

## **FRANCE NATIONAL REPORT 2003**

### **Introduction**

Women have always contributed directly to the Armed Forces whether in peacetime or during war. The Second World War put women in the French Forces on the “map”, so to speak. They had already been serving since 1938, but only on a civilian basis. On November 7, 1940, the Women’s Corps attached to the Free French Forces was created in London. It gave women the opportunity to serve as ambulance orderlies and in the First Aide Corps. In 1943, the Rochambelles Corps, consisting of nurses and first aide personnel was created. Female staff took part in campaigns in Tunisia, Italy, France and Germany as well as serving in Indochina and North Africa.

In 1951, the French Parliament gave a female personnel specific status. The adoption of the 13 July 1972 law gave women the same status as their male counterparts. The Decree of February 1998 removed any mention of theoretical limitation to women’s access to a military career.

Currently, the French Armed Forces has ended a period of transformation, with the end of compulsory national service by the year 2002. This has led to a larger recruitment of women to the military.

### **1. Policy changes**

There has been no significant change since 2001 in the French Armed Forces.

Nevertheless, the French Defence Minister keeps granting a particular attention to the outcome of the texts quoted above<sup>1</sup>.

Above all this, a Committee of observation on the integration of servicewomen was created in early 2002 (see paragraph on “special interest”) and has already proposed adjustments to these texts.

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<sup>1</sup> And to the modernization/fitting of women uniforms (sizing, colours, material).

The repartition per army and per rank is presented below for the end of 2002:  
 A table showing the number of women per service can be seen below.

**FEMALE PRESENCE PER ARMY AND PER CATEGORY (IN DECEMBER 2002)**

	Officers			NCO's			Enlisted			Volunteers			Total		
	Current staff	Females	%	Current staff	Females	%	Current staff	Females	%	Current staff	Female %	%	Current staff	Females	%
Army	15 957	818	5,13%	49 299	5 463	11,08%	62 687	5 571	8,89%	2 834	692	24,42%	130 777	12 544	9,59%
Airforce	6 789	378	5,57%	37523	4505	12,01%	14589	3940	27,01%	763	254	33,29%	59664	9077	15,21%
Navy	4 770	290	6,07%	29 410	2 720	9,24%	7 498	1 024	13,65%	1 078	232	21,52%	42 756	4 266	9,97%
Gendarmerie	4164	96	2,31%	79665	5249	6,59%	5	5	100%	13957	3923	28,11%	97791	9273	9,4%
Procurement Agency	2 196	214	9,74%	918	128	13,94%	42	0	0,00%	57	0	0,00%	3 213	342	10,64%
Health Service	3 045	555	18,23%	3 897	2 327	59,71%	193	42	21,76%	169	98	57,99%	7 304	3 022	41,37%
Oil Supply service	205	12	5,85%	286	16	5,59%	798	52	6,52%	0	0	0,00%	1 289	80	6,21%
Other services	261	12	4,98%	58	18	31,03%	0	0	0,00%	0	0	0,00%	319	31	9,72%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>37 518</b>	<b>2385</b>	<b>6,35%</b>	<b>200988</b>	<b>20403</b>	<b>10,15%</b>	<b>85 747</b>	<b>10 477</b>	<b>12,21%</b>	<b>18722</b>	<b>5175</b>	<b>27,64%</b>	<b>342 975</b>	<b>38 441</b>	<b>11,2%</b>

## **2. Organisation**

Women are now integrated in all Services : Army, Navy, Air Force, Gendarmerie, and the Medical Service under the command of the Chief of Defence.

## **3. Employment**

Eligibility requirements for employment in the French Forces are the same for women as they are for men. They are also granted the same opportunities for promotion as their male counterparts.

The 25 August 2000 Decree clearly outlines the arms and services that are only open to males and therefore the access to some specialities (infantry, armoured, the French Foreign Legion, submarines and the Special Forces of the Gendarmerie) may be restricted.

In the Army, women can fill all posts depending on their rank and specialised trade with the exception of those trades involving the possibility of direct and long term contact with hostile forces. However, some women are assigned to operational duties with regiments or A consequent number of women are assigned to operational regiments or onboard Warships. Nevertheless, the Navy has not yet opened the following speciality to women : submarines. In the Air Force, there is no restriction at all while the Gendarmerie still except NCO's from the mobile Gendarmerie.

Two women are general officers (in the Navy and in the Air Force), eleven females are Colonels and one is Captain (N) in the whole French Armed Forces.

## **4. Recruitment**

Recruitment of women has been positively affected by the ending of compulsory national service in 2002. In parallel, the Decree of February 1998 removed any mention of theoretical limitation to women's access to a military career. This has led to a boost in female recruitment.

Generally speaking, the global rate of female recruitment (except volunteers in the armies) was close to 14.1% in 1999, 15.6% in 2000, 19.6% in 2001 and 20,04% in 2002. Furthermore, the rate of officers' recruitment through external examination has risen from 22.9% in 1999, to 25.7% in 2000, 27.4% in 2001 and has reached 28,54% in 2002.

## **5. Training**

Training is identical for women and men in the Armed Forces. Physical requirements are partly adapted to female personnel.

Women are allowed to enter all Academies and any training schools and receive the same training and diplomas as their male colleagues. They have the same access to training corresponding to the posts opened to them.

## **6. Deployments**

Female personnel (officers, NCOs and troops) frequently work in humanitarian missions and on foreign operations under the same conditions as men. Since 1995, women have been deployed in support of IFOR and continue to be deployed today in support of SFOR and KFOR.

In December 2002, the total women (officers and NCO's) involved in those missions abroad reaches 1725 and is shared as follows : 1601 in the Army, 110 in the Air Force, 8 in the Navy and 7 in the Gendarmerie.

## **7. Career development**

The perspective of career development and promotion for females is similar to their male colleagues, including for the highest assignments in the hierarchy where the same rules of management and selection criteria apply.

The presence of several women in the Joint Defence College shows that they are capable of high-level trainings, as soon as the basic requirements are fulfilled.

## **8. Special interest items/ events**

The integration of women in the Armed Forces has proved to be very straightforward and has not caused any concerns. This can be illustrated in the Navy where at present 10 warships currently have women on board. The presence of women on board warships has meant that a number of changes have had to take place. The boarding of women nevertheless implies the respect of a certain number of rules for instance:

- \* Accommodation and lavatories adaptations in order to respect privacy;
- \* Equal treatment on board (women are likely to serve in every technical or military field);
- \* A female crew covering all ranks and reaching 10% of the whole crew.

At the end of 2002, the sharing of women onboard French warships is as follows :

Name of the Vessel	Crew	Number of Women	% of Women Onboard
Bougainville	95	9	9%
Charles de Gaulle	2181	144	7%
Foudre	224	24	10,71%
Georges Leygues	169	17	10%
Guepratte	140	20	14%
Jean De Veinne	227	18	8%
Latouche Treville	218	18	8%
Montcalm	225	20	9%
Primauguet	223	22	10%
Tourville	261	26	10%

In addition to the different measures taken in the armies, one should notice the creation, in the early 2002, of a Committee in charge of the observation of women integration in the armies, examining the practical conditions for their access to operational assignments –up to now unreachable –and more generally studying staff management policies and their consequences on feminisation.

Please, find attached the FAF airwomen list :

	Women 2001	Women 2002
Student pilots	16	18
Fighter pilots	2	3
Fighter pilot monitors	1	
Transport pilots	19	18
Transport pilot monitors	2	2
Hélicopter pilots	6	6
Weapon system officers	1	2
Navigator officers	1	1
Medical crew members	18	17
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>68</b>

## Conclusion

Women have made significant strides in the French Armed Forces over the years and continue to do so. Women are serving their country with pride and are also able to lead a family life with the provision of maternity and parental leave policies. The Armed Forces enable those women who choose to have a career the opportunity to fulfill their goals and train equally with their male colleagues.

In addition, we can underline a particularly protective national legislation for all French women (pregnancy vacation...) and huge political concerns which guarantee equality of treatment and promotion in labour circles where women are gradually taking place.

<p><i>National Co-ordination Office:</i></p> <p>LT(N) CROSNIER, Apolline Ministère de la Défense Etat-Major des Armées 14, Rue Saint-Dominique 00456 Armées Tel: +331-42-19-32-73 Fax: +331-42-19-80-86 E-mail: karine.foll@defense.gouv.fr</p>	<p><i>National Delegate to the Committee on Women in the NATO Forces:</i></p> <p>W-Cmdr DELACROIX, Odile (FRAF) EMAA/BORH 26 Boulevard Victor 00-460 Armees Tel: +33-145-529012 Fax: +33-145-522070 E-mail: <a href="mailto:borh@emaa.air.defense.gouv.fr">borh@emaa.air.defense.gouv.fr</a></p>
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