women from combat units, contains many fallacious assumptions and damaging stereotypical attitudes. Firstly, it wrongly assumes that all women can or want to be mothers: this has been ably demonstrated to be an erroneous supposition. Secondly, it presupposes that all women experience pregnancy in a uniform manner. Common sense and a minimum of exposure to pregnant women easily demonstrate the fallacy of such an utterance. In fact, there is an enormous range of individual differences regarding what women can and cannot do while pregnant and the extent to

which they may or may not be physically incapacitated. Some, not all, may need to severely restrict their activities in the early months of pregnancy but this is not an "impossible to overcome" problem. Combat activities, as with most occupations, entail a variety of tasks, some of which can be easily performed even by women who are in the last trimester of their pregnancies (Segal, 1982:272). While it is the case that most pregnant women should not perform strenuous activities for part of their pregnancies, it does not automatically follow that they are unable to perform any duties for the duration.

Even if it were true that no women could execute any combat-related tasks during their nine months of gestation and for a period of three months afterwards, given today's birthrate of less than two children per woman, it would only mean that certain women would be "incapacitated" for a two-year period out of a possible 25 year career. This is hardly a convincing argument for excluding all women from combat duties, including women who have no desire of becoming mothers and women who already have had their children prior to enrolling (Segal, 1982:273).

Jeff M. Tuten, one of the contributors to Female Soldiers - Combatants or Noncombatants?, suggests that the physiological ability of women to bear children automatically disqualifies all of them from combat duties

because, he notes, there "is the spectre of intentional pregnancies by servicewomen to avoid deployment" since, in his view, this would represent "an easier and more pleasant alternative than desertion to Sweden." (Tuten, 1982:251). I shall not debate whether or not pregnancy is in fact an easier and more pleasant alternative than a move to Sweden, but I will emphasize that desertion has always been a part of war, and that it has almost always been carried out by men. They have shot themselves, faked illnesses, physical and psychological, or simply walked away in order to avoid combat. Still, these recorded and empirically verifiable events have never been used as arguments for the exclusion of all males from combat or from the armed forces. More importantly though, Tuten's position is one of pure speculation. He does not know and he does not have any evidence to support his preposterous claim that any women would use pregnancy as a ploy for getting out of combat. An issue as crucial to women as equal employment opportunities cannot be resolved through the use of far-fetched suppositions or "gut feelings" such as those put forth by Tuten.

Complementary to the issue of pregnancy is that of childcare. A prevalent attitude on that subject is that the propagation and care of the species is women's business and responsibility. This is, and has been, used to decree that

a woman's place is at home and not on battlefields, on aircraft, or on ships. An American editorial advisor of Fidelity, a monthly magazine of conservative Catholic opinion, James G. Brown Jr., in an essay entitled "Combat is not an Appropriate Role for Women", concludes that:

Ultimately, though, the point is that women have something better and more important to do than go off to war: bear and raise children. It's a point that should guide the consciences and hearts of all people, not just women. Of course, though, this point is it also argues against women in the armed forces, women in the workforce, daycare, contraception, extra-marital sex, abortion, permissive divorce laws, and all others non-negotiable demands of feminism. Motherhood is the most noble human calling. Unless we reinstitute respect for motherhood, women will continue to search futilely for something else to fulfill them, children will continue to suffer, and our society will continue its descent. (Bender et al., 1991:85).

This conclusion is so blatantly discriminatory and sexist that I shall restrict its evaluation to the following statements: not all women are mothers or want to be; the existence of childcare as a women-only issue is "based on the untenable assumption that children need their mothers more than they need their fathers" (Segal, 1982:274); childcare is morally and ethically the shared responsibility of both parents; and, the attitude ignores the fact that there is a growing number of single fathers who are not so discriminated against.

Other arguments against mothers in combat conveniently

disregard the fact that the need to be away from one's family and the need to put one's life "on the line" are not restricted to servicewomen. Many civilian women have jobs which are dangerous and/or which necessitate frequent travel or around-the-clock availability for emergencies (policewomen, fire fighters, doctors, etc.). It makes no more sense to restrict servicewomen because of their parental obligations than it would to restrict civilian women called upon to be away from home and to risk their lives.

MENSES AND PMS

While menstruation and pre-menstrual syndrome were not used as formal arguments against women in combat during the Human Rights Tribunal hearings, they are frequently mentioned in informal discussions as potential problems. This is so because of the assumption that menstruation somehow equally affects all women's ability to carry on their work. If this assumption actually reflected reality then all women could not hold any employment and all families would not function effectively for a given period each month. This is truly an indefensible standpoint. The facts are that some, not all, women are affected by menstruation at varying degrees, and of those, only a very small minority are totally incapacitated by this normal

bodily function. It would not, therefore, be logical to restrict all women because a few of them may or may not experience some debilitating hormonal changes.

It is interesting to note that the issue is only raised vis à vis women in combat units; apparently menstruation does not appear to affect the ability of nurses, technicians, clerks, cooks and the rest of the classifications opened to women. Moreover, every member of the Forces is called upon to serve in field (combat) environments during recruit and leadership training. At that time, they are not asked about their cycles and they are neither excused from attending the courses nor prevented from carrying on any strenuous duties. It is rightly assumed by the authorities that all candidates are physically and emotionally fit to undertake and complete training. In my nearly 19 years of experience with the institution, and after having spent many weeks on these types of courses, I have never heard of a single female failing to complete training because of menstruation.

Other menstruation-related issues are those of privacy and cleanliness. Personally, I have never found these things to be problematic. One can always find the needed privacy to attend to bodily functions; menstruation is simply one more of these functions. As for cleanliness, men and women simply do the best they can. It is not as if

menstruating women required any fanciful or complex mechanism to take care of their hygiene. Water and soap are usually available and plentiful, even in the field, and when or if they are not, then both genders have a problem, not just the females. Finally, tampons and pads are neither prohibitively bulky nor heavy. Women are quite capable of stuffing these supplies in their pockets and packsacks and the Canadian Forces can easily keep some in their supply vehicles along with ammunitions and spare parts of all kind.

The most amazing part of the argument, however, is the way it makes menstruation appear to be a new insurmountable obstacle for women who wish to join combat units. War, combat, and menstruation have all existed for centuries and none of them ever appeared to have caused any mutual interference. It is probable that the thousands of Russian women involved in combat during WWII and the thousands of North-Vietnamese females engaged in guerilla warfare in the 1970's menstruated. No incident of mass female hysteria or of periodical female incompetence has been recorded from either of these countries. Finally, it should be recognized that female military nurses have had a long history of functioning in wartime under primitive, unsanitary conditions without questions being raised about menstruation interfering with the performance of their duties.

The arguments presented under the heading of "physical

capability", like most of the objections raised by the people who would rather not have females in combat units, are protests of convenience. They concentrate on half-truths, myths, fallacious assumptions, and fantastic extrapolations. Moreover, many of them are circular - women cannot be allowed into combat until it is proven that they are as capable as men but, to prove this capability, they must be allowed into combat during times of war - and therefore defy logical exploration and solutions. Finally, they cater to out-dated attitudes and have no place in an intelligent and honest debate.

Women have rightly argued that the fact that a physical difference does exist cannot be extrapolated to mean that all men are physically strong and that no women are, or that differences in strength cannot be narrowed, or that existing levels of fitness and strength cannot be improved upon (Robinson, 1991:6 and Segal, 1982:271). They have demanded that physical capability be discussed in relation to specific requirements, and that the level of physical strength necessary to perform any particular job be the selection criterion, not gender. What matters is not average statistics or the number of women who can meet established standards but whether or not women have the same access as men to all jobs (Robinson, 1991:6). It is a matter of freedom of choice and of human rights, not of

generalizations.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

The next set of arguments used by the CF was that some environments were unsuitable for women because they lacked privacy and because toilet and sleeping facilities were both crude and unpleasant, sometimes even dangerous, in combat situations (Human Rights Tribunal Decision, 3/89:51). The Tribunal countered by pointing out that:

environmental conditions can range from offices to tanks to destroyers to isolated Arctic posting. An unusual environment does not affect a woman's ability to perform her duties efficiently. Some small structural changes to existing facilities can prevent potential problems. Furthermore, facilities shared by both sexes are now common in non-military life. (Symons, 1991:502).

It did, however, find that the argument was grounds for the exclusion of women from submarines because that type of environment provided absolutely no possibility of privacy for either gender (Human Rights Tribunal Decision, 3/89:52)³.

The Forces' arguments are rather ludicrous. Do they really believe that women have never faced those problems before, that they have never endured these conditions? Have they already forgotten about military nurses who have dealt with filth, lack of privacy, vermin, and the like, for over

100 years? And what about civilian women in times of war: did they not do without privacy, electricity, water, and indoor toilets? It might be unpleasant to have to use an outdoor toilet, or to deal with sub-zero temperatures, or to go for weeks without a shower, but it is unpleasant for everyone, not only for females. Furthermore, there is no evidence that these less-than-ideal situations have ever prevented servicewomen from doing their jobs. The Tribunal stated that the SWINTER trials made that point very clear: "the evidence presented . . . indicated clearly that an unusual environment . . . did not in and of itself detract from the performance of their duties . . . (Human Rights Tribunal Decision, 3/89:51).

Part of the Forces' argumentation was related to the costs involved in expanding sleeping and hygiene facilities on ships and on bases. The Tribunal did not agree with the military's position. It noted that: "in the civilian world the public . . . are used to unisex toilets on public transport carriers, and coeducational dormitories and bathroom facilities have not proven to exert a deleterious influence on job performance." (Human Rights Tribunal Decision, 3/89:51). Moreover, it found that the problem could be solved or managed "by minimal structural arrangements in existing facilities." (Human Rights Tribunal Decision, 3/89:51). This type of argumentation can also be

dismissed now, as it has been in the past, when it was used as justification against the emancipation of Black people, or for the continuation of child labour law in Europe. "We cannot correlate cost with equality in this case, any more than we could in the past with certain equality legislations." (Robinson, 1991:11).

SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND COHESION

The CF alleged that "gender adds a complicating element to the performance of individuals and of the group when women are added to an all-male unit." (Human Rights Tribunal Decision, 3/89:52). They "worried" that fraternization, harassment, and favoritism would lead to discipline and morale breakdowns, which, in turn, would affect operational effectiveness (Human Rights Tribunal Decision, 3/89:53).

The Tribunal responded by stating that a very large part of the evidence on the issue was "either impressionistic and anecdotal and often based on participant observation," and that the interpretation of the significance of gathered data on the subject "can be or is often contestable." (Human Rights Tribunal Decision, 3/89:53). It concluded that "the social factors in operational effectiveness and risk minimization were important but not sufficient to exclude a class of individuals from employment" since these factors could be

mitigated or modified "through education, work experience, and leadership." (Human Rights Tribunal Decision, 3/89:53).

The CF used very similar arguments to defend their contentions listed under the "social relationships" and the "cohesion" categories. I will, therefore, present the Forces' case and the Tribunal's findings on "cohesion" before analyzing both categories simultaneously.

The military argued that cohesion was of special importance to the institution because "it is an essential ingredient of the drive to reach a goal, to perform well and to die for one another." (Human Rights Tribunal Decision, 3/89:54). Absence of cohesion was said "to lead to greater risk and, therefore, less operational effectiveness." (Human Rights Tribunal Decision, 3/89:54). The Tribunal, for its part, stated that it was difficult to scientifically measure cohesion and that indeed it appeared to reside in the eye of the beholder (Human Rights Tribunal Decision, 3/89:54). It concluded that: "there was no, or not sufficient evidence of an indisputable kind, to suggest that a mixed gender unit could not develop that cohesion necessary to put in a better than adequate performance." (Human Rights Tribunal Decision, 3/89:56).

The element pertaining specifically to "cohesion" was women's supposed lack of innate aggressiveness, and some of the ones relating to both "social relationships" and

"cohesion" were concerns over the possibility that sexual relationships of a demoralizing nature - unhealthy fraternization, harassment, and favoritism - could arise and affect morale, discipline, and unit (male) bonding. Every single one of these arguments has as its basis perceived intrinsically female characteristics and their detrimental effects on males.

GENDER PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Presuppositions about the essence and psychological characteristics of women have played an important role in the "women in combat" debate, whether or not they were overtly acknowledged as being part of the discussions. Therefore, they need to be examined seriously and de-mystified if they are to be refuted. Before dealing with specific issues brought by the CF, however, I want to clarify my own position on the supposed psychological differences existing between men and women. On the issue, I unequivocally side with Lieutenant-Colonel (Retired) S. Robinson who notes that:

Arguments that men and women are psychologically different are without foundation. Differences exist among people and can be attributed to many variables: culture, religion, societal conditioning, ideology, physical environment, and so on. But there is no evidence to suggest that differences are gender-based. (Robinson, 1991:6).

Admittedly, both genders in our society have been constructed with and complicated by beliefs and assumptions about ideal male and female characteristics but this does not mean that these are accurate or fair. All women are supposed to be caring, nurturing, submissive, passive, and lacking aggressiveness. All men are hypothesized as being active, dominant, aggressive, rational, and, on the whole, devoid of "feminine" emotions such as nurturing and sensitivity. Academic research and a basic understanding of social constructions confirm that it is very doubtful that these traits actually describe the way men and women really are. More likely, "there is a continuum on each of these traits along which each man and woman fall," (Segal, 1982:275) and both genders can position themselves at any point on those lines, regardless of their sex. Some men are "naturally" more nurturing, submissive, and passive than many women. This, however, has not been used as an excuse to automatically exclude all men, whether or not they were suited for the job.

The assumptions inherent in gender stereotypes become more disquieting and upsetting when they are used as "legitimate" reasons for women's exclusion and when they suppose that certain characteristics such as nurturing and submissiveness have no place in combat units. The latter proposition is nonsensical. Human beings, soldiers

included, need nurturing, and combat forces need people who will submit unquestionably to the will of their leaders. The whole institution is based on obedience and on efficient leader-follower relationships.

It is also disingenuous to propose that all females lack the "aggressiveness" necessary to wage a war or that all males possess that "quality": no such thesis has ever been scientifically proven. Moreover, it would be very difficult to devise a test which could correctly predict how any individual would react if faced with a kill or be killed situation. We do know, however, that some women have killed: mothers have used weapons to defend their children, abused wives have killed their husbands, policewomen have shot criminals, and countless women have fought in wars around the world and throughout history. This is empirical evidence of women's ability.

Strangely, perhaps, some authors have used crime statistics, which demonstrate that female participation in violent crime is dwarfed by that of males, to sustain their claims that females lack "combat aggressiveness" (Bender et al., 1991:90). I fail to see the relevancy of these statistics since it does not appear that the military is interested in recruiting murderers, rapists, and other violent criminals.

Another related vigorously-held-onto belief is that,

by nature, males are the appointed "protectors" of females. This male "instinct" has often been used to argue against allowing women into combat. The rationale is that a man might become careless or burdened by his "innate" need to protect his fellow soldier, if she is a woman. This myth has survived even in the face of the most blatant evidence against its supposed truth. The facts are that men are overwhelmingly the ones who perpetrate crimes of violence against women on a world-wide scale (Robinson, 1991:8). When Marc Lepine went on a rampage at the Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal, the situation was, to a degree, analogous to combat. On that occasion, men and women fled and there are no reports that any man tried to shield and protect the victims of Lepine's rage. I am not suggesting that men should have confronted the armed mad man; I am only pointing out that the protectiveness myth implied that they would have. It is not known for sure why no one tried to interfere with Lepine but it certainly is plausible to surmise that, for most people present at the time, the powerful self-preservation instinct prevailed. It is much more logical, therefore, to assume that participants in combat situations would be more concerned with their immediate mission and their prospects for staying alive than with the protection and safety of their comrades, be they male or female.

In any case, even if we are to assume that some men might want to protect their female comrades, I fail to see how this could hinder either cohesion or operational effectiveness. In past wars, some soldiers did take some extraordinary risks to protect and save other men. Generally, decorations of valour have been conferred upon them and there have been no reports that such behaviour impaired individual and group performance.

While I, and other women, recognize "that this argument for excluding women from combat is rooted in one of society's most noble impulses: protection of the weak", it remains that "today's woman does not see herself as weak. She sees protection as something given by the 'superior' to the less able - or, for that matter, to the 'inferior' - as that which is given to . . . a child, not an adult" (Robinson, 1985:6).

Finally, other dangerous occupations, such as police officers and fire fighters, also used to bar women for their own protection. Over the years, such policies were discarded or overturned by the courts. By 1989, the CF was the only organization still tolerating discriminatory employment practices under the guise of women's best interest and military necessity (Bender *et al.*, 1991:69).

DEMORALIZING SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS

Given that combat units are teams, it is readily apparent that they need characteristics such as cohesion, effectiveness, and morale to do their jobs and win battles. What is less demonstrable is the assumption that the inclusion of women into those units would negatively affect any or all of these factors. Little conclusive evidence exists which could support a correlation (positive or negative) between gender and dynamics such as morale, discipline, and cohesion. What research has determined is that the introduction of a minority group into an established organization often causes resentment and overt hostility. One such example is the introduction of African-American soldiers into U.S. military units from which they had been previously excluded. It was also demonstrated, however, that with careful leadership and planning, integration could be complete and successful, and, research and history both indicate that antipathy usually dissipates as the minority and majority groups learn to work together as a team (Human Rights Tribunal Decision, 3/89:55). There is no proof that men and women could not be as satisfyingly integrated as the African-Americans were in the U.S. army or as Francophones were in the CF. Women have already been successfully integrated in other "male" organizations - police forces and fire fighting teams -

there is no reason why they could not become fully participating and accepted members of combat units.

However, the key issue for the Canadian military appears to be the possibility that sexual attractions of an "unhealthy" kind could develop between its members thereby hindering operational effectiveness and interfering with the male bonding process. This line of reasoning basically asserts that females in a predominantly male environment will automatically cause problems because men will feel sexual attraction towards them. This generalization is illogical. It disregards the fact that men and women have been working together for centuries, that mixed-gender units have existed in Canada since 1885, and that no such problems have ever been documented or reported, at least not on a major scale (Robinson, 1985:5). More importantly though, that argument makes women responsible and accountable for male behaviour. The rationale is that if women were not present then men would have no problems keeping their sexual instincts in check and would not sexually harass anyone. At best, this argument is a sad commentary on men's ability to differentiate between right and wrong and to control their "drives". If men really have these difficulties, then for society's sake, it might be worthwhile to study this male sexual libido problem and to figure out possible solutions. It would also be more

profitable to teach men self-restraint than to simply keep women out of combat units since the vast majority of men will inevitably be confronted with the presence of women at some point in their lives, in and out of combat settings.

Concerns have also been expressed that women might receive preferential treatment from their male supervisors. Why, one wonders, should this be viewed as a woman's problem? Such reasoning is "a subtle attempt . . . to place the blame on women and penalize them for weaknesses exhibited by men." (Robinson, 1985:6). Again, it would be preferable and more logical to educate the men than to remove from their sight over half the human race.

It is interesting to note that the assumptions made about the effect of women on men in combat units are contradictory. On the one hand, it is assumed that men might feel an overwhelming and detrimental urge to protect women, while, on the other hand, it is assumed that men will sexually harass those same women. In either case, however, it seems clear that the potential problem is male behavior and not women's presence.

Interference with male bonding has been another persistent objection of the CF. This argument implies that women as a group and that mixed-gender units cannot and will not bond. This assertion is a little strange. Mixed-gender police teams are able to develop strong bonds and to rely on

one another in life threatening situations. Guerilla and revolutionary groups, both of which often include a high proportion of women fighters, have effectively bonded. However, one might feel about feminist groups, it seems absurd to argue that these women do not bond (Bender *et al.*, 1991:61). Finally, when faced with a common enemy, members of families, communities and countries have bonded. It is quite certain that emotional bonding does take place among members of a combat unit but there is no evidence that women have hampered or will hamper the process.

Women cannot be denied equal access on the basis of unproven assumed psychological attributes or on the grounds that their presence may negatively affect men's ability to bond and to do their jobs or that it may add undue sexual pressures to the environments. If problems arise, they should be attributed to the individuals responsible for the harassment, the preferential treatment, and the fraternization, and not on womanhood. They should be dealt with through education, leadership, policies, and punishment, not through the exclusion of women. Myths and assumptions cannot determine national policy (Robinson, 1991:12).

MOTIVATION

Under this heading, the CF argued that most women are

not interested in serving in combat units and that others might be deterred from enrolling if future postings included combat service. The Tribunal answered that the "intention to serve" may be strengthened "in light of evidence that more women . . . are working throughout their lives and that some at least will regard service in the CAF as a career." (Human Rights Tribunal Decision, 3/89:56). It therefore concluded that the motivational factor was not an element affecting risk.

The CF was proposing that the issue of women in combat was a moot point since most women would not want to join combat units in the first place. While there is some truth to that proposition, it does not follow that no women would want to join or that no women should be allowed to join in. Many men have no desire to work in daycare centres, or to be housekeepers, or to participate in combat, and most women would not want to be mechanics, linepersons, or professional wrestlers. In many cases though, society has understood or has been made, through education and legislation, to respect these differences in tastes and aspirations. It has been able to learn not to use general preferences as excuses to violate the rights of minorities whose tastes happen to differ from its norms. Women who desire to join combat units are demanding the same type of understanding and support and an end to gender discrimination for both sexes.

Moreover, questions of "desire to join" and of numbers miss the point entirely. "The overriding question here is not how many women want to be in combat, but why women should be prevented from taking on combat-oriented jobs if they want them and can qualify, as individuals, for them." (Robinson, 1991:8).

It is true that to-date very few Canadian women have opted for careers in combat arms classifications. However, one must remember that combat has only been an option for women for the last three years, that it has not been actively promoted as an attractive career choice to presently serving servicewomen, that the Forces have not made many special efforts to recruit females into the combat trades, and that combat units are hostile to the presence of servicewomen. With time, however, the option might become more appealing to more women and more men. This lack of instant appeal is not new. Two or three decades ago, very few females aspired to join traditional male professions or trades. "Today, fully half of the graduating classes of the major professions are women." (Robinson, 1991:8). It will take time, education, understanding, and cooperation from everyone involved in order to overcome the obvious and the more subtle barriers to entry presently existing (Robinson, 1991:9). It is important, however, to begin the process and the first step has to be the removal of gender as a criteria

for inclusion or exclusion. Finally, if willingness to serve in combat "is to function as the basis for participation for one category of people, then it should be the same for other categories." (Segal, 1982:276).

CONCLUSION

This chapter has examined the CF's arguments against the inclusion of women into combat units and trades and the ruling of a Human Rights Tribunal on the issue. It was shown that the CF's discriminatory employment policies were not based on bona fide occupational requirements but rather that they were grounded in prejudices and out-dated notions about women.

DND has used a number of rationalizations to exclude women from combat. In most cases, there was no substantive data to support its assumptions that women are incapable physically or psychologically or that women will have a negative effect on the unit. (Odorico, 1983:139).

Overall, my conclusion correlates with the following findings of the Human Rights Tribunal that:

- 1) The CF held stereotypic views about women's capacities and capabilities and as a result adopted paternalistic policies to give women special but not equal treatment.
- 2) The risk to operational effectiveness was not shown, in evidence, to be so great as to overbalance the claims by women to non-discriminatory treatment.
- 3) Women have proved in the SWINTER trials,

and in their performance in recently opened occupations, that they can serve or have the potential to serve in any occupation or unit in the forces.

- 4) The risk to individual rights is high when women are excluded from any occupations, and the risk to national security is, by comparison, low. (Human Rights Tribunal Decision, 3/89:62-67).

I strongly believe that women have a right and a duty to share in the burden of defending Canada and of helping this country fulfill its international obligations. My belief does not stem from patriotism alone; it is also firmly grounded in the feminist proposition which holds that women must break male monopoly in every domain, including sanctioned violence, if they are to achieve equality. As long as women do not share equally in the duties and privileges of full citizenship, they will remain second-class citizens and continue to be denied full participation in political decision-making and in positions of authority in society.

Moreover, thus far, the combat exclusion has mostly "protected" servicewomen from reaching the CF's highest echelon and not from danger.

The military is, by definition, a risky profession. No matter how recruiters may try to mask its true nature, waging war can be dangerous to your health. Taking the military oath is like taking marriage vows - it's for better or for worse . . . Every man or woman who volunteers must be prepared to accept that reality or find another line of work. What little protection the

rules provide for women is at the expense of their opportunities for challenging jobs and experiences that enhance career advancement, particularly to the senior officer and enlisted grades. It is also at the expense of military personnel flexibility and efficiency. They waste precious talents and reduce women's ability to contribute to the military mission. (Bender et al., 1991: 69-70).

The Human Rights Tribunal's Order might have changed the Force's policies but it could not change social attitudes, at least, not instantaneously. The Second Annual Report of the Minister's Advisory Board on Women in the Canadian Forces made it clear that it would be naive to believe that equal rights legislation is sufficient to ensure the equality of women. The fact that integration has not been either smooth or problem-free supports the thesis that indoctrinated attitudes and opinions cannot be suddenly and magically changed. Legislation alone is impotent to rapidly alter culturally defined roles and behaviours. The CF must become proactive on the issue and must consciously set about to educate its members and help them redefine gender constructions. It is not a matter of choice for them: the law states that they must do so. The institution has to finally realize that women no longer tolerate others making decisions for or against them solely on the basis of their sex - and that now, it is also against the law to do so.

The next chapter will summarize the findings of

the Advisory Committee responsible for the external monitoring of the CF's integration process and will examine the remaining "unofficial" barriers to the full participation of servicewomen.

ENDNOTES

¹ Sanctum: a place where one is free from intrusion.
Sanctum Sanctorum : Holy of holies.

² It is important to note that the CF did not have a right to appeal in this case since the ultimate authority over the Armed Forces rests with the civilian government in Canada, as befits a democracy, and the Government was persuaded not to appeal by the then A/MDN, Mary Collins. (From a discussion with S. M. Robinson.)

³ For a good analysis of the "submarine question" see Symons, 1991:502-503.

Chapter IV

ARE SERVICEWOMEN FULLY INTEGRATED IN THE CF OF THE 1990s?

INTRODUCTION

In February 1989, a Canadian Human Rights Tribunal made an Order designed to halt the CF's discriminatory employment practices and policies and to promote equality of opportunity for servicewomen. The complete Order read as follows:

- 1) The CAF CREW trials are to continue but are not to be regarded as trials, but as the lead-up or preparation for full integration, that is, the CREW exercise will be the first stage of implementation of a new policy of full integration of women into all units and occupations now closed to them.
- 2) Full integration is to take place with all due speed, as a matter of principle and as a matter of practice, for both active and reserve forces.
- 3) The implementation of the principle requires the removal of all restrictions from both operational and personnel considerations; the minimum male requirements should be phased out; new occupational personnel selection standards should be imposed immediately.
- 4) There must be internal and external monitoring of the policy with appropriate modifications being made immediately.
- 5) The CAF and the Canadian Human Rights Commission are to devise a mutually

acceptable implementation plan so that the integration of women proceeds steadily, regularly and consistently towards the goal of complete integration of women within the next ten years. (Human Rights Tribunal Decision 3/89:65).

The letter and the spirit of the Order were clear: the CF had to remove formal barriers to the full participation of female members and provide equal employment opportunities to all of their members, regardless of gender. This Order became the "law of the land" when the Federal Government chose not to appeal.

After the Tribunal adjudicated for the complainants, the Chief of Defence Staff issued a message to all military members, advising them of the decision of the Tribunal and of his position on the issue. He writes:

First, I can tell you that, although I have expressed concern over the legality and substance of the Tribunal direction to terminate the trials, it has been concluded that an appeal not be undertaken. As a consequence, we must now accept that there no longer exists a Bona Fide occupational requirement for discrimination against women through employment limitations The net effect is that . . . we must introduce a new employment policy which essentially treats the men and women of the CF in a completely equal way The main point I wish to make at this time is that the CHRC decision can be looked upon as the latest (and presumably the last) of a series of developments within the CF over the past 20 years leading to the establishment of full equality between the serving men and women of the Forces. To be sure, it eliminates the scientific trial that we believed was necessary before opening up the final range of MOCs to women, but in the

judgement of the Tribunal this is an acceptable risk. Full integration is now the law of the land, and we of course must obey the law. (DND - Canadian Human Rights Tribunal Decision: Women in Combat, 1989:1-2).

The CDS' endorsement of the Tribunal's decision appeared imbued with reservations and conveyed the definite impression that the highest-ranking member of the CF was not in total accord with the Order.

It is rather ironic then that the CDS concluded his message with the following: "With every earlier step along the way we have implemented such changes with sensitivity and the loyalty that is the hallmark of the CF. I expect no less of all members of the Service at this important juncture. It is up to all of us to make it work, in a true spirit of equality." (DND - Canadian Human Rights Tribunal Decision: Women in Combat, 1989:2-3). Irony because I have demonstrated earlier on that changes have not, as a rule, been willingly nor sensitively implemented and because the conclusion seemed to be more of an after-thought than a sincere fiat.

Nevertheless, the Tribunal handed down its decision and the CDS stated that the law must be obeyed. Therefore, as of February 1989, servicewomen officially became equal to servicemen and all categories of employment (with the exception of submariner) were officially opened to them.

One could, therefore, assume that by 1993 all barriers to servicewomen's equality had been removed and that military females were now found in almost every unit, trade, and classification of the CF. However, as it will be demonstrated in this chapter, such is not the case. While "paper" restrictions have been stricken out from the books, it appears that other and more subtle unofficial barriers are still impeding the career choices and the career progression of Canadian servicewomen.

It should be noted that the military was given 10 years by the Tribunal to complete integration. Therefore, in this chapter, I will examine the available literature for indications of progress rather than for evidence of total integration. I will also attempt to establish the type of "unofficial" barriers which still restrict military women. To do so, I will review the annual reports published by the Minister's Advisory Board on Women in the Canadian Forces examining the issues and problems cited in those reports.

MINISTER'S ADVISORY BOARD ON WOMEN IN THE CANADIAN FORCES

The members of the Human Rights Tribunal recognized that their Order could not be easily implemented and could not automatically eliminate sexist beliefs and attitudes. In their judgement, they write:

The long term societal trend is clear: women

will continue to enter the paid workforce . . . and more will make the commitment to long term careers. . . . And it is clear that young men will also continue to enrol in the Forces and they are likely to be not only more at ease with women as colleagues but also more supportive of them in new roles, than are many of the middle-aged members. These inter-generational attitudinal differences may not lend themselves to easy resolution now but they will probably resolve themselves in time in any case. (Human Rights Tribunal Decision 3/89:66).

The statements about attitudes proved to be prophetic: I will show that negative attitudes towards servicewomen are still one of the biggest impediments to full participation faced by military women today.

This concern over attitudes might have been one of the factors which led the Tribunal to order that an outside monitoring agency be established. The Minister's Advisory Board on Women in the Canadian Forces (referred to hereafter as the Board), established in February 1990, was given the task of monitoring, advising, and of making recommendations about all facets of women's service in the Canadian Forces and was charged with the reviewing of the Forces's policies affecting the ability of servicewomen to serve in all occupations (Canada - First Annual Report, 1991:1). Its two annual reports (1990-91 and 1991-92) are the main available sources of information about the gains made and the problems encountered by servicewomen since total integration began. Unfortunately, the 1992-93 report

was not available at the time this thesis was written.

The Board's members were all civilians but most of them had served in either the Reserve or the Regular components of the CF or had other types of connection to the military. During their first year as a group, the members visited a number of military bases, spoke to countless military personnel, gave lectures designed to explain their function and to address concerns, and observed men and women at work in many different settings. During their second year, the members re-visited many of the bases they had previously briefed and observed and interviewed service members of every rank in an effort to uncover problems and evaluate progress.

The bases visited belonged to the four different Commands - bases grouped by functions - of the CF. They were Maritime Command, Mobile Command (Army), Air Command, and Communication Command. Given that one of the aims of this chapter is to find evidence of progress, each Command and some of their individual and common "shortcomings" will be evaluated in turn using the 1990-91 and the 1991-92 reports.

COMMANDS

During their initial visits, the Board's members were somewhat pleased about the efforts towards integration made

by Maritime, Air, and Communication Commands and were critical of the lack of integration of Mobile Command.

Of Maritime Command, the report notes that:

Most navy leaders, and particularly commanding officers of mixed-gender ships, appear to have adopted a "let's get on with it" approach to integration. Without exception the Board has experienced, at senior command levels, an attitude which welcomes the valuable contribution women are making to the navy. The navy is ahead of its own initial expectations concerning the speed of integration and appears to be actively looking for solutions to present or future problems associated with the process. (Canada - First Annual Report, 1991:9).

Members also found Air Command to be progressing well towards integration. They wrote that there was a high degree of acceptance and willingness to constructively solve problems at the supervisory level. They noted that while there was room for improvement in attitudes in some non-traditional areas, "the acceptance of women and the on-job social climate has, as acknowledged by women themselves, definitively changed for the better over the past few years." (Canada - First Annual Report, 1991:22).

Communications Command was thought to be the only truly integrated Command of the CF. The Board reported that there were no restrictions on the employment of women, that women were found at all levels of the rank structure, and that men and women were comfortable working together in the technical environment. It concluded that mixed-gender

employment issues seemed to be well-managed by supervisors and that, from the General down, all military members seemed determined to make the most of their personnel resources whether male or female (Canada - First Annual Report, 1991:28-29).

Mobile Command's track record on integration was found to be the worst of the four. This finding is not really surprising, however, since throughout this thesis, I have demonstrated that the Army was consistently the most reluctant of the Armed Forces' Branches to accept women. Hard combat units, such as the infantry and the artillery, have usually contended that the jobs they performed are too arduous for all women.

The Board made many observations about Mobile Command. Firstly, it found that few preparations had been made to prepare the units for integration. Secondly, it reported that in some units the atmosphere was hostile between genders and towards the system. Many men felt betrayed by their leaders who had failed to keep their "male bastion" intact. Thirdly, the general attitude was often that the women were still on trial and that a case could be built to challenge or appeal the Tribunal decision. A prevalent "no women, no problem" stance failed to recognize the changed legal and social circumstances. Finally, it stated that "it is evident that there is a core of negative sentiments

toward the acceptance of women in combat arms units in the army." (Canada - First Annual Report, 1991:12-15).

In its second evaluation of the four Commands, the Board found that Communications Command had absorbed growing numbers of women reasonably smoothly; that Mobile Command had had the most difficulty; that the Navy had continued to put considerable effort into the integration process but that there still were some gaps; and that the Air Force complacency was not always warranted. (Canada - Second Annual Report, 1992:1). It was noted, however, that all Commands had devoted attention to the first report's recommendations and that Mobile Command had opened all positions in all combat units to women.

Perhaps the best available indicators of integration progress, or lack thereof, are the statistics provided at the end of each report which state how many servicewomen were trained in combat-related occupations and how many were posted to combat-related units. In every case, these numbers were in accord with the qualitative comments made in the annual reports about each individual command.

It should be noted that no statistics are provided for Communication Command as a separate command because this branch of the Forces has been fully integrated for many years and because members of communication occupations are found in every other command since they provide a support

service essential to the Navy, the Army and the Air Force - the same way the services provided by clerks, drivers, cooks, and nurses are necessary to most units.

During the 1990-91 period, the Navy trained 65 female officers and 120 female NCMs in combat-related occupations and posted 136 servicewomen to its ships. The figures for the 1991-92 period were 88, 203 and 185 respectively. The latter number represented respective increases of 35, 69 and 36 per cent and provided strong evidence of progress within Maritime Command. (Canada - First Annual Report, 1991:Annex C, 1-2, and Canada - Second Annual Report, 1992:47-48).

During the 1990-91 period, the Air Force trained 82 female officers and 7 NCMs in combat-related occupations and posted 23 women to its flying units. The figures for 1991-92 were 87, 7 and 30 respectively. These numbers represented respective increases of 6, 0 and 30 per cent. As the Board members noted, the complacency of Air Command was "not always warranted." (Canada - First Annual Report, 1991:Annex C, 5, and Canada - Second Annual Report, 1992:51-52).

The Land Operations had the most difficulty retaining their servicewomen. During the 1990-91 period, 333 female NCMs were recruited. Of that number, 199 did not complete training, 8 were in recruit school, 6 were undergoing language training, 27 were undergoing trade training, 77

were members of land units and 16 were "on hold"'. For the 1991-92 period, 351 women were recruited, 260 did not complete training, 16 were undergoing some kind of training, 71 were members of land units and 4 were "on hold". (Canada - First Annual Report, 1991:Annex C, 3-4, and Canada - Second Annual Report, 1992:49-50).

Most of the figures for the 1991-92 period represented decreases in female participation in Mobile Command. More women were recruited than in 1990-91 but a greater percentage did not complete training and fewer women were posted to land units. It is difficult to ascertain whether the high rate of attrition was caused by ineffectual recruiting methods - i.e. were the women tested to ensure that they had the required physical abilities to succeed? Were they motivated to go into combat-related employment or were they "pushed" into these occupations by overly eager recruiters? - or whether attrition was caused by some of the problems identified by the Board members - i.e. poorly designed equipment, hostile environments, the negative attitude of some male trainers and supervisors. It is likely that both factors contributed to the poor integration track record of the Army.

Responding to the Board's Second Annual Report, the CDS wrote, in a letter to the Associate Minister of National Defence, that he was satisfied "that progress in mixed

gender employment is being made in all commands"; however, he also added that he was "equally aware that it will be some time before all of the conditions necessary for routine employment of women will be met." (DND - Minister's Advisory Board, 21 Dec 1992:1).

It is impossible to comment further on the performance of the individual Commands until the Third Annual Report is published in 1994. One must be careful not to assume from the two reports that the situation actually worsened between 1990 and 1992 since the Board's original findings and observations were based on "first impressions" and on a rather superficial understanding of the organization. It is more plausible to assume that the second report was more complete and critical because the members had had a chance to better acquaint themselves with the Canadian military than to presume that the situation substantially deteriorated during the 1991-92 period.

COMMON PROBLEMS

The 1990-91 report stated that some of the problems identified by serving members in newly formed mixed-gender units and in newly opened trades were not confined to particular units or trades but that they were found in every Command, albeit to different degrees. The report pinpointed many problematic areas such as: pregnancy replacement

policy, family support policy, physical standards, clothing and equipment, and harassment, and made appropriate recommendations on each of these issues. The problems detected and reported on in 1991 were followed up on during the Board's second visits and reported on in its second report. This allowed for the direct comparison of the two reports and for an evaluation of the improvements, or lack thereof, made during the 1991-92 period. In this section, I will present each of the first four problems identified in the first report, relate the recommendations made, and examine the second report for evidence of change and progress. Since gender and sexual harassment were found to be extensive and systemic problems, they will be dealt with in a separate section.

Pregnancy Replacement Policy: The policy in place in 1991 - that of getting replacements from Reserve units² - was thought to be unworkable at the unit level since trained replacements were not often readily available from those units. This meant that servicewomen's co-workers often had to take on additional tasks for the period of maternity leave. In the long run, this situation tended to lead to a general resentment of military women and created hardship and loss of morale on small units and in highly specialized trades which sometimes found themselves severely

under-staffed. The lack of a clear policy on pregnancy also meant that many pregnant women were arbitrarily restricted from performing some or all of their duties since it was left up to individual medical officers to decide on the restrictions. This led to more frustration on the part of both male and female personnel (Canada - First Annual Report, 1991:30).

The Board sensibly recommended that the replacement policy be "rethought to provide better access to replacements" and that "restrictions on the employment of pregnant servicewomen should be evenly applied, and consistent with contemporary medical knowledge." (Canada - First Annual Report, 1991:31).

Judging from the comments made by the Board's second report, not much progress had been made on this issue. Replacements were not always available and the report states that:

The responses to women who become pregnant in the Canadian Forces today range from the Victorian to the enlightened. Some women are removed from their assigned duties immediately or as soon as they begin to "show", despite their desire to continue working and their physician's approval. Others are taken off shift work and reassigned to day jobs, an action that displaces other workers and increases the burden of colleagues even before maternity leave begins. (Canada - Second Annual Report, 1992:29).

The Board also noted that access to specialists, pre-natal

classes and contemporary birthing facilities was lacking on certain bases. It proposed that base medical facilities be reviewed. Finally, it indicated that policies relating to maternity leave and benefits were not always clearly explained nor understood and that pregnant servicewomen experienced significant problems with the bureaucratic side of maternity leave. (Canada - Second Annual Report, 1992:30-31).

It appears that most of the problems faced by pregnant servicewomen could be solved by educating the CF's leadership and by teaching supervisors that pregnancy is not a disease or a handicap and that pregnant women are not invalids. That was the opinion of the Board members who recommended that "pregnancy issues be included in all mixed-gender training packages." (Canada - Second Annual Report, 1992:44). The routine replacement of pregnant personnel and the expansion of birthing facilities may be more difficult to implement since the CF have been faced with severe budget cuts over the last few years. The Board did not provide any "magic" solutions and simply recommended that "a systemic review of past experience and anticipated current needs related to pregnancy leave replacement in mixed gender units be undertaken and strategies identified to provide better support that recognizes the varied degrees of difficulty involved in replacement." (Canada - Second

Annual Report, 1992:44).

Family Support Policy: The first report noted that while the CF was responding to many pressures to recognize new family structures, the organization was still lacking a consistent policy to deal with the specific issue of intra-service marriages. The Board stated that the main problem for service couples with children was the difficulty of obtaining reliable care for their children when they were posted apart or when they had to be away for long periods of time because of training or exercises. It was also recognized that the childcare problem was compounded when members were single parents (Canada - First Annual Report, 1991:31-32).

The Board recommended that research be conducted on the subject and that the possibility of bringing the CF policy with respect to child care assistance while on detached duty in line with that of the federal public service be investigated.³ It further proposed that alternative career strategies, such as job sharing, part-time work, and family-related parental leave, be researched. Finally, it concluded that the military requirement for personnel to be on duty 24 hours a day and to be ready to depart for indeterminate periods of time at a moment's notice made the availability of support services a necessity and that lack

of such services and attrition among female members were correlated (Canada - First Annual Report, 1991:33).

The second report showed that the situation had not improved in any way. It noted that the CF's official position was that child care was a private responsibility. Moreover, it brought out the fact that, generally, military personnel "have the impression that family support issues are viewed by the CF as administrative burdens, rather than normal facets of a service member's life." (Canada - Second Annual Report, 1992:33).

Whether the CF actually regard family support issues as administrative burdens is difficult to ascertain. Evidence, however, tends to demonstrate that the military is indeed aware of and sensitive to family issues. The organization has set up schools on most bases, has instituted a dental care plan for dependents, has established daycare centers on a few bases, has educated their personnel on the importance of making up a will and of buying life and disability insurance, and has provided the infrastructures necessary for the Military Family Support Program (MFSP). This program, initiated in March 1991, is a community-based program, "owned" and run by military families themselves. MFSP has been successful and by 1993, 38 Multi-Service Family Resource Centres (MSFRCs) had been established on bases and stations across Canada. "The kind of programs

offered at individual centres cover a broad range of community needs encompassing four general areas: information and outreach, child care, life quality improvement courses and crisis counselling." (Personnel Newsletter 6/93:3).

It does appear that the CF have recognized that the 51 per cent of their members who have children required help in managing and combining their responsibilities to the military and to their families. I expect that the next Board's annual report will mention that improvements have been made by the CF in the area of family issues.

Physical Standards. The Board noted that there was a great deal of scepticism about women's ability to succeed in the "hard" combat trades but felt unprepared to comment on the issue in its first report. It tentatively concluded that while it was clearly more difficult for most women to meet the male standard, it was not impossible for some of them to do so. Finally, it stated that the issue was worthy of detailed examination and that it anticipated that it would be able to more fully explore the subject once further research had been conducted. (Canada - First Annual Report, 1991:35-36).

In its second report, the Board reported that some progress had been made and that a new fitness test, which included a six week training period, had been developed.

However, it was found that some units were unable to conform fully to the requirement for the six-week preparation period, while others had turned the test into a competition which tended to discourage the people who could meet the standard but could not keep up with the stronger members of the group. The Board recommended that the CF "investigate the adoption of bona fide critical strength and dexterity tasks and the development of appropriate tests, specific to each occupation, for inclusion in basic occupational training. (Canada - Second Annual Report, 1992:41).

This recommendation is not new. The requirement to develop standards of strength, endurance and dexterity for specific jobs was brought forward by proponents of women in combat-related employment from the beginning. Such occupational standards, as opposed to male standards, are the only way to ensure that the best person is chosen for the job and that women as a group are not dismissed off-hand only because the average woman could not performed a given task. It is hoped that the next annual report will state that the required standards have been developed.

Clothing and Equipment.

The Board originally remarked that the subject of clothing and equipment was less of an irritant than had been

expected but that there was still room for improvement. In particular, it noted that the design of equipment, including vehicles, aircraft, rifles and rucksack, was based on a narrow anthropomorphic form, that some items such as flight boots and gloves, and belts were often not available in smaller sizes, and that certain articles of clothing and footwear did not have a proper fit. The Board stated that it would monitor short and long-term developments in those areas. (Canada - First Annual Report, 1991:36-37).

The second report confirmed that nothing had been resolved and the Board made a new series of recommendations aimed at rectifying identified problems. One of the recommendations suggested that the military purse be replaced by a day-pack or carry-all which could be used by both male and female members. (Canada - Second Annual Report, 1992:36). I strongly agree with this suggestion and I hope that it will meet with approval since I find purses to be both awkward and too strong a reminder that the member using them is a woman as opposed to a professional service member. While I realize that the CF do not possess unlimited funds, I still believe that the issue of ill-fitting clothing and equipment needs to be addressed now so that future purchases may be more judicious and well-thought out.

In each of the four issues reviewed, progress has

either been slow or non-existent; moreover, the 1992 report uncovered more problems than had been previously reported. Some of the "newly" diagnosed or documented problems were: lack of fairness in assignments; surviving perceptions among supervisors of women's "proper" role; gender-biased instructional material and language; lack of female role models for trainees which contributed to the high attrition rate among women; lack of concerted effort to address the issue of women's sports; insufficient internal monitoring and relevant statistical record keeping; and lack of education concerning the promotion process. On the promotion issue, the Board found that both men and women thought that they were discriminated against. The men believed that women were being fast-tracked to meet promotion quotas while women felt that the evaluation system was biased in favor of men. (Canada - Second Annual Report, 1992:7-17 and 27-39). It is evident that the CF still have some problems to resolve before all tangible and non-tangible barriers to the full participation and integration of servicewomen are eradicated.

The reports also included some positive findings. The Board reported that a new maternity leave policy had been implemented and that the performance of women and mixed-gender units during the Gulf War had been up to standard. Its report states that:

In Kuwait, no difficulties were experienced employing a mixed gender engineering unit in a foreign operational setting There appears to have been no remarkable differences in the performance of men and women during the Gulf deployment. On PROTECTEUR [one of our military ships] women had no problem meeting the physical requirements and dealing with the heat and stress encountered in war zone. Indeed throughout the operation, stress breakdowns among the women were insignificant. They tended to be more vocal about their fears, drawing men out and injecting a civilizing influence in a very stressful situation. (Canada - Second Annual Report, 1992:9).

It appeared that the Gulf War provided women with the opportunity to test their own abilities and demonstrated that some of the fears and concerns expressed earlier by the CF had been virtually groundless.

Despite the minor progress achieved, the Board stated in its second annual report that the main problem plaguing the CF at this time was harassment. I will present the comments and recommendations made by the Board on the issue, survey alternative sources of data on the subject, and introduce the actions taken thus far by the organization to remedy the problem.

HARASSMENT

In their first report, the Board members identified two forms of harassment: "low grade" or gender harassment and overt sexual harassment. The document stated that the extent and nature of the problem varied from Command to

Command. In some of the organizations, Board members found that a social climate had been created "in which male peers or superiors feel free to make disparaging remarks and jokes" (Canada - First Annual Report, 1991:34) They noted that in those units the women felt isolated and that the situation reduced the effectiveness of individuals and undermined cohesion. The Board also mentioned that it had heard of only a few cases of overt sexual harassment and that each such case invariably involved the consumption of alcohol. It concluded that there was "ample evidence in all Commands that leaders are attempting to prevent sexual harassment." (Canada - First Annual Report, 1991:34-35).

In fact, in 1990-91, the Board did not seem to believe that the problem was particularly severe. It had spent more time and energy criticizing the flaws of the CF's pregnancy and family related policies than documenting sexual harassment. The second report, however, was different both in tone and in content. It was highly critical of the CF's lack of proactive leadership vis à vis harassment and sexism and "sounded" appalled by the number of instances of harassment it had encountered.

The findings of that second report were not encouraging. Its introductory comment is that:

Overall, despite the considerable progress made towards full integration, some serious resistance remains to complete acceptance of

women as co-workers. This resistance is based on negative attitudes, sometimes unconscious, which form the common thread tying together the major issues of harassment, career progression and utilization of skills. (Canada - Second Annual Report, 1992:1).

The report also stated that Board members had found "pockets of resistance to the reality of women as colleagues, and inappropriate treatment of women, which poisons the atmosphere, marginalizes women, and makes it difficult if not impossible for both sexes to do their best work." (Canada - Second Annual Report, 1992:1).

To help comprehension, the Board offered the following definitions of gender and sexual harassment:

Gender harassment: "Any behaviour directed against women by male peers or leaders that supports or promotes a hostile atmosphere within mixed gender organizations," including statements of rejection or non-acceptance, gender-related epithets, obscene anatomical references, derogatory references to female physiological functions, blaming or scapegoating women for pregnancy, inequitable treatment of genders (the double standard), and collusion among peers or juniors that makes life difficult for women. (Canada - Second Annual Report, 1992:20).

Sexual harassment: "Offensive and unwanted behaviour by an

individual that is directed toward another individual and that has a sexual purpose or is of a sexual nature, including, but not limited to, touching, leering, sexual remarks and propositions, or pornographic material." (Canada - Second Annual Report, 1992:20).

Members of the Board also noted that "harassment in some form had been reported by women everywhere in the Canadian Forces . . . recent observations indicate that the problem may be on the increase, particularly in some Army units." (Canada - Second Annual Report, 1992:18). It was specified that it was not sexual harassment, in and of itself, which was the main problem but the "almost routine denigration of women's participation by some seniors and peers . . ." (Canada - Second Annual Report, 1992:18). Instances of gender harassment encountered by the group ran the gamut from "irritating comments or insults to serious, sustained and collective verbal attacks intended to destroy the confidence and commitment of the victims. Sexual harassment ranged from the display of pornographic material to sexual propositions." (Canada - Second Annual Report, 1992:18).

The group was disturbed by the behaviour of members of some units. It wrote: "There were many indications of overt hostility within some of the Combat and Combat Service

Support units visited . . . Reports from women in problem units revealed that even their Senior NCOs [Non-Commissioned Officers] feel free to tell them that they 'should not be there'." (Canada - Second Annual Report, 1992:18). The Board stated that some of the male unit members complained that most of their problems were due to the presence of women. In the opinion of Board members, such statements and sexist remarks appeared to be symptoms of a larger problem - "an inability or unwillingness to adapt, which . . . is fostered by the tolerance of an atmosphere in which male NCOs and peers can blame and criticize the female members with impunity. There is no difference between the sexist form of bigotry observed in these locations and blatant racism. Racism is not tolerated; unaccountably, this behaviour is." (Canada - Second Annual Report, 1992:19).

Specific examples were documented and used to demonstrate the seriousness and the extent of the problem:

The direct leadership level demonstrates criticism of and a lack of support for women who are pregnant. Pregnant women in static and mobile operational units report verbal harassment by direct supervisors, which is picked up by their peers.

Allusions to the "time of the month" and "PMS" are common among men (peers and NCOs) on snips and within units . . . One woman noted, "I have had PMS for 30 days of each month for the past year."

Field Ambulance women said they believe some of their leaders want them out of the field.

Over several months they have noted that the level of acceptance by their male colleagues has deteriorated.

In one Combat unit, male NCMs believe that the women in their unit are on trial and will be removed if they can prove the women have failed.

All types of slang reference to female body parts, occupation and moral standards are encountered in operational units. . . . Many of the terms derived from female physiology, such as the widely used "split ass" are extremely offensive and there can be no mistaking their hostile intent. In one Combat unit, women reported being hailed with that term while walking downtown. (Canada - Second Annual Report, 1992:21-22).

Other examples were given but these should be sufficient to support the thesis that the problem of harassment was rampant in certain units and probably present, in different degrees, in almost all units.

The Board made some important recommendations to the CF on the issue. It recommended that the military develop a program aimed specifically at eliminating gender harassment and discrimination; that all cases be investigated by a board composed of people drawn from outside the chain of command of the relevant parties; and, that the CF investigate the provision of a telephone contact outside the chain of command to facilitate reporting of harassment and assault cases. (Canada - Second Annual Report, 1992:43). The extent to which these recommendations have been implemented will be evaluated later in this chapter.

Firstly, however, I want to demonstrate that harassment, sexual or otherwise, is not solely a problem for women who have recently "infiltrated" new areas of the military.

Given that Board members concerned themselves with issues associated with the integration of women into combat-related or operational occupations and postings, it follows that their report emphasized the problems faced by women now employed in units and trades which had been previously close to them. One might then argue or propose that harassment problems may be more or less specific to combat roles and units and may represent an unofficial barrier to full participation only or mostly for women employed in those roles and units. It remains, therefore, to determine whether harassment is limited to a particular segment of the CF or whether it is a more common occurrence affecting a large number of servicewomen employed in every trade and on every base.

According to recent newspaper articles, harassment is a Forces-wide issue. Headlines have proclaimed that complaints of harassment were "heard from every base across Canada" (The Montreal Gazette, Nov 28 1993:A1) and were "on the rise" (Globe and Mail, Mar 19 1993:A5), and sexual harassment was called "rampant on military bases." (Globe and Mail, Mar. 11, 1993:A4). In a "CBC Morning News" interview, Lieutenant-Colonel (Retired) Robinson stated

that:

Harassment has been around for a long time, but it has been escalating over the years in the Armed Forces. With unification it was starting to escalate, after the Human Rights Act was introduced and we started employing women in non-traditional areas, it increased again, and then of course, in 1989, with the Human Rights Tribunal decision to open all jobs to women, there was a great deal of resentment and overt hostility out there among some of the men because they feel that they are being threatened. (Canada CBC, Nov. 30, 1992:4).

Other sources of information on the extent of harassment in the military were also available. One of the most substantive pieces of evidence was a study undertaken by the Canadian Forces Personnel Applied Research Unit (CFPARU) in 1989. At that time, the unit was commissioned by the CF to develop and administer a personal harassment questionnaire. The questionnaire was prepared and sent out in October 1992 to 5642 service members and had a 72.7% response rate. The results were published in early May 1993. (Canada - Working Paper 93-1, 1993:i).

The questionnaire dealt with personal harassment (excluding sexual harassment), sexual harassment, and abuse of authority.⁴ The results indicated that:

26.2% of the female and 2% of the male respondents believe they had been subjected to sexual harassment; 32.6% of the female and 19.4% of the male respondents believe they had been subjected to personal harassment (excluding sexual); and 31.5% of the female and 28.9% of the male respondents believe they had been the subject of abuse of authority while

performing CF duties during the last 12-month period (respondents could indicate more than one type of harassment). These results suggest that for female respondents, all three forms of harassment are similarly prevalent, while abuse of authority and personal harassment . . . are the most prevalent forms of harassment for male respondents. (Canada - Working Paper 93-1, 1993: i-ii).

The study did not state the number or percentage of people who had reported more than one type of harassment. If it is assumed that everyone reported multiple forms of harassment then it would mean that nearly 3000 out of 9000 women had been harassed. If it is assumed that nobody reported more than one type of harassment, then the survey would indicate that 8200 out of 9000 servicewomen had endured harassment in some form between 1991 and 1992. The exact figure is probably somewhere between these two extremes but, in any case, the number of females prevented by harassers from working in harassment-free environments is large.

CFPARU's research is not the only indicator of the extent of harassment in the CF. A report entitled Canadian Forces Harassment Awareness Program Communications Plan⁵ notes that:

When the research for this plan was begun, harassment was presumed to be an ongoing problem in the Canadian Forces. Now that the research is complete, that presumption can be confirmed as fact. Harassment pervades the Canadian Forces. No one is immune. Victims and perpetrators can be found at practically any rank level. (BVI Communications, 1993:5).

Whether the reports and surveys supplied statistical data or provided only an overall evaluation of the problem, most of them stated that harassment was an under-reported phenomenon. CFPARU found that 77.5% of the women and 82.2% of the men who had indicated a harassment experience had not taken any formal action. The most often cited reasons for the unwillingness of victims to report the behaviour were the beliefs that: complaining would make their work situations unpleasant, that they would be labelled as trouble makers, or that nothing would be done. (Canada - Working Paper 93-1, 1993: 13-14)

The findings of the CF-wide survey support the thesis that harassment is still a major problem for servicewomen and that it does constitute an informal barrier to their full participation. Military women have to expend energy and time protecting themselves against harassers and dealing with the problem, which means that they have less time and energy available for being productive and for attaining their full potential. Moreover, the knowledge that harassment is particularly prevalent in some trades and units may deter some women from entering some occupations and might encourage other to asked to be release from the CF in the event that they are posted to such units.

It would be unfair to suggest that the military has condoned this type of behaviour and that it has not taken

any steps to correct the situation. The CF has had a formal policy on harassment since 1988 when an Administrative Order was issued stating that "no member of the CF shall subject any other member or any other person with whom the member works to any type of personal harassment including sexual harassment." (Canada - Working Paper 93-1, 1993:3). The promulgation of an Administrative Order, however, was and is not sufficient to halt the behaviour, as was amply demonstrated by the Board's reports and the survey's results. As Shirley Robinson writes in the AWECEF's February 1993 Newsletter:

. . . sexist attitudes and behaviour must stop - and the responsibility for stopping them rests squarely with the CF leadership from the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) to the Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs). It is obligatory that harsh disciplinary action be taken against any CF member/officer who is guilty of such unacceptable conduct. Written policies and memoranda do not work . . . unless they are backed up with swift action to deter further attacks. (Robinson, 1993:2).

Lately, substantial improvements have been made. Policies have been reviewed, studies have been conducted, and a statement of "zero tolerance" was issued in November 1992. Moreover, in May 1993, the CDS sent a message to all military members which stated that:

The CF policy on harassment provides guidance and procedures for a harassment-free work environment. Policy improvements have been identified and communication, education

and training packages are being developed It is our collective responsibility to ensure the CF achieves and sustains a harassment-free environment . . . (Canada - CF Harassment Policy, 1993:2).

It is difficult at this time to evaluate the effectiveness of the CF's initiatives. Such an evaluation will be provided over the next two years by the annual reports of the Minister's Advisory Board on Women in the Canadian Forces. It is my belief, however, that the situation has and will continue to improve. The CF were made acutely aware of some of the costs of allowing harassment to continue, costs which included: productive hours lost while the behaviour was taking place, time wasted trying to avoid the harasser or solve the problem, time used up by investigations, time spent at the doctor's office dealing with the physical and psychological repercussions of harassment, attrition, and less easily quantified effects such as loss of motivation, of potential, of faith in the system and its leaders, and of personal dignity. Harassment did and does exact a heavy price and the military is slowly coming to realize that it cannot afford to continue wasting its limited financial and personnel resources.

My belief that the situation will improve is not based on unquestioning faith in the system. It is based on the fact that society has started to recognize harassment for

the problem that it is, and on the fact that women and many men are less likely to silently condone and/or endure such behaviour. Many of today's servicemembers want and expect their work environment to be harassment-free. I do not believe that there can be any "turning the clock back" on that issue.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have reviewed the progress made by the CF towards the "imposed" goal of full integration of servicewomen since the 1989 decision of a Human Rights Tribunal to open all military occupations and units (with the exception of submarines) to women. I showed that while some progress had been made, on the whole, integration had been slow and plagued with many problems, the most prevalent of which was the negative attitudes of some CF male members.

The chairperson of the Minister's Advisory Board, Shirley Greenberg, in response to a CBC interviewer's question about the integration of women into new roles and units, said: "I would have to say that the situation is much better. It has been improving steadily over the past ten or twenty years, but there's still a far way to go. I would not give anybody an 'A', maybe a 'C' on the report card." (MTT Ltd., Nov 30, 1992:3). To the interviewer's comment that a "C" was a passing grade, Ms. Greenberg replied:

"Barely." (MTT Ltd., Nov 30, 1992:4).

Ms. Greenberg was right, of course, to say that the situation for servicewomen is better today than it was a decade or two ago. As was demonstrated throughout this thesis, however, this improvement has been primarily due to outside influences and to legislative changes. The CF have not been proactive on women's issues and it could even be argued that, at times, the organization has consciously hindered women's advancement and opportunities. Given the historical record of the military on issues relating to their servicewomen, one might justifiably wonder if the organization will meet the integration deadline imposed by the Tribunal and better its "grade".

It is nearly impossible to ascertain what the future may bring and whether the CF will begin to actively set about to remove informal barriers to the full integration and participation of servicewomen, such as harassment, negative attitudes, inadequate pregnancy-related and family support policies, badly designed equipment and uniforms, and lack of opportunities and equipment for women to engage in sports. There is some cause for optimism, however. My on going contact with literally dozens of servicemembers has shown me that there is a greater willingness on the part of some men and women to engage in constructive debates and dialogue on these issues, that more men are willing to

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condemn harassment, and that more women are electing to report harassment and to go "public" on the issue. Moreover, more servicewomen are spending more years with the CF and are being promoted to supervisory and decision-making ranks.⁶ This may help bring specific issues such as harassment and equality of opportunities to the forefront. As members become better educated on these issues, it is anticipated that the Forces will make progress towards the provision of harassment-free work environments and towards complete formal and substantive equality of the genders. The institution must be made to understand that "changing the law" - removing formal barriers - is only a first step and that informal barriers - harassment, negative attitudes - are as significant a hindrance to servicewomen as are sexist rules and regulations. In this time of budgetary restraint, it is in their best interests to attract and retain the "best person for the job."

ENDNOTES

¹ Personnel "on hold" are usually people awaiting training.

² The two main components of the CF are the Regular and the Reserve forces. The major difference is that Regular personnel are enrolled for continuing, full-time military service while the Reservists are enrolled for other than continuing, full-time military service. (QR&Os, 2.02 and 2.03).

³ Federal Public Servants receive monetary compensation for children when they are required to be away from home.

⁴ Personal harassment is defined as unsolicited behaviour by an individual that is directed at or is offensive to another individual; that is based on personal characteristics including, for example, race, religion, sex, physical characteristics, or mannerisms; and that a reasonable person ought to have known would be unwelcome. (CFAO 19-39, p. 1).

Sexual harassment is defined as a type of personal harassment that has a sexual purpose or is of a sexual nature including, but not limited to, touching, leering, lascivious remarks and the display of pornographic material. (CFAO 19-39, p. 1)

Abuse of authority is defined as the misuse of authority to undermine, sabotage, or otherwise interfere with the career of another individual including, but not limited to, intimidation, threats, blackmail, coercion, or unfairness in the distribution of work assignments, in the provisions of training or promotional opportunities, in the completion of performance evaluations, or in the provision of references. (CFAO 19-39, p. 1).

⁵ The study was completed by a civilian firm. It is unclear who the authority for the research project was. It does appear, however, to have been commissioned by the CF since the research team visited many bases, military training establishments, and DND directorate, and interviewed a number of service members.

⁶ In 1980, 19% of female officers and 8% of female "other ranks" had more than ten years of service; these figures had increased to 24% and 36% respectively by 1992.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have established that women have always played a role in the defence of the land now called Canada and that the myth of their defenselessness owed more to a selective reading of history than to reality. I have particularly examined the roles and status of Canadian servicewomen during the twentieth century and I have shown that, on the whole, military women's roles have been restricted to the parameters consistent with prevalent gender constructions. I have also demonstrated that the CF's perception of servicewomen's abilities often lagged behind that of Canadian society at large. This was established by showing that changes in employment policies, as they relate to women, were slow in coming and that the organization often used manipulative tactics such as trials in order to forestall the implementation of required changes. Moreover, I have shown that barriers to the full participation of women in the CF have been numerous and that while all of the official barriers - i.e. rules and regulations - have been eradicated, many more subtle but still effective unofficial impediments - i.e. harassment, lack of family support programs, etc. - still prevent servicewomen from having both a rewarding career and a fulfilling family life. Finally, I have postulated that in

times of severe budgetary restraint, the organization needs to give quality of personnel a priority over quantity and that in order for the military to become as efficient as possible, it must attract, employ, and retain the best possible person, man or woman, for the job. I have concluded that in order to attract these high-quality candidates, the CF will have to ensure that all barriers to entry and to participation are removed.

It is evident that the working conditions and opportunities for servicewomen have improved tremendously over the last 90 years. Women once paid two-thirds of servicemen's pay have now attained full salarial equality; women once employed only in traditional female roles such as clerks and cooks can now earn their living as electronic technicians, as jet fighter pilots, as doctors and as infanteers; women once restricted primarily to shore duties now serve on ships and women once kept out of harm's way are now found in every continent of the world serving as peacekeepers. While these are worthwhile achievements, it is not sufficient to look back and see what has been done: one must also look forward and establish what remains to be done.

There is no doubt that the Canadian workforce as a whole is presently undergoing fundamental changes. Jobs once thought to be secure are now disappearing; many people

have had to accept decreases in salaries and in the number of hours worked in order to keep their jobs; countless companies and governmental agencies have downsized; more people are working from home; minority groups have been vocal and have demanded that they be fairly represented in all kinds of occupations; and there are increasing calls for people to share their jobs so that more workers can be gainfully employed. It is possible that by the end of the twentieth century, the workplace and the workforce as we now know them will have substantially altered in order to meet social demands and the new economic reality. What do these changes mean to the CF in general and to servicewomen in particular?

The Department of National Defence, as the largest department of the Federal Government will undoubtedly have to respond to these new social pressures. Its "people content" will have to become more representative of Canadian society in general. Given that women and members of minority groups are some of the taxpayers who support the institution and the Government, it is probable that DND will be required to offer these people more opportunities for employment. As competition for jobs becomes fiercer, the military's recruiting practices will have to become fairer. This means that the CF may have to review some of its recruiting techniques and policies to ensure that all

Canadians are given equal opportunities to compete. They may also have to devise new ways, such as job-sharing or working from home, of using its personnel resources. Finally, the CF will have to ensure that their working environments are harassment-free and that family concerns are addressed so as to curb attrition and reduce operational costs. Whatever the future holds, the organization needs to be pro-active in reviewing social trends and in adapting its policies to meet changing public demand and social mores. This must be done because Canadians financially support the organization and are entitled, as employers, to a fair and cost-efficient military.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DND

All of the problems identified in chapter four were amply reviewed and discussed in the annual reports of the Minister's Advisory Board on Women in the Canadian Forces. These reports contain dozens of recommendations: it would be useless to simply reproduce them here. Nevertheless, if the CF are to reduce their costs associated with attrition and loss of productivity, they urgently need to address the issues of harassment and family support. The former requires that a forces-wide education program be established and the perpetrators of harassment be dealt with swiftly and severely in order to emphasize the credibility

of the CF's "zero-tolerance" policy. The Forces also need to seriously study all family-related issues and to develop creative policies designed to alleviate problems so that their members can more fully concentrate on their jobs and fulfill their obligations to the Canadian public.

The CF should find ways to better use its Reserve personnel as replacement workers during short-term crisis such as pregnancy, illness, and peacekeeping tours. This would ensure that the organization does not become dangerously under-staffed and that it can meet its obligations to Canada, NORAD, NATO, and the UN. The Reserve component of the CF should also become a viable alternative to members desiring part-time work and preferring job-sharing schemes. As an alternative career path, the Reserve could become attractive to retired members of the Regular force. This would cut down on training-associated costs and allow the military to recoup on the investment it had made developing its retired personnel. Finally, consideration should be given to alternative career paths since it is likely that such alternatives will become staples of the future workplace.

Given the changing workforce, the military should review its recruiting and employment policies to ensure that they do not deter or prevent members of any minority groups from having a rewarding career with the Canadian Forces.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The following recommendations are, in part, intended as means of elaborating on this thesis and as ways of answering questions raised in the minds of the readers. They are also offered because I believe that it is necessary that more research on the "human" component of the CF be conducted.

1. The contributions of servicewomen for the 1950-70 period should be examined as very little has been written about them. It may be interesting to research the roles military women were assigned during the Korean War and during the more intense years of the Cold War and to determine whether women's efforts during the Second World War affected the way they were perceived and the way their talents were utilized in the immediate post-war years.

2. Most Western countries still do not officially employ women in combat roles. The political and historical reasons for this near-universal exclusion are worthy of examination.

3. The ethnic composition of the CF should also be researched. In my eighteen-year career, I can recall meeting fewer than ten non-white people. It would be

interesting to determine whether the CF are, consciously or not, excluding these people or whether a military career simply does not appeal to visible minorities.

4. Research also needs to be done on family issues since family responsibilities undoubtedly affect one's career, in and out of the military. The specific needs of different types of families need to be explored so that solutions can be found.

5. A study on the upward mobility of female military college graduates may help determine whether a "glass ceiling" exists in the CF. Since the colleges started enrolling female students in 1980, it can be assumed that enough data now exists for such a study.

6. Finally, a comparative and historical study of servicewomen from different Western armed forces should be undertaken. Such work might uncover new ways of solving problems and of organizing which may be of benefit to the CF.

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