

NATIONAL REPORT
JORDAN ARMED FORCES 2006

Introduction.

Jordanian women started to join the Armed Forces as early as 1950, when they were brought in as teachers for the military schools. However, the number of women in the military remained insignificant until 1962, when Princess Muna College of Nursing was established. The first group of women, consisting of eight cadets, graduated from this college in 1965. After undergoing the essential training, these cadets received their commission, as second lieutenants, into the Royal Medical Corps. Since then, the number of Jordanian women enlisted in the Armed Forces, as civilian employees or as service women, has risen significantly.

Although women have always been on equal footing as far as pay is concerned, with their fellow servicemen, their role in the Armed Forces was enhanced by the creation of the Directorate of Military Women's Affairs in 1995. Not only does the Directorate look out for the best interests of service women, but it also works toward taking the role of women in the Armed Forces to a higher standard than before, by providing women with more training, more responsibilities, and ultimately more opportunities to serve their country.

Employment

Women can enroll as civilian employees or as soldiers (whether officers, non-commissioned officers, or private soldiers). They have always received equal pay to those of their male counterparts.

Promotions, length of military service, and pay are the same for men and women. Promotion rules are based on seniority and professional qualification. Female military personnel are allowed to take 3 months paid maternity leave. She can also take up to 2 years unpaid leave for several reasons but it won't be accounted for when computing for promotion to the next higher rank.

Career Development.

As of the year 2006, career qualifications have become a mandatory for promotions within the individual units, in order to reach a higher level of professionalism and distinction. Foreign languages and computer skills have also become mandatory for those with long term career plans.

Recruitment.

Women enter the Jordanian Army on a voluntary basis. Due to women's high interest in serving in the military, which currently exceeds the need of the army, no special recruitment programs for women have been necessary. There has never been a quota applied either to recruitment or to the total

number of serving women in our forces. Recruitment policies have been carefully planned and applied for the selection of females.

They are selected after passing competitive examinations in areas such as medical health, mental health, command tasks, physical fitness, leadership, as well as personal interviews. Once they have been selected they join the Royal Military Academy for basic training. After that they are assigned to their units and undergo advanced and specialized courses according to their specialty and rank within their units, same as their male counter parts.

Training.

The Medical Services were the first section of the military to recruit and train women, starting with the Princess Muna College of Nursing in 1962. As of the year 2006, all specialized training programs for women will be identical to those of their male counterparts. During their careers, service women must attend the same qualification courses and participate in all examinations required for promotions to higher ranks within their fields.

In 2005, 48 female university graduates joined our newly established Field Officers Commissioning Course along with their male counter-parts. While they segregated as platoons and live in separate quarters to the male cadets, they are integrated on the academic requirements of the course. Apart from the differences in Physical Fitness requirements for the men and women, all other standards must be performed at the same level. Upon graduation, both male and female cadets are commissioned as 2Lt's and then join there units.

As of 2006, our Staff College and National defense College will be opened to the few senior female military officers who qualified to attend. There will also be an increase in the numbers of female officers and NCO's attending post graduate programs at university's in Jordan and overseas.

Physical Fitness Test

As of 1997, all servicewomen have to take part in an annual Physical Fitness Test until they reach the age of forty. This test consists of strength and endurance disciplines. Performance in each discipline is rated with points. The Army PFT consists of a 2 mile run, sit ups and push ups. The physical fitness criteria for men and women differ slightly allowing for natural gender differences.

Numbers of women in the Military.

The total number of women in the military is 4883: 1203 officers, 2421 servicewomen, and 1259 civilians. The table below shows the total number of women per service. The percentage of women is the lowest in the regular army and the highest in the medical services. The majority of women occupy administrative positions. Since 1990, women began to occupy positions that were strictly reserved for men in the past, such as; Royal Guard Protection

Unit, military police, and military intelligence. The highest rank reached by a woman in the army was of Major general, in the Royal Medical Services and that of Brigadier General in the General Headquarters.

Retention Rates.

The turn over rate of military women in JAF is considered very low. It is due to family reasons such as the lack of forced mobility of husbands in and outside the country and child care. Today's youth join the military because of the pay and benefits, good healthcare coverage, education, skills training and most importantly the honor of serving their country. The younger generation of women, are increasingly interested in joining the JAF, because of the exciting new career opportunities.

Policy Changes/New Policy.

In 2005 a 10 year strategy for enhancing the role of women was introduced. A committee in the JAF that focuses on equal opportunities issues prepared an Action Plan, setting up new initiatives to be implemented up to the year 2015. The long term purpose of the action plan is to expand our recruitment, open new positions and assignments in nontraditional fields and command positions, and improve the quality of work and service within our Armed services. This action plan outlines the basis for all future policies and initiatives concerning equal opportunities for our women. Over a 100 new positions have been opened to women through out the services including the Air Force.

Positions currently Held by Servicewomen.

Women have the opportunity to choose one of the following fields:

- a. The Royal Medical Services as nurses, allied health specialists, dentists, and doctors.
- b. Administrators, secretaries, computer programmers, architects and engineers.
- c. The Directorate of Education and Military Culture and other departments as teachers and instructors.
- d. Military Policewomen .
- e. ADC and body guards at the Royal Guard Protection Unit.
- f. Military Intelligence.
- g. Finance, military law.
- h. Flight Control Operations, Flight Control Assistants

Directorate of Military Women's Affairs (DMWA).

The DMWA was established in 1995. It was assigned the mission of managing all women's affairs in the military, developing their administrative techniques, raising their qualification level's, improving their performance and enhancing their adherence to discipline, The Directorate creates and implements changes where we feel it is necessary, and follow through with changes required of us be our leadership including the implementation of the

training policy approved by the general headquarters. This is done through monitoring both basic and specialized internal courses, in addition to increasing the numbers of overseas basic and advanced courses for our women.

These tasks also include maintaining and updating all women personnel records through a well-established database, and conducting researches and studies that aim to elevate the performance of women in service and enhance their quality of life, especially in the areas of family awareness and education.

Training Center.

As of 2006, preparations and foundations for the establishment of a Regional Military Women's training Center have begun. We have concluded that we are the best and most ideal bridge between East and West, to train, support, enhance, and advise on the roles of military women within the region.

By establishing a regional center we hope to provide specialized training courses by military women for military women. We hope to break down barriers and increase cooperation between the female military components in our region. We also hope to be able to encourage and advise regional countries on how to successfully integrate women into their militaries in accordance with their individual national objectives and military requirements.

Conclusion.

The Directorate of Military Women's Affairs has achieved plenty in terms of effecting and enhancing the role of women in the Armed Forces since its foundation. Today, the Directorate stands proud of all its accomplishments and is poised for more advancement's in order to carry forth its message and example of equality and efficiency. We believe this is best done through the implementation of timely and needed changes of over-all policy regarding the role of military women, and most importantly, by leading through example.