

# Women At War

A Deadly Species

J. David Truby

## **WOMEN AT WAR** *A Deadly Species*



By J. David Truby

1977

# Contents

<b>[Front Matter]</b>	<b>3</b>
[Title Page] . . . . .	3
[Epigraph] . . . . .	3
[Copyright] . . . . .	3
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Chapter I: War ... Equal Opportunity Employer?</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Chapter II: Some Mighty Ladies Under the Gun</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Chapter III: The Deadly Species</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>[About the Author]</b>	<b>37</b>

# [Front Matter]

## [Title Page]

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## [Epigraph]

## [Copyright]

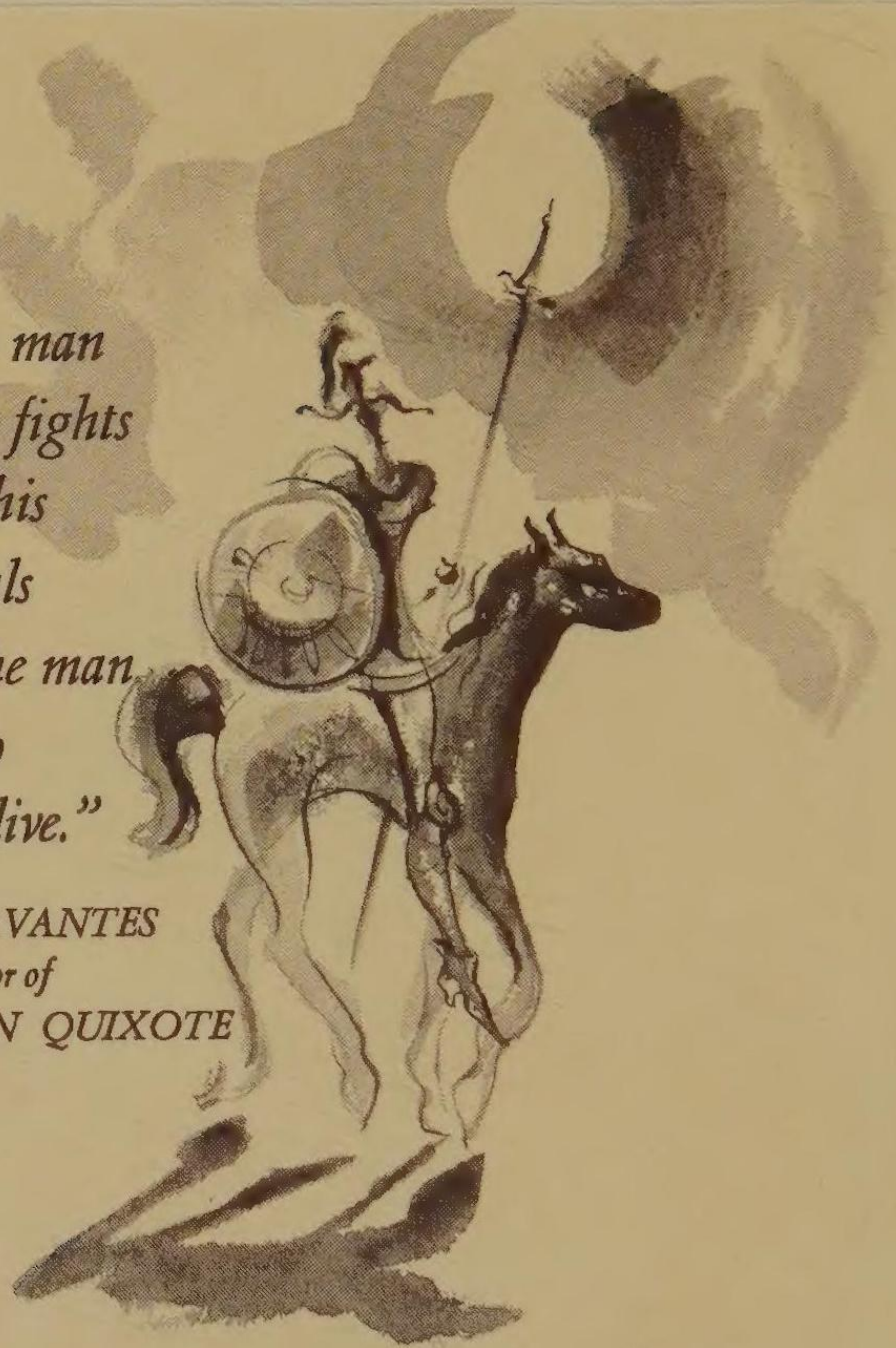
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*"The man  
who fights  
for his  
ideals  
is the man  
who  
is alive."*

CERVANTES  
author of  
DON QUIXOTE



**Raymond H. Hoffman**



# Introduction

If you' re good to the ladies you' II never go hungry.

James Kensinger

The next societal battle will be the war between the sexes and there will be nothing civil about it.

Wallace R. Croup

If Robert Vesco or Bernie Cornfield could pull off a merger of all the world's armed forces, it would be the largest international conglomerate in history. War is big business, you see. The armament payroll would total \$220,000,000,000 annually, and the work force would be 23,000,000 persons.

When one considers that about fifty-four percent of the world's population is female, is it then fair to assume that roughly half of those twenty-three million soldiers would be women? No. Men still run the show in politics and the military; most of those men are not about to give any sort of rights, equal or otherwise, to women.

Perhaps this book will change their minds. Of course, as former President Nixon is supposed to have said when he spoke to the annual convention of the National Campaign Financiers Association, "Don't confuse me with facts, my mind is already made up. I may be wrong, but I 'm never in doubt about it."

This book is an informal photojournalistic look at women in war. Your author is a neutral reporter in this battle of the sexes and thus, the purpose of this book is simply to illuminate some of the history and issues of women at war. I have no axes to dull.

As the philosopher Aristotle said, man is a political animal. And, as a by-product of his political evolution, man has become a modern military animal as well. Now, though, this military role is simply another area in which women want equal rights with men. History shows some startling facts about women going into combat against men and other women. As you'll soon see, it is not unusual for women and weapons to get together.

Whatever the reason, the world's women are simply asking for military equal rights — equal opportunity to kill or be killed.

# Chapter I: War ... Equal Opportunity Employer?

—Those who take the sword perish by the sword. Those who don't take the sword perish by smelly diseases.

George Orwell

Now in its second decade, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 forbids employers to discriminate among their employees on the basis of sex, except where a *bona fide* sex difference exists. Yet Uncle Sam's biggest employer — the armed forces — blithely ignores the very law it is sworn to uphold. A quick roll call of other nations shows that other countries don't have this military double standard.

The Israeli military, for example, takes almost everybody at age eighteen, gives maternity leaves, makes everybody serve in the reserves, and gives everybody weapons training, although the women no longer participate in firefights under usual conditions. If they can do it, then why can't the U.S., where everyone is supposed to be equal?

"The Israeli women are good soldiers and have fought alongside their men. But most of the time now they do the administrative jobs that leave men free for combat," commented American journalist Maitland Samuels, who had front-row seats for the short run of the Six-day War. "Women make an army much more efficient," he added. According to some recent socio-biological statistics, the female may be the stronger and healthier of our species. Social commentator Will Eisner cited that men have four times as many duodenal ulcers as women, that the male suicide rate is twice as high, that man's life expectancy has increased by twenty- six percent since 1920, while that for women has increased thirty-nine percent, and that fifty percent of all middle-aged men are balding, while less than two percent of women are.

Next time you're tempted to pick a fight with your spouse, parents, or lover, consider that over the past 3,475 years, since history's first recorded conflict in 1496 B.C., there have been only 230 years of peace in the civilized world. Men have been in charge of politics and the military during all that time. Like civilization, war is a part of our human condition. Sports commentator Bill Corum called it a "passion play performed by idiots," while George Bernard Shaw termed war "a most pestilential nuisance, except that it helps out in times of famine."

Civilization, which is what happens when men learn to live off each other instead of the land, has brought a new acceptance of war. The Prussian military strategist Karl Von Clausewitz called war "an extended continuation of politics in another direction." This other direction is exactly what brings us to gun-carrying females who feel that war is their way, too. So far, though, they haven't had much luck in the United States. In the U.S., the military seems to be ignoring fifty-two-point-one percent of the population when it comes to being an Equal Opportunity Employer.

As Margaret Mead has maintained for years, women are far more brutal fighters than are men. In recent articles, Dr. Mead has suggested that women would be more deadly soldiers than men. Arab prisoners taken during various Middle East conflicts with Israel apparently agreed, as most said they would rather die than fall into the hands of women. What is the big problem?

[Missing Image/s]

Israel Information Services



Units of the Women's Auxiliary Service of the Israeli Armed forces carry Uzi submachine guns.

"It's a tough question," replies Betty Carpenter, former Army nurse who had to shoulder a weapon in Vietnam in 1967 when guerillas attacked the "safe" area base in which she worked. "Sure, I grabbed a carbine and took part in the defense. Look, with me, human survival comes ahead of the rules of civilized warfare or the woman's traditional non-combat role."

She related how women fought well (and nastily) in Mexico, China, Cuba, and South America. "I know about those areas because I did some service time in the Dominican Republic before shipping to Vietnam. I know other nurses who had personal guns, little .32 and .38 pistols. I had a .25 automatic for the whole time I was in Asia."

Laura Palmer, essayist for **Rolling Stone**, told first-hand how U.S. military officials confiscated dozens of tiny handguns from various persons fleeing Saigon during the last rush there late in April of 1975. "A helluva lot of those tiny guns were coughed up by women of all races, sizes, occupations, and classes," Ms. Palmer related.

[Missing Image/s]

Adjusting her Uzi, an Israeli fighter takes a break from her assignment in the famed "Six-Day War" of 1966.

According to Dr. Mead, we are in a historical era when little girls are to be encouraged to be as mean, nasty, and aggressive as their brothers. It's true. Younger women and high school girls are flocking to karate and other defense courses. The National Rifle Association says that females of all ages are crowding into firearms handling courses across the country.

FBI statistics tell us that for the first time in history, armed, violent crimes by women are becoming epidemic. Sylvia Sachs, a **Pittsburgh Press** reporter, noted that the number of women arrested for violent crimes grew by fifty-two percent between 1968 and 1973. Dr. Freda Adler, associate professor of the graduate school of criminal justice at Rutgers University, says that the "Bonnies are catching up to the Clydes when it comes to violence ... statistics explode the myth of the 'little woman,' the notion that women are gentler, more passive, weaker, and more moral than men."

Pointing out domestic examples, she cites a West Coast woman and her male partner during a gasoline station stick-up in which the attendant was shot. The woman told police, "I knew Joe (her companion) didn't have the guts to shoot the guy, so I did."

In another case reported by Dr. Adler, a sweet-faced woman smuggled a sawed-off shotgun aboard an airliner a few years before electronic security went into operation. She used it to hijack the aircraft. The shotgun had been concealed under the blankets of a fake crib. For further evidence, this noted criminologist points to some names on the FBI's Most Wanted roster between 1970 and 1974, listing such gun and bomb-toting terrorists as Kathy Boudin, Bernadine Dorhn, Susan Saxe, Jane Alpert, Catherine Wilkerson, Pat Swinton, Katherine Power, and, of course, Emily Harris and Patricia Hearst.

The FBI also reports that their arrest statistics for the last decade show that female arrests for major crimes rose 167.2 percent. For men, the decade increase was 61.3 percent. This growth does not surprise Dr. Mead. "When women disengage completely from their traditional role, they become more ruthless and savage than men. Men and male animals will fight to show off their prowess and to impress females. But they usually have rules to prohibit killing in these games. Now, with women and female animals there is no game. When they fight it is fierce and to the death. Women are naturally suited to kill for survival ... much more than men are."

Society has changed. In the Soviet Union, for example, the fact that they lost 8,000,000 men in WW II made it imperative that women accept jobs usually reserved for males, e.g., medicine, security, engineering, law enforcement, and labor transportation. Even now, with no shortage of young males, the USSR continues to have women in important occupations.

Russia has thirty-four percent female engineers, while the U.S. has less than one percent. The idea of equality has always been slow to catch on in the U.S., for many reasons. No doubt the Puritan work ethic has something to do with it, as well as the great Macho appeal characterized by the boorish editorial credo of **True Magazine**.

The ultimate traditionally male-only job, of course, is that of combat soldier. While occupying the office of Vice-President of the United States, Spiro Agnew expressed outrage at the idea of American women serving in combat situations. "We respect our women too much to expose them to the horror of warfare," said Mr. Agnew.

This is very noble, but it doesn't square with the reality of female instincts. If the stakes are high enough, the human female is as deadly as the human male.

Former WAC Captain and now a psychology professor, Gladdy Adams, says, "I studied Russian and German women in WW II, and I know the history of ancient women as warriors. There is nothing more brutal, cruel, and cunning than a female in battle. Look through historical accounts — from Africa to the Middle East to Southeast Asia to the American Indian — men fear women in combat."

Despite all this sociological, biological, and historical evidence, men — the dominant decision-makers — still picture women in a less violent role than men when it comes to military service. When American males are willing to admit women to the armed forces, it's only in non-combat, supportive positions.

The argument that women can easily do non-combat jobs has historical sense. In our Civil War, for example, only one man in ten was in a non-combatant position. By WW II this ratio had risen to five out of ten, while in Vietnam, nine soldiers were in nonfighting, support positions for each and every soldier out on the line. Advocates of this system say that women could handle the non-fighting jobs.

Cost-conscious spenders at the Pentagon, however, men who sometimes waste millions to save pennies, argue that women soldiers cost much more than male soldiers. Former Department of Defense cost auditor Tony Cambellei put it in plain words: "Women have to have individual stalls with individual doors on their latrines. They need sanitary supplies. They must have bathrobes and lounge chairs. They must have certain break and rest privileges ... that's the law. I don't think America will accept a coed Army."

Cambellei adds, "If we're going to turn a bunch of women loose on a big base, teeming with horny GI's, someone is going to have to walk guard around the goodies, unless the DOD is suggesting coed barracks. Somehow I don't think the country is ready for that yet!"

Mr. Cambellei ought to get away from his deskbound adding machine and into the field. The U.S. Army already has at least one coed barracks, opened in 1974 at Fort Harrison, home of the Army Information School. According to a friend who attended the Information School and lived in a coed barracks area, "it turned out pretty cool. We blew grass a lot and drank wine ... lots of parties. The girls felt safer and more secure than if they were in their own barracks. Of course, some people called the place the 'Clap Trap Hilton,' but I don't think VD was a major problem."

Vice-President Nelson Rockefeller got in on the debate by suggesting that women have their place in the armed forces. In 1975, when a reporter asked the Vice-President what he thought about women in combat, Mr. Rockefeller replied, "Women want equality in everything else, why not on the battlefield, too?"

[Missing Image/s]

PVT Elizabeth Anderson takes aim as she squeezes off a round during weapons qualification with the M-16 rifle. She qualified as an expert markswoman.

PFC Mary Alice Jenkins directs traffic at a U.S. Army Post. PFC Jenkins is fully trained in the use of her .38 Special revolver.

Pointing to the Equal Rights Amendment, Lt. Col. Jacqueline G. Gutwillig (Retd.) said that women ought to see combat and asks, "Why shouldn't women bear arms?" A co-founder of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, which later became the Women's Army Corps (WAGS), Lt. Col. Gutwillig said, "I was

in Europe during WW II, and both sides dropped bombs on everyone — men, women, children, soldiers, and civilians. Bullets and bombs don't know sex, and a gun doesn't care whose finger pulls the trigger, male or female," she noted.

This retired officer, who worked with Oveta Culp Hobby to pioneer women in the army, is chairwoman of the Citizens Advisory Council on the Status of Women, a Federal agency established in 1961.

Although the U.S. military now claims equal employment opportunity in all jobs except combat, women generally continue to fill the traditional jobs they have always had: clerical, medical, and "show-case staff jobs," as one male officer termed it.

Lt. Col. Gutwillig says, "This is grossly unfair. Without combat experience, a woman can't get her 'ticket punched' for promotion. You have to have those combat assignments to make rank in the military if you're going to have equal rights." She pointed out that the anti-combat rule, coupled with the equal duties and promotion scale, was obviously meant to discriminate against women. In another criticism, Lt. Col. Gutwillig charged that the Veterans of Foreign Wars organization remained the only veterans' organization which refuses membership to women.

Commenting on that matter, another retired female officer who served as a nurse in Korea and in Vietnam said sharply, "I hope those beer-bloated VFW bastards think about how they blessed our nursing care after the battle next time they vote to keep us out of their crummy clubs."

Another sexual problem began in April of 1974, when the U.S. Army Reserve told enlistees, both male and female, that they would stay in the specific unit in which they had enlisted for their entire three-year hitch. In November, someone in the Pentagon changed his mind, and women who had been assigned to units with any history of combat or use of that term in their official identification were told that they had to transfer to other units or be discharged. One woman who had enlisted with her husband — the couple was serving as a team in a combat engineer unit in western Pennsylvania — was told she would have to leave the outfit because of the word "combat" in the designation. At least a dozen other women were caught in this same situation in that one area alone.

In a letter to the editor of an area newspaper, one female reservist wrote, "If there is equal opportunity in the United States Army Reserve, where is it? Are we being requested to reassign because of inefficiency or inequality?"

The Department of the Army had no comment on this case. Indirectly, though, another service commented on the cause underlying the situation. Late in 1974, while testifying before the House Armed Forces Subcommittee, Secretary of the Navy J. William Middendorf said that regulations against assigning women to combat units or to units in combat areas ought to be removed. "In view of society, this will have to happen. I am not totally in favor of the idea, though, if our women would have to take an active part in the actual combat operations." Vice-Admiral William Mack, superintendent of the U.S. Naval Academy, testified, "In my mind a woman can do anything a man can do and some things she can do better. I don't mean combat, though." Thus, early in the summer of 1975, the House Armed Services Committee shot down an amendment to a law which would have allowed women to get actively behind the gun in a shooting war.

Representative Samuel Stratton of New York explained, "When people think of women in combat they think of women shooting rifles in foxholes and that is hard for some people to visualize." Representative Patricia Schroeder of Colorado added, "These politicians are afraid of the next election. They want to be very careful they don't say something that would sound like putting women in combat."

One career enlisted man was happy to talk about integrating women into the active battlefield. This three-war, multi-combat tour Non-commissioned Officer said, about sending young American girls off to war, "Geezus, we got enough trouble with them 'new Army boys' smoking marijuana now," he snorted at me, hitching up his shirt-front full of combat ribbons. "Hell, women don't belong in the army, they belong following it," he added with a twelfth-beer leer.

There is also a serious side to the debate about women's role in the armed forces, as women have served honorably and well. They have also filled a very large need in the military life of this country. One classic example of the need for military women-power came during WW I. For some reason,

men have never been good at the switchboard. To save his command sanity, General John Pershing commandeered 100 women telephone operators to get and keep his communication nets operating — after male operators had hopelessly fouled up the system.

The problem of morale always comes up in this debate. Critics wonder if women in the military won't emasculate the men. Writer Caroline Bird suggests that working alongside a female soldier would do no more damage to the American male than working alongside a civilian women in any civilian job.

[Missing Image/s]

French soldiers talk with woman recruit at the front lines. Women sometimes disguised themselves as men to get into combat.

Some people disagree. "There's a tremendous difference between working with a WAC in an office and sharing a foxhole with her during a firefight," sneered a Korean-vintage former line officer who was most outspoken about keeping guns out of women's hands. "I don't want my life hanging on some silly dame's emotions. Suppose she has a menopause attack and turns her rifle on me?"

Late in 1974, Lt. Col. Hugh Waite of the Department of the Army's Office of the Chief of Information, pointed out that "weapons proficiency has never been a part of WAC training or responsibility." This became a bit of historical theory in May of the following year, when the Army announced that M16 rifle training would become mandatory for all women enlisting after June 30. "The new training recognizes the fact that we are an army and that every soldier should be able to defend him or herself should the need arise," an Army spokesman announced. He added that women officers and female military police officers would also be given training in "other defensive small arms and sidearms."

At the same time, the Air Force and Navy said they would continue their policies of voluntary arms training using .22 calibre rifles. A Marine spokesman said that arms training for women Marines is determined by the nature of their jobs. "This reality was a long time coming in this country," a satisfied WAC officer, Lt. Carol Goode, commented.

Experts suggest that women might wield an M16 as easily as they handle an IBM electric typewriter. Underneath this suggestion is the attitude that many women might enjoy slamming an artillery shell into their target more than they would enjoy sliding a folder into a file drawer. As former war correspondent Ellie "Cracker" Krupp said, "Women may make great nurses and save lives, but I've talked to many who'd rather give men shots ... with a machine gun!"

Armed with this positive thought, I looked into the idea of a coed army more thoroughly. Having bosomy buddies in the bunkers is not a new idea. It goes back almost as far as the history of people killing one another on purpose.

## Chapter II: Some Mighty Ladies Under the Gun

War does not determine who is right... only who is left.

The Montreal Star

War is an effort to extend our foreign markets by killing off theirs.

E. Howard Hunt

History is replete with women in battle. It all started with Pallas Athene, a goddess of war and wisdom in early Greece. Other early women warriors were the legendary Amazons, led by Queen Penthesilea. There were also the Valkyries, fabled superwomen who were Norse God Odin's handmaidens. Their job was to hover over battlefields and pick warriors for special rewards. In what is now England, Boadicea, Queen of the Iceni, ruled a mighty army which beat back Emperor Nero's legions in 61 A.D. The buxom battlers didn't always win, however, as Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra, lost her struggle against the Romans in 272 A.D.

Despite Elizabeth Taylor's fantastic portrayal, Cleopatra was not very mature or very beautiful. In fact, the original teenage warlady named Cleopatra was a nasty little girl. Yet she seduced and killed enough men to make her mark in history. It was probably sour grapes, but an ancient Arabic graffito uncovered years ago states most simply, "Caution — women can be a robe full of poisonous snakes." Might that have meant Cleopatra's asp?

A wild tale, which would credit a Joseph Levine movie script, was told by Francisco de Orellana when he brought his fleet of small Spanish ships back from exploring the Amazon River in the late sixteenth century. He told of an amazing race of Amazons who were just like the originals of mythology. His journals told of these jungle ladies who captured healthy, well-endowed males, mated with them, and killed them. They destroyed all male offspring but kept the strong girl babies and raised them in their own deadly image.

This "legend" was considered just that until 1970, when a German ethnologist named Jesco von Puttkamer found just such a tribe of women with almost the same belief in equal rights. The women had a small arsenal of firearms, which they turned upon the German party. Gradually, von Puttkamer befriended them, and found that they had "softened" to the extent of fulltime, non-lethal relationships with males. His exploration turned up cave drawings and other artifacts which clearly showed that the legendary Amazons had lived in that area. Included in the artifacts were drawings of the "firesticks" (guns) used by the early Spanish explorers.

[Missing Image/s]

The Valkyries were legendary battlers.

Horsewoman in full battle gear (top), and Amazon holding her rifle in one hand and the head of a male victim in the other.

Vase painting of Greek males and Amazons in combat, circa 400 B.C. (above), and a statue of an Amazon warrior.

Later, the most famous woman warrior was Joan of Arc, a holy terror who got hers during the Bishop of Beauvia's big cook-out in her honor.

In Britain, doughty Hannah Snell enlisted in the army in 1745 and took part in combat. She retired prior to the American revolution in 1776.

During that revolution, Colonist Deborah Sampson shouldered her musket and joined her husband as the menfolk marched off to liberate their Colonies from England. She was joined by Molly Pitcher, a busty lass who loaded and fired cannons at the Battle of Monmouth after her man was wounded. Molly, whose real name was Mary Ludwig Hays, is credited with bowling over nearly three score British troops, which should have put her in the good graces of the Women's Lib of the late 1770's.

Smithsonian Institute

Deborah Sampson joined her husband's outfit during the American Revolution. Sho carried her own musket (left). Hannah Snell (right) was hired by the British Crown as a pirate and combat officer. She did her job.



Molly Pitcher took over tor her fallen husband at the Dattlo of Monmouth.

National Archives, Painting by Alonzo Chappel

The fair sex of that era also served as pirates. One of the best known was Mary Read, who pirated under Calico Jack in the early 1700's. Another woman of the high seas was Shirley Velasco, who reportedly solicited sexual relations with male prisoners and then stabbed the men in the neck right at the height of their passion.

That women have commanded battalions and directed battles is a matter of cold fact. Anna Ivanova, empress of Russia from 1730 to 1740, once had two active cannons carved from solid ice. She used perfectly formed solid ice balls for shot, and, according to more than one historical account, the ice cannons were actually fired. Both blew apart after the first shot, although the huge iceball round shots did hit the target: some villagers out on a minor uprising.

Anne Mills was a female anti-terrorist fighter for the British. She was a tough seafaring woman who has been sketched holding a bloody knife in one hand and a buccaneer's severed head in the other. She reportedly divided her shore leave between bedding with young ladies and beating up young men.

[Missing Image/s]

Anne Mills was a brutal fighter for the British.

Smithsonian Institute

Another Britisher with an unusual history carried his dual sexuality to the grave. Dr. James Barry, an 1815 graduate of the University of Edinburgh, was assigned to the British Army as a surgeon. Noted for his nasty temper, he was in a number of fights and at least one recorded dual with a fellow officer. Once, on assignment to Quebec, Barry turned on a seaman who was making sport of the surgeon's high, "sissy-like" voice. The British officer, who was described as stocky, compact, and muscular, swung one punch and decked the loudmouthed sailor.

His medical skills won him many official awards. But Dr. Barry lived alone, refusing to share quarters with others. He also had a reputation among his fellow officers for being "a real lady killer, that one." His friends said he insisted upon living alone because he had many lady guests stay overnight. Junior officers were in awe of Barry.

Colonel Barry put in fifty years as a British Army medical officer, dying in 1865. Then the military mortician dropped a bombshell.

Col. James Barry was a woman. According to the postmortem, she had borne at least one child, which partially explained the several times that Dr. Barry had taken leaves of nearly six months duration "for his health." To this day no one knows the real name of "Dr. James Barry," who she was or why she chose the life she did, or what happened to her child or children.

In our Civil War, three lassies won battle stripes. Loretta Velasquez, a Cuban, joined the Confederate forces with her adventurer husband. She took a man's name, wore a false beard and mustache, avoided bathing with men, and got away with it for two years, surviving to write her adventurous autobiography many years later.

[Missing Image/s]

Madiline Moore, nicknamed "The Lady Lieutenant," followed her lover into battle, picked up a fallen officer's uniform, and somehow "formalized" a commission. She actually led troops in the battles of western Virginia.

Katey Brownell served with the Rhode Island Volunteers, fighting in several battles alongside her husband. Unlike the others, she never pretended to be a man.

Kate Brownell (above) fought in the U.S. Civil War as a volunteer, and Madiline Moore (below) won a man's commission and actually led a cavalry charge during the Battle of the Wilderness in Virginia. Women also wielded arms in the Old West. Calamity Jane (opposite) is dressed for the trail as an Indian Scout.

National Archives

"Bad Cattle Kate" (above) and her male accomplice were hanged by masked vigilantes in the 1880's. According to local folklore, this gunwoman also took part in the Indian Wars. An artist for the old POLICE GAZETTE portrays Calamity Jane (opposite, top) fending off

the boys in a saloon fight one evening. She won the fight. Joe and Effie Gump (opposite, bottom) were a husband and wife soldier team in the Indian Wars. They also battled with each other. This duel at Red Lodge, Idaho, ended with both slightly wounded—and still in love.

National Archives

A woman member of an American gun crew passes hot shot to the other gunners during the Battle of Niagra in the War of 1812.

During the nationalistic movements in Cuba and the Philippines, women took part in the fighting. U.S. soldiers brought back tales of amazing courage on the part of Moro women armed only with knives or an old rusty muzzle-loading pistol attacking American positions.

In Mexico the revolutionary armies of both Emiliano Zapata and Pancho Villa used women as combat soldiers during the fighting there between 1910 and 1920. The *soldaderas* are famed in Mexican literature.

The contemporary American journalist Charles West writes of a half-dozen female Zapatistas who caught an especially nasty young officer of the army of General Huerta. West's narrative states that the women ordered him to undress, then tied him spread-eagled to four poles where he lay on top of a mound of Mexican red ants.

In another story, one of Zapata's best snipers was a large, middle-aged woman who could handle a 7mm Mauser better than most males. "As a present for her service," West writes, "Zapata himself brought her a scoped 1903 Springfield rifle in 1916. It had been smuggled in across the border."

Another Mexican legend who really existed was the mysterious "Adelita," a lithe lady who took her name from the popular Mexican tune adopted by the Zapata forces. This lady was a fabled and savage fighter whose favorite sidearm was a Colt 1873 model "Peacemaker" in .44 calibre.

[Missing Image/s]

University of Mexico Historical Archives

Casola Archive

Women's work during WW I was spotty, partly because of the lingering Victorian prudishness and the emerging suffragism. In North America and England, women did a great deal of factory and other manual work. On the Continent, they occasionally found themselves in combat.

Several women flew combat missions in the frail aircraft of the period, while a few smuggled themselves into the trenches disguised as men. Some of these actually got into the fighting, clutching their rifles as they peered toward the fearsome "Huns."

Sgt. Flora Sandes fought in the Middle East, seeing enough combat to be wounded in Greece. Recovering, she was later decorated for bravery in combat. Wounded again, she spent much of the last part of her military service using a cane. This tall, rangy woman was described as an ideal soldier.

During the first World War, a Frenchwoman named Marcelle Semer braved German fire to open a drawbridge across the Somme River, causing the Germans a day's delay. She pinned down their engineers with gunfire for several hours prior to exhausting ammunition for her rifle.

In Germany's last offensive in 1918, armed women soldiers were used as auxiliary and security guards in rear areas. A Canadian journalist who had been captured by the Germans wrote that he saw women working with machine gun crews, loading and feeding belts for the deadly Maxim guns.

In Russia, one entire battalion was staffed with women by the order of Alexander Kerensky. Known as the "Battalion of Death," the unit was made up of female recruits between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five. Physical criteria were tough for this battalion and training, which was equal to that given males, was even tougher. The training cadre came from one of the combat regiments loyal to the



Kerensky Republic. "This unit was not meant for pictures and publicity. They were meant to fight on the front, and they did. They fought well and bravely," writes military historian Todd Longstreet.

[Missing Image/s]

During the Mexican revolution of 1900, women often fought with men. In this case (top), a "soldadera" takes aim against the Yaquis Indians. This\* e really was an Adelita (bottom left). This woman, who is honored in Zapata's revolutionary song "Adelita," was a real fighter in his forces. There were also female soldiers in Pancho Villa's army during the Mexican Revolution of 1910 (bottom right).

Clockwise from left: Sgt. Flora Sand served in a combat unit in Greece. She was wounded and later honored. Above she is shown with her company in a photo taken outside Salonika. She is in the row at the far left. Opposite, women at the front during WW I; and the "Battalion of Death," the Russian women's combat unit, at rifle training and in their national dance pose.

David Truby

John A. Minnery

According to other military historians, women took an armed and active part in the myriad revolutions that blossomed in the Banana Republics of Central and South America during lulls between the major wars of this century. "There are a lot of photos showing native women with Winchesters, old Mausers, Thompson guns, Colt pistols, and a few homemade weapons during this period of the twenties and thirties," explained the late Col. G.B. Jarrett, renowned international ordnance expert.

Other than activities in regional revolutionary movements, women dropped out of the front line until 1940, when Britain began drafting women along with men. This un-American practice prompted the FBI's venerable and late J. Edgar Hoover to blame England's growing juvenile crime wave upon Britain's drafting of women. "Women's place is in the home, taking care of children," Hoover huffed.

Meanwhile, across the Channel in Europe, women not only clerked, they fought, died, and killed. There are many horror stories of women serving in both Russian and German combat units. One theme is present in all of the stories: for sheer cruel, emasculating brutality, the female Nazis and Communists were every bit as imaginatively violent as their fellow male troopers.

"I was afraid of the Russian women soldiers," a former Wehrmacht NCO confided to me a few years ago. "We were going into Russia in the summer of 1941, and our unit ran into a women's unit. They were mean, rough, and about as appealing as the operating end of a Schmeisser. We all had sex on our minds, though. But when we tried to capture them, they sure put that idea away with their bayonets, grenades, and those damn drum-loaded machine pistols they carried.

"Later, we heard that these women caught up with a couple of Russian rapists. One of our boys who'd been captured witnessed this. He escaped and got back to us with the story. He told us that the Russian women made the men perform oral sex on each other, then tied them spread-eagled to the ground. Later, they stuck pins through one poor bastard's testicles." He went on to describe how the women also set small fires on selective portions of the prisoners' bodies and performed other acts of torture before shooting the Russian men.

Despite the shock value of stories like these, the majority of female soldiers and partisans were "decent" in their behavior. One must remember that war is not a gentle occurrence at best. War behind the lines is worse, and those who were on the Russian Front found its hellish horrors almost indescribable.

Other testimony to the fearsome reputation of Soviet women was related by former Air Force and CIA officer L. Fletcher Prouty, who passed along the comments of a German acquaintance of his who was present at the siege of Stalingrad:

There was absolutely nothing more frightening than to have to face Russian women lying on their stone doorsteps and firing until they were dead. These women did not know what giving ground meant. They killed, then died, in their place.

One man who has seen it all is Andor Dverk. He wrote of his experiences with Yugoslavian partisans during WW II saying, "Those women were a horror — Attila incarnate! I watched them simply shoot down Nazi prisoners. Once, two of them did a tap dance, in jack boots, on the stomach and genitals of a spread-eagled German officer. Another soldier had the fingers of each hand shot off, was castrated, and made to choke on his own testicles. One of our women, Mira, was a crack shot and had thirty-four Germans to her credit in combat ... not just prisoner killing, but in real fighting." Dverk described this woman as "tough and stocky, in her early twenties. She was totally dedicated to killing Germans. She could use a machine pistol with the best of us."

[Missing Image/s]

Soviet women fought in the front lines during WW II. Correspondent Vsevolod Vishnevsky (opposite, top) interviews members of a mixed combat squad. Female soldiers are at the extreme left and middle right. The Soviets also used women as military police and other support personnel (opposite, bottom). This armed female is directing traffic on the Ladoga ice road. Above, Soviet women are loading 20mm aircraft cannon cartridges. During WW II, the pilot for whom they were loading could also have been a woman.

These Soviet light bomber pilots (above) won medals fighting the Germans in WW II. They were still active in the 1960's. They are Rufina Gasheva and Natalya Meklin. These three women (opposite, top) flew combat missions for the Soviet Union during WW II. On several occasions they flew with all-women crews. By 1943, there were about 600 women combat pilots in the USSR air corps. The redoubtable Russian Cossacks (opposite, bottom) not only posed women in unit pictures, they also employed them for fighting. The two females in this unit are in the front row.

Soviet Military Review

John A. Minnery

Arlo Grindalman

Anti-Nazi Partisans fought the Germans in Turkey, too, aided by SOE personnel and equipment. Above, a Turkish guerrilla operates a Bren gun, aided by his female assistant gunner. Below, left, ace Soviet pilot Capt. Budanova, who downed eight aircraft in combat. Below, right, Soviet Partisan leader Anna Litvak, who was decorated for her bravery, leadership, and courage against the German invasion.

Some other Communist countries integrate their women into combat units. Cubans, Koreans, and Vietnamese women all shoulder weapons with the men. In one section of his book **KGB**, former naval intelligence officer John Barron describes how Cuban and Mexican Communist terrorist men and women received identical sabotage and combat training. The terrorists were trained in North Korea.

In Vietnam, serving with a unit on classified missions, Frank C. Brown came across a snapshot taken from a dead Viet Cong soldier. It showed uniformed women posing with AK47 submachine guns. He said that armed and uniformed women were not uncommon in the Communist armies fighting in Southeast Asia.

Just about anyone who served in Southeast Asia has either seen or heard of women fighting with the men. Like the other Communist countries, when it comes to combat, their women have an equal role. "Of course, women have traditionally been fighters in this section of the world," commented journalist Ben Waters, who spent two tours in Vietnam and Cambodia for several news organizations.

Waters continued, "In 1970, I saw the bodies of three women who had been caught in a counterambush situation in the Delta. Two of them had really old, battered GI carbines, while the third one had a local



Each of these Soviet snipers serving In the second Baltic front In 1943–44 had scores of individual “victories” to her credit.

Novosti Press Agency

copy of the Russian Tokarev pistol. The American Military Intelligence Captain said that she was probably their officer. If so, she was commanding the other two girls and fifteen males. Pity, not one of those people was over twenty years old, and I doubt if the one girl was over sixteen.”

In another case, a Special Forces officer wrote that both he and his Vietnamese counterpart personally heard a female voice speaking French and giving tactical orders to three company-sized Viet Cong units.

Then without a bit of an apology, former PFC Herman Bell told me that he had been shot and wounded in combat — by a woman! He says, “Hell, I saw her hit me. I was in the open and couldn’t do much. Thank God the sights in her old rifle (a locally reworked 8mm Mauser) were bad. We were on patrol outside Da Nang, and stumbled upon a sabotage group. I saw this one person dash out and turned to direct fire on him. I saw this other figure laying in the grass \*• <h the rifle just as I turned and WHAM ... I took a round fat part of my outer thigh. Knocked me down.”

B< .e never lost track of the soldier who’d shot him and w ight ended, his buddy told him that the VC had been

a bung woman of about eighteen years. She had been

bao ded in the battle and died a few minutes later. “I was . oal shu. i (near the end of his tour), so they shipped me out. I never did shoot anyone the whole time. But I got the scar and the medics gave me the slug they dug out of my leg. I got it displayed at home.”

During the 1968 Tet Offensive, Fred Rexer, Jr. was flying as a door gunner with a Razorback Armed Helicopter Platoon. One of their jobs was a countersniper mission against a VC commando firing at friendlies from the roof of the Chosen PX building. The sniper was using a Chinese RPD light machine gun.

“I was hand-holding my M60, and as the chopper swooped around the roof, I traded shots with the sniper. Finally I managed to catch the soldier in the open, moving from one ventilation duct to another, and wounded the quarry. The RVN’s moved in and made the capture, taking the wounded sniper into a guarded hospital. Imagine my surprise when I learned that this vicious, wily terrorist who had pinned down forty U.S. and RVN soldiers and caused our gunship scramble was a ninety-pound teenaged girl from the Red River Delta area,” related Rexer.

[Missing Image/s]

J.R. Angolia Photo, Courtesy of F.C. Brown

J.R. Angolia Photo, Courtesy of F.C. Brown

This Is obviously a posed shot (opposite), but it shows a Viet Cong soldier with a variety of weapons, including the M3. Above, a Vietnamese woman is carrying a .30 calibre U.S. machine gun

Ramparts

Clockwise from left: Viet Cong women with a U.S. carbine and a French MAT 49, circa 1969.

This is a reproduction of a photograph taken from a dead VC. North Vietnamese girls (above) join the armed militia at a very young age, when they are fifteen or sixteen years old. Viet Cong women carry bazooka and machine parts through the jungle; troops loyal to Lon Nol are on the move near Phnom Penh in 1973, including several armed women and children. The young girl carries an M16 rifle.

Above, Felix Greene’s photo of an AK47-armed young woman of the North Vietnamese People’s Militia. Opposite, top, armed Vietnamese women train for combat assignments as guerrillas against U.S. troops. Opposite, bottom, a female terrorist shot down while trying a bomb run in Saigon, 1953.

The face of militant China (above). A woman recruit with her blanket roll and rifle goes off to meet the Japanese. Chinese women (opposite, top) volunteer for Vietnam fighting in

1969. The women joined the men behind the sandbags during the revolution in China (opposite, bottom).

Sgt. Hammil Ru I let was a marksman and a teacher for would-be marksmen. He taught rifle firing to women and had some strong ideas, saying, “The only thing that bothers most of ‘em is the noise recoil. Actually, women would make great snipers. Stick a silencer on the gun and a muzzle brake — cut down on the noise recoil, and they’d love to sit up about 600 yards away and stick it to some guy with a 7.62mm round.”

The former sergeant wasn’t guessing. He related that women had told him they’d love the sniper role, and several even asked him how to apply for the assignment. “I remember when I tried to get this one woman attached to the combat sniper school in Nam,” he recalled. “The man got all nervous and told me to forget the deal. I think she eventually went to clerk’s school ... Hell, she would have been one goddamn good killer!”

Domestically, there have been several women “soldiers” involved in killing recently, as in-country revolutionaries spread their brand of urban violence across America. Military arms rooms were broken into and stores of M16 rifles, M60 machine guns, other small arms, and massive loads of grenades and ammunition were stolen.

The most famous of these domestic terrorist cases was the media-hyped career of Patty Hearst, who captured America’s fancy and the FBI’s attention during much of 1974. Patty Hearst, the heiress-turned-revolutionary, left behind more questions than clues when she went underground, but she did leave behind one important indication to her character — the origin of her *nom de guerre*, “Tania.”

In Third World revolutionary rhetoric, the original “Tania” is regarded as a true heroine of the People’s Revolution. A number of Cuban schools, hospitals, workers’ unions, and military units are named after this mysterious woman who was called “Tania.”

Former CIA South American field agent Philip Agee says, “Tania was not really her name. She was an Argentine-born German whose real name was Tamara Bunke.” According to CIA sources, Haydee Tamara Bunke Bider served almost as many espionage masters as she had aliases. Journalist Allen Daniels documents that the young revolutionary worked for the East German Ministry of State Security, the Soviet KGB, and Che Guevara, using a total of eight known aliases.

Almo Ortiz, a Korean War veteran who also did rough jobs for the CIA in the mountains of South America, personally interviewed the only guerilla to escape the ambush which killed “Tania.” This man, whose code name was “Paco,” was really Jose Castillo Chavez, a tough Bolivian Communist. He was the last person to talk with Tania.

Chavex told Ortiz, “She could be a mean bitch and no one messed with her, you know, tried anything. We felt she was a killer, too. Somebody gave her money and orders, somebody even higher than Che. The men were afraid of her and she used it. She did fight to the end, though.”

When “Tania” died on August 31, 1967, it was under combat conditions with a small band of guerrillas led by the Cuban Communist known as Joaquin. “She was definitely killed and positively identified,” Ortiz added

Tania’s last letter to her mother contained a paragraph with an interesting comparison to Patty Hearst. The last part of the letter reads:

I am a child who want to hide in some corner that is cozy and where no one can find me. I want to crawl away and hide. But where can I hide?

Those were the last words this revolutionary, who may have also been a KGB agent, ever wrote. It may be the legacy this professional revolutionary left behind for a bright American girl named Patty Hearst.

The death of Tania didn’t bury the South American communist movement however. There were fifteen women among the twenty- five guerrillas arrested by the Argentine police even as late as April of 1975. The guerrillas, from Argentina, Uruguay, Bolivia, and Chile, were members of various “people’s revolutionary movements” in South America. They were arrested in connection with a huge underground

small-arms factory operated on a remote farm thirty miles from Buenos Aires. “One of the women was captured trying to get a heavy machine gun operational against police, while another woman bandit wounded an officer with an automatic rifle,” the official communique noted.

[Missing Image/s]

Lee Lockwood

Fidel Castro’s loyal secretary Celia Sanchez (opposite) crouches behind her boss (out of the picture, left foreground) during an air bombardment in 195A. Above, Cuban militia women in training.

After the Communist nations and Israel, Ireland is probably the nation credited with a history of combative women. The most famous of these ladies is, of course, Constance Markievicz (nee Constance Gore-Booth), who became a real Countess when she married Count Casimir Markievicz. Caught up in the clamor for independence, the Countess accepted a Captain’s commission in the Irish Citizens Army and took up small-arms training. During the Easter uprising of 1916, she took part in the fighting, firing her pistol as she led rebels into battle.

Present violence in Ireland has surely carried forth in the rebellious spirit of Countess Markievicz. Female warfare peaked at its most violent in March of 1973, when three seductive Irish women led three British sergeants to an apartment in Belfast. The three soldiers were then submachine gunned by the women. British authorities took a hard attitude which turned to rage a few weeks later when it happened again to two more troopers. One man swore, before dying, that the women personally used the guns.

In addition to the threat of the IRA, which is always thought of as an all-male organization, a new organization turned up in 1973 —the League of Women, or the *Cumann na mBann*. These ladies were more than in IRA auxiliary. They became a terrorist combat unit.

In April of 1973, while British paratroopers were questioning teenage boys by thumping their heads against a brick wall, several old women burst on the scene screaming foul insults at the troops. No one saw several younger women move out of another building.

WHAPP.....

A high velocity round from an M16 tumbled into the chest of one of the British soldiers handling a youngster. The soldier slammed up against the wall. The other soldiers dispersed. The boys ran. The women melted away. Later, the female branch of the IRA took credit.

According to a Newsweek story there are more than 1000 women fighting in the active arm of the *Cumann na mBann*, and the numbers are growing. “Most of our female recruits are working girls of sixteen to twenty years. We send them to a real camp where they learn to handle weapons,” said one female IRA officer talking to a friend of mine who did the interview for this book. She recounted that their recruits learned about weapons, explosives, and

[Missing Image/s]

Countess Constance Markievicz (opposite, top) In her Captain’s uniform of the Irish Citizen’s Army, for which she fought in 1916. A young couple wonder about their future (bottom) even as they take up arms against the British in the early 1920’s. Women bore arms in this fight from the earliest days.

I.R.A. Truth Unit

Pairways Corporation

sabotage, adding, “We get a lot of surplus and stolen weapons, mostly .22 calibre and shotgun sporting weapons. Sometimes we turn up a Sten gun or a Sterling, but usually those go to the IRA main forces.”

As oldtimer IRA soldier Seamus Twomey chuckled through his beer in Belfast recently, “Women? Why, they are our backbone. They’re a hard, tough lot. No one in our Army (IRA) uses the word ‘order’ around them. It’s always ‘request.’ They do their share and more.”

[Missing Image/s]

Militant female figure illustrates IRA demonstration poster.

There were other women terrorists busy in the mid-seventies. The ranks of various Middle East terrorist squads were sexually mixed, as perusal of any newspaper or magazine of that era shows. These women were more than photogenic equipment carriers: they used their guns. “Good God, one Palestine Liberation Organization terrorist was the smallest, sweetest looking girl until she hauled off with an AK47 and blew holes all through the ship,” one reporter said in awe after an aircraft hijacking in 1973.

In Angola’s civil war fighting, **Newsweek** reporters said that a few women officers were among the Soviet “advisers” to the Marxist provisional government in the former Portuguese colony. Indeed, reporting from Angola late in December of 1975, **Newsweek’s** Caryle Murphy spotted and photographed at least one Portuguese military adviser, a young woman officer wearing combat fatigues and carrying an assault rifle.

Women turned up in combat roles during the Philippine uprisings of the early seventies, too. Two well-armed lady guerrillas were captured in 1971, three more were killed early in 1972. One of these was armed with a cutdown M16 rifle. Several female suspects were captured in 1973, according to Associated Press reports. Late in 1974, a woman commander of the Maoist New People’s Army, her staff of fourteen ranking male officers, and 1017 guerrilla troops gave themselves up to the government troops in a mass surrender.

This Army had been at war with government troops for more than two years, following President Ferdinand Marcos imposition of martial law. Nelida Cabigayan, known as Commander Lina, had won a large following and was the only chief female commanding officer in the uprising. Her surrender nearly ruined the “cause” according to government press releases carried by United Press International in the U.S.

Despite that major defection, other guerrilla units vowed continued action against what they called dictatorship. Early in 1975, a UPI reporter named Rowlinson Carter filed a story while traveling with Moslem rebels in the Southern Philippines. Risking death, which, as government officials told him, could be the consequence of association with these “modern day Moros” (a reference to the Philippine nationalists of seventy-five years ago), the reporter told of the mixed fighting units. Writing of women shouldering arms along with men, Carter described “every imaginable type of small arm — M16 rifles, Belgian-made NATO semiautomatic rifles, many old U.S. carbines, a few BAR’S, plus a plethora of homemade and modified firearms.” The women, he noticed, carried the smaller weapons, such as M16’s and carbines. He did note “one brawny lady toting around an M3 submachine gun with obvious authority.”

[Missing Image/s]

Armand L’Fregge

An MPLA recruit In Angola. 1976 (opposite, top); and Malayan “Tommy” Lucy defending no> plantation during the civil unrest of the early 1950’s. Armed women fought with rebel units against government troops in Angola (above) Into the fall of 1975, gaining International press attention.

Former Marine officer Allan Flynn saw women in action in the Pacific during WW II and says that given the training, most are as fast on the trigger as men. “In the Philippines, I saw these tiny native women greasing away at the Japanese with carbines and Thompsons,” Flynn, a behind-the-lines organizer, recalled. “There was no hesitation on their parts. They were like any animal fighting for its

land and brood. And when we got prisoners, I practically had to beat them off the poor Japanese. They really wanted to kill those poor GI's "

[Missing Image/s]

During WW II. Chinese women (top, left) trained, fought and died beside the men. China currently has a males-only combat policy, but everyone fought the enemy during WWII. Every village had its militia which included women and children (bottom, left). Drill and training for women in the Nationalist Army was taught by OSS personnel during WWII at a camp in Chungking (above).

Freedom is the issue which drove many European women into active and sometimes violent resistance against the Germans during WW II. The documentation of female contributions to these efforts fills the literature of the WW II Resistance movements.

Kurt Strod, one of Czechoslovakia's renowned Resistance leaders, always had women in his units — as combat soldiers instead of sexual decoys as they were in so many guerrilla bands. "Women are good soldiers and fierce fighters," Strod told reporters after the war. "I had no fears about using them. The American carbines and the English Sten guns were perfect for our women. They never hesitated to shoot or to toss grenades against the Nazis."

Appropriately, it was a female soldier who saved Strod's life. Marja Koizany, a graduate engineer and a veteran saboteur, dragged the wounded guerrilla leader away from a bridge that they had just blown up in March of 1940.

"This Marja was a professional engineer. She knew more about stresses and exploding than I did. I resented that, of course. But I tell you, I soon fell in love with her, both as a woman and as a fighter," Strod wrote after the war. "And, I owe her my life."

The two of them had rigged charges according to her plan, and had barely gotten away as the bridge was blown. The Germans shot Strod several times. Marja calmly shot back using a "liberated" machine pistol, killed three German soldiers, then dragged her friend to safety.

[Missing Image/s]

Young Chetnik female was in the lines for Col. Mihajlovic during WW I Resistance (opposite) SOE officer accepts field message from armed dispatch runner, in this case a female soldier of Tito's anti-Nazi guerrillas in Yugoslavia (this page, top). Partisan troops receive equipment and supplies (bottom). These Yugoslavian guerrilla units were totally integrated and all wore armed

Imperial War Museum

Mixed group of Partisans during training by SOE personnel in August of 1944 (above).

Below, Partisan woman takes instruction in the use of a German machine gun in 1944.

Three Yugoslav Partisan women in May of 1944, in a variety of uniforms and weapons from many nations (opposite).

Emil Janark

Emil Janark

Guerrilla leaders meet to discuss strategy (above). The woman with the Sten gun is the bodyguard for the General to her left. Yugoslavian Partisan women brave enemy fire during combat operations (opposite, top) after training by Tito's people and SOE officers. Yugoslav Partisans, including a young woman armed with a Sten MKIII, greet Soviet troops in October of 1944 (opposite, below). The U.S., Britain, and the USSR argued over who would support these guerrilla troops, and thus the fighters ended up with a range of equipment.



David Truby  
Alpine Geophysical Associates  
United Press International!  
Viktor Taber

In addition to «ervln<i as combat fodd sr, Yugoslav women also took an active role in politics as delegates io the Communist AVNOJ in November of 1943 (opposite, top). Women fought side by side with men in Tito's army (opposite, bottom). One of the most famous was Vera Krinzman (foreground). Female Yugoslav Resistance fighters were tough and feared by the Nazis. Women killed and died with men during WW II fighting in Yugoslavia (above).

Of the many women who helped make D-Day a success for the allies. one was a Frenchwoman named Elaine Mordeaux, a tall, slender woman in her late twenties. As a top Resistance agent and excellent shot, as well as being skilled in German and English, she was invaluable to the Maquis and their mentors from the OSS and SOE.

She and her unit held up the advance of the entire 101<sup>st</sup> Panzers at a critical time and damaged the roadway so badly that the tanks and accompanying infantry never did get into the battle After the war, the handful of survivors from the band of 200 Resistance fighters said that Elaine was in the battle to the end.

[Missing Image/s]

This Frenchwoman captured twenty-five soldleis by herself In August, 1944 (opposite). She sought the help of a Free French soldier who helped het turn them over to U.S forces. She is regarded as one of the folk heroes who liberated th> town of Chartres. This young Frenchwoman (above), a member of the French Forces of the Interior, hugs a wall as sne moves along in a patroi to rout (>oi man snipers still left in Paris during the bitter fighting which preceded the liberation of the French Capital, August 25,1944. Armed with a captured German rifle, this fifteen-year-old French girl (below) was part of the local FFI units who helped secure French towns In 1944.

One former guerrilla, now a stout, middle-aged university teacher, recalled, "Yes, I remember that battle and Elaine. She was throwing dynamite down at the Germans from a cliff about forty feet above the roadway. Her Sten gun was empty, as most of us had run out of ammunition. I was wounded and fortunately for me, left for dead later. But, before I passed out, I saw Elaine throwing more explosives and trying to get more ammunition from the bodies piled around her. She was shot by a sniper, I remember that." Within less than an hour, the 200 men and women had inflicted 3000 casualties on the Germans, wrecking nearly three dozen tanks and roughly fifty trucks. That had to help the allies, and it was a woman, Elaine Mordeaux, who led the way.

Grenade-armed French women discuss the liberation of France in the streets of a town in Brittany (above). These French Forces of the Interior women were in front line combat during the summer of 1944. French W ACS land in southern France (opposite). They will get arms and join the fight to liberate their homeland. Women were often used, fully armed, as couriers.

National Archives

Another female freedom fighter who became a legend to her countrymen during their struggle against the Nazis was Maria Svobod, a tiny woman who lugged around a .303 British Enfield which was almost as long as she.

Maria belonged to the band of Janos Halasi, who was famous for wearing the disguise of a priest's garb. His unit operated in the snow-capped Volos Mountain area in Hungary. When Halasi was killed in August of 1944, Maria took over the unit, leading it into battle until her own death late that year. She was respected both as a soldier, with many Germans to her credit, and as a commander who led the unit on successful missions.

In Czechoslovakia, a young civil engineer who, at age twenty-five, was embarked on a fine professional career, joined the Resistance when the Germans invaded her country. Soon, her profession became that of a saboteur, and the name Elena Haas became well known to the OSS, SOE, and the Gestapo.

She ran many operations in Europe during the war, though her most dramatic came in September of 1944, when she helped a French agent and a few SOE people blow up a vital bridge which crossed the Ohre River leading to Prague. The mission destroyed many German lives and materiel. Forsaking captured weapons, the tall full-figured Czech engineer favored a British Sten submachine gun. However, when the Ohre bridge was blown, she personally provided covering fire with a Bren gun, and was credited with at least thirty-five German soldiers.

Elena Haas died in January of 1945, leading a guerrilla raid against a strong German force. The few survivors of her unit reported she went down fighting, her Sten gun still firing as she took the fatal shot from the German Mausers.

[Missing Image/s]

Women also joined men in combat during the Hungarian Revolt of 1956. The man has a Soviet submachine gun, while his female companion, who was wounded, has her attache case stuffed with hand grenades.

Partisans get sworn in for anti-German duty in the Crimea, 1941. Note the women in the group.

The Soviets also had at least one Tania. During the siege of Stalingrad in WW II, a young Red Army sniper named Tania Chernova ran up a score of two dozen German victims. In one raid on a German headquarters, she took part in setting explosives, as well as knocking out the guards with silenced rifle fire. According to her superior's report, she also killed an SS security agent in hand-to-hand combat.

USSR's premier volunteer sniper in 1943 was Zlba Ganiyeva, opposite.

Novosti Press Agency

United Press International

Chinese women fought the Japanese during WW II (opposite, top). These women received training from Soviet agents, British SOE personnel, and American OSS people. A woman of the Italian Maquis (opposite, bottom) is armed with a Beretta submachine gun. She was in combat with her husband's unit in the mountains near the French/Italian border, fighting the Nazis. Below, a group of Italian Partisans in Stngara before a mission against the Germans. The woman is Nataline Zamagni. The picture was taken in October of 1944.

Imperial War Museum

John A. Minnery

German women learned to use all small arms and served in the front lines during WWII (above). The Soviets consider them to be as deadly as the male German soldiers. Here a squad of German women train in 1938. Husband and wife Resistance fighters take a crack at Germans fleeing Paris in 1944 (opposite, top). She has a P-38 pistol and several German grenades. The French Air Service made limited use of women fliers, a few of whom actually saw combat. This woman, Lt. V. Rennei, reputedly flew armed missions against German aircraft (opposite, below).

Nordbaum Associates

Polish women march to the Russian front to combat German Invaders. This is an actual picture of women going into battle with their own rifles.

One of the coolest Resistance campaigns was run inside Denmark. Realizing that active fighting would be futile, King Christian X surrendered his nation one day after the invasion in 1940. Preaching Teutonic brotherhood, Adolf Hitler declared Denmark a “model protectorate,” granting them semi-autonomy and a minimum of interference. The world’s press grumbled about the capitulation of Denmark.

But the wily Danes used this as a cover for massive covert activity against the Nazis. Within a week they had an intelligence sabotage network in operation. By mid-1941, the German occupation forces realized that they had been stung. The clever King, however, was able to fool the Fuhrer until 1943, when the Danish underground finally became overt in their resistance attacks upon the increasing Nazi presence. The King was arrested and the nation subjected to Nazi suppression.

Alma Allen, a Danish lady whose husband was a British RAF flier, joined one of the active units of the Danish Resistance in 1941. By 1943, she was in command of fifty people, one-third women and two-thirds men. Armed with a variety of SOE-supplied weapons, her unit raided various German installations. She personally led a dozen major missions. She survived many German traps and joined British intelligence at the war’s end. She retired in 1968 and is now a “fulltime tourist who loves seeing the world.”

[Missing Image/s]

Nationalmuseet of Denmark

A Danish woman named Ruth Weber served as a machine gunner aboard a merchant ship running the Nazi blockade under allied tings during WW II.

Women joined the men to combat Nazis during WW II, as shown in this candid photo taken in a Resistance hideout during the war.

Of the many women who served SOE, two who received special attention for their bravery in behind-the-lines combat operations were Noor Inayat Khan, who was executed by the Nazis at Dachau in 1944, and Pearl Witherton, who trained and commanded a highly active Maquis of 2000 men.

Ms. Witherton was recommended for an MC, but the stuffy British hierarchy ruled that women were not eligible for this combat award. They offered her the civilian MBE, which she refused, saying that she had done “nothing at all civil, it was all nasty and military.”

Another famed British agent was the beautiful and mysterious Christine Granville. Thousands of allied soldiers owe their lives to her.

When war broke out, this lady and her lover ran an escape network for airmen downed in Hungary. Barely escaping ahead of the Gestapo, the pair was driven out of the country hidden in the trunk of the British ambassador’s personal car as he left the country at the German’s request.

Given further SOE training, Granville worked in Cairo, where she obtained microfilm evidence of German troops massing on the Soviet border. Her superiors turned aside her report “because it came from a woman.” Two weeks later, Hitler’s hordes invaded the USSR, just as agent Granville had said they would. From that point on, she was a top star in the SOE agent galaxy.

In 1944, she was parachuted into France with top SOE commander Frank Cammaerts. Eventually, the Gestapo caught the entire team, including the master spy Cammaerts himself.

“Christine saved us, there’s no doubt, “ Cammaerts later recounted. “She bluffed the Gestapo by brazenly telling them the Americans were ‘right behind our team.’ She told them we were all top, important agents and that if any harm came to us, the retribution from the Americans would be terrible. This was in 1945, mind you, near the end. The Gestapo bought it and just kept us jailed.

Thank God that your GI 's did arrive within two weeks. It was a little close, I'd say. But, we owe our lives to that brave lady."

Christine Granville was awarded the George Medal and the Croix de Guerre for her wartime efforts. For many years, she was thought to have been murdered by unregenerate Nazis in 1952. This was cleared up late in 1975 with the release of her biography. The author of that book, using family records and unreleased police reports, claims Granville was murdered by the last of her lovers, a psychopathic man who killed her when she tried to break off their affair. Thus a jealous sex partner destroyed the woman that legions of Gestapo could not.

[Missing Image/s]

Christine Granville, wartime SOE agent and heroine, was killed by a jealous lover in 1952, after surviving frantic Gestapo efforts to capture her during the war.

Official Admiralty Photo

British Official Photo

Britain's famed commando leader, Lord Simon Lovat, told a BBC interviewer, "Knowing the mettle of some of the brave SOE ladies, I wished I'd had some with us when we took the gliders into France back in June (he was talking about his behind-the-lines mission of D-Day)." Gruff old General Bill Donovan of America's OSS wrote, "Every OSS woman surely did her assignment. Many of our women did much more than they were asked to do, as well. Some paid the supreme price, just as did our men."

[Missing Image/s]

British WRENS prepare for home defense with a Lewis gun during WW II (opposite, top).

Fernando's naval officers (WRENS) hold target practice at the Royal Naval Engineering College - (opposite, bottom). "To your guns, ladies." ATS gunners move out to their own gun as the alarm sounds (below).

British Official Photo

That was in the SOE and the OSS. In regular American military minds, the situation was not quite the same. When the war began, there was some thought of drafting American women. The U.S. draft system, however, had such a hard battle competing with the defense industries for personnel priorities that they gave up on the idea of conscripting women. Left to voluntary enlistment, the Women's Army Corps (WAC) spent an average of \$125 to recruit each female during the war.

Their major problem was not really in attracting patriotic women to the armed forces, but in keeping the "wrong kind" of women away. Prostitution within or near the camps became a Federal violation. This was not so much for moral reasons as it was to check the spread of venereal disease. There were also problems of rape and violence, and these problems were used constantly as arguments against expanding the draft to include women.

This same fear faced the Peace Corps in its early days. Sargent Shriver, the Corps' first director, recalls the problems. "Would we dare let girls attend a mixed camp, sleep in tents, and take part in tough physical training that included mountain climbing, survival exercises, swimming, and jungle marches? Would we let innocent girls from Vassar or Peachtree Street in Atlanta loose in remote and dangerous areas? We sure did. And it worked! There was also the sex problem," Shriver continued. "We got many complaints from parents and old-fashioned moralists who predicted that the mixed training would turn into an orgy. It didn't."

Rumors multiplied fears back in 1942, too. There were rumors all during WW II that WAGS were issued condoms as standard equipment so that they could readily bolster the morale of any needy GI they might meet along the way. This rumor was strongly denied by General George Marshall in a stinging rebuttal, portions of which were given to the press. One of the General's comments was, "This

is a sordid insult to the patriotic American women who serve their nation bravely in the face of both foreign and domestic hostility.”

General Marshall was not the only officer to appreciate the value of women in the armed forces. An impressive array of General Officers, from venerable old Mark Clark to suave William Westmoreland, have given lady soldiers higher commendations than their male counterparts.

This has not been a universal opinion, however General George Patton was an exception. To him, women belonged at home, waiting for their soldier-husbands. He also frowned upon camp followers, and as one of his aides noted, “It was with some reluctance that I accepted the fact that the General had fathered children. I didn’t think he thought about women at all.”

Congress was thinking about them though. In 1946 Generals

[Missing Image/s]

U.S. Navy Photo

A WAVE gunner learns to handle a machine gun. By December of 1943, the Navy was using WAVES as gunnery instructors.

Dwight Eisenhower and Mark Clark testified before Congress that it would be necessary to draft women for major wars of the future. The military waited only four years to test the idea: conscription of both men and women nearly came to pass during the Korean conflict. President Truman had emergency plans on his desk to register women for the draft. When the tide of battle turned and fighting lagged as negotiations began, the women’s draft plan was allowed to gather dust.

According to Washington freelance newsman Fred Doody, that draft plan was dusted off twice during the Vietnam fighting. Doody claims that Congressional leaders feared public opinion if women were drafted. After a personal interview, he quoted former Director of the Selective Service General Lewis Hershey, who put the final clamps on the plan, saying, “The public is just not ready to see women draftees rained on, shot at, left out in the cold, or getting killed.” A Selective Service PR man, who wishes not to have his name used, was more specific: “Our current plans say that in an all-out mobilization women will be registered, drafted, and used in non-combatant situations. It’s on the same standby status as a renewal of the active draft for males.”

Given that information about total mobilization in the event of a national threat and conditions in the continually inflamed Middle East, one can surely understand why military training is mandatory in Israel for both men and women. However, the idea of mass numbers of Israeli women in combat has been largely a publicist’s myth. Despite a few isolated reports of women fighting recently, Israeli women were ordered out of the front lines by David Ben-Gurion in 1950. Still, documented evidence shows that women fought in the lines in the 1956 skirmish and again in 1960. There were a few reports of armed female commandos in 1966 as well.

According to Israeli military writer Ze’ev Schul, “The grenade throwing Israeli woman soldier doesn’t exist anymore. Today, these women fight only on defense, which, of course, becomes more a combat reality every day.” Rev Braun, a former Israeli agent, said, “The world writes new rules for us every week. We may have to have women in the lines again. I predict a major war before 1977, and, if Israel is going to survive, women will be in there fighting to the death.”

When one asks her about the combat role of women, Col. Dvora Tomer, commander of the Israeli women soldiers smiles, “Yessir, every female soldier is qualified with a rifle and with the Uzi. Every single one of us is. We must be, given our nation and our situation.”

[Missing Image/s]

Women soldiers take a break for the photographer during Israeli army training.

Israel Information Service

Vered Photo



WAVES learn small arms shooting during training at Treasure Island Naval Base in California in February of 1943. Only a few ever used this training for real—those who switched to the OSS operations.

## Israeli Ministry of Information

Clockwise from left: Thompson- carrying women fought to the death during Israel' s battle for life in 1947. All Israeli soldiers, male and female, receive full combat training. Women fought In Israel s wars throughout the sixties. Submachine-gun armed Syrian women soldiers parade during combat training (top, left). Female firefighters are a reality in the Middle East. Lt. Yael Dayan (top, right), journalist, Israeli army officer and daughter of Moshe Dayan, during the 1966 War, in which she saw front line action Armed Israeli women still guard critical positions in Israel. This young woman (bottom, right) has a Stren MKII.

That may be the situation in Israel. Conditions in the United States, however, are considerably different. Despite Madison Avenue attempts to widen the appeal of the military, the U.S. Army remains a predominantly male institution. Due to the progressive leadership of former Admiral Elmo Zumwalt, the Navy is a bit ahead in giving women equal rights. In addition, the Air Force has women pilots. They are not allowed to fly in combat missions, however.

Kate Millet, the Ben Franklin of the Women's Liberation movement, doesn't like the practice of war at all, but agrees that the rejection of women for combat is a political hold-over from the male ego conspiracy. Ms. Millet told an audience recently, "Men have a hero escape they can duck into and keep women out. It's the old virtue-protection game that a man plays while he's on his white charger." To formally emphasize this point, the National Organization for Women (NOW) in the spring of 1975 lobbied for the introduction of legislation by Congress to give women soldiers "complete battlefield equality and to upgrade female combat readiness."

This brings us to the point that while some women want to serve equally, and many have proved that women can serve in combat, the decision of whether they will serve is still the province of men.

# Chapter III: The Deadly Species

Woman Is the last thing man will civilize.

George Meredith

Dr. Ralph Klondike, a psychosociologist, feels that women are inherently more savage than men: “Good Lord, the female of any species is generally the killer ... history is replete with stories of women doing in their mates or other women.” According to other authorities, beneath the glamour, sex appeal, and warmth of motherhood which surrounds women, there lurks the soul of a killer. Former Army Psychiatrist Dr. Nati Hoover feels that women are born fighters, claiming that it’s inherent in the sex. “The instinct for violence exists in women,” she explains. “It started with our prehistoric sisters who learned to fight for survival against man and animals. That same urge is still there, despite society’s attempts to hide it behind plastic bosoms, vaginal deodorants, and the softness of sexuality. You know, the female praying mantis kills and eats the male after sexual intercourse — nearly everytime!”

Margaret Mead agrees, “The aroused female, defending her young, her family, or their territory will fight to the attacker’s death. She displays no built-in chivalry.” Dr. Mead was asked if there were anything in the psychological make-up of women which makes it socially undesirable to give them the weapons of war. Her answer was a strong NO.

Examine the biological sciences, scan anthropology, and read history for documentation: if you give weapons and means of war to women, they will play for keeps.

In theory it all sounds good. In uniform and in service, all are equal. But under that uniform there are going to be differences that could cause problems for a coed army. For example, how will a newly-enlisted momma’s boy react when he finds out about that “shortarm inspection” his female barracks sergeant had been talking about holding? The mixed military physical doesn’t seem like something that would become a national fad. The results of the tests would be badly discredited. For evidence, consider those members of 1973 St. Cloud (Minnesota) State College football team who flunked the blood pressure portion of their annual physicals when that test was given by a pretty, young, female technician.

The foul GI language might improve if more women were present on the parade ground. But, having been in a college dormitory recently and overhearing the language of two young women in an argument, I doubt if this is a valid supposition anymore.

There are other problems in moving from a soft, swinging, civilian life and getting jammed into a military existence. Today’s male is no more ready for a female supervisor than his older brother who went to Korea, or his father who tramped across Europe in the forties.

I asked a young officer I knew slightly about the role that women could play in combat. “Women in war? In combat? I’ll tell you about goddamn women in war, fella. When I was in Nam the VC used women in the lines and to sneak explosives into our safe area,” said Captain Elmo Hawks, a twenty-five-year-old decorated Vietnam veteran. “Ahh, I guess we could use some native gals to run mimeographs and sort mail and stuff like that. But I don’t like the idea.”

‘Captain, I was talking about using our women in combat. You know, American women in the American Army.’

His eyes blazed like twin flamethrowers and his voice rumbled up like a 155 firing out of a volcano. “Nosir! That’s the whole point of our fine Army, so our women don’t have to fight. Women should stay home, have babies, and make the home comfortable when the husband comes back. There is too much





A World War I poster shows Italy being defended against the beastly Hun by a lady of virtue and sword.

National Museum of Italy



"Liberty Leading the People," an 1830 painting by Delacroix.

of this Lib nonsense. For all I know, it's a Communist trick. After all, they use women in combat, you know."

Apparently a large percentage of the U.S. population no longer shares this anti-female attitude, at least politically. In 1937, when the Harris pollsters asked a sample of citizens if they would vote for a qualified woman presidential candidate, only thirty-four percent said YES. In 1972, the number of YES responses in a much larger sampling was seventy-one percent.

In military matters the differential is a bit less, but the general support seems to be in favor of women. A public opinion poll conducted by the Elmo Roper organization in 1973 found that thirty-five percent of the respondents felt that it was acceptable for women to be in combat if conditions would merit it. No one bothered to define those conditions, though. Furthermore, eighty-five percent felt that women ought to have equal rights within the military. There is also the professional evidence.

Late in the spring of 1975, the U.S. Army responded, ordering that as of June 30, 1975, all soldiers donning the uniform must become "qualified markspersons with the M16 rifle." No kidding, they really used the term "marksperson." Although the Army stressed that women would still be barred from combat duty "for the present," each female soldier should know the basic procedures to help defend her supporting outfit should the need arise.

According to a later AP release, the Marine Corps was considering the same idea, and by the time you read this, women Marines may be getting the seventies' version of Maggie's Drawers.

An Army spokesman said that an unpublicized test had been run during late 1974 and 1975 to see how many women volunteered for weapon's training. Only one in five did. "Therefore, the voluntary weapons program did not fully meet the Army's responsibility to have all its soldiers adequately trained. A change in policy was required."

These new requirements make basic training very different. According to Army statistics, Equal Rights legislation has changed the Army. "We credit these moves toward equality with the increase from 13,000 WAC's three years ago to 40,000 by the summer of 1975," noted one Pentagon Public Information Officer. She added that the Army looked ahead to 50,000 WAC's by 1979.

Women soldiers can do everything their male counterparts can do except participate in combat. They already have armed guard duty and serve as armed military police. Senior officers admit that women might see combat in a defensive situation such as when their units are overrun. "I'm convinced that women soldiers are more conscientious than male soldiers. They know that they are on center stage now and must prove themselves," says Lt. Col. David Loyd, an officer with eighteen years of service and sixty women in his battalion.

WAC training commander Col. Shirley Heinze says, "I make a women-in-combat analogy like this. Going into combat is 'running.' Right now women are just beginning to 'walk' after coming from the 'crawling' stage of military service. We have to make attitude changes, but it will happen."

[Missing Image/s]

WACSat Ft. McClellan on the range with M16 rifles.

The Army may finally have realized a higher natural calling when it comes to arming women. According to a consensus of people who know, the human male has a series of built-in devices to halt combat, such as whistles, bells, truces, cease-fires, etc. In all of known history, however, women have observed none of this. On the basis of most studies, one can safely conclude that the human female is as fierce as the human male. Rudyard Kipling may have even been correct when he wrote, "The female of the species is more deadly than the male."

The equal rights question seems to be a major dilemma for some people. But, as one who believes totally in equal opportunity and equal pay for equal work, I agree with women who want the same chances as men. Of course, I recognize that women in the military will be a problem. But it is a problem that most honest men won't mind wrestling with.

As Sir George Savile wrote, “Women have more strength in their looks than we have in our laws, and more power in their tears than we have in our arguments.”

Or perhaps it was best said with an old cliché from a B-Western of many years ago, when Randolph Scott told someone, “Give him a gun — that is the equalizer between a big man and a little man.” The same might apply to the sexes.

## [About the Author]

J. David Truby is an award winning professional journalist associated with National News Service. His other professional experience includes radio, newspaper, television and magazine journalism. He has also worked in advertising, public relations and has taught both journalism and criminology at the collection level. He is a U.S. Army Veteran.

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The Library of Unconventional Lives

J. David Truby  
Women At War  
A Deadly Species  
1977

[<archive.org/details/women-at-war-a-deadly-species-paladin-press>](http://archive.org/details/women-at-war-a-deadly-species-paladin-press)

The book had pictures on almost every page, but since they look faded in this book scanned version I haven't added them all just yet, as it'd be good to maybe brighten them in some way. Some text will have been mislabelled as picture captions and visa versa. And there will be some scanning errors that

I've missed.  
Paladin Press

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