



**60 Years
of Women's
Service
in the IDF**

1948 - 2008

Introduction

Women have been an integrated component within the fabric of the IDF since its establishment in 1948.

The Israeli women have been recruited for mandatory service, career employment and even mobilized for the reserves – ever since.

Female soldiers have come a long way from those early days in which they were asked to perform traditional support duties to the present, in which most military roles are open to women.

But, not only have new positions been opened for women – we, in the Israeli military, have succeeded in letting women take part in various human resource placement and classification procedures – meaning – that soldiers are classified, selected and trained based on their abilities and not their gender.

Those days in which women manned staff and rear positions are long gone! Today, women participate in a large array of duties and their presence is meaningful throughout the military.

There's no need to prove the importance of the Israeli women in our military forces. The Israeli society acknowledges their significance and shows appreciation regarding their immense power within the security apparatus of the State of Israel.

The following pages provide some testimony as to the contribution of the female soldiers within the military forces – in the past and at present.

Women's service can be best compared to a long distance marathon. Once the race commences – equipped with a clear vision, will power,

"The IDF - Israel Defense Force - the leading Israeli establishment, shall provide a meaningful and respectful service to its soldiers – men and women alike! Both male and female soldiers will be awarded equal opportunities, depending on their abilities and acquired skills – in order to promote the supreme goal of protecting the State of Israel."



relating to the military service – the role of women in the ground forces dramatically changed. Women were no longer the support force – women became an active component of the military. And so, today we see women in combat units – such as the light infantry (KARAKAL), protecting Israel's southern border, the artillery corps, engineers, field intelligence to mention but a few.

Even today, unfortunately, women are still excluded from combat positions in Special Forces, Infantry and Armor and from some combat positions in the rest of the ground forces.

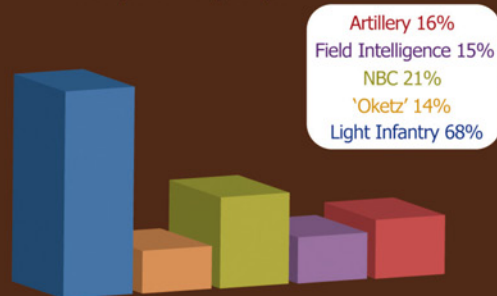
The good news is that this current policy is under review – and may change. Currently, the Ground Forces employ women in the support units – which obviously are of major importance as well – In the Medical Corps – women serve as physicians, paramedics and medical assistants – all in the field battalions. Some women staff medical centers by serving in numerous medical positions.

In the Logistics Corps – quite a few women serve as logistics officers, throughout all echelons of the Corps. The Ordinance Corps – in charge of developing and maintaining combat equipment – recognized the great potential in employing women – already in the early eighties, and has been utilizing their skills in many demanding “non traditional” occupations. Single Electronics and Computers Corps – within its ranks one can find mostly women (55%) who develop, operate, and maintain key command and control systems.

Finally – let's not overlook the special role women have been playing in the military campaigns the army has been involved in, during the last few years – such as the Operation Defensive Shield in 2002 and the Second Lebanon War in the summer of 2006.



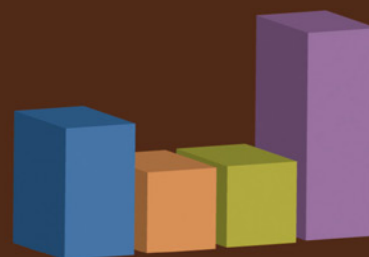
Rate of women in "open" combat occupations by corps





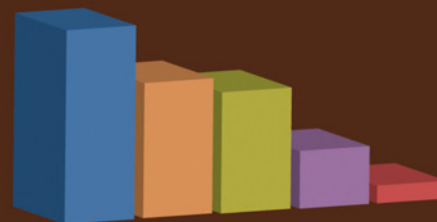
The Ground Forces Command is comprised of the ground combat corps (infantry, armor, artillery, engineers and field intelligence) and their support units. The forces are deployed according to the three regional commands.

Historically, women had served in the ground forces prior to the establishment of the State of Israel. They took part in the paramilitary pre-state organizations, as well as in the British army during WWII. Once the State of Israel was established, the Israeli women assumed positions as administrators, medical assistants, and educators – all in the ground forces. In the aftermath of the 1973 war – there was a growing need for combat troops. This was the turning point in which women were allowed to enter the operations division – meaning – actual action duties on the field of battle. They served as combat instructors, operations sergeants, and even officers. At that time – following some legislative changes



Rate of women in ground forces support corps

communication 55%
logistics 19%
ordnance 19%
Medical 27%



Rate of women in Ground Forces by rank

Col. 1%
LTC. 7%
major 17%
captain 19%
1st & sec. Lt. 27%





"The fast development of technology makes it crucial to constantly train technical maintenance personnel, and keep them updated," asserts Renana Hagby, an ordinance officer at the Ze'elim central ground forces training facility. She is the one who is in charge of all the combat and training equipment and ensures that it is in good operating order.

"It is important to keep them updated not only about the technical equipment but also with the development in fighting doctrines. This is especially true for the reserve manpower that I am responsible for training".

I accompany them throughout their training, and makes sure that they learn and internalize the use of new equipment and methods. Every now and then I find my self giving special attention to the older guys".

Renana Hagby

Ordinance Officer

Renana Hagby (20) enlisted to the Ordinance Corps in November 2006. After graduating officer's course she served at the Zeeli'm reserve central training base in the south.







When corporal Niva Hazon climbs on the turret of the MERKAVA 4 tank she cannot hide her excitement. "I have not been on a tank for a month now," she disclosed, "most of the communication instruction is carried out in the classroom. We have special simulators on which we can demonstrate the tank's communication system. Only after extensive practice in the classroom we actually go in the tank". After she easily leaps into the tank, Niva gives us a comprehensive explanation about the communication equipment. "We were taught every possible detail about this equipment. This way we earn the respect of the trainees, and motivates them to learn. The instructor is an important part of in producing a combatant".

Niva Hazon

Communications instructor

Niva Hazon enlisted in April 2007. She served as gunnery instructor and communication instructor at Armored Forces central training base at Syayrim, in the south of Israel.







Yasmin Reizner

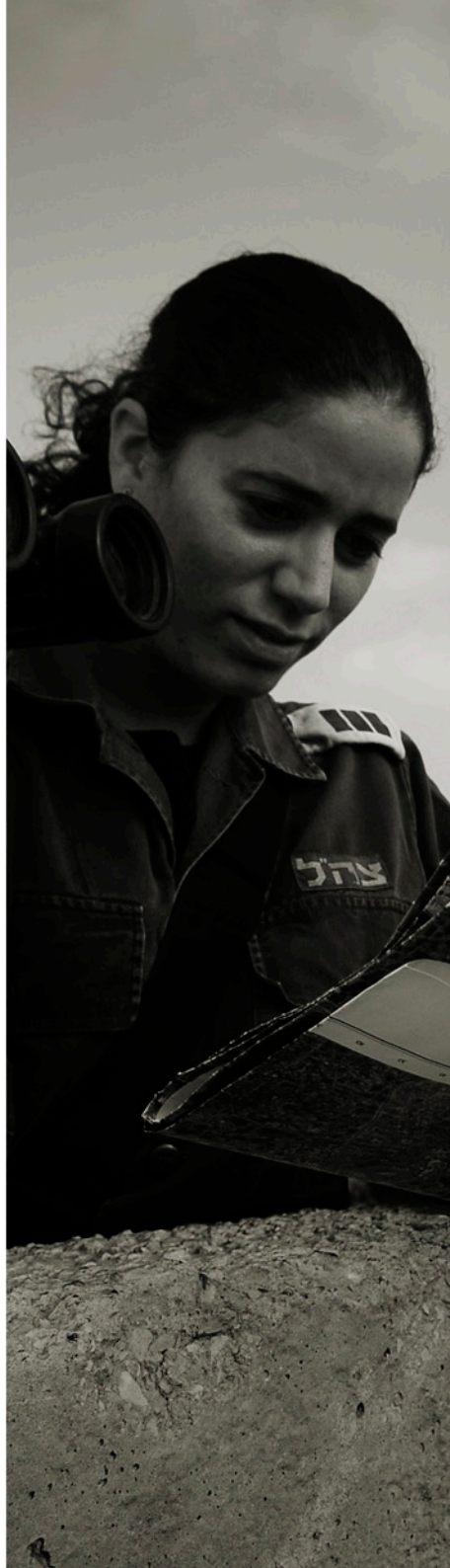
KARAKAL (light infantry) Combatant

Yasmin Reizner (21) started training at the Karakal, Light Infantry Battalion in December 2005. Today she serves with the battalion protecting the southern borders of Israel.

The path Yasmin Reizner, a Karakal combatant, gives special meaning to the phrase "fighting to fight". Even before she enlisted Yasmin was taking part in a combat preparatory course and was working out in the swimming pool in order to make sure she will be selected to be a combatant. "It was always my dream, and I did not give up until my fitness level was greatly improved" she discloses. "For me to be a combatant in the KARAKAL battalion means to defend the borders of Israel in the most direct way, and in addition to set an example to other battalions about the right way to integrate women".

She proudly adds that the work the battalion does along the southern boarder is very important although there are peace treaties with the neighboring countries Egypt and Jordan." This boarder should be guarded, there are a lot of infiltration attempts, and we are very close to the Gaza strip. We work closely with other combat units, and we feel that we are well worthy of the title of combatants".







Shlomit Daisy can't be missed when she stands in front of ten men in the drill ground. As the only female Company Commander around, Captain Daisy is in charge of 30 field intelligence soldiers. She works closely with other officers and has been surrounded by men for the last year. "I am not bothered at all," she confesses. "I concentrate on the job. The work is operational, and the task is to protect the boarder, and to me this is of utmost importance. I relay between the field intelligence company and the regional brigade commander, so I get to see the big picture. The responsibility is enormous both professionally and personally for each soldier"

Shlomit Daisy | Field intelligence company commander

Shlomit Daisy (24) enlisted in March 2007 as a basic training instructor. After graduating officer's course she served at various command positions such as squad leader, officer's course instructors, and company commander of a field intelligence course. In 2007 she was appointed as company commander at the northern field observation battalion.



force duties. Then, in 1998 – the first woman in since Alice Miller's case graduated a fighter pilots course – which brought an end to the prevailing myth relating about the meaning of women in the air force.

The Israeli Air Force was among the first corps to integrate women into combat duties, within the anti-aircraft units.

Women are ubiquitous in the air force – they serve as officers, in air crew positions, and in aerial control. There are some female soldiers who serve as flying instructors and technical aids.

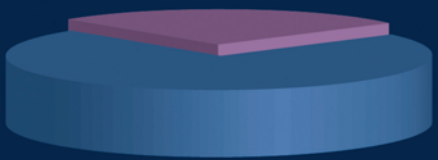
We cannot forget Sergeant Karen Tandler, may she rest in peace, a flight technician, who died in action during the second Lebanon war in 2006.

Her personal story and the circumstances around her death demonstrate the profound contribution of women in the corps.





Distribution of conscripts in the Air Force by gender



Women 31%
Man 69%

The Air Force – The Air and Space Arm - is assigned to provide air and space defense to the State of Israel.

From the time it was formed when Israel became a state, comprising of a few light aircraft till today – the Israeli Air Force has turned into a sophisticated air force with High-Tech and advanced systems that entitle it to be considered the strongest air force in the Middle East, primarily due to its greatest strength – the professionalism of its pilots.

In 1995, following a dramatic and well publicized appeal to the Supreme Court, by a service candidate named Alice Miller, the air force opened its fighter pilots course to women!

The Alice Miller affair had overshadowed an earlier brief episode concerning women in the air force. Throughout the years, many women have been serving in various positions in the air force – In the early 70's women could participate in some training programs for high school graduates – to provide them with some technical skills designated for air

Rate of women in the Air Force by sector



combat 7%
Technical 15%
administration 27%
flight support 47%

Rate of women in the Air Force by rank



Col. 1%
LTC. 7%
major 12%
captain 16%
1st & sec. Lt. 26%





She never lifted the hood of her private car, but she can tell you the exact position of every knot and bolt inside a fighter jet, even if she wakes up in the middle of the night. "We give avionics technical service to three squadrons in this air base," explains Reut Benmayor, an avionics technician at The Ramon Air Base. "The responsibility is immense, and this is why our training is very extensive. In the first two months we learn electronics, and then go through a six month course about this specific occupation. I am surrounded by men and airplanes most of the time, and this is not the most natural of environments but this is what makes it so unique for me".

Reut Benmayor

Avionics technician

Reut Benmayor (19) enlisted in August 2007, for four month of pre-military course, and after an additional four months of training as an avionics technician, she was placed at the Mizpe Ramon Air Base.







"The protector of the sky" is the nickname given to Liron Ben Yaakov by her soldiers. They are not exaggerating. As a battery commander in the Anti Aircraft Forces she is responsible for the protection of quite a large part of the Israeli skies. "The battery contains advanced monitoring equipment which enables us to create a full aerial picture covering a radius of hundreds of miles. We are working 24 hours a day to prevent any aerial infiltration, which can have severe consequences. We have all the means needed to ensure this will not happen."

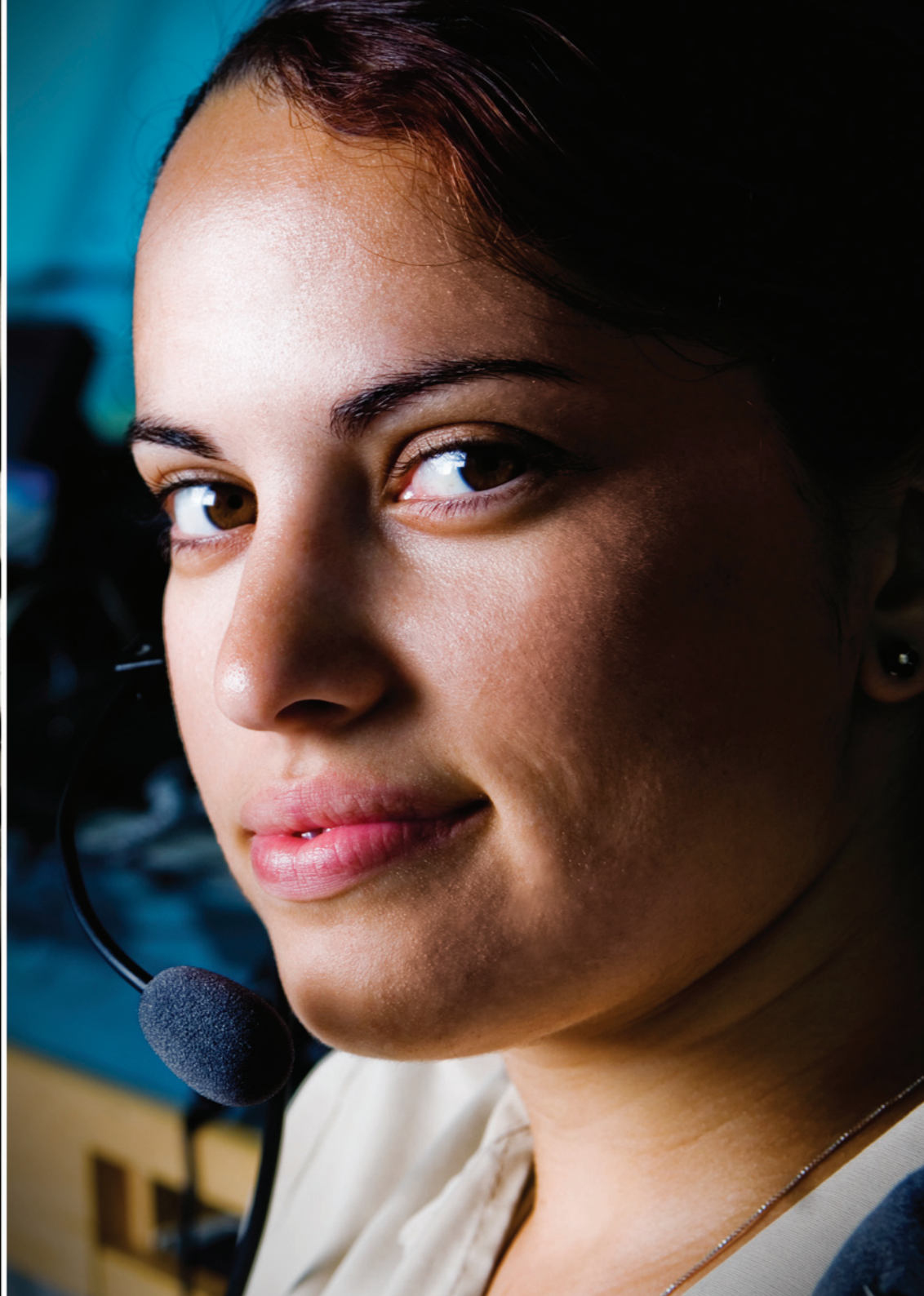
"The work is very intensive", says Ben Yaakov. "We know that each undetected missile will hit the ground and create severe damage. The event lasts only a few minutes but the responsibility is tremendous".

Liron Ben Yaakov

Anti aircraft Battery commander

Liron Ben Yaakov (24) enlisted in 2002 to the Anti Air Craft forces. In the beginning of 2004, after graduating officer's course, she was appointed squad commander. For the last year she was the commander of an Anti Aircraft Battery.







The work in the control tower, the enforcer of order in the air, requires perfect precision, because any mistake can prove very costly. The control tower is in constant touch with pilots and directs the aerial traffic. "No room for mistakes here, you always have to be very focused and attentive" clarifies sergeant Rita Idelzook, an air controller in the Sde Dov air base. "There are unexpected events every day. Only yesterday an air craft was landing with no permission and it almost collided with another plane. Only the alertness and professional performance of the control tower staff prevented disaster. In these cases it is important to react quickly and change courses. The burden of responsibility is heavy. A wrong call can cost the life of hundreds of passengers."

Rita Idelzook

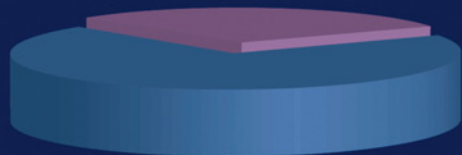
Air controller

Rita Idelzook (21) enlisted in August 2005, to the Air Force as an Air controller. Rita serves as air controllers' team commander, controlling both military and civil air traffic, in the Sde Dov Airfield near Tel Aviv.





Distribution of conscripts
in the Navy by gender



Women 34%
Man 66%





back in 1997. The first graduates were immediately integrated into the naval units and assumed professional positions on board the various combat vessels.

In spite of numerous prevailing traditions among the naval people, relating to women, the Israeli navy has been integrating female soldiers into many positions and the last word hasn't been said yet.

The Israeli Navy, is the naval arm of the IDF. Its objectives include: protecting Israeli commerce at sea against foreign fleets, preventing a possible naval blockade of Israeli ports during war and closing enemy home ports concurrently.

The Israeli naval force includes the Missile Boats Flotilla, The Submarine Flotilla, and the 13th Flotilla, which is the naval commandos unit.

The Naval Officers Training School, is a prestigious naval academy, was first open to female soldiers

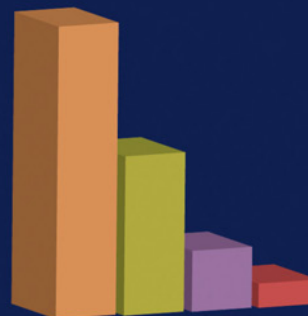


Distribution of conscripts in the Navy by gender



LTC. 7%
major. 15%
captain 13%
1st & sec. lt. 17%.

Rate of women in the Navy by sector



Combat 5%
Technical 14%
Administration 46%
Operations 58%





The small unit emblem decorating Chen Meged's uniform does not tell the story of the long and winding trail she had to follow in order to be worthy of it.

During the month of the underwater defense Chen acquired many new skills from martial arts to anti-terror skills and underwater operation. Chen and her colleagues are in charge of protecting the vessels and the port where they serve.

"It is amazing that the military is giving me this opportunity. I never imagined that my service will look like this – combat service - but underwater."

Chen Meged

Under water defense

Chen Meged (19) Serves at the Snapir, a port security team, at Ashdod port. The unit protects the port area by sea patrols, vessel security checks, and various under water missions.







When considering the borders of Israel there is a tendency to forget Israel's longest and most open border – the Mediterranean sea. "The lack of clear and concrete borders make the work of the naval controller more comprehensive," says Bat El Ohayon, a naval controller at Ashdod naval base. "We use sophisticated equipment in order to monitor these borders".

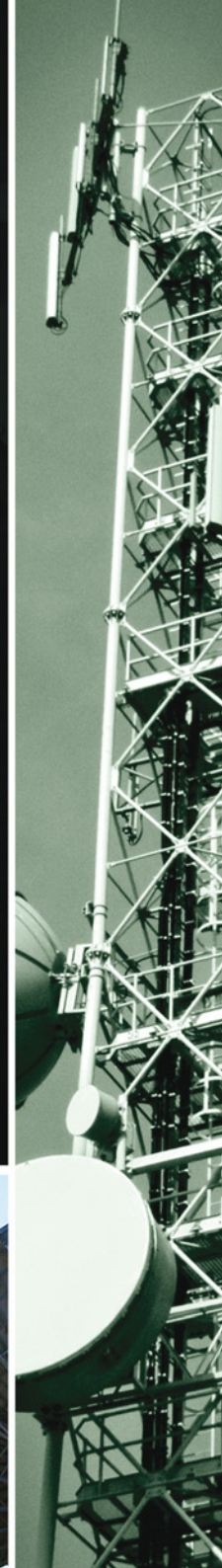
In a month, after a year of service she will be promoted to be a control team commander. The experience she accumulated in the last year made her realize the amount of work and effort that goes into making the shores peaceful. When I go to the beach with my friends I see the sea in a completely different way" she says.

Bat El Ohayon

Naval controller

Bat El Ohayon (19) was placed at Ashdod Naval base on December 2007 after completing three month training as a naval controller. Bat El's job is monitoring Israel's naval borders, mainly around the Gaza Strip.



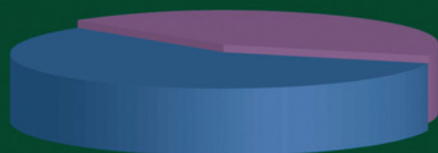


Rate of women in the
Intelligence Corps by rank



Col. 2%
LTC. 9%
major 19%
captain 20%
1st & sec. lt. 31%

Distribution of conscripts in the
Intelligence Corps by gender



Women 47%
Man 53%





The Intelligence Corps is responsible for collecting and publishing intelligence information for the military and for the political echelons in Israel. It also collects and analyses intelligence for the sake of warning the relevant entities in times of war or peace, respectively. The Intelligence Corps prides itself for the number of women it has been employing since its early days.

With the recent technological developments, especially following the 1973 Yom Kippur war – women have been playing a most significant role within the Intelligence Corps' ranks.

Obviously it is impossible to mention here the specific positions of women in intelligence – yet, one can clearly state that they are inseparable from the backbone of this major corps.







It is probable that captain Carmit Y will not be surprised by news headlines reporting military actions. It is also probable that as an officer in the Research Division of the GHQ Intelligence Branch, she plays some role in important military decisions. "We get the crude intelligence, we analyze it and give it initial interpretation" She describes. "Of course, in sensitive times the workload is heavy, but so is our influence. I think that in the end of the day, what we do is very important to decision making."

It is hard for her to point out a similar occupation in the civilian world. She hesitates and finally gives the simplest answer: academic research, but explains: "the difference is that many time research is for the sake of research, our research is quite different".

Carmit Y

Intelligence officer – Research division

Carmit Y (27) joined the Intelligence Corps in 2000. After finishing her compulsory service she earned a BA in diplomacy and strategy and a Masters degree in Security studies. During her master she rejoined the army, as assistant head of section in the Intelligence Research Division.



Rate of women in the Home Front Command by rank



Combatants 30%
 Administration 38%
 Search and rescue NCOs 40%
 Population emergency
 instructors 58%

Rate of women in the Home Front Command by rank



LTC. 21%
 major. 41%
 captain 54%
 1st & sec. Lt. 58%





The Home Front Command was created in 1992, in the aftermath of the Gulf War.

The main mission of the Home Front Command is to prepare the rear for emergency.

This calls for coordination among the governmental entities, and all support institutions – such as medical installations and the school system.

The Home Front Command is comprised of major reserve forces to alert civilian population and the ability to be mobilize for rescue missions or in times of war.

Women have been an integral part of this special force. They serve as professional rescue instructors and operatives.

Women have also participated in the numerous missions overseas in support duties when the HFC was sent to disaster areas such as Turkey, India and Kenya to mention but a few. Their contribution has been highly acclaimed.







Corporal Stephanie Rankovitz, serves as a combatant in the regular Search and Rescue Company of Home Front Command. Stephanie and her friends are equipped with a high ability to cope with varied complex rescue scenarios.

"The combination of search and rescue training and regular combat service is very special. We defend the home front from all aspects, and therefore we have to be ready for any event. Most of our deployment today is counter terror work in the West Bank and the south. We do more than just guard the boarder, and if we will be required for a rescue mission I am sure we will not disappoint".

Stephanie Rankovitz

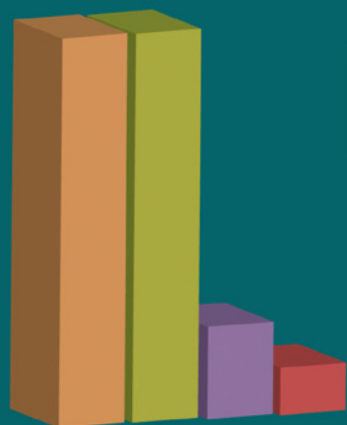
Search and rescue combatant

Stephanie Rankovitz (19) served from January 2008 at the Shavit Rescue Battalion, of the Home front Command. The battalion is routinely deployed in various boarder security missions, and is ever ready to respond to various emergencies.





Rate of women in the
Border Guard Corps by sector



combat 9%
Administration 22%
urban patrol 100%
boarder control 100%





Jerusalem and Hebron and are positioned in most—border checkpoints.



The Border Guard has been under the IDF since the early days of the State of Israel.

It has been providing security to settlements along its problematic borders. At times it has helped in the fight against the infiltration of terrorists from Egypt, and Jordan in the past and at present – as well as from Gaza and the northern territories. Women have been a major part of this force – right from the beginning. At present, they participate in most combat positions and are extremely efficient in the anti terror activities. They patrol the areas of

Distribution of conscripts in the Border Guard Corps by gender



Women 19%
Man 81%







For Sergeant Asia Banjer, a border guard combatant, the word 'compromise' is not part of her vocabulary. "I go all the way" she explains, "I knew I will be a combatant because I felt this is the most important job in the army. It is important for me to contribute. My father, volunteered for reserve service as soon as he immigrated to Israel".

Asia's non compromising attitude is evident not only in choosing combat but also in choosing to serve for the boarder guards. " The border guards deal with all aspects of internal security, and for this reason it fits me. The work changes every day, and the variety of abilities I have to use is immense. We do check points, and are involved in operational anti terror activities, as well as detection and pursuits".

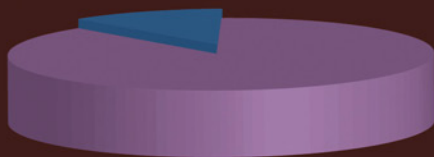
Sergeant Asia Banjer

Border Guard Combatant

After eight months training Asia Bejer (21) was placed in a southern Border Guard base on November 2005. As a border guard combatant Asia is involved in a variety of anti terror and anti criminal operations.

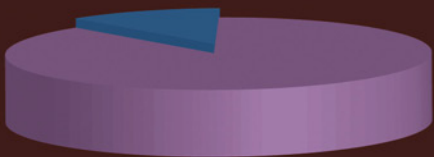


Distribution of conscripts in the Adjutant Corps by gender



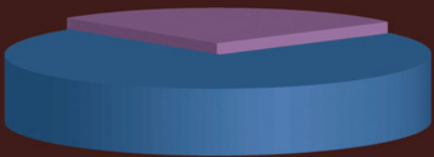
Women 82%
Man 18%

Distribution of conscripts in the Youth & Education Corps by gender



Women 81%
Man 19%

Distribution of conscripts in the Military Police corps by gender



Women 39%
Man 61%



Rate of women in the Military Police by rank

major 16%
captain 37%
1st & sec. lt. 19%



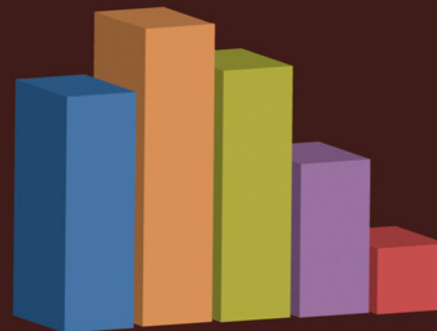
of our women to the welfare of the soldiers and their families in good times and more difficult ones as well. In the Military Police – women serve in a wide range of positions including regular police duties as well as specific tasks called by the special security needs of the country.



The General Staff Corps – the Military Police, Education Corps, and Adjutant General Corps, hold the traditional occupations in which women have been playing a major role since the early days of the military.

In education – women are extremely significant. The foundation of the Education Corps are women – the regular soldiers and officers, who carry upon their shoulders most educational missions including teaching new immigrants, taking on cultural issues, and creating the right platform to instill the values of the IDF in soldiers.

As for the Adjutant General Corps – they diligently serve as administrators – without whom the military would not be able to function. Another unique service they provide is the task of being the support arm for the numerous families of the military casualties and their families. This special duty is of extreme importance and has added to the fact that the Israeli army is considered the people's army – due, inter alia, to the contribution



Rate of women in the Adjutant Corps by rank

Col. 19%
LTC. 45%
major 74%
captain 78%
1st & sec. lt. 68%



& Rate of women in the Youth Education Corps by rank

LTC. 50%
major 82%
captain 69%
1st & sec. lt. 84%





Lieutenant Ella Ben Zur Serves as a reserve manpower liaison officer in the southern command.

Mobilizing reservists for service is not obvious, and Lieutenant Ella's efforts and motivation are crucial for a reserve battalion to function both in war and peace time. "I am the one who is in touch with reservists who have a private civilian life and are very busy". My staff and I are trying to balance the personal needs of the reservists with the need to mobilize them for training or operational reserve service"

The exposure to civilians and their lives make her job a lot more interesting. " I work with all segments of society, of all ages, it is an eye opening experience and I learn a lot".

Ella Ben Zur

Reserve manpower liaison officer

Ella Ben Zur (22) enlisted in May 2004 directly to Adjutants officer's course. When she graduated she chose to serve as reserve manpower liaison officer, in a reserve forces base in the the south.







It is not only the green uniform that set apart Gil Goldman, a soldier-teacher working with new immigrants in a junior school in Kiryat Malachi. The excited attention which she receives from the school children is a testimony of the special relationship she created with them.

"We are very good friends and I help them with more than just the academic requirements," she emphasizes. "They don't take for granted the fact that I spend a lot of time with them and listen to them. They really strive for a feeling of belonging. It is not easy to be a new immigrant".

Gil also works with the children in a community club in the afternoon "My presence is really important to them".

Gil Goldman

Soldier-Teacher

Gil Goldman (19) enlisted in September 2007 as a soldier-teacher with an immigrant integration specialty. She lives with her colleagues in a flat in a southern town, working with children in a local junior school and a local community center.



Sexual Harassment

The IDF maintains the policy of zero tolerance for sexual harassment. The instruction and enforcement guidelines related to this issue are clear and strict. The military has compiled a comprehensive support system to help out harassed victims. The IDF conducts sexual harassment awareness training sessions twice a year and it is mandatory that all units participate in these important workshops.

All Israeli female soldiers are equipped with a pocket manual, pertaining to the necessary information relevant to sexual harassment. Victims can choose, out of a number of channels of complaints and treatment, the one most appropriate for them. Only specially trained military judges are allowed to preside over such cases.

In each military unit there is an appointed liaison officer who is responsible to monitor the policy implementation. Along with him there are professional social workers, who personally support and follow victims throughout the entire process of filing sexual harassment cases. The IDF carries out a bi-annual survey (among a wide array of female soldiers), to observe the scope of this phenomenon, as well as the attitude towards the IDF policy and enforcement of this painful issue.

Currently, the awareness of women's rights in the IDF is high, and the obligation of the commanders to fight sexual harassment is clear. All this is reflected in the latest survey results which show a decrease in the scope of sexual harassment cases.



Women's Health

The Medical Corps provides an extensive health care system, promoting women's health in the military service. There are numerous military health clinics which regularly provide all the medical needs of all the enlisted and career personnel.

The IDF prides itself on the special services relating to special needs of women such as fertility treatments as well as psychological sessions in situations when these services are necessary for the welfare of the military personnel and the family.

A new field has been incorporated into the Medical Corps – due to the new demands by women in recent years, in which women have been assuming more combat roles – the military has made great effort in providing women with extra health care to promote good health and maintain it in light of the heavy demands of the new age.

Family and Career

Women in the Israel Defense Forces constitute 20% of its entire regular career officers.

These women have been facing the need to cope with the intensive and at times – the conflicting demands of military service and family life.

The IDF has been aware of this major impediment and has set measures to assist them to balance between the career and family life. Women are entitled to a three month birth leave, shortened work day and allowances for child care.

In the pursuit of the effort to enhance their ability to cope with their unique situation – women in the military have been offered special workshops. These unique activities have been open for all officers from the rank of Major and up.

There are also programs for families such as housing projects, leisure activities, and consumer clubs.

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