

## **NATIONAL REPORT 2003 – NORWAY**

### Introduction

There is a long history of service by women in the Norwegian Armed Forces. Since 1938 they have had access to all military posts. During World War II, women served in all the ranks. A political decision in 1947 reduced women's service opportunities to civilian posts only. Due to an increasing demand for personnel, women were allowed to serve as reservists on a voluntary basis in 1959.

Women were given non-combat military appointments and functions from 1977. In 1985 the Storting (the Norwegian Parliament) decided that The Equal Opportunities Act also should apply to the military. Women were consequently allowed in all combat functions. The focus of attention for the last years has been to increase the number of women in all services.

### Policy Changes / New Policy

Kristin Krohn Devold was elected as Norway's Minister of Defence in October 2001. Krohn Devold is the second female MOD in Norway. The appointment is important because it to a large extent demonstrates that defence policy also concern women. She is also met with great respect within NATO. The MOD aims to recruit a larger proportion of women to the Armed Forces, and has said in Parliament that the recruitment of women must be a highly prioritised area. She believes that if we are successful in achieving a greater gender balance within the Armed Forces, it will result in broader competence.

### Organisation

History proves that the Norwegian Armed Forces have had (and continue to do so today) women on active duty in all areas. Eg: Head of Officer Candidate School, Squadron Commander (Tank Company) Explosive Ordnance Disposal officers, Fighter Pilots, Commander of infantry company in Kosovo etc. etc.

Women serve on a voluntary basis, yet they have the same obligation as men to serve in the event of mobilisation.

Today (as of April 2003) there are 610 female officers serving in the Armed Forces.

(Those serving on international postings are not included in this number)

The distribution of women is as follows;

Army:	254	5.3 %
Air Force:	216	6.7 %
Navy:	140	5.3 %

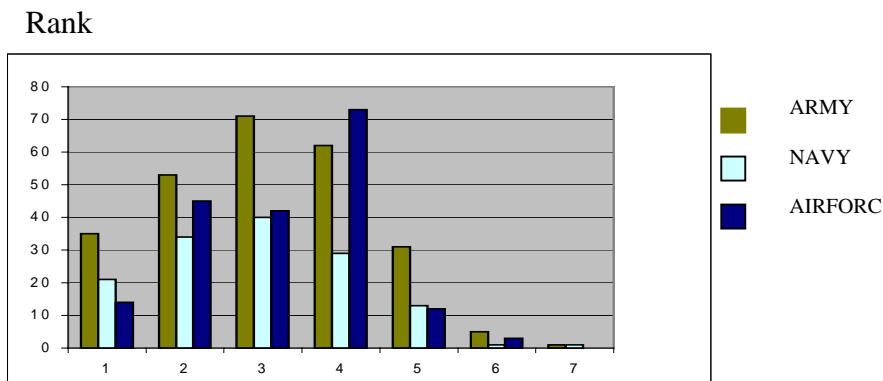
### Service

The motivation of many women who join the services is based upon the fact that women have the same opportunities as men within their military carrier. In recent years women have gained more influence in the forces due to wider accept because they add diversity to the Armed Forces.

In 1988 female officers formed a group to support women in the forces. It has been active ever since. Nettverk for kvinnelig Befal (The Network for Women in the Forces) was established to provide women with a forum in which they could exchange experiences and support each other.

The group arranges meetings regularly, and holds seminars conducted by both military personnel and civilians.

The Network works closely with the Armed Forces, and receives support in the form of financial aid etc, in order to carry out its work. The Network also cooperates with The Norwegian Women's Voluntary Defence Association (NWVDA). Annually NWVDA arranges various exercises including both civilian and military personnel, in which the Network is invited to participate.



1 = Sergeant	5 = Major
2 = 2nd Lt	6 = Lt Col
3 = Lieutenant	7 = Colonel
4 = Captain	8 = Brigadier

### Recruitment

The Armed Forces Media Centre (AFMC) is responsible for the recruitment of students to all of the Officer Candidate Schools. Results from a questionnaire provided by the AFMC show that it is no longer considered unconventional for women to apply to an Uncommissioned Officers Training School.

The AFMC has in recent years led a series of recruitment campaigns, targeting specifically women. They began by creating a database in which they registered women who wished to receive information about the Forces and educational possibilities within it. Further correspondence with these women is then upheld via text messages, e-mail etc. Using today's youth cultures' own methods of communication. The success of the "Military Women's camp" held last year prompted the Forces to arrange several camps again this year. The participants are encouraged to try many typical military activities. Female officers lead the Camps and the activities. The evaluation of the camps proved that an "active recruitment campaign" such as this, is far more successful than previous campaigns.

The AFMC is positive to the recruitment campaign of 2003, and for the time being the results seem to have increased since previous years.

The MOD believes that an integral part of the recruitment campaign aimed to encourage young women to join the services; is to place older, experienced female officers in attractive/popular public positions who in turn become roll models for these young women.

### Training

Basic Officer Training has remained unchanged in the last few years. Women receive the same educational opportunities as their male counterparts. The physical fitness criteria for men and women differ slightly allowing for natural gender differences. The Armed Forces upholds the principle of life long learning. There are several stages to the military educational system. The first stage is Basic Officer Training at a Non-commissioned Officer Training school followed by a year's secondment in a military unit. Once the secondment is successfully completed the non commissioned officers are eligible to apply to one of three military academies.

The Norwegian Defence Staff College is divided onto two levels. Part one is undertaken as distance learning, with a few group meetings throughout the study period. Part two is a whole academic year of study at the Staff College. There are at present relatively few female officers who have completed part two of the course.

The highest levels of Military education take place at the Norwegian National Defence College. Civil servants, military civilians and officers are educated together at the Defence Collage. 50 % of the civilian students are female, In comparison only three female officers have graduated from the College.

### Deployments

Norwegian women have broken many traditional barriers in many of the more recent operations. Norway was in the mid 1990's, one of the first countries to post women to the Middle East as International Observers. At the beginning of the war in Afghanistan 2002, Explosive Ordnance Disposal personnel were posted to Afghanistan.

The figures below take into account male and female national conscripts.

Number of women in International Operations;

Army:	37	4.6 %
Air Force:	9	5.8 %
Navy	3	5.6 %

### Career Development

The Armed Forces has a strategic plan for the development of equal opportunities. "The Armed Forces Personnel Handbook" in which one of the focal points is the politics concerning equal opportunities. We have also a "Plan of Action for Increasing Female Representation in the Armed Forces". As a result, the Armed Forces sent female officers to participate in a civilian mentor programme for Female directors. 9 officers have completed.

The Norwegian Defence Leadership Institute has now developed and holds the Norwegian Defence Female Senior Leadership Program. The main theme of the program is for the women to further develop themselves and gain personnel growth (Personal insight, self confidence). 20 officers and 3 civilian military leaders have completed the course so far.

Results from an evaluation report on the programme proves that The Norwegian Defence Leadership Institute has been successful in developing a course that helps motivate the women to keep building their career in the Armed Forces. It also helped to make them feel more secure in their leadership and their future career moves. In turn they become positive role models for military and civilian women.

The Air Force runs its own mentor program for both women and men. The aim is to prepare potential directors/leaders as well as possible for the top military positions. At present only 4 female officers have completed the program. It exists no such mentor program within the Army or Navy.

#### Special interest items/events (recent and Projected Developments)

The Armed Forces is in a huge reorganisation and reduction process. As a result a new “10 point programme” is being developed. The aim is to identify concrete measures in order to implement direct action and short term initiatives, expand existing “plans of action” and personnel management within the forces. The program will directly affect the following areas: continuity, career competence, welfare, domestic support and geographical stability.

The Armed Forces Equal Opportunities Award was on March 2003 presented to Air force Inspector General, Major General Thomas Colin Archer, for his hard work in enforcing equal opportunities in practise. The award is to be given once a year.

In 2002 Norway’s first female Commodore, the first female principle at the Norwegian National Defence College and the first female Sea King helicopter pilot were announced. In 2003 the Air Force announced its first female Squadron Commander.

#### Conclusion

The Armed Forces has over the last few years shifted its way of working from “specifically female matters” to now focusing more upon the individual, male or female, emphasizing the importance of equality. There has been a great deal of focus upon the combination of a military career and family welfare. Female officers, as a minority group in the Armed Forces; have been able to achieve certain gains allowing them to effectively combine a military career with family life. (Free childcare travel, Kindergarten, the possibility of using a “mobile office” etc)

We have no special programmes designed specifically for the retention of younger female officers. Due to the short history of female service we have very few high-ranking officers.

Although there are few women in the Armed Forces, they legally have precisely the same opportunities as their male counterparts. However in practice this is not always evident. There are still leaders who cannot see and value the advantages and gains by integrating female and male officers on an equal platform. Regardless of this we are working towards a better family welfare system both at home and abroad.

The Norwegian Defence is in a period of reorganisation, And at present is focusing upon reducing the number of officers it contains.