



INVISIBLE BATTALION

« I KNOW A GIRL WHO CARRIED WOUNDED PEOPLE TO SAFETY DURING A SHELLING IN ILOVAISK WHILE MOST MEN WERE SITTING IN THE BASEMENT. IF A WOMAN, MOTHER, SISTER, OR DAUGHTER IS WILLING TO DEFEND OUR VALUES AND OUR TERRITORY, NO ONE CAN FORBID HER TO DO SO. »

“INVISIBLE BATTALION”: WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN ATO MILITARY OPERATIONS

(SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH)

“I know a girl who carried wounded people to safety during a shelling in Ilovaisk while most men were sitting in the basement. If a woman, mother, sister, or daughter is willing to defend our values and our territory, no one can forbid her to do so.”

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The research was made possible due to the information and financial support provided by the ICF Ukrainian Women's Fund.



The Ukrainian Women's Fund is an international charitable foundation that was founded in 2000 by a team of women leaders aimed at developing and supporting the overall women's rights movement in Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus. The Ukrainian Women's Fund has, through 15 years of active work, established itself as the leading and only organization in Ukraine that provides targeted and consistent financial, outreach and consultative assistance to civil society organizations that work to defend, support and promote the rights of women in their political, economic, social and everyday life. The Ukrainian Women's Fund's activities are grounded in the belief that to have a just, harmonious and successful society, equal rights between women and men must be ensured.

The research was published with financial support provided by UN Women Ukraine.



The opinions expressed by the authors do not necessarily reflect the views of UN Women.

UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide. UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.

This publication includes photographs requested by the Ukrainian Women's Fund in the course of a social study titled “The Invisible Battalion: Women Taking Part in ATO Military Action.” Photos by Kleopatra Anferova.

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The Ukrainian society has been undergoing fundamental changes in thinking and legitimization of gender relations for the last decades. The successful introduction and regulation of gender relations in society involves establishing the values of gender equality in society as a whole and in its various institutions, in particular. First of all, it means to prevent gender discrimination, to ensure equal participation of women and men in public decision making. The Army is no exception, because during social problems and armed conflicts, it is important to professionally integrate and consider the interests of the male and female citizen categories who are involved in conflict resolution and in establishing peace in the country.

Ukraine has ratified the main international documents on equal rights and opportunities for men and women: the UNO Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and Millennium Development Goals, defining for itself gender equality as an important part of the further development and as one of the policy priorities. A democratic society must give men and women equal opportunities to participate in all spheres of life, including in the Ukrainian Armed Forces and the peacekeeping process.

At the national level, the gender equality is warranted primarily by the Constitution of Ukraine, the Labor Code of Ukraine, as well as by the separate Law of Ukraine "On Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men" (2005), the State Program of equal rights and opportunities for women and men for the period until 2016, and other legislation.

Ukrainian women were involved in protests at Euromaidan 2013-2014, and in all activities, including in the military ones (forming the so-called Women's Hundreds) on an equal basis with men. Currently, women are also fighting in the ATO, which has been repeatedly covered by media reports. Yet, there is still an important question about visibility of women and recognition of their role (on a par with men) by the state and society. For example, really few congratulated the defender women on October 14, 2015 (Defenders' Day in Ukraine). The vast majority (including the media) perceived the

date as a festival for "fathers, husbands, and sons."

Thus, the purpose of this investigation was to find out specifics of women's participation in the military operations in the ATO zone, revealing both possible achievements and problems of women's integration in the military. We began with a desk research of gender aspects in the armed forces, which included analyzing statistics of women's involvement in the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the status of women's integration in the military structures, as well as a review of the relevant legislation etc. Secondly, we presented the results of expert interviews on gender aspects of women's integration into the army in Ukraine and the women's situation in the combat zone. Thirdly, we analyzed how mass media portrays the ATO women. Fourthly, we used the ethnographic research in the ATO zone (observation, interviews with women and men involved in combat actions) to clarify the legal aspects of women's participation in the ATO, the gender division of labor, living conditions and medical problems faced by women etc.

We would like to thank everyone who helped and contributed to this research: Olesya Bondar and Nataliya Karbowska of Ukrainian Women's Fund for their tremendous support; Tetyana Popova, Deputy Minister of Information Policy of Ukraine, Ministry of Defense of Ukraine, Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine; Natalya Dubchak, gender expert for involving women in the armed forces, for her advice and recommendations; Ella Lamah for the invitation to the NATO SPS Advanced Research Workshop "The Role of Women and Gender Mainstreaming in Resolving the Ukraine Military Conflict. Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution # 1325 on Women, Peace and Security" and related Resolutions"; Volodymyr Sologub, for his help with contacting journalists; all the women who participated in the project. We express our sincere gratitude to Cleopatra Anferova, the project photographer. We are also thankful for the assistance with the project to: Julia Tolopa, Maria Chernenko, Victoria Dvoretzka and Lilia Dvoretzka, Fedir Ustinov; Tetyana Zherebkina, Anastasia Popova, and Tetyana Stepanova, students of Sociology Department at National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy.

GENDER EQUALITY IN THE UKRAINIAN SOCIETY

1.1. Ensuring gender equality in Ukraine: legislation and international obligations

The idea and value of gender equality are implemented primarily at the state level. Gender policy is defined as the state policy aimed at ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men. Certain transformation processes - changing perception of women as mothers only to citizens with equal rights and opportunities in public life¹ - have been observed in gender policy of the post-Soviet Ukraine. The so-called institutional regulation of gender relations, whose important part is the relevant legislation, has been developing for over twenty years.

Generally, the issue of equal rights and opportunities for women and men in the Ukrainian society is governed by both general and special legislation. First, the Constitution of Ukraine (1996), Section II "The rights, freedoms and duties of man and citizen", Article 24 guarantees to citizens equal constitutional rights and freedoms, "there can be no privileges or restrictions based on race, color, political, religious and other beliefs, sex, ethnic or social origin, property, residence, language or other characteristics."²

Also, the special Law of Ukraine "On Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men" (2005) contains definitions of concepts such as equal rights and opportunities for women and men, gender-based discrimination, positive actions, sexual harassment etc. As stated in Article 3, "the state policy on ensuring equal rights and opportunities of women and men shall be aimed at: establishing gender equality; non-discrimination based on gender; application of positive actions; ensuring equal participation of women and men in making socially important decisions; ensuring equal

opportunities of women and men in combining professional and family responsibilities..."³. Further on, the Law (Article 6) states that "gender-based discrimination shall be prohibited" and lists what is not considered gender-based discrimination. Among other things, the list includes compulsory military service for men.

Chapter II of the Law describes the mechanism to ensure equal rights and opportunities for men and women, namely, agencies, institutions and organizations that are competent in the area of equal rights and opportunities for women and men, and, in particular, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, the Verkhovna Rada Committee on Human Rights, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. Despite the importance of these issues stipulated in the law, it is viewed rather as a declarative document, which lacks mechanisms to implement gender equality policy, and does not spell out responsibility for violating the law.

The international reports that measure the state of gender relations do not place Ukraine anywhere near the top. According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2014⁴, prepared by the World Economic Forum, which measures the gender gap in four critical areas of inequality between men and women - economic participation, education, political representation and health sector - Ukraine ranked 56th⁵ out of 142 countries surveyed.

The international Freedom in the World annual report includes a section on "personal autonomy and individual rights." Ukraine was found a "partly free" country with a rating of 3.5⁶ in 2014. As such, it faces the following issues in relation to gender equality: "Gender discrimination is prohibited under the Constitution, but authorities show little interest in or understanding of the issue. Human rights groups complain that employers openly discriminate people based on sex, age and appearance."⁷

3 The Law of Ukraine "On Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men" dated September 8, 2005 r. № 2866-IV [electronic resource]. - Access: <http://zakon4.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2866-15>

4 Global Gender Gap Report 2014. - Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2014. - P. 358 // http://www3.weforum.org/docs/GGGR14/GGGR_CompleteReport_2014.pdf

5 The higher position in the list, the more a country is close to gender equality.

6 Out of maximum 7.

7 Freedom in the World 2014. Freedom House, about Ukraine. Access: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2014/ukraine-0#.U9tj6PmSwbQ> (dated August 1, 2014)

1 Martsenyuk T. Women in Ukrainian Politics: Challenges and Prospects for Change. - K.: International Centre for Policy Studies, 2015. - S. 10 // <http://www.ekmair.ukma.edu.ua/handle/123456789/4441>

2 The Constitution of Ukraine dated June 28, 1996 [electronic resource]. - Access: <http://zakon4.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/254%D0%BA/96-%D0%B2%D1%80>

Ukraine has assumed a number of international obligations, including ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men. According to the Millennium Development Goals, set at the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000, which must be met by 2015, Ukraine determines “ensuring gender equality”⁸ among the six identified goals. Another important Ukraine’s commitment concerns ratifying the major international document regarding the rights of women - the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)⁹. Ukraine is to periodically report to the Committee of the Convention on the progress of meeting its obligations. According to the results of the previous National and Alternative reports on the implementation in Ukraine of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination, the issue of equal rights and opportunities for men and women in Ukraine is controversial. On the one hand, Ukraine has “made real steps to create the mechanism to ensure the rights and freedoms of women in accordance with the International Human Rights Standards.”¹⁰ On the other hand, “the country has not yet changed its ideology regarding gender issues in the society consistent with the international trends of the matter.”¹¹

The National Review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (2014)¹² noted that despite the accession to international agreements and adoption of national legislation on equal rights and opportunities for women and men, there is

a lack of political will to implement gender transformations, low level of representation of women in public and political life. A significant problem is stability of stereotypes about the roles of men and women in society and family (which are spread through education and mass media).

1.2. The problem of sexism in Ukrainian society

Sexism is the ideology and practice of gender-based discrimination. Gender stereotypes that envision a specific set of the so-called “traditional” roles for women and men are at the heart of sexism. Researcher Oksana Kis says there are two models of constructing gender identity of women in the post-Soviet Ukraine - Guardian and Barbie¹³. The former deals with the Ukrainian national liberation theory, while the latter - with the Western consumption standards. Indeed, women are expected to play roles primarily related to motherhood and beauty in the public discourse. The role of the mother is even more appropriate in situations of national struggle. It would be expedient to consider certain trends of involving women in protest activity, including the military, against the example of women’s participation in Euromaidan (2013-2014), which will be done later.

The problem of sexism becomes even more acute where sexist statements are made by public figures, famous people, whose opinion is deferred to. Some examples of sexism from local politicians are absolutely inexcusable. The former president Viktor Yanukovych, speaking in Davos about the Ukrainian promotional campaign before the European football championship in 2012, called the blooming chestnuts and women the charms of the country. “So, women will start undressing in the Ukrainian towns. Seeing this beauty is wonderful,” Yanukovych said. Or, Ukraine’s former Prime Minister Mykola Azarov said that “carrying out reforms is not women’s business”. Such things are unacceptable in the democratic society where gender equality is a value.

8 Millennium Development Goals: Ukraine 2015 Goal number 6 “Ensuring Gender Equality” [Electronic resource] // <http://www.ukraine2015.org.ua/tsil6>

9 The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women / UN Convention on the International Document 12/18/1979 [electronic resource]. - Access: http://zakon4.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/995_207

10 Report on the implementation in Ukraine of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women / [Lead of writing team L.E. Leontieva, L.E. Tolstokorova, A.V.]. - Kharkov: Folio, 2007. - S. 18.

11 Same

12 Gender policy and institutional mechanisms for its implementation in Ukraine: Ukraine national review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly / [Ed. Koryukalov, M.; with the assistance of the UN Women “Strengthening accountability in the financing of gender equality. EU-UN Partnership on Gender Equality” in Ukraine, Representative of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in Ukraine and Ukrainian Women’s Fund]. - K., 2014. - 120 p.

13 Kis, A. Models of constructing gender identity of women in modern Ukraine // Independent cultural journal “JI”. - 2003. - № 27 // <http://www.ji.lviv.ua/n27texts/kis.htm>

According to Olga Vesnyanka and Yuri Shelyazhenko in the article "Panic sexism or Yanukovych's ideas live"¹⁴, the sexist rhetoric persists and finds its supporters, even after the Revolution of Dignity. Further, the authors corroborate their opinion with the following example. On August 28, 2014, Zurab Alasania, Director General of the National Broadcasting Company, accused women of alarmism on his public Facebook page:

"You (especially lovely and compassionate ladies) are wonderful volunteers with huge kind hearts and generous self-sacrificing souls. You really help men in the army, I know a million facts like that. Your contribution is huge, your care is priceless. Your empathy grows to heaven - and that's where you start thinking that you can help a soldier with something more than care of his daily life. That's where you start thinking that you know the right way to make war. That's where you start screaming into all available ears about where a tank brigade should be urgently sent, and how to immediately attack a township, because that is where your cared ones are and "the corrupt generals" (a quote from any of your cared soldier) "left them to die." And that's where, excuse me, I think of the three classic German "K" .. Kinder, Küche, Kirche".

What was his reaction to the ensuing outrage? A few hours later, after numerous angry comments, the media manager edited his post. He added one sentence: "This also stands for men, as well". No regrets, or apologies – just covering his tracks. He even advised women to read an antifeminist text about women's propensity to hysteria¹⁵.

This is just one example of sexism, whose problem is still relevant, during protest activity and warfare, as well. To better understand the situation with women's participation in hostilities, it's worth to briefly analyze women's participation in the Euromaidan in 2013-2014.

1.3. Women at Euromaidan in 2013 -2014

Olesya Hromeychuk notes that the most important Kyiv's square became the area of public performance of revolutionary activities, patriotism and heroism, where characters often acted depending on their gender, and the public perception was formed, also largely based on specific gender expectations¹⁶.

Women did the so-called reproductive labor (cooking, cleaning, caring for other members of society, etc.) at Maidan. In a patriarchal society, it is assigned to women, considered not prestigious, almost unpaid and invisible. However, it is a great effort, the public work is difficult to imagine without.

Perhaps, the most outrageous for women at Maidan was the fact that the men made decisions for women about their participation in the protests¹⁷. We often heard reports that: *"Women and children were encouraged to leave Euromaidan in Lviv for the night."* According to Anastasiya Melnychenko: *"The problem with not letting women go to the barricades was just that women were not seen as fully responsible people in this situation. That is, a man, even a minor, may decide to get injured or to die for the homeland."* Nina Potarska, activist, also resents such policy exception: *"... it was so humiliating to hear from the stage something like "ladies, give some pleasure to men, they need to relax ... ". It is more like an escort service, instead of thanking women for their involvement at Maidan along with men."*

The patriarchal discourse regarding gender roles also imposes limits on men and masculinity, who must be necessarily patriotic and courageous. On March 8, the leaflets with the words *"Is your husband not going to Maidan, because it is very dangerous over there? Don't forget to congratulate him with March 8!"* were handed out at Maidan and shared online. This

14 Vesnyanka O., Shelyazhenko Y., Panic sexism or Yanukovych's ideas live / Insider, September 3, 2014 // <http://www.theinsider.ua/politics/5406fba21835d/>

15 Same

16 Hromeychuk O. Gender and nationalism at Maidan // Historians.in.ua, October 27, 2015 <http://historians.in.ua/index.php/en/dyskusiya/1673-olesia-khromeychuk-gender-i-natsionalizm-na-maidani-a>

17 Martsenyuk T.O. Gender sociology at Maidan: The role of women in protests // Post-socialist society: diversity of social change. Materials of the Seventh International memory sociological readings in memoriam of Panina N.V. and Zaslavskaya T.I. / Scientific Editing Golovakha E.I. and Stegnyy O.G. - K.: Institute of Sociology of NAS of Ukraine, 2014. - P. 146-160.

wording is sexist both to men and women, as the International day of vindication of the women's rights is still perceived as a holiday of 'spring, flowers, and tenderness'. The men not participating on barricades were openly mocked at in the social media. The so-called 'Sofa Self-Defense Hundred' was made up. The articles titled *"AutoMaidan female activist: Men should be kicked out to protest"* could be found in mass media

On the other hand, the diversity of Maidan was visible even from the barricades. The so-called women's hundreds began to be formed. They were both formal associations like the 39th Women's Self-Defense Hundred (currently, it presents itself as *'Women who can change the world...'* on Facebook), Women's Platoon of 16th Self-Defense Hundred, and various alternative hundreds: Olga Kobylanska Women's Hundred, Zaporizhzhya Women's Hundred, Sisters' Hundred (Dnipropetrovsk).

In fact, the women's associations used the military terminology (division in 'hundreds'), but filled it with a different meaning. For example, the Sisters' Hundred *"is a public union of caring Dnipropetrovsk women who gathered to peacefully vindicate the ideas of Euromaidan. Different power – same goal!"*. The Olga Kobylanska Women's Hundred defined its values as "human rights, human dignity, freedom, equality and non-discrimination", and the goal of activity as "activating of the women's protest movement and support of Euromaidan based on the principles of solidarity, sisterhood and mutual respect". Gender female experts, organizers of the annual gender equality award "Gender Balance. SPRING 2014", the human rights activists of the Civic Organization "Women's Information Consultative Center" and the International Women's Rights Center "La Strada-Ukraine" handed the award for "overcoming stereotypes, promoting women's leadership and gender equality idea promotion" to the Olga Kobylanska Women's Hundred.

Anna Kovalenko, the founder of the 39th Women's Maidan Self-Defense Hundred, noted that "the hundred was joined by over 150 women within three days. They took part in

clashes on Grushevsky street, resisted the police and stayed at Maidan after the most active period of protests was over"¹⁸. The 39th Women's Self Defense Hundred launched a program to support women involved in the ATO¹⁹ and invited everyone to join! The information says that *"Ukraine is famous for both its courageous men, and brave women. Today, about 300 women are in the Armed Forces and volunteer battalions. They are snipers, intelligence officers, machine gunners, as well as doctors, kitchen personnel and HQ support. Yet, despite the work they do, they remain women. And they need to be taken care of."*

Kateryna Chepura, an activist of "Vidsich" organization and the leader of the Women's Platoon of 16th Self Defense Hundred explained why it was formed:

*"The Women's Platoon was created because of the Maidan gender policy. Our organization existed before Maidan. We have been around for four years, but we just became a hundred at Maidan. Although sometimes there are more girls in our organization, the problem was that when our girls came to the Maidan to do something, we always had a problem with the fact that the Maidan self-defense guys [told them]: "You are ladies, you shouldn't be here, go home." That was exactly the reason why we created a female platoon: to formalize our presence at Maidan. So we could show a Self-Defense pass and say, "Dude, I'm self-defense just like you, so I have the right to be here." Even though it did not solve all issues, but it made it a bit easier for us."*²⁰

To summarize, in addition to barricades, defense and protection activities, Maidan entailed a large number of activities (with a high level of women involvement): care, information, logistics (SOS Euromaidan hotlines and others) and legal support, medical and psychological help, safe transportation, working with the media, educational work ("Open University" of Maidan, Maidan's library), Automaidan, the hospital guard, the ambulance guard, civil

¹⁸ Hromeychuk A. Gender and nationalism at Maidan // Historians. in.ua, October 27, 2015 // <http://historians.in.ua/index.php/en/dyskusiya/1673-olesia-khromeichuk-gender-i-natsionalizm-na-maidani-a>

¹⁹ ATO Women Program, 39th Women's Self-Defense Hundred http://39s.com.ua/ua/news/startu_programa_pdtrimki_zhnki_v_ato/

²⁰ Same

guards, a fundraiser for the injured and volunteer support, etc. is only a part of the list of the work performed in support of the protest.

Also, noteworthy is an online initiative of Nadiya Parfan "Half of Maidan: Women's Voice of Protest"²¹, which was also accompanied by a number of protest actions at Maidan and beyond. Journalist Christina Berdyskyh launched the initiative "They are people" to

show the "ordinary" people of the protest space. Irina Vyrtoşu compiled the publication "Maidan. Women's Cause", which included interviews with 17 heroines, described dozens of women's initiatives. These and other examples demonstrate the fact that women were active participants of protest activity at Maidan and did their work despite sexism.

Many Maidan female activists continued their volunteer activities or participated in military operations in the ATO zone in the East of Ukraine.

21 <https://www.facebook.com/groups/255422234633303/>

WOMEN IN THE ARMED FORCES: CHALLENGES OF INTEGRATION

2.1. Gender issues in the military sociology

In the military sociology, discussions on women's participation in the Army are based on real opportunities for women to be professional soldiers. The main dilemma in discussing gender integration is the question of what a modern army should be like. Should it be a professionally closed group, or must it also respond to social changes in society, and to the changing role of women in society, in particular?

American scholar Mady Segal singled out three groups of factors that promote women's integration in the army: (1) changes in the armed forces; (2) changes in the social structure of society, and (3) changes in culture²². The researcher understands changes in the Armed Forces as the changing concept of the national security, military technology, organizational structure of the army, purpose of the Armed Forces, and military recruitment policy. A change in the social structure lies in the fact that women have actively entered the labor market and the public sphere in recent decades. Mady Segal defines cultural factors as changing cultural values in relation to the role of women in the Western societies and popularity of the liberal principle of equal rights and opportunities.²³

Women in the military have been causing controversy for a long time. The arguments of gender equality opponents were mainly related to the physical and psychological inability of women to perform military service, problems with cohesion, combat readiness and morale support of the unit. However, such arguments have been repeatedly refuted by sociological researches. It was found that women suffer from psychological, physical discomfort and busy schedule the same as men. Numerous experiments have also demonstrated that the importance of personal hygiene issues

for women soldiers is exaggerated. As for the argument about the destructive role of women soldiers, the study of the mixed gender units of the US Army has also disproved this stereotype. Mixed gender units were more prone to empathy, interest in the national, cultural features of countries where the military operation was carried out, and preferred non-use of force in interacting with the locals.²⁴

Today, gender issues in the civic and military relations hold a prominent place. This is mainly due to the fact that the armed forces are in a state of transformation. The physical strength and aggression, as traditionally male features, lose their meaning for them. It is the main argument presented by supporters of involving women in military structures. Another key argument is that women have the same rights and responsibilities as men, thus their participation in the military functions should be equivalent to those of men.

There are two possible scenarios for women to join the armed forces. Women either adapt to the existing regulations and orders, which are "masculine" in nature, or, they change the existing structure and nature of the army making it gender-neutral. These issues will be elaborated in the next section of the study.

2.2. Integration of women in the Armed Forces: international experience

The former Director of International Cooperation Department of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine Ivan Androsenko said in his article about historical overview of gender policy in the armed forces of the leading countries that "women are not any worse than men at carrying out their duties and contributing to the strengthening of discipline and ethics of communication in the army".²⁵ The article presents certain historical information about the women's participation in

22 Segal M. W. Women's Military Roles Cross-Nationality: Past? Present? And Future // *Gender and Society*. – 1995. – Vol. 9 – № 6. – p. 760.

23 Danilova N. *Army and Society: Principles of interaction*. – SPb.: Norma, 2007. – S. 173.

24 Miller L., Moskos Ch. Humanitarians or warriors? Race, gender and combat status in Operation Restore Hope // *Armed Forces and Society*. – 1995. – 21 (4). – p. 615.

25 Androsenko I. *Aty-Baty, walked the girls ... or historical overview on gender policy in the armed forces of the leading countries of the world* // Information and educative edition "Ya" Special issue "New roles for Ukrainian women." - H.: Kharkov Women's Organization "Krona", 2009. - pp. 31-32 // <http://krona.org.ua/assets/files/journal/Gendernyi-zhurnal-Ya-rolu.pdf>

the armed forces of various countries. The world's first women soldiers become fully legitimate with the appropriate status in Canada in 1895. They were accepted to military service in time of peace not only in the support structures, but also in combat units. The adoption of Human Rights Act in Canada in 1985 helped women to get access to about 75% of military professions. Another birthplace of the feminized army is Great Britain.²⁶ The first female military hospital designed for 350 wounded was founded there in 1653. Women's Royal Air Force, Royal Auxiliary Corps and Women Motor Drivers Legion were formed listing 100,000 persons in the British Armed Forces in 1917-1919.

Poland has been trying to create more attractive conditions of service for women in the Armed Forces. Recently, the Polish army has introduced the position of the Women's Military Commissioner (staffing category for a colonel rank). It is a woman officer who is in charge of a full range of "female" issues in the army. A permanent position for a woman (captain rank) is also included in the Convention of Deans (representative body of officers and military contract service men of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland).

In Israel, a woman in the military does not cause much surprise. When Israel was created in 1948, women were not left behind. They took an active part in the defense of their homeland.²⁷ At present, the share of women in the Israeli army is 26% and keeps growing. IDF (Israel Defense Forces) include 35% of women.

Arguments concerning women's integration into the armed forces may be divided into two categories. The first one relates to social justice, values of gender equality while the second one – to a different social experience of women, as opposed to men. Let us consider these arguments in detail.

The social justice is ensured, in the first place, at the legislative level as the implementation of the idea of equal rights and opportunities

for women and men to participate in various spheres of social life. In particular, the Security Council Resolution #1325 (2000) emphasizes the importance of changing the idea of the women's role from victims of conflict, to a participant of conflict resolution and peacekeeping operations on an equal basis with men.

The first steps towards the **integration of women into the NATO armed forces** included development of policy of equal opportunities, fighting discrimination and harassment²⁸. Back in 1961, the senior NATO women officers organized a conference to discuss the situation with the women's integration in the armed forces of the Alliance. The Committee on Women in the NATO Forces (CWINF) was established in 1976. The Committee was renamed into the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives in 2009.²⁹

As for the second argument of women's integration into the armed forces, let's review the following. For example, as noted by Natalya Dubchak (at the time of writing, a humanitarian Officer of Humanities Policy Department, Ministry of Defense of Ukraine, the captain of the Armed Forces of Ukraine)³⁰, e.g. the military discipline statistics show that women make up the smallest share of offenders. Their immediate superiors (commanders) claim that women are more responsible, organized and disciplined. Similar arguments are based on some deterministic beliefs about the differences between men and women, which can also be explained by a different socially expected experience for women and men. Even the former Defense Minister of Ukraine Anatoliy Hrytsenko once said on the radio that *"... a woman is an additional factor of psychologically favorable climate in the unit. The presence of a woman raises men's self-esteem. They become more cultured, more restrained, trim."*³¹

28 Bender P. Gender balance and equality at the NATO Headquarters: Ongoing transformations // Information and education issue "Ya". – Special Issue "Gender aspects of EuroAtlantic integration." - 2007. - p. 27 // <http://krona.org.ua/assets/files/journal/Gendernyi-zhurnal-Ya-nato.pdf>

29 NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives // http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_50327.htm

30 Dubchak N. Strong side of "weaker" sex // Information and education edition "Ya" Special issue "New roles for Ukrainian women." - H.: Kharkov Women's Organization "Krona", 2009. - p. 25 // <http://krona.org.ua/assets/files/journal/Gendernyi-zhurnal-Ya-rol.pdf>

31 Same

26 Same

27 Vishnyakov O. Ukraine and Israel. Women in the war. August 20, 2015 r. // http://consul-ukraine.blogspot.co.il/2015/08/blog-post_20.html (available August 21, 2015)

A number of issues are cited in the context of women's integration into the armed forces. For example, the Russian researcher Nataliya Shumakevich concluded³² in her thesis on gender aspects of military reform that a huge disparity between men and women in senior and commanding positions is a clear indicator of the low social status of women in the military. The men feel about advancement of women in the service more or less ironically, and overall indulgently and favorably, whereas most women - with greater jealousy and aggressiveness. Not only do women put up with the least prestigious places in the service, they also have to face much greater difficulties than men. It turned out that sexist attitude is manifested in various forms of discrimination: from infringing on the work/rest schedule, to brutal treatment of women by commanders and fellow men.

2.3. Methodology of empirical study of women's position in the Armed Forces of Ukraine and in the military actions in the ATO zone

The empirical part of the study, which concerns the actual study of women's situation in the armed forces of Ukraine and their participation in the ATO, consisted of two parts: the desk and field studies. *The desk study* envisioned a review of previous professional (academic) national and some international studies, available media information; the results of the formal requests for the appropriate statistical information to the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior; legislation in relation to women in the armed forces.

In the framework of the project, *formal requests* were sent from the Ukrainian Women's Fund to the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine. The objective of the requests was to obtain official statistical information concerning the involvement of women (vs. men) in the Armed Forces of Ukraine, the military operations in the ATO zone, both mobilized and voluntary; the number of women who were killed in combat,

decorated for combat duty etc. Realizing that such information may be classified, we expected to receive at least the share of women vs. men.

Ukraine's Defense Ministry provided a response, noting the "incorrect name of the research." The arguments claimed that "the anti-terrorist operation is regulated by the appropriate regulatory and legal framework, including the Law of Ukraine "On combating terrorism" and is actually far from the concept of "military action." The law doesn't include the concept of "fighting in the ATO zone." Actually, this report uses the respective words (war, military action, combat etc.), primarily because the respondents and experts often use them.

Responding to the request, *Ministry of Interior of Ukraine* noted that "in accordance with the responsibilities assigned by law, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine has no need to generate comparative statistical data on the interior employees based on gender criterion during their activities." The statistical data provided by the Ministries in response to the requests will be provided below.

The field study used qualitative sociological methods: in-depth semi-structured interviews with women who were or had been in the ATO zone; interviews with men and women experts; observation (in the form of participation in several academic events); content analysis of media messages.

The research was conducted in the summer and autumn of 2015. It contained the following steps: sample design and finding respondents, interviewing ATO participants, men and women experts; transcribing interviews; analyzing interviews, writing a report.

In particular, **42 ATO women from various units were interviewed.** We used the "snowball sampling" technique to recruit the respondents. The respondents were aged 20 to 47. Also, 9 military men were interviewed about the treatment of women on the front.

Interviews were conducted in Ukrainian and Russian. The respondents answered three units of survey questions: 1) legal aspect of participating in the ATO; 2) living conditions of

32 Shumakevich N.V. Gender aspect of the military reform: diss. cand. social. sciences: 22.00.04. / Nataliya Vladimirovna Shumakevich. - Saratov, 2002. - 267 p.

service; 3) behavioral and psychological aspects of their stay on the front.

Table A.1 (see Appendix A) presents all the respondents. The table does not contain any personal information which might help de-anonymize or track the female respondents.

Expert interviews were aimed to find out the specifics of women's participation in hostilities in the ATO, revealing both possible achievements and problems of women's integration into the military service. Depending on experience and specific qualifications of women experts, they were asked about the pros and cons of women's integration into the Armed Forces of Ukraine (both before the Maidan and ATO, and afterwards); the situation with visibility of the women as ATO participants; whether it is expedient, and how best to integrate women into the Armed Forces of Ukraine; attitude to compulsory military service for men in Ukraine; attitude to prohibition of certain military occupations for women; how women's participation in the military operations in the East of Ukraine is reported or how it should be reported; what countries are the most successful in integrating women into the armed forces and why; forecasts of the situation of women in the armed forces and administrative units in Ukraine and more.

The selection criteria for male or female experts included the following qualifications: at least 1 year of experience in the Armed Forces of Ukraine; or, at least 1 year of experience in analytics on the armed forces in general and / or an armed conflict, in particular; or, at least 3-5 reports on visiting the ATO zone.

The "key informants" and "snowball" sampling techniques were used to recruit the men and women experts. Also, the accessibility of experts was taken into account. That is, some experts (particularly, in the Armed Forces of Ukraine) had to get a clearance to provide expert interviews. Some people that were approached for an interview refused stating lack of time; some requests were left unanswered. Expert interviews were conducted in August 2015.

As a result, nine persons were interviewed. Table

A.2, Appendix A contains information about them. All respondents agreed that their words might be openly quoted in this report. Most of the interviews were conducted face-to-face or via Skype. The results of one interview were mailed in. The deputy Maria Ionova answered on behalf of the Equal Opportunities Caucus. The respondents included 2 female journalists and 1 male journalist. The women experts also included the head of Public Organization "Ukrainian Women's Guard", which was founded in 2014. The organization created "Voluntary Women's Battalion", "Cyber-Guard" and "Legal Guard". The sample does not claim to be representative. The main objective of expert interviews was to complement the existing information.

Also, on September 21-22, 2015, Kyiv hosted the NATO SPS Advanced Research Workshop "The Role of Women and Gender Mainstreaming in Resolving the Ukraine Military Conflict. Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution #1325 "Women, Peace and Security" and related Resolutions", which was attended by the research authors. The study also uses the presentation information and comments of female/male participants of the workshop, which were taped and transcribed. On October 9, 2015, the public discussion "Women in the Ukrainian Army. How to Overcome Stereotypes?" was held. The results are also used in this research.

The representation of the ATO women in the media was analyzed using the **qualitative content analysis**³³ technique. It is an interpretive inductive method that helps isolate categories for analysis, formulate hypotheses and theories based on the interpretation of empirical data, not vice versa - use categories developed within certain theories to interpret raw data. This approach is appropriate to be used for the lack of relevant theories and analytical literature, as well as in descriptive studies, i.e. in order to answer the question HOW? E.g. "How are women participating in anti-terrorist operations in the East of Ukraine portrayed by the media?"

33 Hsieh H-F., Shannon S. Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis / Qualitative health research. – 2005. – Vol. 15. – No. 9. – P. 1277-1288.

This part of the study deals with analyzing texts and videos published between April 2014 - when the antiterrorist operations began in the Donbass - and September 2015 inclusively. The study used only online media resources, but many of them are electronic copies of the print and TV media, which have a broader audience that includes people who are not Internet users. The resources that have been analyzed include both national and local media. This is due to: 1) lack of material on this subject, 2) interest in coverage of women's participation in the ATO in the local and national media. The media whose materials were used for the analysis are listed in Table A3, Appendix A. The following key phrases and their cases were used to search for articles: women (in) ATO, women at war, women in the war, war women, women in the military, women (in) ATO, ATO women.

This and the next sections present thematic information using the data collected as a result of desk and field studies.

2.4. Women in the Armed Forces of Ukraine: achievements and problems of integration

2.4.1. The number of women and specifics of their employment

Women have been joining the Armed Forces of Ukraine since 1993³⁴. Nataliya Dubchak writes in her article published in 2008³⁵ that traditionally, the Armed Forces of Ukraine used to be the most conservative social institution on the issue of women staying in the military whereas currently, almost 10% of the Armed Forces of Ukraine are women. In total, there are about 1800 women in the military, out of whom 1151 are officers. Back then, the most numerous category of military women - about 40% of female soldiers - served under the contract.

Representation of women in defense **has been increasing** which is consistent with the global development trends. However, the growing number of female soldiers, especially

the contract ones, is not associated with the prestige of the service, but rather with the reluctance of men to hold low-paid positions³⁶. In fact, women mostly have so-called "feminized" professions like nurses, finance, logistics and communications.³⁷

In early October 2015, the head of Agency of Communications and Press, Ministry of Defense of Ukraine, Oksana Gavrylyuk reported at a briefing in Kiev³⁸ that 938 women had participated in the ATO. As of early October 2015, about 14,500 of female soldiers and 30,500 of the employees of the Armed Forces of Ukraine are in the service. Almost 2,000 are officers with 35 women holding managing positions in the Ministry of Defense, General Staff and various corps of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The deputy of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine and co-chairman of IF "Equal Opportunities" Maria Ionova provides the following information: *"In 2013, they accounted for almost 25% of all the Armed Forces members. In fact, you can also take in contract women soldiers. Their number reached 15%. How many are in the East Ukraine in the ATO zone? I cannot give you the exact numbers, so any comparison would be incorrect."*

Responding to the request for statistical information concerning the involvement of women in combat operations in the ATO zone, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine indicates that the total number of the National Guard of Ukraine is about 14,000 people, including 21 women (positions: doctor, nurse), for the ATO duration. That is, women make up only 0.0015%. In 2014-2015, about 22,000 National Guard of Ukraine troops, including 500 women (0.023%) stayed in the zone of hostilities. No female internal affairs or defense personnel were killed in the line of duty in the ATO in the East of Ukraine. 1316 internal affairs and defense personnel were decorated for participating in the ATO in 2014-2015, including 480 persons (3 women and 477 men) in 2014, 836 people (15 women and 821 men) in 2015.

34 Mashkovets T. Women in the ranks // People's Army. - October 6, 2014 r. // [Http://na.mil.gov.ua/10494-zhinki-v-stroyu](http://na.mil.gov.ua/10494-zhinki-v-stroyu)

35 Dubchak N.I. Women in the Armed Forces of Ukraine: Problems of gender policy // Strategic Priorities. - №4 (9). - 2008. - P. 187-188.

36 Dubchak N.I. Women in the Armed Forces of Ukraine: Problems of gender policy // Strategic Priorities. - №4 (9). - 2008. - P. 190.

37 Is there a future for women in Ukrainian Army? // Pravda. - October 8, 2013 r. // <http://pravda.if.ua/news-45277.html>

38 Almost one thousand Ukrainian women participated in the ATO // UNIAN, October 9, 2015 r. // [Http://www.unian.ua/war/1147650-mayjetisyacha-jinok-viyskovoslujbovtstv-vzyali-uchast-v-ato.html](http://www.unian.ua/war/1147650-mayjetisyacha-jinok-viyskovoslujbovtstv-vzyali-uchast-v-ato.html)

The Ministry of Defense of Ukraine provided statistical information only about the state decorations for the military women, 10 in 2014, and 18 in 2015.

It would be expedient to analyze in detail the situation of women in the Armed Forces, in terms of the general labor market of Ukraine. According to the report on discrimination and gender inequality in Ukraine, there is an evidence of **employment discrimination** against women, particularly, in the armed forces³⁹. The number of positions that women can occupy in the Ukrainian army is small. In addition, there is an evidence of sexist remarks by the military commanders. For example, Igor Zakrevsky, Deputy Chief Enlistment Officer Sumy region, said:

"According to the law, we have the right to offer the army service to women. Yet, currently, we only have vacant positions of a tank commander, tank mechanic, and tank driver. I cannot imagine a woman to hold this position (...) If you are lucky to be born a man, you have a lifetime to prove to the representatives of the second half of humanity who were lucky enough to be born women, that you are a real man. There is no better way to prove it than to test yourself in difficult military conditions."

The report "On the Edge: Addressing Discrimination and Inequality in Ukraine" (2015) collects the testimonies of persons who were **subjected to discrimination**. For example, Olesya told her story to the Equal Rights Trust. She worked as a chief specialist in the Department of Military Policy, Ministry of Defense of Ukraine for 8 years, held a "Best Specialist" award. However, the newly appointed Director fired Olesya and other employees of the department without any legitimate reason. Later, she was offered a new position, which was half in rank/payment. The head of the department explained that Olesya could not hold the position of a chief specialist, because she had no military record. Finally, Olesya got the position in the ministry, but at a different department. She was also subjected to an unreasonable formal investigation. Once the

investigation was over, the head of department personally threatened Olesya that if she refused to resign, a new investigation would be initiated and impossible conditions for her work would be created.

As Head of Career Management and Staffing Positions for Military Service and Training Abroad, HR Policy Department, Ministry of Defense of Ukraine Oleksandr Nikitchenko pointed out at the international roundtable "Gender Equality and Equal Relations in Defense and Security Sector of Ukraine - Present and Future" (2014), "Critical ... are the issues of equipping the place of service for military women, creation of proper living conditions for them at the training ranges, etc."⁴⁰

Also, the **right of military personnel to education** is infringed because after receiving basic or complete higher education based on state order, officers are allowed to study in other higher education institutions on-the-job only provided they have served for a period equal to the period of their education, whereas privates, sergeants and sergeant majors - after the extension of service under a new contract.⁴¹

Gender discrimination is manifested, in particular, in a different representation of military women in the public social discourse (which will be covered in an individual section). The Ukrainian media often publish stories about "heroes", with the names and the list of feats, but rarely about "heroines"⁴². It is not specific of Ukraine only, it is a general post-Soviet tradition. Olga Nikonova notes that almost a million Soviet women that took part in the World War II "dissolved"⁴³ later in the official propaganda. On the other hand, in the traditions of the Ukrainian Rebel Army (URA), the "real" heroism of the URA military women was determined largely based on a situation. Performing her calling of a mother and a helper wife, she showed "a different subtype" of heroism in the "right" moment and

39 Armed Forces (Gender discrimination) // On the Edge: Tackling discrimination and inequality in Ukraine / The Equal Rights Trust Country Report Series: 5 London, August 2015. - P. 58-59.

40 Mashkovets T. Women in the ranks // People's Army. - October 6, 2014 r. // [Http://na.mil.gov.ua/10494-zhinki-v-stroyu](http://na.mil.gov.ua/10494-zhinki-v-stroyu)

41 Savchenko Y. Some features of legal status of women soldiers in the Armed Forces of Ukraine // Law. - 2011. - № 6. - P. 176.

42 The only exception is the prisoner of war Nadezhda Savchenko, yet, her "heroism" is not associated primarily with her military service, but rather with her behavior in custody.

43 Nikonova O. Women, War and "silent figures". <http://magazines.russ.ru/nz/2005/2/ni32.html>

replaced her man to perform heroic deeds.”⁴⁴

The discursive invisibility of military women is directly linked to yet another aspect of inequality: being invisible to the media, women are also invisible to the military infrastructure, despite the fact that they are not few. The infrastructure of the Armed Forces of Ukraine is designed for the needs of men and thus excludes women with their specific needs from the army. Therefore, it must change, so that the army can properly incorporate women and enable them to efficiently participate in hostilities on equal terms with men and to fulfill their desires and opportunities, to defend their values.

2.4.2. Prohibition of certain military occupations for women

Military professions that can be occupied by female soldiers at soldier, sergeant and sergeant-major positions are provided in the Interim list of staff positions for private, sergeant and sergeant-major positions, which was approved by the Minister of Defense of Ukraine on May 27, 2014 under No. 337⁴⁵ (with later amendments). Opening a table that lists around one thousand posts for military service personnel at private, sergeant and sergeant-major positions, we see that women are allowed to occupy only a small number of positions for military service personnel such as, artist of different categories, archivist, librarian, accountant, executive secretary, chief nurse, disinfectant, code breaker, manager, clerk, printer, storekeeper, tailor, draftsman, nurse, meteorologist, musician, head of economic division, canteen etc, paratrooper - packer of parachutes, baker, hairdresser, postal operative, radio operator, telephonist, pharmacist, nurse, artist, shoemaker and others. In other words, women find the only positions open to them are the traditionally “female” posts that involve the provision of services, care for others, and entertainment.

Instead of this, female soldiers doing military service under contract are not allowed to be

appointed to positions of autopilot, adjutant, board mechanic and engineer, boatswain, diver, flamethrower operator, driver, working dog handler, chief petty officer, grenadier, animal trainer, electrician, charge man, vehicle commander, section commander, platoon commander, vehicle commander, tank commander, etc., gunner, painter, camoufleur, operator, pointer, interpreter, fire fighter, senior baker, woodworker, timekeeper, turner, tractor driver, photographer, chemist, duty officer, plasterer, and many others. This list includes features of not only horizontal gender segregation, separate “niches” or types of jobs for women and men. It also contains examples of vertical gender segregation: woman can be a common baker, but not a senior baker.

The Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine⁴⁶ includes the list of professions that allow women with appropriate training to be enlisted in the military service: medical; communications (telephone operators, telegraph, radio operators, radiotelephone operator, radiotelegraph operator, radiometry, a radio mechanic, radio operator, telegraph mechanic, photo telegraphy operators, photo radio telegraph operator, computer technology (technicians, repair technicians, mechanics, operators); optical and sound investigation tools and metrology (technician, repair technician, meteorological observer, hydro meteorological observer); map making, topographical surveying, photogrammetry and air reconnaissance; printing; cinema/radio operator. Women fit for military service may be accepted in the military service depending on age: up to 50 years of age - for the officer ranks, up to 45 years – for other military ranks.

The specific feature, as well as one of the key issues with the military women’s legal status, is that it is governed by the standards of both military and other branches of law.⁴⁷ In particular, according to the Labor Code of Ukraine, women may not be employed for hard work or hazardous/dangerous jobs, they may

44 Bureychak T., Petrenko O. Canapes, Sych and “bandera women” // http://zaxid.net/news/showNews.do?kanapki_sich_ta_banderivki&objectId=1300428

45 The provisional list of staff positions for private, sergeant and sergeant-major positions, including those allowed for female military service personnel and corresponding military ranks and tariff categories of posts. In: Decree No. 337 dated May 27, 2014 about approval of the interim list of staff positions for privates, sergeants, sergeant-majors and female military service personnel and about the tariff list of service personnel in the above-mentioned positions // <http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z0600-14#n16> (in Ukrainian)

46 On approving specialties for which women with appropriate training can be taken to the military service // Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine dated October 14, 1994. № 711 // <http://zakon4.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/711-94-n>

47 Savchenko Y. Some features of legal status of women soldiers in the Armed Forces of Ukraine // Law. - 2011. - № 6. - P. 178

not be involved in lifting and moving items, whose weight exceeds specially established limits. The list of such jobs is approved by the Ministry of Health in coordination with the State Committee of Ukraine for Labor Protection. Also, women may not be involved in work at night, except for the sectors and types of work with the maximum night hours for women approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. Hence, in employing women for a specific job, the commander (chief) must be aware of the above list and strictly follow its requirements. Also, military women enjoy privileges provided by the law of Ukraine on social protection of women, maternity and childhood. However, the practice shows some problems with implementation of certain rights.⁴⁸

Major Nataliya Dubchak speaks about how some male colleagues feel about giving women access to military professions: *"we have developed two new (actually, my colleagues with Personnel Policy Department have) Decrees of the Minister of Defense approving the list of military occupational specialties that can be filled by military women. Why two? Because one applies to women officers and the other to the contract service women.... I remember these debates, with members of the General Staff who argued: "These women have nothing to do out there. What the hell are they doing? They would never want to serve, they would never do. Would they go to the combat, if they need to?"*

In general, the issue of **women's access to certain military professions** should be considered comprehensively. Gender expert Kateryna Levchenko said that the armed forces was only one of the spheres of social life and the labor market: *"And then, the issue should be revised comprehensively. I do not think it might be revised, say, just in the military sphere, without considering the civil one. We need a completely different approach in this area."*

Indeed, over 500 trades and professions are prohibited by law for women in Ukraine today. Women don't have the right to do any work or to have one of the professions that are included in the "List of heavy jobs and work in

harmful/dangerous conditions" approved by the Ministry of Health.⁴⁹ Also, in support of the Law of Ukraine "On Labor Protection", the Limits of lifting and moving heavy objects by women⁵⁰ were approved.

In fact, because the *"law of 1993 ... forbids women to work with explosives, a woman could not be assigned to a position, for example, of a mineman or a bomb technician (maybe, there are some more specific military professions)"* (expert Nataliya Dubchak). Nataliya Dubchak notes that there is another area, *"which is prohibited for women. It's service in special units. The assault troops, the rapid response units directly participating in combat operations."*

The ban of certain professions for women for reasons of "special care" entails a number of consequences⁵¹. It creates a significant difference in the financial provisions of women and men who are employed in the same segment of the labor market. When the state prohibits certain types of work for women justifying its concern with their reproductive health, it recognizes and creates higher value "of women as mothers" and undermines the role of "women as workers." Consequently, the ban ignores the male reproductive health, which is unfairly considered invulnerable, resistant to harmful external influences. The ban also conveys gender stereotypes: men are seen as invulnerable persons, and women - as excessively vulnerable ones who should have children. The situation where the care and guardianship of women are expressed through a number of prohibitions shows women as dependent and unreasonable people in need of care and custody.

Gender expert Larysa Kobelyanska is critical of such bans for certain types of work for women: *"In fact, it must be up to you to choose. If a woman wants to have a particular job and,*

48 Savchenko Y. Some features of legal status of women soldiers in the Armed Forces of Ukraine // Law. - 2011. - № 6. - P. 180

49 On approving the list of heavy jobs and work in hazardous and dangerous conditions, which prohibits the employment of women: Decree of Ministry of Health #256 dated 29.12.93. Kyiv // <http://zakon5.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z0051-94>

50 On approving the Limits for lifting and moving heavy objects by women: Decree of Ministry of Health #241 dated 12.10.93. Kyiv // <http://zakon5.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z0194-93>

51 Martsenyuk T., Plakhotnik A. Gendered jobs: How the labor market and domestic work construct gender (Section 5) // Gender for media: Textbook on gender theory for journalism and other humanities / ed. Mayerchyk M., Plakhotnik A., Yarmanova G.. - K.: Kritika, 2013. - P. 80-81.

say, she has already raised her children and has no reproductive plans, and exactly because she has spent a certain time of her life raising children and has not worked, she wants to make up, wants to get a better paid, or even a risky job. Why should it be prohibited? And why hide it from a young man who has no children, and might never have at all because of this?"

Nataliya Dubchak, major and a former defense gender counselor notes a problem based on her own experience in the Armed Forces: *"We are saying that a person - whether man or woman - has the right to choose. She has the right to choose her life and place in life. It's her right, and the man should not - because we, the most of leadership in the armed forces, are represented by men - men should not be the ones to decide if the woman has to go to war or not."* The leader of "Women's Guard" Olena Biletska also believes that *"it is unfair and incorrect on women, as today a woman absolutely deservedly holds her positions on equal terms with men in all fields of action."*

Yet, another expert Olena Suslova advises to first discuss the issue before lifting the ban: *"my experience with the Parliament support programs [shows] that there must be a discussion first: we have to see the situation. Then see what are the possible ways. And only afterwards, when we see that one of those ways could be the best – take it and move forward. Because making decisions that are not supported or even worse – are not understood by society - would be a disservice."*

Also, it would be expedient to solve in parallel a number of other specific women's problems. One of them is described by Olena Biletska, lawyer and coordinator of "Women's Guard": *"Although, again, a woman must understand, if she wants to make such a choice and hold positions in politics or other areas equally with men, she must understand that she is still responsible for her house and children. It must also be understood. Because many women do not understand that. Again, these constraints give women fewer choices. It is very unpleasant and wrong."*

Indeed, the Ukrainian society still secures care jobs with women. For the state, parenthood is, above all, motherhood. Accordingly, it is more difficult for women to combine productive

and reproductive jobs. So, women's access to certain professions means expanding access and encouraging men to take on care jobs, the so-called private sphere.

2.4.3. Gender policy of the Armed Forces of Ukraine

Gender policy of the Armed Forces of Ukraine is a part of the overall gender policy, the function of military administration bodies, which regulates the processes of social interaction between military men and women in the army, improvement and development of their social status and relationships, taking into account military cultural traditions and stereotypes⁵².

The **objective of gender policy** of the country⁵³ in the Armed Forces of Ukraine is to ensure efficient implementation of the gender approach in the military to ensure equal rights and opportunities for a human being, regardless of his/her sex. The gender policy in the Armed Forces of Ukraine focuses on the need to build the army model that would meet the best international standards, provides their functioning and development as a humanitarian system, favorable to human nature and adequate to the objectives set by the state, using gender factor to enhance combat readiness of the army.

The legal basis for the state policy to achieve gender equality and equity in the Armed Forces of Ukraine⁵⁴ may be conventionally split into the following components:

- international legal standards for gender equality, enshrined in international acts adopted at the global and regional levels;
- constitutional/legal acts that define the general principles of state policy on gender equality in the society;
- acts of military law that directly regulate the implementation of gender policy in the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

The main **directions of optimization of gender policy** in the Armed Forces of Ukraine and its **harmonization** with the European standards

⁵² Informational material on gender policy in the Armed Forces of Ukraine [electronic document provided by the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine]. – 8 c.

⁵³ Same.

⁵⁴ Same.

are⁵⁵:

- development of research projects on gender aspect of national security in general and military security policy, in particular;
- development of educational, cultural and communication activities with the population of Ukraine and military personnel to form a culture of gender identity, development of humanitarian and educational activities in this area;
- development and implementation of the mechanisms of legal liability in the cases of gender-based discrimination in daily practice;
- implementation of positive action mechanisms to overcome gender imbalance in the management structures of the Armed Forces of Ukraine;
- improvement of legislation on the equal rights of men and women to participate in governance in the field of military security, ensuring equal opportunities for combining work and family life in the military service.

In general, the gender policy of the Armed Forces of Ukraine is consistent with the national gender policy, which was described above. Yet, the realistic enforcement mechanisms of the declared policy of equal rights and opportunities for women and men are not quite clear. In fact, this report shows that de facto gender principles of the Armed Forces policy are not always met.

Nataliya Dubchak, an expert with 18 years of experience with the Armed Forces of Ukraine, described some of the **mechanisms of gender policy implementation** in the armed forces. In particular, in 2010, she was Counselor to the Minister of Defense on Gender Issues as a volunteer. Nataliya Dubchak also occupied a special position, which was introduced by Decision of the Minister of Defense in 2008. Her position was called the gender policy officer: *"It lasted for exactly two years ... But the biggest part was done precisely over these two years. I got this status of a gender policy adviser in those two years, and we had made a great progress: we had made changes to the legislative, departmental legislative framework, and had tried to harmonize*

it with the state law on gender policy, according to the Law "On Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men. "We've made a great progress."

The deputy of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine and co-chairman of IFO "Equal Opportunities" Maria Ionova said that the problem of improving the women's status in the military was a part of a broader issue - poor representation of women in the decision-making process. Next, the politician exemplifies that there are only three female deputies in the Rada Committee on Defense and National Security and adds: *"That's already an achievement, since the Committee used to be represented exclusively by men!"*

However, Maria Ionova considers it a positive fact that a woman (Irina Gerashchenko) was appointed President's Commissioner on peaceful settlement of the situation in the Donetsk and Lugansk regions.

Olena Biletska, the lawyer and coordinator of "Women's Guard" speaks about positive aspects of women's integration in the Armed Forces: *"Through discipline, the woman in the army affected the state of the army in general."* The expert continues by saying that women "put in order" bureaucratic procedures, and she can speak from her own experience: *"This year, "Women's Guard" has issued many requests to the Armed Forces of Ukraine and all that's associated. I had a chance to communicate not only with men, but also with women. In this case, women show more efficiency and quickly respond to the situations concerning war and the army in general."*

The expert of the Ukrainian Armed Forces Kateryna Levchenko points out the negative aspects of the gender policy: *"Our legislation is not gender-balanced. Back in 2007- 2008, I made inquiries from UNDP to the Ministry of Justice on gender analysis of the Law of Ukraine "On social protection of the military personnel and their families." There are many provisions that simply discriminate against women. I mean this is negative."*

Though the conclusions of gender-legal examination of this law⁵⁶ at the website of the

55 Same.

56 Conclusion of gender legal expertise of the Law of Ukraine "On social and legal protection of servicemen and their family members"

Ministry of Justice state: "The gender aspect in the Law of Ukraine "On social and legal protection of service personnel and their families" is covered neutrally." The consequences of the application of this law are gender-neutral. However, the methodology of gender expertise⁵⁷ developed by K. Levchenko is much more complex and does not give grounds for such brief conclusions.

In 2010, the **survey of military personnel of the Armed Forces of Ukraine**⁵⁸ was conducted to find out the current state of gender equality, and the conditions and factors that affect its establishment in the Armed Forces of Ukraine.⁵⁹ The survey findings⁶⁰ confirm the presence of gender-based discrimination in the Armed Forces of Ukraine. According to the majority of respondents, this phenomenon affects mainly military women. In particular, according to over half of the female respondents, the main reason for their possible release or transfer to a different military unit could be because of their sex. Almost half of the military women respondents said that they were not confident they would finish their service in the Armed Forces without any encumbering. Moreover, almost every tenth female respondent pointed out cases of sexual harassment. The following main reasons for gender discrimination were mentioned: outdated traditions and ideas about the role and place of women in society; imperfection of the legal framework to protect human and citizens' rights (regardless of gender); lack of efficient implementation mechanisms for gender equality ideas; disparity of gender standards of the Armed Forces of Ukraine with the social needs of the military personnel.

The recommendations of the guidelines "Topical problems of gender policy in the Armed

dated December 20, 1991 № 2011-XII / Ministry of Justice of Ukraine // <http://old.minjust.gov.ua/15484>

57 Levchenko K.B. To methodology of gender expertise of Ukrainian legislation law // Forum. – 2008. – # 1. – C.285-295 // <http://www.nbuv.gov.ua/e-journals/FP/2008-1/08lkbeuz.pdf>

58 The number of sample - 1071 persons (799 male soldiers and 272 female soldiers). It is representative and its structure conforms to the minimum sample in the survey and serves as a micromodel of the population.

59 Attitude of military personnel to gender equality and its establishment in the Armed Forces of Ukraine: Survey Report / Ministry of Defense of Ukraine, Scientific Research Center of humanitarian problems of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. - K., 2011. [electronic document provided by the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine]. - 66 p.

60 Same source. – p. 40.

Forces of Ukraine" (2011)⁶¹ on a more efficient implementation of gender policy in the Armed Forces state that a medium-term State Program of Gender Equality in the Armed Forces of Ukraine should be developed and adopted. At the end of the program, a special Law of Ukraine "On gender equality in the Armed Forces and other military formations of Ukraine" should be adopted. The gender issues in the Armed Forces of Ukraine should be regularly monitored, gender indicators reporting of command and control and gender statistics in the Armed Forces should be established. Those are rather ambitious, but meaningful recommendations.

Olena Suslova points out that Ukraine has not yet adopted an Action Plan for Security Council Resolution #1325. The gender expert adds: *"Ukraine has a unique situation here, because it is the first country where an action plan is developed not before or after a conflict but during a conflict. We could also have certain bonuses and experience, and a certain procedural thing that might be interesting to others."*

61 Topical problems of gender policy in the Armed Forces of Ukraine: Textbook / [Krotykov V., Topalskyi V.L., Malyuga V.M. et al.]. Ed. Andresyuk B.P. - K.: RS Armed Forces of Ukraine, 2011. - P. 78-79.

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN COMBAT OPERATIONS

3.1. The war in feminist studies

"All that we know about war, we know from a 'man's voice.' We all are in a captivity of the 'men's' ideas and 'men's' sensations of war. Men's words. And women are silent. Nobody but me asked my grandmother. My mother. Even those who were on the front are silent. If suddenly they start talking, they don't talk about their war, but about someone else's. A different one. They adjust to the male canon. They only talk about the war that I don't know anything about, only at home or after they have a little cry in the circle of wartime lady friends."

Svetlana Alexievich, *"War Does Not Have a Woman's Face"*

The war is firmly anchored in the public mind as a traditionally "male" business. Women are seen as victims of war, often as objects, whereas men are its subjects and its agents. Stereotypes represent an armed man and a woman who, at best, services the warrior on the front, e.g. as a medical worker, and, at worst, waits for her husband at home while he protects her. It is stated that the women's role in armed conflicts may be peacekeeping, with a pacifist position.

Serbian author Jasmina Tesanovic speaks about expectations of women's traditional roles: "Masculinity of men is forced, just as well as the subordination of women. Women are guardian angels of their own home. They must support their husbands, take care of all family affairs, lead social life and perform everyday responsibilities, work as engineers, workers, miners, doctors, do whatever they have to while their husbands are on a special mission, which they believe borders on saving the world. Women accept this dual role easily and even gladly, particularly because they master the social sphere, which is closed to them in peacetime, and which is historically warranted. However, the women's entrance in the public sphere lasts only as long as the war, and when the soldiers return home, women are thrown back into the sphere of private life again. Women, women's bodies become the resting

place for soldiers."⁶²

We do not have any data on sexual abuse against women in the Armed Forces of Ukraine. But the general subject of sexual abuse in the armed forces of various countries, including the United States, is quite relevant. For example, the American journalist Naomi Wolf reports in *The Guardian* that women who served in the American army in Iraq were faced with higher probability of sexual assault by fellow soldiers than the probability of death from enemy fire.⁶³

Feminist scholars note the symbolic construction of the nation in public discourse in which gender roles are polarized. The man's role is to protect motherland, whereas women's one is biological reproduction.⁶⁴ Joan Nagel considers the national state as a masculine institution, investigating "hidden historical and contemporary relationship between male sex and statehood."⁶⁵ Thus, "real actors" of nationalist struggle are men who defend their freedom, honor, homeland, and their wives. The author also notes that "Masculinity and nationalism complement each other well, the modern form of Western masculinity emerged at about the same time and in the same place as modern nationalism."

Olena Dudko says the idea of military women and women at war must be a cornerstone for various feminist approaches.⁶⁶ Thus, some feminists claim that the women's involvement in military service is an important part of equal rights and, ultimately, leads to obtaining the full citizenship in their countries. It is generally a common position of the so-called *liberal feminism*. Other researchers believe that militarism can hardly result in more feminism and equality in society

62 Tesanovic J. Women and War // Independent cultural journal "Yi". - 2003. - № 27 // <http://www.ji.lviv.ua/n27texts/teshanovych.htm>

63 Wolf N. The US Military's Rape Culture // The Project Syndicate, June 30, 2013 // <http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/the-us-military-s-rape-culture-by-naomi-wolf>; Wolf N. A culture of coverup: rape in the ranks of the US military // The Guardian, 14 June 2012 // <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/jun/14/culture-coverup-rape-ranks-us-military>

64 Yuval-Davis N. Gender and Nation. - SAGE Publications Ltd., 1997.

65 Nigel J. Masculinity and nationalism; gender and sexuality in the making of nations // Independent cultural journal "Yi". - 2003. - № 27.

66 Dudko E. Gender war: feminist analysis // Journal of social criticism "Spilne", November 28, 2014 r. // <http://commons.com.ua/genderovana-vijna/>

as a whole, and advocate fundamentally pacifist and anti-militarist views. In particular, based on *radical feminist positions*, the Army should cease to be the army, and the military should abandon the status of tools and managers of violence.⁶⁷

Women's participation in the World War II and other wars is not well-studied yet. Despite the fact that women actively fought, the official memorial policy eliminates their merits and their experience. The classical journalistic work dedicated to the role of the Soviet women in the WWII "War Does Not Have a Woman's Face" by Svetlana Alexievich, whose excerpt was used as an epigraph to this study, was almost the first attempt to examine this part and this specific experience. The recently published collection of articles "Women of Central and Eastern Europe in the Second World War: Gender specificity of experience in times of extreme violence" (2015) has become a further attempt to develop this subject in Ukraine.

In addition to academic and journalistic work, the subject of women in the war has been actively discussed in the feminist activist environment. The answer to question whether women should take part in hostilities vary even among feminists. Some believe that women must legally and actually become equal with men in all areas, where the army is no exception. Others argue that the war is "men's games", that the propensity to violence is a part of men's socialization and women should not take part in it.

3.2. Participation of women in the ATO: voices of an "invisible battalion"

We are all very grateful to our boys who fought hard for the peace in Ukraine!

Let's congratulate our heroes with Defenders of Ukraine Day together!

In your comments, post photos of defenders - fathers, husbands, sons - so all of us can see their serene faces.

"Facts: ICTV News" (Facebook, October 8, 2015)

67 Danilova N. Army and Society: Principles of interaction. - SPb.: Norma, 2007. - S. 171.

"First thing the girls who were set free wanted to do was to go to war."

As the tortures they were subjected to in captivity were too much "

Nataliya Korzh, film director of the documentary "Tortured femininity"

"In the beginning of the war, we saw that the woman of today is very active, very promising,

very productive and very serious about the protection of her country.

And she does that very professionally. "

Olena Biletska, NGO "Women's Guard"

Despite the stereotypes, women do go to the army, especially during the war. As already noted, women created separate women's self-defense units in addition to protesting equally with men in the Ukrainian Euromaidan in 2013-2014. After Maidan, military operations began in the eastern Ukraine, so women went to war both as volunteers and mobilized. According to Acting spokesman of the General Staff of the Armed Forces Vladyslav Seleznyov, the following age groups of women can be mobilized to serve: 20 to 50 years old for officers and 20 to 40 years old⁶⁸ - for military women in general. According to Seleznyov, most women drafted during the mobilization would be in the military service as medics, communications and logistics personnel. He also added that under the partial mobilization, about 100 women were drafted to serve in the Armed Forces in 2014. In fact, there are many more women who would like to fight, so they have gone and keep going to fight as volunteers. Military training courses for women are organized in the rear (in particular, by the all-Ukrainian public organization "Ukrainian Women's Guard").

As Oleg Vishnyakov, Honorary Consul of Israel in the West Ukraine, points out in his blog⁶⁹, according to various media, about 14,000

68 The General Staff HQ claimed that they could mobilize women from 20 years old, as required // UNIAN, 02.04.2015 // <http://www.unian.ua/politics/1040064-u-genshtabi-zayavili-scho-pri-neobhidnosti-mojut-mobilizuvati-jinok-vid-20-rokiv.html>

69 Vishnyakov O. Ukraine and Israel. Women in the war. August 20, 2015 r. // http://consul-ukraine.blogspot.co.il/2015/08/blog-post_20.html (available August 21, 2015)

women are fighting in the East of Ukraine. Whereas the Israeli army developed and supplied their military women with all necessary items a long time ago, the problems of supporting the Ukrainian Army are well-known. In a situation like that, gender distinctions are the last thing to be concerned with. Ukrainian women fight wearing men's uniforms, men's shoes, which are often uncomfortable and wrong size.

The Israeli experts have developed and presented the first and only in Ukraine specialized gear for the Ukrainian army women. The volunteer and social activist Natalya Naumova was the initiator of this project. The new uniform is practical, comfortable and made of very high quality materials. High quality military equipment means life for a soldier. Let us hope that the novelty will facilitate the hard life of the Ukrainian military women.

One of the female soldiers mentions other issues of the women in the war: *"Women get injured just the same. Our kidneys, stomachs and bladders wear out just the same. We have nightmares, those we fail to save and those we kill visit us in our dreams just the same. Our mind is affected. Not all female journalists who became machine gunners would be able to go back to journalism and write about Publishers Forum. A woman who lost one of her limbs wants to get married and feel she is still a woman, too."*⁷⁰

We propose to carefully consider various aspects of women's participation in the ATO operations which they mentioned themselves.

3.2.1. Legal aspects of women's participation in the ATO

First of all, the questionnaire included questions about how military women ended up on the front, to allow our respondents to tell about their self-positioning and their motivation to be involved in the ATO.

Since, as was noted above, primarily men are mobilized for the ATO, and women must have a military profession to be mobilized, the respondents mainly come to the front voluntarily. 40 of 42 respondents came to the

combat zone as volunteers and only 2 were mobilized. One woman said that she tried to get mobilized, but was rejected because of her age and gender, so she was forced to get enlisted in a volunteer battalion.

The respondents might have totally different motivations for voluntary participation in the war - from fully private to generally civilian. We can cite an example of personal motivations, where one of the female respondents went to the combat zone after her woman friend. Another female respondent worked before the war at the munitions factory, which was taken over by separatists. Some female respondents go to the combat zone following their husbands, one followed her adult son. Still another female respondent believed she wanted to go to the combat zone because her friend shot a friend. Another respondent dreamed to serve in the army when she was a little girl. As for the civilian, gender-neutral motivation, in several cases, a woman started to interact with the army as a volunteer first, supplying the troops with necessary supplies, and then proceeded to directly participate in hostilities. In some interviews, this motivation is stated directly:

"The duty of every citizen is to defend the territorial integrity of the state" (Female respondent 23)

"It is my duty. There is no other way." (Female respondent 38)

Also, the motive "after the Maidan" is often mentioned in the interviews. As we wrote above, the women's participation in the Maidan was active and was not limited to purely reproductive labor. It also included participation in confrontations. Logically, the active citizenship encouraged some women to continue participation in social changes in the combat zone:

"I decided to go to war after the Maidan. I came to the Maidan at the outset, after what I had been through, I never doubted I would continue fighting." (Female respondent 15)

"I wanted to bind my career, work, all my life with the army since I was a little girl. I always liked the uniform, the discipline in the army. Unfortunately, I have not had a chance to be drafted or to enter

⁷⁰ Yerenenko N. How are women perceived in the war? // Insider. - October 1, 2015 r. // <http://www.theinsider.ua/lifestyle/560a9df624e78/>

the military academy. But after the Maidan, when riots broke out in the East, I decided that I should help people. Because the Easterners came to the Maidan, helped us, too. We are a single nation. So I decided to go to war. Just wanted to help.” (Female respondent 1)

“I have been involved in the military for a long time. First, it was the “Patriot of Ukraine”, a military organization, then a military fight club, which was also a military organization. I love guns, I have quite a good physical military training, and, honestly, what else would I do?” (Female respondent 40)

“After the Maidan and my divorce, I realized that I should move forward. I knew that the recruitment office wouldn’t accept me because I was not draftable. At that moment, I came to the recruitment office, and there was a man who told me: “Child, go home, cook some borsch.” Then I met these guys from [name of a volunteer unit]. A group from my city was leaving, seven boys. I called them two days before departure, said I was going with them. I hit the ceiling, called work to say that I quit, and left.” (Female respondent 27)

One of the respondents ended up on the front almost by accident:

“[My wish] was not articulate. Once I just went to visit the base [military unit] and decided to stay there. That’s it.” (Female respondent 34)

Arriving at the front, a woman has to incorporate into the army institutionally. A part of the respondents (17 of 42) managed to get formalized, and subsequently, to receive appropriate benefits, including the legal status of combat participant. In particular, the Law of Ukraine “On status of war veterans, guarantees of their social protection” envisages a number of benefits, including free medications and medical products, free rehabilitation treatment, 75% discount for utility bills etc. Two respondents suggested they could be granted the status, the other 23 couldn’t, because the volunteer unit in which they served had no formal legal status with the UAF or MIA structures.

“What benefits are you talking about, if there is no information I was there. Well, maybe there is somewhere, but not in the right places” (Female

respondent 8)

“Actually, I was not legal for half a year. My first ATO certificate dates August 20, but I was officially formalized on January 20. That is, legally I was not in the ATO for half a year, although I was under fire in Schastya the whole time. But the biggest paradox was that I was told to be formalized on January 28. I had lived in Kiev for 8 days already, I thought I was a civilian, that I was no longer related to [volunteer unit] nor war, but they called me to say that I was formalized, they waited for me and I was a defector.” (Female respondent 21)

Due to difficulties with the formalization for those women who serve informally and thus are invisible to the military bureaucracy, they lose their chance to obtain several benefits granted to combat participants. Our respondents are aware of that and consciously continue to participate in the operations. They don’t see obtaining benefits as a critical motivation for themselves, or even clearly deny it. Some respondents plan to claim the status of combat participants after the war, even though they are not entitled to it, since they haven’t been formalized.

“I don’t count on that. That is, I originally didn’t do it for that, not for benefits” (Female respondent 10)

“I don’t need it. I’m not here for the status, not for the money. They offered me to get legal, well, if they do it, OK, if they don’t - it won’t hurt. Maybe, I will take care of that after the war.” (Respondent 14)

“It would be good if the state recognized the combat volunteers as participants of hostilities” (A female volunteer)

And even in cases where a service woman was formalized in the Armed Forces, her position in the papers might not be always consistent with her actual occupation. Such difficulties with formalization of military women in various positions actually make them invisible psychologically and legally.

For example, one of the female respondents – a doctor – was formalized as a head of field baths (even though there were no baths). Another female respondent said she was an accountant in the paperwork, but actually served as a rocket

launcher operator. Another respondent was never formalized in the actual position (drone operator), even though she insisted there was a legal opportunity for that.

"There is a resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers dated 1993. It lists female military positions that could be filled by women under 50 of their own volition. And that profession is there." (Female respondent 20)

Instead, that woman was offered a position of an orderly. Another respondent, reconnaissance platoon commander, says that she had to struggle to be formalized in this position for two months.

As the anti-terrorist operations are not legally a war, they are not covered by military legislation which creates legal conflicts:

"We won't get a man's position in this case, although there is a decree about wartime, that's no matter you're a woman or a man, you should be raised in rank and position." (Female respondent 17)

However, despite the MOD's conceptual vision of the women's role on the front as the care and auxiliary one, as mentioned above, actually one third of our respondents (15 of 42) hold purely combat positions.

"I am a miner, I mine and demine. Sometimes, I may be a sniper. Legally, I am a rocket launcher operator. We all know how to do everything." (Female respondent 14)

Almost half (19 of 42) respondents engaged on the front deal with medicine, and another part (9) deal with HQ, organizational, service support. Some women combine various responsibilities.

3.2.2. Living conditions of women in the ATO zone

The next unit of the survey questions focused on aspects of everyday life of women in the army. In general, according to numerous data and evidence, the infrastructure in the Armed Forces of Ukraine is implemented very poorly. Consequently, it is very difficult to serve in terms of living conditions. We tried to find some gender specifics here, i.e. how much this infrastructure

is friendly to female soldiers.

The researchers suggested that the army may face difficulties with a centralized supply of appropriate size uniforms and shoes for female soldiers and discussed that with the respondents. Indeed, the female respondents complained about an insufficient provision of uniforms and shoes from the government, pointing out that they buy them on their own, for their salaries, at the expense of their parents and volunteer funds:

"I have enough of everything, but the state did not provide help" (Female respondent 25)

"People like me need custom tailoring. First, I'm a woman, secondly, my figure is not standard. I need an individual approach." (Female respondent 13)

"There is nothing for women in the army. I have an impression there are not women in the army" (Female respondent 36)

The same situation is observed with female hygiene products. They are not supplied for female respondents who have to get them like the uniform, by themselves or through volunteers.

The female respondents answered the question about meals to the effect of their generally poor quality, but that is rather a gender neutral issue.

"Previously, all food was abominable, now they started to supply more or less normal food. It used to be condensed milk, canned meat and that's it." (Female respondent 26)

Another question was related to the housing conditions, separate or shared, and if shared, how much that situation was comfortable for women. We learned from the responses that sometimes women have to share a room with men in the army, and in some cases they are provided with separate accommodations.

"... A piece of unfinished construction, but I used it to keep medications and my beach chair- [...] I slept on a plastic beach chair." (Female respondent 29)

The shared accommodations may be comfortable provided there is a habit and

understanding of the forced situation, as well as when relations with male colleagues are good and friendly. The female respondents get used to the discomfort and treat it with understanding.

"Somehow, I got used to it. They are my sworn brothers, almost family, so I do not really feel any discomfort. No, I feel no discomfort, I am just used that everybody is the same." (Female respondent 8)

"They offered to set up a separate tent for women, but none agreed, because everybody got used. Earlier, in my previous station, I used to have a separate tent." (Female respondent 26)

"It was difficult at first that there is no place where I can be alone. I used to be the only lady in the barracks. It was especially difficult during the first two weeks. It was winter. I was always cold. There were forty people in the barracks. It was hard to get used to that fact that you couldn't sleep like at home – so, you got to sleep in your clothes. There was no lock in the showers. I would ask someone I trusted to watch the door. But then I got used." (Female respondent 28)

As we can see, the living conveniences depend mainly on how much the men are ready to take this factor into account:

"The guys made me a private toilet and guarded the showers." (Female respondent 41)

"Basically, a separate residence was organized for the girls in the battalion. But in some cases, in the positions, of course, nobody built us any bunkers. So, we slept on bunks together, just on different levels, and when we needed to change – the men politely went out and waited." (Female respondent 7)

"We are all people, we are all humans, we all understand each other." (Female respondent 35)

The female participants did not complain about health care in general. In fact, about half of them are themselves the front-line physicians or paramedics. One of the respondents established a comprehensive medical service unit. However, the army medical service seldom provides specific gynecological support, so our female respondents could only rely on the imperfect

national medical system.

"As for gynecology, it's not there, it should be created. Otherwise, what could paramedics do with gynecology?" (Female respondent 5)

"As we were at Schastya, there was a hospital, a clinic, where they can see women for some special cases. But of course, if we were somewhere in the field, with a standard hospital, I'm not sure a problem could be resolved, if needed..." (Female respondent 19)

"There is a staff gynecologist in any military or regular hospital. If there is a need for narrow specialists, he's there. After all, both women and men serve in the army. But the nearest hospital is 35 kilometers away, and a military hospital is 90 kilometers away." (Female respondent 14)

"I would like to have better provision of medicines, including drugs, which are specific for women. A lot of women have cystitis." (Female respondent 17)

3.2.3. Gender stereotypes concerning the ATO women

If stereotypes about women are significantly common in peaceful places at peaceful times, according to a study discussed in the theoretical section of this report, the masculinity and femininity are even more pronounced and stereotyped in the war. In order to study the process of spreading a stereotype of how war actually is a "man's job" in the current Ukrainian army, we have included in the questionnaire a unit of questions about prejudices, which military women may face during their service. Analyzing the interviews, we have corroborated the belief that the gender bias is still strong in the Ukrainian society, and the army is no exception.

In fact, to confirm assumptions of previous researchers, the war emphasizes these stereotypes and gender roles. Men perceive war as a serious, male business, women are perceived as unworthy to participate. They are believed to be there only to serve men. The respondents reject that position, otherwise, they would not take part in the hostilities. They speak with the researchers quite willingly about gender stereotypes projected on them.

Generally, the female respondents confirm a friendly attitude towards them, as well as friendly relations with colleagues. Their opinions - if they want to express them - are heard. Some respondents have an impact on decision-making in their units. Some respondents feel quite comfortable, they have never been confronted with assertions that they have no place in the war. But the rest of them witnessed a behavior like that and give own examples of disrespectful treatment. The respondent who has children repeatedly heard fellow colleagues call her "mother-cuckoo ". One of the respondents indicates stereotypical feelings towards women starting with the drafting office. The other one complains about the chief of staff, who said that he saw no women in a military unit and they must not be here.

"- 'A blonde'. Right away.

- How did you respond?

- It's just the first five minutes, then it was clear who was a blonde and who was not." (Female respondent 39)

"Every man I met in the battalion said that I had to be at home, giving birth to children." (Female respondent 16).

"Oh, I hear it every day, every day. Even my husband tells me: 'Stay at home, do some needlework.'" (Female respondent 6) (The respondent's husband is in the Army with her. Researcher note).

"Since I am short, they do not take me seriously at all." (Female respondent 27)

"Once some army doctors came around, they had been drinking heavily. They said what are you doing out there, your place is in the kitchen. Mind the stove, you are good for nothing more." (Female respondent 8)

As we can see, the treatment of women as "second class" is caused by stereotypes rather than by the female respondents' personal characteristics - men do not complain about the quality of their service.

"I have a sworn brother who used to bring me to tears: 'You're a woman, you do not belong here, born in a skirt, you should rattle pots." (Female

respondent 27)

"Men hate to be led by a woman. But they obey to an appointed head of group, whether woman or man." (Female respondent 13)

"Well, there were some narcissistic penguins, who believed that 'a woman has no place in the war, too weak creatures.' After that, I proved to them that those weak creatures are head and shoulders above them." (Female respondent 28)

"They do not realize that they think and feel stereotypically. So, they try to push you into the kitchen, charge you with some allegedly women's stuff, which is really neither man's nor women's. They are not used to the fact that ladies do all the work with them. They are largely stereotypes." (Female respondent 30)

"Their position is that a lady should stay at home, cook borscht, while the man has to fight. But we made it up. It was important that my commander was a woman, so they did not really pressure me." (Female respondent 31)

The benevolent sexist stereotype that a woman is "weaker sex" is implemented in the fact that women are protected too much.

"There is nothing humiliating about that, but they protect you too much" (Female respondent 32)

"In my opinion, they protect me too much and try not to take me on the most interesting missions which, respectively, are the most dangerous ones." (Female respondent 6)

"There is a concept of positive action when you are cared about, and I appreciate it, but, guys, I do have to perform my duties" (Female respondent 29)

"I am treated as though I was made of crystal" (Female respondent 41)

"I have repeatedly seen men being protective of women. When there is just one woman in the unit, they take care, protect her, fence out from all evil that might happen." (A woman volunteer)

Those women never ignore facts of disrespect. But they might respond in different ways, ranging from anger and tears to, even, some rationalization.

"I used to joke demanding tactical boots with rhinestones. I can't care less about men's stereotypes." (Female respondent 4)

"First, those are traditions, very old traditions that prevail in society. Secondly, it is a natural desire of the strong to protect the weaker. They can see, it's no secret that women are weaker. And they want to protect women, they want them to stay inside. And they say – if a man has been crippled, it's one thing, and if a woman has been crippled, it is a totally different thing. Maybe, if you dig deeper, there is a purely natural explanation. A man, even very hurt, if, excuse me, his genitals are not affected, he can conceive. If a woman is crippled, she is almost devoid of a normal chance to marry, bear and give birth. That's where it comes from, I think." (Female respondent 6)

"It's just because men were raised in the spirit that they must defend their land, their women. And where there is a woman, they think: "We defend you, why are you coming here. "" (Female respondent 2)

"I was so infuriated, I thought: I will prove to you that I am strong in spirit. I had a fight with him and went to cry in the corner, so that nobody could see me." (Female respondent 27)

"I often heard: "You are a woman, stay at home and cook some borsht". I hated it, but it was motivating. Every time I heard that, I proved that I could, that my place was not in the kitchen." (Female respondent 14)

"It was not easy, the boys did not understand why there was a woman, because it was a stimulus for them, that was attractive for them, sexually" (Female respondent 29)

The researchers find some optimism in the fact that some women testify that the feelings about them gradually changed, from the stereotypical ones at first to the feelings of equality later, that men changed their impressions of them.

"There is no place for women at war, but you're a brilliant exception. It was said by some officers, it was said by other officers, it was said by all those with whom I had to interact." (Female respondent 38)

"In just one or two days, and they already don't

see a woman in you, but another soldier" (Female respondent 2)

An obviously sensitive subject is a possible sexual harassment of male companions on military service. For ethical reasons, we have not asked respondents direct questions, and none of the respondents mentioned anything like that during the study. However, some of them said they had witnessed the following:

"A drunk soldier came into that girl's room She was scared so she jumped out into the yard with her eyes wide open in the middle of the night. It's the only case I know of. The next morning he apologized and the conflict was settled" (Female respondent 6)

"- There was this story, happened with the girls, we went to a show down. (Laughing). I was just curious to see a man who told them that.

- And who was that? An AFU?

- Yes, they're sort of medical service. They were given the local hospital to settle at, but they were drunk all the time, harassed girls. There was this meat pastry cafe. A cheap joint. They used to hang out there ... well, like that. They didn't act really good" (Female respondent 10)

"I never allow any violence towards me. I never heard of violence cases in our unit. But I did hear about other battalions." (Female respondent 4)

"The women were few, the majority came on, there were proposals to have sex often enough. But they were never rude, rather it was not serious. Never came across sexual violence." (Female respondent 31)

"Those soldier-girls who go to the army to be privates – sometimes, it happens they are accepted in positions to be ... someone's protégé in a purely sexual sense." (Female respondent 37)

Also, one of the respondents told us that she learned her fellow soldiers sexually assaulted civilian women. She says she was very upset because it was done by some people she knew personally. Another one speaks about several incidents like that, and it indicates that today our government can't protect women against such assaults.

3.2.4 Further Perspectives

The respondents were asked to share their vision of the future Ukrainian army in terms of women's integration. Generally, the respondents approve of the idea that women can have an opportunity to serve in the army on equal terms with men of their own volition and can occupy senior and lucrative positions.

"This has to be done necessarily. Women can be battalion commanders or chiefs of staff. That's absolutely fine. Women can be officers, platoon or squadron commanders. It must be done." (Female respondent 37)

"I'd like women to be taken as equals so you do not have to prove every time that I'm like you, guys. I eat, sleep, carry a gun just like you do." (Respondent 41)

Several female respondents used as an example the Israeli army, where, they believe, the gender equality is fully in place. A wish was spoken to build a conscript army using the Israeli model for both sexes.

"They say there is this bill that allows that to women – under a contract, on the commander's recommendation, but none of us saw it." (Female respondent 26)

"There must not be a segregation between men and women, because we live and we fight the same way." (Female respondent 17)

"And the most important obstacle is sexism that says to you: you're a woman, you cannot be a colonel, you cannot be a major." (Female respondent 34)

The women's contribution in the fighting must be measured by achievements:

"Generally, women find very few opportunities to express themselves. There must be some equality introduced in everyday life and in the military one." (Female respondent 27)

"Three months on the front, with the wounded, with experiences related to their condition, in danger - quite equal with men. You can't compare, say, the contribution of a woman medic and that of a man shooter, like who is more necessary in

the war. But saying that a man should be in the war, and a woman should not, is unacceptable. It's like saying that singing or cooking is a woman's business." (Female respondent 7)

"Women are not less strong than men. Maybe, weaker physically, but still strong morally." (Female respondent 30)

The respondents believe that reform of the Armed Forces of Ukraine is badly needed:

"There is a discrimination for women, like a woman may be either in the kitchen, or at a supply warehouse." (Female respondent 42)

"The women on the front are really few, so they are not visible. If there were more women, the appropriate conditions would be created, investments attracted." (Female respondent 3)

"Well, I'm not saying women must serve and fight there, yet they should be given a choice. No one should deny that to them, I think." (Female respondent 8)

"Generally, our army needs a change, both for women and men. I do not know what has been done in the Ukrainian Armed Forces. It is hard to say what has been done for women in the volunteer battalions." (Female respondent 13)

Women and men are equal, but not identical. Some respondents make minor reservations about the actual equality, related to difference in physical strength between men and women:

"Still, a woman is a woman. Even if I want to be a machine gunner and I am good at it, I can't carry a heavy machine gun." (Female respondent 16)

"I would probably mind if women were drafted, but if they were given equal rights with men, if they served equally and suffered no less than men, clearly, I would be in favor". (Female respondent 16).

Generally, the respondents often add that women can perform their duties not worse than men, and even better.

"I know many women who really do a lot. Not worse than men. And even better." (Female respondent 8)

"Women are more reckless, more firm." (Female

respondent 9)

"Women in the army discipline men better."
(Female respondent 3)

"Women are sometimes more level-headed than men. And, say, more reckless." (Female respondent 5)

"I can see that our girls are no weaker than men, and sometimes they serve even better. Men often have alcohol problems, women do that much less. My husband says 'Sometimes, a skinny girl is better than five drunks'." (Female respondent 2)

In fact, the respondents added that women could motivate men to serve better. It can also be considered as servicing men, except not domestically, but rather emotionally.

"Because women sometimes give a lead to men. That is, I believe that men learn from us, the same way we learn from them." (Female respondent 11)

"A motivated woman can do much more than an unmotivated man. Women are more resistant, they may encourage men with their example. [...] When a woman does a man's job, she motivates the men. They look and realize that they have who to fight for." (Respondent 14)

"Maybe, girls are few and invisible, as you say, but the role of women is enormous. It is primarily a motivational role. When men see a woman in the war, they feel embarrassed, and if they are not on the front - they go to the front." (Female respondent 6)

In general, the respondents act friendly towards their fellow military women and are happy to share specific examples of female military success:

"I heard about this girl with the call sign Cat, who was wounded and helped a wounded soldier. Someone yelled: 'Separatists outside'. She threw a grenade in the window, and continued with bandaging." (Female respondent 4)

"Most girls who pulled our guys from the trenches, well, not from the trenches, but from under fire ... they are heroes, of course. We have Mother who is treated after a grenade concussion. So she pulled a guy. She is a woman of my height, may be a

little wider than I am. And I could never imagine how I could pull about those huge boys. But she actually did. Pulled out and helped them." (Female respondent 5)

The very presence of women in the war is in itself a remarkable situation, according to some respondents.

"We have stories about every woman. Every woman has made her contribution to the war. In general, a woman who voluntarily went to war, is already a heroine, no matter whether she cooked or was a sniper." (Female respondent 13)

"If there is a woman on the frontline, what are we talking about?" (Female respondent 38)

Whatever the wishful thinking, in describing the current situation, most female respondents recognize that the desired gender equality in the armed forces of Ukraine is still far away. One woman says directly that either in her particular battalion, or in the Ukrainian army, there is no way a woman can make a career because of discrimination.

Various respondents feel differently about further military service. A small share (4 respondents) would like to pursue a military career, but most are not interested, and would like to return to civilian life after the war. You can't always tell how much this reluctance is due to purely personal factors, and how much to the fact that the military career is deliberately complicated for women, as they are well aware. Two female respondents directly stated that they did not have such a possibility. One had the opportunity to be promoted in her specialty at the headquarters, but she was not happy with HQ. Another respondent thought about a military career at first, but eventually decided that she was more interested in reforming the army in general. One of the respondents expressed a desire to become a minister of the armed forces and participate in reforming the army.

"I never thought about the military career. I am a designer in the peaceful life, my job is interesting and fun. People work hard, whereas I come to work to have fun, I love it." (Female respondent 20)

"I am not interested in the military career. But I would really want my results [...] to continue living in the Army and after I resign. I do my best for that." (Female respondent 7)

Some respondents associate their personal future after the war and / or postwar future of other military women with family and children:

"Girls, women are much more attached to families, dependent on families. If she has a child, she leaves to go to the front, a woman returns to the child, will take care of him/her and will be happy. If she has no children, then, of course, she will have children. A lot of girls find their own destiny and their love in the war. If they come back from the front together, they will build up a family and be happy. That is, women have something to do. That is, both man and woman can go to work, it's the same, but few people have a kind of job where their soul rests, a job to love and enjoy. Not everyone is so lucky. But practically every woman enjoys bringing up children." (Female respondent 6)

"I can't go back to the service now, my son went to school this year. He spent a year without his mother. Now I want to be with him. And I will keep helping the Army from here, from Kyiv." (Female respondent 7, already demobilized)

We asked the respondents about how their families and civilians feel about their participation in the war. There were different feelings, but at this point almost no complaints against specific gender stereotypes were presented. One of the respondents complained that a stereotypical attitude to her happened more often in the rear than on the front. Another respondent said that she never told her family what she was actually involved with, her family believed she was a volunteer.

Also, the respondents complained about their different experience with people who were never in the war, and as a result, about misunderstandings with them. They believed that it would be difficult for them to get settled after the war. They would like to have some rest, social support and, if necessary, psychological support (one of the respondents said that all those who were in combat had psychological problems). Everybody complained about too

complicated procedure for benefits. One of the respondents is a citizen of the Russian Federation. She complains about several problems because of lack of Ukrainian citizenship and Ukrainian passport.

"[Bureaucratic problems] probably arise because there is no respect for participants of military action." (Female respondent 33)

"There are issues when they say: your combat participant ID is not good, give us a slip, but being a clerk myself, I say the combat participant ID certifies that the person was there. Why present a slip, which is actually the basis for this certificate?" (Female respondent 24)

Actually, there are almost no gender colored responses here either. Except in one case, a woman talks about possible difficulties with subsequent relationships with men, having in mind the figure of a male soldier as a kind of model for male behavior:

"And it's even more difficult for women who demobilize. Most women do not demobilize, because they simply do not know where to go. Like, she couldn't find anybody here, so she comes back and thinks: damn it, who can I find here, they are all write offs, like he did not go to the army, but I did." (Female respondent 22).

Two female respondents say that social services tried to take away their children, because they allegedly failed to fulfill parental responsibilities. Another one said there were cases like that in her unit. The fourth one said that before the war she was raising her child without a husband. She left her child with the grandmother for the period of her service. The grandmother is not happy about that but the child, she said, takes the situation with understanding.

A female volunteer points out that a man who returns from the front is welcomed as a hero whereas a woman:

"... is immediately under suspicion. What was she doing there, who was she there with? [...] We imagine that a woman who was on the front necessarily slept with the entire unit or with

someone. It's there and it's how society views it. Often, instead of saying "thank you", people say to women : "Everybody knows what you were doing out there, now lay low and do not tell anyone." Many women wouldn't say they were on the front."(Female volunteer)

We also interviewed 9 male soldiers. We did that to see the service of women in the ATO through the eyes of men and to make a comparison with what women themselves say about their service in the army, and also in order to have a specific starting point for further dialogue with men about the women's role in the Ukrainian army. Also, we asked them about possible institutional problems – they had none.

Generally, the male respondents feel very differently about women's participation in the ATO. Some are neutral/friendly, they believe that everybody who wants to is entitled to participate in the defense of the country and to professionally serve in the army. They stand in solidarity with our female respondents that the army needs a reform, and this reform should not distinguish between contract service persons by gender.

"If a woman, mother, sister or daughter wants to defend our values and our territory, no one can forbid it to her." (Male respondent 1)

"To me, there is no difference, whether it is a woman or a man. According to the military regulations, the only difference is in rank and position." (Male respondent 2)

"Well, if she is in the same trench with us, clearly, she has the same [equal rights]. Even more." (Male respondent 9)

However, other men express doubts that women can adequately serve in the army.

"If we take it in a purely military sense, I am against women on the front [...] it's not their business." (Male respondent 4)

"An arbitrary decision might be needed any second. I think only a man can do that. Not all positions can be given to ladies." (Male respondent 5)

"Not only do they distract all the fighters with their presence, they are also bad soldiers. [...] Because

they're women. Because they don't want, in the first place." (Male respondent 7)

Some respondents recognize existence of discrimination for military women, but treat it differently.

Men generally agree that women may face problems with service in the army, but consider it necessary for women themselves to express them or say that they personally have never seen any discrimination examples.

"Occasionally, we have problems with that because of the conservative gender structure of our society in particular. But [the unit] can't, but please, in this respect. There must be more equality here than in the traditional units. Well, at least, I do not believe the ladies feel somehow oppressed or disadvantaged here." (Male respondent 8)

"We have full equality with them. Women can serve in the Armed Forces, it's a fact confirmed by our practice." (Male respondent 6)

One of the men feels inclined to shift the responsibility for discrimination against women on the front to women themselves:

"Everything depends on the lead that is given by the unit commander, how he positions women in the unit. And it also depends on the woman herself, on how she positions herself in the unit."

- Have you come across cases where someone says stereotypically to a woman: your place is not here, or go home, and so on?

- Yes, of course, I have.

- Why is this happening?

- Due to incompetence of one side or the other side, or both sides" (Male respondent 2)

Also, he is not really free from stereotypes about distribution of professional roles in the war:

- What is your opinion in general about women in the war?

- If a person is in her proper place, if she is a professional needed here, why not? According to some researches, there are operations or even whole manufacturing processes, which women do



DIANA MAZUR

MEDIC/RADIOTELEPHONE
OPERATOR OF THE MEDICAL
STATION IN THE 12th
KYIV TERRITORIAL DEFENSE
BATTALION, 32

"AS A CHILD I DREAMED OF
JOINING THE ARMY, BUT THEY
WOULD NOT ACCEPT GIRLS.
WHEN I STUDIED AT THE INSTITUTE,
MILITARY TRAINING WAS OFFERED
TO MALE STUDENTS ONLY.
I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE A CHOICE."



CUBA (CALLSIGN)

UKRAINIAN VOLUNTEER
CORPS (UVC) HOSPITALLERS
PARAMEDIC, 29

"WE ALL FIGHT FOR THE
GROUP OF PEOPLE
ALONGSIDE US WHO CARE."



OLHA OMELCHUK

MEDIC,
12TH KYIV TERRITORIAL
DEFENSE BATTALION, 34

"THREE MONTHS ON THE
FRONTLINE WITH THE WOUNDED,
CONSTANTLY WORRIED ABOUT
THEIR CONDITION, IN DANGER,
AND ON ABSOLUTELY EQUAL
TERMS WITH THE MEN."



KATERYNA PODZIZEY

UVC, PARAMEDIC, 22

"FROM A PSYCHOLOGICAL
PERSPECTIVE IT HELPS TO
UNDERSTAND THE PURPOSE OF
BEING ON THE FRONTLINE,
AS WELL AS THE YOUNGER
BROTHERS AND SISTERS!"



ANARCHY (CALLSIGN)

UVC HOSPITALLERS,
PARAMEDIC, 20

"EVERY STEP WE MAKE IS
ONE STEP CLOSER TOWARDS
VICTORY. WHETHER YOU
ARE A COLONEL OR A
REGULAR SOLDIER."



KATIA PRYIMAK

UVC HOSPITALLERS, 22

"I WAS THE LEADER OF
OUR FOUR-MEMBER MEDICAL
TEAM: MEDIC, PARAMEDIC,
FIRE SUPPORT, AND THE DRIVER.
I WAS THE ONE MAKING DECISIONS."



YULIIA TOLOPA

AIDAR, IFV COMMANDER,
ASSAULT TROOPER, 20,
RUSSIAN CITIZEN

"WHEN A LANDMINE BLEW UP
UNDER US THE FIRST PEOPLE WHO
RUSHED TO OUR AID WERE
ANDRIANA, THE RIFLEMAN,
AND LADA, THE MEDIC."



VALERIIA FEDORENKO

KULTCHYTSKYI BATTALION,
19, RUSSIAN,
UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLE
OPERATOR



MARIIA CHERNENKO

UVC HOSPITALLERS, MEDIC,
24

"I WENT THERE BECAUSE
I'M A MEDIC. I HAVE TO BE WITH
THEM. A MEDIC MUST HELP
PEOPLE AT WAR."



HAIKA [GADGET]
(CALLSIGN)

AIDAR, MEDIC/RADIOTELEPHONE
OPERATOR, 23

"EVERY MAN I MET AT THE
BATTALION SAID I SHOULD BE AT
HOME AND HAVE KIDS."

better than men because of their physiology. Why not use it for a benefit?

- Which ones?

- Well, for example, checking documents... "(Male respondent 2)

Another male respondent considers gender discrimination to be the biggest problem of women who serve in the ATO:

"- In your opinion, what problems do women face in serving in the ATO?

- First of all, they face problems with the commanders who grew up and studied in the former Soviet Union. There is a barrier in their minds that a woman is not a fighter, that she wouldn't fight. For example, the popular navy adage goes "a woman on the ship means trouble". They have the same mindset. They do not understand that a woman can be sometimes much more useful than a man. In fact, a large number of men, especially the mobilized ones, do not understand what is happening. They do not consider it necessary to serve their country, or the state, as is necessary. "(Male respondent 1)

However, he also claims that women in the ATO are treated with respect by all male counterparts and he kindly stereotypes women saying that their important role is to motivate men.

One respondent thinks that military women are privileged:

"[The women] have even more rights. Fewer duties - more rights. A woman is a human being" (Male respondent 3).

3.3. Women in the ATO: Expert opinion

We have summarized in a separate section opinions of the male and female experts, as well as of those who spoke at the NATO SPS Advanced Research Workshop "The Role of Women and Gender Mainstreaming in Resolving the Ukraine Military Conflict" held in Kyiv on September 21-22, 2015. In particular, the conference presented statistical information about the involvement of women in the armed forces and military action.

Nataliya Semenyuk, Colonel, Deputy Head of Information and Analytical Department of Civil-Military Cooperation of Armed Forces said that women made up 30% in the main office of the regional HQ of Ukraine, which may be considered a sufficiently large number. Also, there is quite a high percentage of women in the Signal Corps (approximately 30-33%).

Nataliya Dubchak, a retired major, former counselor of the Minister of Defense on Gender Issues, speaks about general **problems** faced by women in the Ukrainian Armed Forces which don't apply to men: *"Unfortunately, it's harder for a woman than for a man. He doesn't have to prove anything, a woman must prove "she's different."* The researchers speak about a similar need for women to make more effort to achieve the same status as men in relation to other areas of the labor market, especially traditionally "male" ones, such as politics, business, information technology etc.

Volodymyr Kukhar, Deputy Company Commander for Personnel Issues said at the conference that he knew many women who would like to serve, but they failed. He explains that by the fact that it is not easy for a woman to get into the armed forces. If a woman has a university degree, she might theoretically claim to become an officer, because it is one of the prerequisites to get the officer's rank in the Ukrainian military forces. However, according to Volodymyr Kukhar, the system does not encourage getting primary officer ranks. He believes that it is problem of the career army: *"It is a problem of corporate solidarity of officers who are not interested in outsiders to come in and take over various positions."*

The deputy of Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine and co-chairman of IFO "Equal Opportunities" also speaks about the problem of gender segregation in the armed forces of Ukraine:

"Career growth of military women is a problem. In Ukraine, in general, the problem of inequality on the labor market and a "glass ceiling" in professional advancement in most areas is very complex. The military sector is not just an exception. In fact, it is the most closed sector, in this sense. Stereotypes prevail that women have no place in the war. That

defending the country and protecting the weak is the men's job. Most of these arguments are based on the assertion that women are physically weaker and are ineffective in combat situations";

"We have very few women in leadership positions in the army. As far as I know, women officers make up just over 3% of the total number of officers in the Armed Forces. Every year, the number of women who received the highest military ranks and decorations in the armies of the world increases, but it is never the case in Ukraine. Only a dozen women have been raised to the rank of colonel, and even those are in medical service."

The film director Nataliya Korzh, who filmed the documentary "Tortured femininity" speaks emotionally in an interview about women in the ATO operations: *"They hate to be treated with leniency. Or to be given bonuses for what they are. I know many stories of women who never copy ... It's just that you can be a soldier in such circumstances. And their pattern of behavior is the same as men's. That is, they rush forward and act. Women have all skills that men do. Physical strength they have from fighting the battles is not always helpful. Since it is not close combat. But it's entirely different in a close formation. It's a psychological state."*

Expert Kateryna Levchenko speaks about the **gender stereotypes** women themselves internalized: *"Actively participating in the ATO, they believe that their functions, their missions are really secondary in comparison to what the men do."* Vitaly Golota from the Armed Forces of Ukraine also pointed out in his speech at the conference that women do not always believe in themselves, in order to engage in the more traditionally "male" professions:

"Let's be honest, what would a woman want to make: a tank company commander or a military psychologist? It depends. But for some reason, there are many psychologists and no one tries the tank company. Trust me, please. When I repeatedly asked women, whether they were ready to become deputy battalion commanders, the answer was more often "no"."

Also, Vitaly Golota was critical of gender stereotypes in relation to military women:

"Our military leaders often think like "I take on a woman, and something might go wrong." Actually, it was demonstrated that women accomplished missions, that women were ready to go on trips, women were ready to be in the field, women were sometimes willing to leave the children behind for their husbands, or call out mothers, mothers in law, aunts, sisters. Thus, the stereotype that women would not do something, it was not justified."

The journalist Volodymyr Sologub observes that he seldom met women in the military operations he visited for his ATO reports. He confesses that *"I saw only one woman who was actually a soldier during the whole time I was in the ATO. All the other women out there performed other functions. Even if women do carry weapons (I saw women carrying guns), they were not actually soldiers."* Volodymyr Sologub adds that he saw many **women doctors**, or rather paramedics. Then he gives an example that he was shooting a story about Hospitaliers, about what they do: *"There are many young ladies who do the work, which is quite dangerous, quite complicated ... I spoke, I saw ladies who go around and collect the wounded, actually, from the battlefield, from the positions where they were wounded, and pull them into a dugout or trenches. And they actually go there, and collect them under the fire, to give them medical help."*

Also, answering the question whether there are women among those journalists who travel to ATO, Volodymyr says that although the percentage is difficult to estimate, he believes that *"at least half of the journalists working on the front line - in the combat zone - are women."*

The journalist Nataliya Nagorna explains why **women are not admitted** in the Ukraine's armed forces and are not sent to the ATO frontlines. Firstly, it is caused by the fact that the living conditions there are not suitable for women: *"Those are field conditions, trenches, bunkers, high risk to life. Those are gender issues, that there are many men, far away from women."* Although the expert does not speak directly about the risk of sexual assault from men, it may also be possible (especially taking into account the studies of other military conflicts in the world). Secondly, the general idea is that women distract men

from the war. Also, *“there is a nuance that if the shelling starts, women often are not perceived as comrades in arms, and when there is a need to correct the situation, they can just rush to rescue a woman, just because she is a woman.”* Then, the journalist adds:

“If a woman is admitted, she is at best thrown in the kitchen, or to paramedics, Hospitallers, Pirogov hospitals. There are some ladies who live at the forefront in medical units. For example, I met medical volunteers in the 90th battalion. And there is a woman among them who is a good driver. So, she transports the wounded men from the front line. Goes to the front, picks up, drives back to the hospital and thus saves them.”

At the conference, Volodymyr Kukhar read out the list of military positions which are available or not available for women. It turned out that a woman can't hold positions like aircraft mechanic, aide, asphalt/concrete operator, driver, master sergeant, contract soldier instructor, machine gun operator, gun pointer, security officer etc. After the presentation of Volodymyr Kukhar and Lyudmila Kalina (service woman of the 46th separate battalion of special purpose “Donbass-Ukraine”), there was an interesting dialogue about the women drivers' ability to drive heavy vehicles:

Vitaly Golota with AFU: Lyudmila, with all due respect and admiration to your driving abilities, would you meet a military standard #5 - Replace the battery of “Ural-43/20”? Will you be able to replace a wheel on a KAMAZ or APC? Unfortunately, a driver is to do that in accordance with the job description.

Volodymyr Kukhar: Regarding the question who can lift a battery. Well, firstly, there are different categories of driver's license, those Urals are not the only vehicles. Secondly, the crew does not consist of one person. Thirdly, there are always people around, your brothers in arms. These words are openly discriminatory.

Mary Honiukova, acting company commander of the 46th special purpose unit, spoke at the conference about the **prejudice against women** in the armed forces:

“In our situation, this is what has happened for

eighteen months: we all came in as riflemen. Then, we made nurses, scouts/nurses, graduated from sergeants boot camp. But, the men were given ranks after the boot camp, and none of the five girls, who were there as well, were given any. They got certificates of special purpose squad leader. It was good for nothing. When we presented it in the AFU, they didn't tell us go get re-certified, and you are on. They said that the papers were not valid. And it was nobody's business that we had been in training for eleven months. And only thanks to the battalion commander, we have been assigned military ranks and accepted to the actual service.”

“For some reason, it is believed that a woman cannot command men. Let me give you a quick example from my own experience. When I was transferred to the sector, my platoon was a little late in. When they learned that their commander was a woman, their sector commander asked them: “Does it bother you?”. What's that, a woman commanding men? And my question is: what's wrong with that? Someone makes it, someone else does not. There is a leadership, move forward. And if not, then it is necessary for women to go to the army to support the men on the frontline. How do you know, what would a woman act like on the front line? I saw soldiers who fled, saw soldiers who pulled 120 kg on their shoulders. And saw young ladies do that. Just give them a chance, they don't have a chance.”

Nataliya Nagorna cites an interesting example of the **exemplary women's unit**, which is described in Akunin's novel “Battalion of Angels”: *“When the men refused to fight; many of them defected. So, what did they do? They have mobilized to the army ladies from intellectual families, cut their hair and sent into combat, without teaching anything. Those were intelligent young ladies, nice young ladies. And when the men saw that the ladies went under fire, and they were getting killed, those girls were, they just could not help going to war.”*

The journalist says that the creation of so-called women's exemplary unit could be a motive in order to encourage men to think about mobilization. Clearly, the state might use a unit like that as an additional factor of mobilization pressure on men, claiming that “even women

have gone to fight."

However, the female experts are also critical of **compulsory military drafting for men**, and offer alternatives. For example, the gender expert Larysa Kobylyanska is convinced that not all men can serve in the army, as well as there are women who can:

"There are men who are useless for the army, so I think there should be a different approach. Instead of using mandatory/optional approach, voluntary, contract relations, military patriotic education should be used: re-introduce basic military training to the universities and even in secondary schools, both for girls and for boys."

Volodymyr Sologub argues that the army should be open for anyone who wants to apply for certain professions. In fact, the journalist proposes to introduce equal conditions for joining the armed forces for women and men.

Journalist Nataliya Nagorna is quite critical of the presence of women in military operations, especially, if it's the case of the so-called "misplaced heroism." She gives an example of the woman soldier Lisa⁷¹ who was recently killed in action:

"She was pregnant. On the one hand, it looked heroic. On the other hand, many may say it was irresponsible. There are more requirements for women. There will always be ... I don't claim that the business must be given completely to men. They just manage it better, and they are an overwhelming majority. If we talk about individual women, I can't say that I saw a woman who was as efficient. Yes, some girls do bandaging. A medic, a rifleman, a paramedic. But, again, if there was a man in that position who was psychologically prepared, and who can pull 30 kg more than the girl, I believe it's easier. That is, to pull from under the debris would be "a misplaced heroism"."

On the other hand, the women's training coordinator Olena Biletska says: *"They recruit boys in quantity, they mobilize them, but no one thinks of quality. And women are better quality in some specializations."*

⁷¹ It is about death of Anastasia Gorbacheva (call sign Lisa) in the ATO. See details here: <http://www.volynpost.com/news/55136-u-ato-zagynula-ukrainska-rozvidnycia-anastasiia-gorbachova-iz-poznyvnymlisa-foto>

As mentioned above, the ATO women are more likely to be found in the **voluntary associations**, in the "Right Sector", in particular. Nataliya Dubchak explains this with a specific relationship in the volunteer corps that integrate their members more informally:

"I think because they don't give first priority to meeting specific requirements, certain principles or circumstances. Unlike in the army: if you are not an officer, you can't be in a certain position, if there is an order that does not allow women to be in the ATO quick response units, you won't be assigned there. And the main thing is the human factor, what kind of person you are and if you are ready to fight, and the people feel comfortable with you (like they say "I could go on a recon mission with you), that you are not "rotten", and how you can be relied upon in a difficult situation"

Answering the question **what can help women who are already in the ATO**, the female experts emphasized the need for their visibility, both as victims, and as heroines: *"In my view, we have to speak and write as much as possible about these women. Not like now, when the girl lost her legs, and that's how we knew "* (Nataliya Dubchak). Nataliya Dubchak adds that there might be a series of shows about women in the war *"for propaganda and to show the women."*

Kateryna Levchenko is critical of using women as heroines for a certain period of time, and cites unpleasant historic precedents: *"When the war is over, what do they recommend women to do? To deal with housekeeping etc. It did happen after World War I, and it did happen after World War II. It was big, but the state had to recruit more women and men to the front during the war. Then the men returned and women who made a career had to come back to private life. And, to be honest, we don't have the scale, nor the time where you might want to learn the lessons of the 20's, of the late 40's. Especially in Europe and in the United States, by the way. But we should keep that in mind."*

The example of the new police is referred to as a model for the army to follow. For example, the gender expert Larysa Kobylyanska is optimistic about possible changes in the Ukrainian armed forces: *"Regarding equality, I think that the situation will change. Again, let's take an*

example of the police. I think that it will change both the psychological and ideological, and even organizational approach, to some extent. Yet, women who serve in the police are not in mandatory residence conditions, not in barracks. Generally, army is not designed for women. In fact, it was probably the reason why women were rejected in the first place. But I think the condition of our army is unsuitable for men, either. I hope that the historical lesson Ukraine had to learn through a hard experience would ultimately push for the real, not pretended changes. And those changes will include normal conditions for both men and women. And then, this channel is open now. Actually, the one who has the desire, enthusiasm, talent, the one who has physical training must serve. The general reform is going on now, and this reform can be used as an opportunity for women to integrate in the army."

Olena Suslova suggests to proactively apply the so-called "positive action" so that children knew their dreams were real and they would be prepared to make them come true when they grow up. The gender expert gives an example of September 1, 2015, when *"police women and men came to some schools... it's a good role model for girls who want to do it, and those girls who see these role models, they can go to the police or to the prosecutor's office, or to the army..."*

Attorney Olena Biletska notes the importance of giving military women the appropriate status and support of women's organizations, as well as helping them after the war is over: *"What is waiting for them? Where are they going? I know that today those women who are fighting, they can't go back to normal. They can't work as before. They will be explicit leaders and they will need completely different things. I am sure of that."*

The deputy Maria Ionova is of a similar opinion, believing that women will need to be increasingly engaged in the national security sector and defense decision making. She expresses a bold opinion: *"I think it would be a great advantage if the Minister of Defense of Ukraine were a woman. By the way, this practice is becoming more common in the European countries - Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden" (Maria Ionova).*

Journalist Nataliya Nagorna believes that

demobilization will be useful for women who are fighting in the ATO, as it will be more efficient:

"If I were asked now about volunteer battalions... I do not see any real active hostilities, that would force Ukraine as a state to keep women in the frontline, instead of, for example, doing military training (if they want it so badly). It would be more efficient, not to teach women who want to engage in military affairs, at the forefront. There is not enough military operations to keep them all at the forefront."

3.4. Representation of the ATO women in the media

This item aims to analyze how the ATO women are represented in the media in order to understand what ATO women's images are projected to the public, what exactly is known about women's participation in the ATO, about their lives on the front and afterwards at home, and what attitudes media promote for the Ukrainian citizens regarding women's participation in the antiterrorist operations in the Donbass region.

Given the purpose of the study, this item will only consider the information about women who were directly involved in the anti-terrorist operations (privates, medics, ATO commanders or those who are holding other military positions and who are at the forefront). No volunteer movement was considered in this study.

This content analysis considered the following aspects of the ATO women media images: 1) official position of defense and interior structures on women's participation in the ATO; 2) men's feelings about women in the army; 3) gender roles; 4) ATO women's images in the media; 5) needs of women in the ATO; 6) problems faced by women involved in anti-terrorist operations in the Donbass. This will help understand what ATO woman image is conveyed to the public, its detail and veracity.

3.4.1. Attitude toward women in the army and distribution of gender roles in the ATO

The women's position in the army largely depends both on legislation and on the attitude of the Command to women's participation in the

military service. The official position of defense/interior structures on women in the military is ambiguous and seemingly quite optimistic: women in the army hold various positions, their rights are not curtailed. Women have been drafted for military service under the Law of Ukraine "On military duty and military service, mobilization preparation and mobilization"⁷² since 2014. According to the media, the defense representatives believe that the Ukrainian army employs enough women and their rights and freedoms are not limited: they are charged with both "traditional" tasks (communications, medical staff), and "complicated", "combat" missions. However, the specifics of "combat" missions are never disclosed.

"There are enough women in the Armed Forces of Ukraine," acting commander of National Guard Oleg Garchu says. "According to the facts, the military women in the National Guard may be trusted with complicated missions", Oleg Garchu points out. "Apart from traditional professions - communications, medical staff - women get involved in combat missions as well."⁷³

But what positions are allowed for women in the army? What jobs are given to women in the ATO? Other comments given by the military personnel in the media demonstrate a more paternalistic stance of the Ministry of Defense on the women's participation in the ATO - only few professions are envisioned for women outside the combat zone:

"Combat missions, they are not only those with a gun. They might involve setting up communications, and doing surgery, and servicing our patients etc. in field hospitals. That is, acceptance, delivery," the ATO spokesman said ⁷⁴.

"There are many professions for women in the armed forces where they can be involved - communications, logistics, medical support. Also, women can be outside the ATO zone, in

hospitals and camps where injured soldiers end up."⁷⁵

"Most drafted women will serve in medical positions, as well as in communications and logistics units."⁷⁶

The media do not explicitly speak about the existence of a limited list of permitted occupations for women in the military, or about the acceptance criteria for women in the army.

Unlike Commander-in-Chiefs, soldiers hold more egalitarian views of women's participation in the ATO (at least, that is what they choose to share in some articles and video about the ATO women):

"Clearly, I would like our women and girls to get involved in other things, but if a person feels like doing it, or if they desire to defend their country, I think it does not matter what sex they are."

"Girls and war are incompatible. But it is my answer to all skeptics. We can only win with them, but never lose."⁷⁷

In fact, the very presence of women in the war may be perceived by soldiers as a motivating factor:

"When you see a lot of girls around, it makes you brace up and be a level stronger, because if they are up to it, then we must be as well. Because it's a shame to whine. And you understand how much people can be together ..." ⁷⁸

The media usually focus on a friendly and caring attitude to women soldiers who fight along with men. Journalists even published a number of touching reports about how women soldiers were welcomed in the ATO. Women soldiers and medics in the ATO say: "The attitude of the boys was excellent"⁷⁹, "There is never any brazen

72 Women in the ATO: Conditions of mobilization // ICTV Facts. February 4, 2015 // <http://fakty.ictv.ua/ua/index/read-news/id/1541549>

73 Head of National Guard: Women may be trusted with complicated missions // BBC Ukraine. July 31, 2015 // http://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/news_in_brief/2015/07/150731_rl_army_women

74 Now women may be drafted // Strike. January 20, 2015 // <http://firstsocial.info/news/teper-pid-prizov-potraplyat-i-zhinki>

75 Mobilization will be voluntary for women - Military expert // Slovo i dilo. January 21, 2015 <http://www.slovoidilo.ua/articles/7007/2015-01-21/mobilizaciya-dlya-zhenschin-budet-dobrovolnoj-voennyj-ekspert.html>

76 The General Staff HQ advised that women may be mobilized in the ATO // Channel 5. February 4, 2015 // <http://www.5.ua/ato-na-shodi-y-genshtabi-povodomili-yakih-jinok-mojyt-mobilizyvat-v-ato-69175.html>

77 Ukrainian women told why they went to fight in the ATO // TSN. September 29, 2014 // <http://tsn.ua/ukrayina/ukrayinski-zhinki-rozpovili-chomu-voni-pishli-voyuvati-v-ato-371067.html>

78 Same.

79 Lab'yak I. Women in the ATO: Three stories // Galnet. November 10, 2014 // <http://galnet.org/newsticker/222311-zhinky-v-ato-try-istoriji>

attitude. You are a sister to everybody.”⁸⁰

We can also see in the media that the traditional gender roles tend to be reproduced in the war just as well: men are the defenders, women are the defendees. Men are strong, and women get indulged. The respondents take it for granted and appreciate the masculine care in about half of the articles that raised this issue.

“I was treated like a sister. You’re their sister, period. They protect you, put up with you... The boy’s attitude was great. Imagine, there is a bunch of them out there, and I am one or just two of us. You can only dream about something like that,” jokes a nurse.⁸¹

“Once on a mission, our men tried not to let me go in front, just behind and under supervision. I felt secure among them, the only woman after all, and they protected me the best they could.”⁸²

“Some male soldiers demonstrated a caring attitude to female soldiers ... commanders tried to protect them any way they could.”⁸³

“Naturally, when the missions were very serious and no one knew what they would end up with, some boys were opposed to women going there, because they worried.”⁸⁴

This attitude toward women is likely to make the average reader feel approval and respect for male soldiers. However, the caring attitude can sometimes border on prejudice about women, underestimation of their ability to be a soldier and to do traditionally “male” jobs equally with men. Whereas some ATO women like to be protected by men, others want to be on equal terms with them. It should be noted that the media portrays them as being rather successful in that.

“- How do boys treat women in the war?”

80 Stories from the ATO. Woman with truth sector // Reporter. June 5, 2015 // <http://report.if.ua/gazeta/akcent/istoriyi-z-ato-zhinka-z-sektoru-pravdy/>

81 Lab'yak I. Women in the ATO: Three stories // Galnet. November 10, 2014 // <http://galnet.org/newsticker/222311-zhinky-v-ato-try-istoriji>

82 ATO through the eyes of a woman. Frankivsk woman told about the war in the East // RAY. August 17, 2015 // <http://trkrai.com/?m0prm=25&showItem=13564>

83 Peterson N. Meet Ukraine's Women Warriors // The Daily Signal. August 11, 2015 // <http://dailysignal.com/2015/08/11/meet-ukraines-women-warriors/>

84 Woman in the ATO zone: Poltava woman is a volunteer and serves with her loved one // Kolo. October 8, 2014 // <http://kolo.poltava.ua/novini-poltava/alla-fedorchenko-23244.html>

- It depends on a person. But sometimes a woman has to overcome double standards to prove that she is a professional soldier. Those women who have proved their professionalism enjoy an incredible respect.”⁸⁵

“Miheychenko commended Yulia for her bravery in combat situations and for her military skills. However, he does have some concerns about women in combat: “In general, I personally think that women should not actually get involved in combat in the war,” said Miheychenko. It is hard to see them get hurt and killed. “On the other hand, he added, they mobilize men with their brave behavior and give them courage. So, men do not dare to act like cowards.”⁸⁶

“There is no brazen attitude. She is a sister to everybody. Of course, there are wooers, flowers, gifts, confession. But the time comes and they realize that it’s ridiculous.”⁸⁷

The going trend is that different attitude towards gender roles in the army is related to the women’s profession in wartime, in particular. Women soldiers often talk about equality between men and women in wartime and achieve respect and brother-in-arms attitude to themselves. Nurses and psychologists demonstrate more traditional attitudes towards gender roles distribution and accept care of soldiers. Similarly, they take for granted that they do not have / may not be in the same physical shape as men. However, it is only an observation of the ATO women images portrayed in the media.

3.4.2. Images of women in the ATO

Based on the analyzed material, it would be expedient to distinguish the three main images of the ATO women as shown in the mass media:

- 1) Warrior woman;
- 2) Caring helper;
- 3) Revolutionary.

85 Maria Berlinska: Give women a chance to legally defend their homeland // Hromadsbke radio. July 4, 2015 // <http://hromadskeradio.org/gromadska-hvylya/mariya-berlinska-dayte-zhinkam-mozhlyvist-legalno-zahyshchaty-batkivshchynu>

86 Peterson N. Meet Ukraine's Women Warriors // The Daily Signal. August 11, 2015 // <http://dailysignal.com/2015/08/11/meet-ukraines-women-warriors/>

87 Stories from the ATO. Woman with truth sector // Reporter. June 5, 2015 // <http://report.if.ua/gazeta/akcent/istoriyi-z-ato-zhinka-z-sektoru-pravdy/>

Warrior Woman. This is the image of a soldier who fights on equal terms with men. She lives in the same conditions as men, does "male" tasks: fires a sniper rifle, a machine gun, drives a military vehicle, carries the wounded from under fire with the bullets flying over her head etc. Strong and emotionally stable, she has authority among peers.

"They are professionals with weapons. They are not afraid of looking death in the eye and could compete with the most skillful male soldiers. They are good at all kinds of defense and arms ... They left their children, their families, their own businesses to fight in the war..."⁸⁸.

In the war, a woman like that earns from men respect, confidence and attitude to herself as a soldier on equal terms with men: "I'm a soldier like others."⁸⁹ Mass media call these women "saviors", "defenders", "bold", "brave", "fighter", "brave Athena"⁹⁰, "goddess of war."⁹¹ However, the journalists try to explicitly or implicitly add an element of femininity to the image of an "Amazon", a strong and brave soldier, in most of the articles and videos. This could be a description of jewelry on a woman sniper, a silk evening dress on a female machine gunner⁹², mentioning about children or a photo of a woman soldier with a wreath of flowers on her head etc.

"I remember you as a little fairy, wearing a dress and heels..."

- But I am a military officer. I cannot go to work without my uniform,"- says lieutenant Tanya fluttering her eyelashes and rejecting another phone call⁹³.

"One of the soldiers was Yulia, 22. She just returned from the trenches and stood with her AK over her shoulder, while she was talking

and laughing with others. Yulia's dark black hair was in a bun, but it looked a little tattered and uncollected. She had a bullet-proof vest on, camouflage pants cut off below the knee, and high black army boots. The jewelry she wore was simple - a silver necklace, silver earrings in the earlobes and a black earring at the top of one ear. She had two woven bracelets on her right wrist, and a ring on the index finger of her left hand"⁹⁴.

Careful assistant. Perhaps, the most eloquent illustration of the female image in the ATO would be the subtitle of one article, "Women save wounded, give food and clothes to soldiers..."⁹⁵ Women in the ATO are not only fighters and the Amazons, but also caring and sympathetic soldiers, doctors, psychologists, photographers etc. They care about the male soldiers, help and support them through their work and presence. They are more "feminine", more likely to stick to gender-based division of labor. These women take the combat training together with men. They stay together with men in hazardous areas, live in the spartan conditions, wear bullet-proof vests and weapons, but they "normally" do not have as much workload or challenges on the front. They often perform non-combat tasks: office/warehouse support, reporters, nurses etc.

"Inna trains equally with men mastering tactical skills and improving physical training. Yet, the girl won't have to carry out combat missions like men. She is entrusted with the logistic support in the army ... "Of course, I exercise less than the guys, but we have the same weapons proficiency standards"⁹⁶.

"... We will at least cook porridge, mend uniforms for them, as they are men whom the state didn't help"⁹⁷.

88 Service women in the ATO zone are fighting equally with men // TSN. November 9, 2014 // <http://tsn.ua/video/video-novini/zhinkivyskovu-zoni-ato-voyuyut-na-rivni-z-cholovikami.html>

89 Lab'yak I. Women in the ATO: Three stories // Galnet. November 10, 2014 // <http://galnet.org/newsticker/222311-zhinky-v-ato-try-istoriji>

90 Service women in the ATO zone are fighting equally with men // TSN. November 9, 2014 // <http://tsn.ua/video/video-novini/zhinkivyskovu-zoni-ato-voyuyut-na-rivni-z-cholovikami.html>

91 Same.

92 Lab'yak I. Women in the ATO: Three stories // Galnet. November 10, 2014 // <http://galnet.org/newsticker/222311-zhinky-v-ato-try-istoriji>

93 Service women in the ATO zone are fighting equally with men // TSN. November 9, 2014 // <http://tsn.ua/video/video-novini/zhinkivyskovu-zoni-ato-voyuyut-na-rivni-z-cholovikami.html>

94 Peterson N. Meet Ukraine's Women Warriors // The Daily Signal. August 11, 2015 // <http://dailysignal.com/2015/08/11/meet-ukraines-women-warriors/>

95 Ukrainian women join volunteer units: "The feeling of fear spots gets disconnected in hot" // Segodnia. June 13, 2014 // <http://ukr.segodnya.ua/regions/kharkov/Ukrainskie-zhenshchiny-idut-v-otryady-dobrovolce-CHuvstvo-straha-v-goryachih-tochkah-otklyuchaetsya-.html>

96 Ukrainian women join volunteer units: "The feeling of fear spots gets disconnected in hot" // Segodnia. June 13, 2014 // <http://ukr.segodnya.ua/regions/kharkov/Ukrainskie-zhenshchiny-idut-v-otryady-dobrovolce-CHuvstvo-straha-v-goryachih-tochkah-otklyuchaetsya-.html>

97 Service women in the ATO zone are fighting equally with men // TSN. November 9, 2014 // <http://tsn.ua/video/video-novini/zhinkivyskovu-zoni-ato-voyuyut-na-rivni-z-cholovikami.html>

"... Office work is among the duties of the girls from the Sich camp. The boys are said not to have time to keep certain records, accounting. Which is very important to do".⁹⁸

"..Her job is to ensure the border guard doesn't falter at the right moment and manages to shoot an intruder". "Most often, we talk to people calmly, trying to understand what they think about, what their concerns are."⁹⁹

"... On the other hand, it is good I was there. It means support. First, the psychological support. It is very important to communicate, to share thoughts, to hear a woman's voice".¹⁰⁰

The fact that some women perform more traditional functions on the front - some call them "auxiliary" - is visible only through a deeper analysis, while the message, which is on the surface of articles and stories about the ATO participants, is that all women are heroines. A woman in the army, in the combat zone, near the combat or even in it, serves as a display of courage, heroism and patriotism. Mass media basically don't distinguish women working in an office in the ATO from those who shoot guns or carry the wounded out of the battlefield with bullets flying over their heads - there are no major and minor, or "auxiliary", roles that women can perform in the ATO. The common idea in all articles and stories about women and the Ukrainian army in general is that everyone who is there is a hero. Everyone contributes to the conflict resolution, deters enemy, establishes peace, and this contribution is valuable.

Revolutionary. This category covers several women whose activity in the ATO is of a revolutionary and innovative nature. They are reformers and innovators who break old patterns and stereotypes, develop new military industries, stay on the same hierarchical level as men in the army, while their names and stories

have become famous. Among these women are Nadiya Savchenko, a heroic pilot (448,000 Ukrainian and 607,000 Russian results on google search), Tetyana Rychkova, Counselor Defense Minister and volunteer (331,000 Russian and 4,680 Ukrainian), Maria Berlinska, Head of Air Reconnaissance Center (540,000).

Nadiya Savchenko is the most famous Ukrainian military woman and ATO participant. Nadiya's story illustrates the problems that women face in the Ukrainian army. It is an example of gender stereotypes about women in the war. However, in the Ukrainian media, Nadiya Savchenko is a revolutionary that is not only a symbol of heroism of a Ukrainian soldier, but an example of the destruction of gender stereotypes about women in the war.

In order to become a professional soldier, Nadiya had to overcome many stereotypes and bureaucratic obstacles that were mostly related to men's biased attitude to professionalism of women in the army.

They said at the checkpoint, "There are no girls in the army, especially in aviation." To which Nadiya replied: "It is not true, there are." For years later, she succeeded to get an appointment with the general who warned: "If you want to study, serve a year in the army."

"When I was applying, I heard from men with big stars on their shoulders." You have one problem - you're a girl." Nadiya replied: "When you are flying the aircraft, what are you thinking with - your brain or something between your legs?"

The mass media clearly emphasize the "uniqueness" of Nadiya's position in the army as a woman:

"Nadiya Savchenko was the only woman in the flight department of the Kharkiv Air Force University in 2005".¹⁰¹

"Nadiya Savchenko was the only female soldier among Ukraine peacekeeping forces in Iraq."¹⁰²

"The only woman who came to Iraq occupying a

98 Woman in the ATO zone: Poltava woman is a volunteer and serves with her loved one // Kolo. October 8, 2014 // <http://kolo.poltava.ua/novini-poltava/alla-fedorchenko-23244.html>

99 Ukrainian women join volunteer units: "The feeling of fear spots gets disconnected in hot" // Segodnia. June 13, 2014 // <http://ukr.segodnya.ua/regions/kharkov/Ukrainskie-zhenshchiny-idut-v-otryady-dobrovolce-CHuvstvo-straha-v-goryachih-tochkah-otklyuchaetsya-.html>

100 Woman in the ATO zone: Poltava woman is a volunteer and serves with her loved one // Kolo. October 8, 2014 // <http://kolo.poltava.ua/novini-poltava/alla-fedorchenko-23244.html>

101 Shydlovska E. Five stories of Nadiya Savchenko // BBC Ukraine. April 17, 2015 // http://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/entertainment/2015/04/150306_savchenko_impressions_she

102 Sindelar D. Ukrainian pilot Nadiya Savchenko. A bit of biography // Radio Liberty. April 11, 2014 // <http://www.radiosvoboda.org/content/article/25453913.html>

man's position."¹⁰³

However, all these words were written after Nadiya had been captured. Nobody was interested in her story while she was fighting her way through at the Kharkiv Air Force University.

Nadiya's role in the war is portrayed as unique. She is the most famous professional military woman in this war. She is a soldier who won't lose to male soldiers in anything: either her physical shape, emotional stability, or participation in difficult military operations.

"I went on patrol, I was on duty, I did not expect any favors. I'm not a woman, I am a soldier," she would say repeatedly when any of the guys tried to be a gentleman with her. She knew that she chose this profession herself, so she would carry her gun on her own."

"One day, at a morning formation she said: 'I am a woman, I bear the burden of military service, while some men here can't even control themselves,' she held up herself as an example of a combat officer."¹⁰⁴

The mass media show Nadiya not only as a physically strong and enduring soldier, but also as a kind person with a strong character and an acute feeling of justice. Her school and military nicknames are the evidence of her positive personal and professional qualities. They would call her "Xena Warrior" in the secondary school, as she was bold and stubborn. "If she thought something was unfair, she always fought and defended her opinion"¹⁰⁵. She was "Bullet" in the army. "A determined girl ... had a powerful voice, clearly commanded people and people would obey her commands. It was evident that she had the authority"¹⁰⁶. Nadiya is not just integrated into the military forces and performs military tasks on equal terms, but she also occupies a rather high place in the military hierarchy (in the "man's world"): she is an authority and successfully performs leadership functions.

103 A fragment of the book of Nadiya Savchenko. "Strong name Nadiya" // *Istorychna pravda*. June 28, 2015 // <http://www.istpravda.com.ua/blogs/2015/07/28/148497/>

104 Shydlovska E. Five stories of Nadiya Savchenko // BBC Ukraine. April 17, 2015 // http://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/entertainment/2015/04/150306_savchenko_impressions_she

105 Same.

106 Same.

Nadiya is an exception in the army, not only gender-wise, but also due to her human qualities. She is a model of professionalism and humanity in the military, which is more like oxymoron, since such positive characteristics were not typical of the Ukrainian army before the war.

Also, the mass media portray Nadiya as a woman who had to go through more trials than the regular soldiers. She was captured and became a political prisoner. Eventually, the military image of this woman has changed to the image of a heroine, the victim of political repression and a symbol of struggle against the regime, fighting for freedom.

"NADIYA SAVCHENKO IS A UKRAINIAN HERO WHO MUST BE SAVED"¹⁰⁷

She is identified with the great warriors and politicians – well-known men, victims of the regime, fighters and winners.

"Thus, in recent weeks, Nadiya Savchenko, like many of her compatriots, famous or anonymous, of the Russian or Soviet times, started a new struggle writing prison notes. Being in prison cells, Sakharov, Vaclav Havel, Lech Walensa, Padilla shook the confident and arrogant regimes like today's neo-czarist regime in Moscow."¹⁰⁸

We could also consider Nadiya Savchenko both as an example of a unique female heroine in the structure of the Ukrainian army, and as a model of a revolutionary woman in the political arena. She successfully overcame bureaucratic obstacles and stereotypes regarding female role in military operations, and stereotypes about women as a "weaker sex". Also, she is a politically active woman. Being in prison in Russia, Nadiya became a deputy of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. She practices different ways of political struggle (fasting, speeches, books, letters). Nadiya Savchenko is, perhaps, the most vivid symbol of Ukraine's fighting with the enemy. In court sessions held in Moscow, she speaks only Ukrainian, wears national clothes or clothes with

107 NADYA SAVCHENKO IS IN VORONEZH JAIL, AND ONLY WE CAN SAVE HER // TSN // <http://savesavchenko.tsn.ua/>

108 Nadiya Savchenko: War, captivity, kidnapping, prison, hunger strike in prison and beyond // *Ukrainian Pravda*. May 11, 2015 // <http://www.pravda.com.ua/articles/2015/05/11/7067480/>

national symbols. She shows courage, defiance and belief in her rightness.

Tetyana Rychkova is known as Counselor Minister of Internal Affairs of Ukraine and a successful volunteer. In summer 2014, Tetyana was portrayed by the media as a successful volunteer, a faithful and strong wife of an ATO volunteer soldier and just a "beautiful woman". We see in Tetyana's image an emancipated woman who performs rather egalitarian gender roles. She is socially active, public, bold, regularly travels to the war zone.

"The entrepreneur Tetyana decided to solve the problems of the army after her husband left for the front as a volunteer soldier. The wife quit her job and jointly with her parents spent all the savings on the soldier's equipment: "It all began in March when my husband left to fight in the army as a volunteer. I went to his military unit and saw there was lack of everything there ... So I began to help the unit. Now I help the whole army. As much as I can do in terms of my energy, opportunities, time."¹⁰⁹

"... She sold her bakery and a summer cottage located nearby Dnipropetrovsk to become a supplier of provision for the armed forces of Ukraine. Since then, she has been living on the road, crossing the war zone."¹¹⁰

Yet, her image is still based on the traditional image of a woman. Tetyana cares and ensures comfort and well-being of not only her husband, but the entire 25th Brigade. Feminine, with her eyes made up, false eyelashes and manicured nails, she provides soldiers with clothes and food - performs the so-called "supporting" or "serving" function, which is typical of the traditional woman's image. Tetyana's family actually embodied the image of a new Ukrainian family: he protects the country while she supports her husband in the war and provides the army. They actually work side by side on a common cause - to strengthen the ATO forces and to ensure peace in the country.

After her husband's death, Tetyana's image in the media finally transformed into the image of a strong and professional woman integrated in

the men's world, who makes decisions, consults men, demands from them and achieves actions and changes in the army. In the mass media, Tetyana is no longer a caring wife and mother, not a carer, but a reformer.

"Today, her task is to "make reforms." She repeats this phrase so often that you come to realize it is her new goal just like it was with helmets and bullet-proof vests for the soldiers of the 25th Brigade ... "Having assessed all that objectively, I came to Stepan Tymofiyovych (Poltorak, Ukrainian Pravda) and said that I would like to be involved in reforms more. We divided the responsibilities, shared the projects - logistics, food, software. I supervise these processes. As a coordinator, I am engaged in the reforming project for the procurement department. I am a broker (smiling)."¹¹¹

Her son lives in Dnipropetrovsk while she spends most of her time in Kyiv or on the front. She is the only "proactive" woman in the ministry. She holds a "male" position, and has an effect on decision-making in the Defense Ministry. She makes reforms, drives to the front, makes friends with soldiers. She knows about their lives and needs more than many "swivel-chair warriors" at the ministry.

In the media, Tetyana is called "Tanika-polygraph"¹¹², "tank girl"¹¹³, "Kyiv junta leader"¹¹⁴, "authority on the front,"¹¹⁵ "guardian angel" for the ATO soldiers "¹¹⁶, which is the evidence of Rychkova's authority both among soldiers and the ATO command.

Tetyana is well-integrated into the "male" military world, but at the same time, she demonstrates

111 Titish G., Tetyana Rychkova: I cried twice during the war. The second time when I was at the Ministry of Defense // Ukrainian Pravda. April 6, 2015 // <http://life.pravda.com.ua/person/2015/04/6/192127/>

112 Titish G., Tetyana Rychkova: I cried twice during the war. The second time when I was at the Ministry of Defense // Ukrainian Pravda. April 6, 2015 // <http://life.pravda.com.ua/person/2015/04/6/192127/>

113 "The Defense Ministry called me the tank girl, but they did change the staffing plan for the Airborne Corps", - volunteer Tetyana Rychkova provided Ukrainian paratroopers with tanks. VIDEO // Tsenzor.Net. 3 leaf fall 2014 // <http://censor.net.ua/v310092>

114 Tanya's war and peace. // Ukrinform. 11 Listopad 2014 // http://www.ukrinform.ru/rubric-lastnews/1727128-tanini_voyna_i_mir_1683033.html

115 Titish G., Tetyana Rychkova: I cried twice during the war. The second time when I was at the Ministry of Defense // Ukrainian Pravda. April 6, 2015 // <http://life.pravda.com.ua/person/2015/04/6/192127/>

116 Mashable: Story of a woman who became a friend and "guardian angel" for ATO fighters // TSN. September 24, 2014 <http://tsn.ua/ukrayina/mashable-istoriya-zhinki-yaka-stala-tovarishem-i-yangolom-ohoroncem-dlya-biyiv-ato-370397.html>

an active support of ideas for better integration of women into the army. Rychkova speaks about women on the front lines somewhat haughtily:

"Let me tell you about the women on the front. According to the legislation, women can serve on the front in a brigade. There must be a separate bathroom for them as well as separate places to sleep. But, where would you find anything "separate" over there? That's why they don't take women on the front - because it is really difficult. There is a very nice female doctor in my 81th Brigade. So, they took her to the front for one day. Found a pink house for her, everything was just great. It was really pink, painted in pink! There was hot water, a toilet, just for female doctors. Put some soft toys, too. Everything was ready for her arrival. Repaired the pipeline. Shooting began as soon as she arrived. And she says: "Guys, I cannot stay here, drive me back to Druzhkovka, I am not going to stay." And I go to the frontline on recon missions, with the young guys, I just get on the armored car and drive away. They are used to that now and they say, "Thank God you show, we have a combat mission for you." I say "Roger that, let's go."¹¹⁷

Even though she successfully performs traditionally "male" roles and which are really far from the traditional woman's image – having no husband, being among men, on the front line, not crying, not taking care of her child - Tetyana does not exemplify the typical image of "woman warrior" or "Amazons". She remains a comforter and support for soldiers on the front line, in addition to her reform activity.

"Can you imagine what these guys feel psychologically? I come to visit them, try to entertain, give some candies, we go for a walk, stroll, you guys are cool – I almost dance for them. We can discuss anything: the birth of goats in the village, new crops. We talk about lots of stuff."¹¹⁸

Tetyana's image is the image of one of the few ATO and MOD women, who combine the traditional male authority, reform efforts and

activities outside the family along with the women's traditional caring:

".. - Anyway, you're strong. But still, how did you become an authority on the front?

- Because I've never been afraid of anything. Because I'm with them on all combat missions. If they are in trouble, I'm with them, and they just know that I am with them. One of the soldiers who was wounded at Saur-Mohyla, slept at home after he came back from hospital. His wife raised hell. Why? Because he had a dream where they were under fire, and he, like, woke up somewhere in a dark pit, and he was alone. And he started screaming "Tanya!" Because he knows that Tanya is always somewhere nearby when one is in need. He says: "I know you must be somewhere near, you will come, you will take me away. You'll manage to do that". That is why."¹¹⁹

Maria Berlinska is an Air Reconnaissance Officer, participant of the ATO and founder of the Air Reconnaissance Support Center. She is a representative of the younger generation. She was 27 when she participated in the fighting in the East. She was basically the only drone operator in the ATO and became the leader and founder of the Air Reconnaissance Support Center.

One of the special features of Maria is her age. The media form a romantic image of a still young¹²⁰ student of the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, who goes to fight in the East when she is still a student.

Maria Berlinska had cut her dark blond braid, came by a bulletproof vest and ran away from the masters studies at the Kyiv Mohyla Academy to the front. In the ATO, she became a drone operator and repeatedly came under fire during the reconnaissance missions.¹²¹

However, it is important to note that the media portrays *Maria* as both a conscious citizen,

117 Titish G., Tatyana Rychkova: I cried twice during the war. The second time when I was at the Ministry of Defense // Ukrainian Pravda. April 6, 2015 // <http://life.pravda.com.ua/person/2015/04/6/192127/>
118 Same.

119 Titish G., Tatyana Rychkova: I cried twice during the war. The second time when I was at the Ministry of Defense // Ukrainian Pravda. April 6, 2015 // <http://life.pravda.com.ua/person/2015/04/6/192127/>
120 First National (2015) Travelers. Maria Berlinska // <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ADjKqOGGwBA>

121 26-year-old Aydar Battalion soldier woman Maria Berlinska: when people saw us, they hid ... and only children waved to us and ran after // Vikna. October 24, 2014 // <http://vikna.if.ua/news/category/ua/2014/10/24/23995/view>

and a conscientious student. She passed her examinations and even successfully defended her master's thesis in the breaks between trips to the ATO in winter 2014/2015. Maria has no makeup and wears her hair short in the photographs or video scenes, but the journalists still find a way to emphasize her femininity. They show her talking with parents, call her a cute girl with an unusually serious gaze of gray-green eyes.¹²²

The young student became known because she was engaged in an occupation that is atypical of women and of the Ukrainian army in general – drone reconnaissance. Maria acted rational about her participation in the ATO. Even though initially none of the battalions would want to take her on like many other women, she succeeded in getting one of the sought-after positions in the air reconnaissance rather than agreeing to the position which was offered to her.

"I think everyone should do what they have talent and strength for. I know for sure that I'm not a superhero, I cannot pry steel with my teeth, but I know that I can learn and organize some processes. Therefore, I can be useful for the army. And so it began."¹²³

Over time, Maria's image has transformed into a more revolutionary one: a 27-year-old student, one of the few who undertook to correct the deficiencies of air reconnaissance in Ukraine and of the Ukrainian army in the Donbass. Maria put together her team, gained support of a few commercial organizations and KMA, then founded and headed the Air Reconnaissance Support Centre which is very atypical for a woman, for a student of Jewish Studies, or for ATO volunteers.

"My friends joke: "All you had to do was pay the instructor for the training. Instead, you have built up your own center." That is true. I saw a problem with training for myself and realized that other interested people would constantly face a similar situation. The government does not conduct any systematic trainings.

122 Travel companion. Maria Berlinska. // <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tvq8Tpr0lXw> May 28, 2015

123 Women of War: Mary Berlinska who created the air reconnaissance center // Insider. September 21, 2015 // <http://www.theinsider.ua/lifestyle/55fee8aeef8b5/>

The volunteer centers do not conduct any systematic training... The system courses have just been launched, on my initiative. People showed, everybody was united by the idea and understanding that it is impossible to win the war without air reconnaissance."¹²⁴

The center is the only most accessible training platform that prepares qualified air reconnaissance operators for the front and partly provides the Army with drones.

Also, Maria is one of the few women and ATO participants who speaks about the problems of women in the ATO. She has been actively pursuing the empowerment of women in the ATO, including increasing the number of permitted occupations for women in the army and, accordingly, the legalization of their status in the ATO, payment of "combat" benefits and provisions of privileges to combat participants.

"I am often told that the war is not for women. It's a stereotype, because the war is not for human beings. But it is here, so we all went to defend on equal terms ... It often happens that a woman does the job which actually belongs to a man who sits in the headquarters. We have to give women the right to legally defend their country."¹²⁵

Thus, the image of Maria Berlinska is another example of a woman-revolutionary in the ATO. She is a woman who not only integrated into the Ukrainian army, but also changes it from the outside, ensuring the provision of services and knowledge that the government cannot provide.

3.4.3. The needs and concerns of women in the ATO

The information about the **needs** of the ATO women in the Ukrainian media is gender neutral. The articles about women involved in anti-terrorist operations often mention about soldiers' needs, but in a generalized form. In fact, none of the interviewed female ATO participants ever mentioned any specific women's needs in the ATO. Their vocabulary shows the army's

124 Same.

125 Maria Berlinska: Give women a chance to legally defend their homeland // Hromadsbke radio. July 4, 2015 // <http://hromadskeradio.org/gromadska-hvylya/mariya-berlinska-dayte-zhinkam-mozhlyvist-legalno-zahyshchaty-batkivshchynu>

needs identified as those of men:

"Speaking for the boys who are at the checkpoints of other volunteer battalions, they are poorly clad and shod, too. What they need badly is warm clothes."¹²⁶

"They also need winter boots, because the boys have already developed signs of trench foot."¹²⁷

The specific needs of the women involved in the ATO are hardly discussed in the media. Only one article indirectly referred to the lack of uniforms for military women in the Ukrainian army: "They wore uniforms of wrong size, either purchased online or brought by volunteers"¹²⁸. However, it's an English-language article written by an American for a foreign magazine, so the vast majority of Ukrainians were not aware of this information. None of the articles or videos mention lack of military uniforms for women, personal hygiene items, lack of specialized health care for women. The requirements for separate housing for women are those that are most often mentioned. Only few actually discuss this topic and claim that women have been given privacy and a separate room.

"At first, I lived in barracks with seven boys. Today, Alla and I share a separate room."¹²⁹

"I had my own "wagon", it was difficult to call it a room. As I lived alone, I somehow could bring it in a better and more comfortable shape. But we always got together for dinner in one place - no one was ever alone."¹³⁰

"We found a pink house for her, in a great shape. It was really pink, painted pink! There was hot water, a toilet. Just for female doctors."¹³¹

126 Woman in the ATO zone: Poltava woman is a volunteer and serves with her loved one // Kolo. October 8, 2014 // <http://kolo.poltava.ua/novini-poltava/alla-fedorchenko-23244.html>

127 Yana Zinkevych, serves in the ATO zone: At first I memorized the faces of men I rescued. Now, I don't. // Espresso TV, September 2014 // http://espresso.tv/article/2014/09/12/chomu_ukrayinski_zhinky_vidmovlyayutsya_vid_myrnoho_zhyttya_ta_yidut_voyuvaty_na_donbas

128 Peterson N. Meet Ukraine's Women Warriors // The Daily Signal. August 11, 2015 // <http://dailysignal.com/2015/08/11/meet-ukraines-women-warriors/>

129 Stories from the ATO. Woman with truth sector // Reporter. June 5, 2015 // <http://report.if.ua/gazeta/akcent/istoriyi-z-ato-zhinka-z-sektoru-pravdy>

130 ATO through the eyes of a woman. Frankivsk woman told about the war in the East // RAY. August 17, 2015 // <http://trkrai.com/?m0prm=25&showItem=13564>

131 Tytysh G., Tatyana Rychkova: I cried twice during the war. The second time when I was at the Ministry of Defense // Ukrainian Pravda.

"I have a private room. The boys made up a great washbasin. There is a mirror. I stay there, it's also my pharmacy and a grocery storage."¹³²

The Ukrainian media never mention the ATO women's needs for such basic things as uniforms, personal hygiene items, medical care.

Despite the fact that women are to stay in separate rooms, many of them share rooms with men on the front. In analyzing the media texts and video, we have never seen any negative reviews about the shared common conveniences for men and women who serve in the ATO. We never found any allegations of indecent behavior¹³³ from men, or complaints about inconveniences and harassment¹³⁴ from women. Yet, articles about ATO in general or about the men's well-being were not considered in this study. We get an impression from the media information about women in the ATO that men and women coexist harmoniously in one room. This situation even has its advantages. "At first, I lived in barracks with seven guys. People said they cleaned up the room after I moved in."¹³⁵ Interestingly, the discussion of this issue was usually initiated by the journalist. The report characters themselves never spoke in the interview about common facilities or their attitude to this issue, especially in a negative sense, or at least it's not apparent in the interview.

Thus, the army has no problems with housing from the public perspective. The reports lead to believe that women are provided with housing, and if not, it is not a problem. Cohabitation with men is perceived by the ATO women as a part of military life. It is more comfortable for some, it is less so for others, but they knew where they were going and they were ready for that. Compared with the stress of combat situations and horrors that they can see in the war, the lack of a separate room is not seen as a major problem. And there might be a difference between the attitude to

April 6, 2015 // <http://life.pravda.com.ua/person/2015/04/6/192127/>
132 Ukrainian women told why they went to fight in the ATO // TSN.

September 29, 2014 // <http://tsn.ua/ukrayina/ukrayinski-zhinky-rozpovili-chomu-voni-pishli-voyuvati-v-ato-371067.html>

133 Typical behavior patterns of women in the army.

134 Typical behavior patterns of women in the army.

135 Stories from the ATO. Woman with truth sector // Reporter. June 5, 2015 // <http://report.if.ua/gazeta/akcent/istoriyi-z-ato-zhinka-z-sektoru-pravdy>

cohabitation with men from women who serve in volunteer battalions and from women who were mobilized. The available empirical material is insufficient to analyze this issue.

Another problem faced by the ATO women is returning to the civilian life. They might face psychological, domestic, and bureaucratic difficulties during the reintegration process. First, the soldier women often develop the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The articles about post ATO men report about acute manifestations of the PTSD like anger, aggression, irritability, alcoholism, whereas women show the same as a feeling of guilt, sacrifice, detachment:

"The first week after I got home was very difficult. We were given time to relax, and I spent almost a week at home. I stayed in, and just lay and sat on the couch, thinking over everything I saw there."¹³⁶

"I'm on the borderline of two lives: the life there and the life here. And you know, the life there ... who has not been there ... it's hard to describe ... sometimes I can't find the words to describe the kind of life that is going on there now. There are a couple of men that I pulled out at Ilovaysk who were later killed at Debaltsevo. Naturally, in those moments, when you realize that you are needed there, you are ready to drop everything here and rush over there, because there is actually no one over there today."¹³⁷

"... Our boys are still there... how can I go home now? Please, understand correctly, I am not ready to go back mentally. Mentally, I am still there."¹³⁸

Secondly, the society lacks tolerance towards ATO soldiers. There is a misunderstanding about the essence of the situation in the East, the essence of hostilities and what ATO participants had to go through. After the war, the women soldiers face negative attitude to them and

have problems with integration. This negative attitude is not gender-specific. It is not related to their participation in the ATO as women, but it is caused by their involvement in the conflict. Thirdly, the media is already publishing the first reports about bureaucratic problems related to obtaining the combat participant status and, consequently, lack of incentives for the women, ATO participants. Only one woman speaks about such problems in her story, although we know from the ATO women we interviewed that it is not easy to get a combat participant status for volunteer battalion women soldiers. And it is impossible for women who took part in real combat. However, the media information is insufficient to determine the level of awareness of these problems in society.

"It's like you come somewhere where uniformed guys are standing in line, and people are saying like "so, what are you fighting there for? " It's really painful to hear. I was there and I know how hard it is."¹³⁹

"I remember once I was kicked out of the tram, because I have this ID, but it's not really legit yet, so I tried to present the ATO ID. Many people started to resent to the effect that you guys made up a war for yourselves ... and it is very painful and it hurts that Odessa residents feel that way today ... I understand that there are different categories of people, but I just got off the tram, that's all ... "¹⁴⁰

"You will never get an official war participant status," Burlakova said. I'm not sure what this combat participant status is good for, but I see guys so proud of it, and so it would be nice to have it officially."

According to the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine, 67,697 Ukrainian soldiers were granted the ATO participant status, *indicating the area where the anti-terrorist operation was performed*. This status gives certain social security benefits and the right to free travel on public transport, preferential treatment in obtaining housing and land plots, 0% credit for private construction and

136 ATO through the eyes of a woman. Frankivsk woman told about the war in the East // RAY. August 17, 2015 // <http://trkrai.com/?m0prm=25&showItem=13564>

137 Ilovaysk. The point of no return. "Murka". // Gromadske TV. August 30, 2015 // <http://www.hromadske.tv/society/ilovaisk-tochka-nepovernennya--murka-/>

138 Service women in the ATO zone are fighting equally with men // TSN. November 9, 2014 // <http://tsn.ua/video/video-novini/zhinkivyskovi-u-zoni-ato-voyuyut-na-rivni-z-cholovikami.html>

139 ATO through the eyes of a woman. Frankivsk woman told about the war in the East // RAY. August 17, 2015 // <http://trkrai.com/?m0prm=25&showItem=13564>

140 Ilovaysk. The point of no return. "Murka". // Gromadske TV. August 30, 2015 // <http://www.hromadske.tv/society/ilovaisk-tochka-nepovernennya--murka-/>

75% discount for utility bills. The government statistics on the number of women who have been granted the ATO participant status is not available at the moment, although about 25% of the 250,000 soldiers in Ukraine are women according to the Ukrainian media reports.”¹⁴¹

The issue of ensuring gender equality in the Ukrainian society is governed by both general (Constitution of Ukraine) and special legislation (Law of Ukraine “On ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men”). However, though the equal rights and opportunities for women and men are supported at the declarative level, they are not always enforced in practice. Thus, Ukraine occupies mediocre places in international reports and does not always meet its international obligations concerning the implementation of gender policy (particularly, in the United Nations Millennium Development Goals). Despite the accession to international agreements and adoption of national legislation on equal rights and opportunities for women and men, there is a lack of political will to implement gender transformations. The level of representation of women in public and political life is low. There is significant problem with the stability of stereotypes about the roles of men and women in society and the family.

The public discourse assigns for women a role primarily related to motherhood and beauty. The sexist rhetoric continues to be used by the Ukrainian public figures. On the other hand, women are visible participants of protest activity, which was corroborated by the events at Euromaidan 2013-2014. Women performed not only reproductive work (cooking, cleaning, caring for other members of society, etc.), but also stood next to men on the barricades. Starting with Maidan, women were involved in paramilitary activities, established several women's hundreds. Many Maidan activists continued their volunteer activities or participated in military operations in eastern Ukraine, in the ATO.

However, the women's participation in the armed forces is not new both for world history and

for the present. The military sociology studies integration of women in the armed forces. The proponents and supporters of women's integration point out that the armed forces are in a state of transformation, so physical strength and aggression as traditionally “male” features are losing importance. But the more important argument is justice, implementing the idea of equal rights and opportunities for women and men. The Security Council Resolution #1325 (2000) emphasizes the importance of changing vision of the women's role not only as a victim of conflict, but as a participant of conflict resolution and peacekeeping on an equal basis with men.

The phenomenon of vertical and horizontal gender segregation is inherent in the Armed Forces of Ukraine as in the general labor market. The number of women in the military gradually increases following the global trends of nation development. However, the growing number of military women, in the contract service, in the first place, is associated rather with the reluctance of men to hold low-paid positions. Women mostly have the so-called “feminized” professions: nurses, financial, logistics and communications. Women in the Ukrainian Armed Forces also face gender discrimination and prejudice on the part of the authorities.

Thus, according to a sociological survey of the Ukrainian military women (2010), the main causes of gender discrimination are the outdated traditions and ideas about the women's role and place in society, inadequate legal framework on human and citizen rights (regardless of gender), lack of efficient mechanisms for enforcing the ideas of gender equality and inconsistent gender standards in the Armed Forces of Ukraine to social needs of military personnel.

As of early October 2015, about 14,500 female soldiers and 30,500 women employees served in the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Almost 2,000 of them are officers, 35 female officers occupy senior positions at the Ministry of Defense, and the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. As of early October 2015, about 1,000 military women took part in the ATO. The name of this investigation is metaphorical. It's called an “Invisible Battalion”, because we are talking

¹⁴¹ Peterson N. Meet Ukraine's Women Warriors // The Daily Signal. August 11, 2015 // <http://dailysignal.com/2015/08/11/meet-ukraines-women-warriors/>

about women who are actually fighting in the war (or mobilized as volunteers), but their interests and needs are often ignored by the state.

Yet, on the other hand, according to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, three women received state decorations in 2014, and 15 women - in 2015. According to the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine, 10 women were given Ukrainian state decorations in 2014, and 18 military women and employees of the Armed Forces of Ukraine - in 2015.

Women's access to the armed forces and military service is regulated by several documents: a provisory list of military professions and permanent staffing positions of private, sergeant, sergeant-major positions, those of military women, and tariff lists of the above servicemen; a list of officers positions, which may be allowed to be filled by women who are enlisted for military service under contract on a voluntary basis; list of professions for which women with appropriate training may be taken to the military records.

Another problem of the legal status of military women is that it is governed not only by the norms of military law, but also by the provisions of the various branches of law (such as the Labor Code of Ukraine). According to the Labor Code of Ukraine, it is prohibited to use women's labor for heavy work and jobs in hazardous or dangerous conditions, involve them in lifting and moving items whose weight exceeds the established limits. That is, the issue of women's access to certain professions should be considered more comprehensively.

The Armed Forces of Ukraine have a developed gender policy that meets the national gender policy and provides for efficient gender mainstreaming in the military life support to create guarantees of equal rights for all persons, regardless of their sex. However, there is a problem of resistance of the existing mechanisms and realistic implementation of the declared policy of equal rights and opportunities for women and men.

Generally, the topic of women's participation

in combat action has been actively discussed in activist environments. The opinion on whether women should take part in hostilities varies even among gender researchers. Some believe that women should have equal rights and opportunities in all areas, including in the military. Others believe that the war is "men's games", and the propensity to violence is part of the men's socialization, so women should not take part in it.

The results of our empirical survey of 42 women who were fighting in the ATO showed basic problems that were reported by almost all the female respondents: the problems with their ability to make decisions in the army. Women are not actually allowed to make decisions in the armed forces. Many of them are not formalized and, in fact, are not able to receive payment for their work, and won't have public benefits, any combat participant status and all appropriate ramifications. Another problem concerns the fact that some women are formalized for the wrong positions. That is, they are limited in choosing professions with the explanation that staffing plan doesn't have those positions for women. Some issues that are not discussed by the state are logistics issues: the lack of specialized health care for women, the right size and shape of shoes, poor living conditions. In fact, the infrastructure of the Armed Forces of Ukraine is equipped to the needs of men and exclude women from the army with their specific needs.

The expert surveys enable to look deeper into the situation with the women's integration in the armed forces, as well as supplement the responses of the "invisible battalion." For example, one of the female experts speaks about the gender stereotypes women themselves internalized: "In actively participating in the ATO, they believe that their functions, their mission are secondary in comparison with those of men." Women do not always believe in themselves as much as to take on the more traditionally "male" professions. Both female and male experts are also critical of compulsory military service for men, offering alternatives.

Women may be employed by the government

to promote the mobilization, but there is still an issue with their further fate. Will women be professionally and successfully integrated into the armed forces later on, or will they come back to their homes?

The example of the new police is cited as a model for the army in terms of the women's involvement. In addition, female experts noted the importance of giving women the appropriate status, and support military women by the women's organizations. Women will need to be more involved in the areas of national security and defense decision-making.

The Ukrainian media often speak of "heroes", listing their names and feats, but rarely about "heroines". We conducted a qualitative content analysis of 33 media to learn more about how they portray women in the war. The ATO women have a positive image in the media. Journalists have been trying to balance between the masculine and feminine characteristics of the military women, presenting the ATO women as a harmonious blend of delicacy and beauty, courage and strength. The women are described as "fragile", "aggressive", "beautiful", "brave", "saviors" and "defenders". The ATO women's image is romantic and heroic: women's participation in the anti-terrorist operations is a heroic act, regardless of a position.

Sometimes, women on the front are depicted as auxiliary and supporting for male fighters. In other cases, the reports cover on women who are in no way inferior to men in their combat

skills and achievements. The presence of women in the ATO has a positive function of support and mobilization in both cases. It is important to note the absence of overtly negative images of women in the media. There are no accusations of frivolity, masculinity, ignoring traditionally female functions, the ATO women are almost never victimized. However, some publications tried to speculate on the attractiveness of the woman's image in the army.

The mass media do not cover the real needs and concerns of women in the ATO. The articles and videos we have analyzed never speak either about lack of women's uniforms, hygiene and medical care, or about PTSD, difficulties of reintegration, getting a combat participant status, impossibility to get "combat" benefits, especially for women with volunteer battalions.

Thus, the media performs a rather recruiting function, depicting only the more positive and heroic sides of the ATO women. Even though their everyday life is hardly covered in the media, it is a reality for the ATO women.

The concept of being brave and defending the country actually consists of many real actions and situations that should be learned, that should be managed. A greater media emphasis on the women's needs on the front and the problems they face after returning from the war would help improve public awareness and could be an additional leverage of influence on supplies and gender policy in the armed forces of Ukraine.

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Tables with empirical material

Table A1. Female respondents

Item	Age	Recruitment	Actual profession	Actual formalized	Benefits, combat participant status	Interest in promotion
1	23	Voluntarily	Security, roadblocks	Policeman	Yes	Yes
2	32	Mobilized	Paramedic/radio telephone operator of first aid point	Paramedic/radio telephone operator of first aid point	Yes	No
3	32	Voluntarily	Sanitary instructor	Sanitary instructor	Yes	Not able above sergeant
4	41	Voluntarily	Accountant of financial/economic services, intelligence activities	Accountant of financial/economic services	No	No
5	23	Voluntarily	Second-level medic responsible for first aid point	-	No	Yes
6	36	Voluntarily	Private	-	No	No
7	34	Voluntarily	Sanitary instructor	Sanitary instructor	Free subway	No
8	28	Voluntarily	Paramedic	-	No	Would be interested, provided the formalization
9	35	Voluntarily	Intelligence	-	No	-
10	34	Voluntarily	Assistant unit head	-	No	Maybe
11	20	Voluntarily	Paramedic, responsible for warehouses	-	No	Maybe
12	22	Voluntarily	TED deputy company commander for personnel	Clerk of the rear, head of field baths	Yes	Was interested, now wants to influence the reform of the army in general
13	33	Voluntarily	Paramedic, team leader	-	No	-
14	47	Voluntarily	Medic, team leader	-	No	Convinced that there is such a possibility
15	20	Voluntarily	Miner, sniper	Rocket launcher operator	No	Not needed
16	23	Voluntarily	Medic/phone operator	Nurse	No	Was interested but did not want to be in a staff position
17	42	Voluntarily	Sanitary instructor, service for men	Paramedic of field bath	Yes	-
18	32	Voluntarily	Secretary	Secretary	Yes	-
19	34	Voluntarily	Medic	Head of field baths	Yes	-
20	44	Voluntarily	Drone operator	-	No	No
21	21	Voluntarily	Clerk of technical department	Accountant of financial and economic department	No	No

SECTION 3. WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN COMBAT OPERATIONS

22	28	Voluntarily	Rocket launcher operator, courier	Accountant	No	Yes
23	30	Voluntarily	Paramedic	-	No	No
24	21	Voluntarily	Clerk of staff department	Clerk of staff department	Yes	No
25	22	Voluntarily	Paramedics	-	No	No
26	22	Voluntarily	Deputy commander for educational work, for arms, for logistics	Sanitary instructor of company	No	Yes
27	22	Voluntarily	Patrol, assault company, policeman	-	No	-
28	25	Voluntarily	Medic/evacuation	Junior Sergeant, sanitary instructor, radio telephone operator	Yes	Yes
29	22	Voluntarily	Paramedic of battalion first aid point	Private/sanitary instructor, senior company sanitary instructor	Yes	-
30	28	Voluntarily	Paramedic	-	Yes	Yes
31	27	Voluntarily	Paramedic	-	No	No
32	36	Voluntarily	Senior mortar gunner	Correction, orientation	Yes	-
33	20	Voluntarily	Private, commander of combat vehicle	-	No	Yes
34	22	Voluntarily	Medic	-	No	No
35	30	Voluntarily	Commander of recon/diversion platoon	Commander of recon/diversion platoon	Not sure	Maybe
36	37	Voluntarily	Sergeant of reconnaissance platoon	Sergeant of reconnaissance platoon	Yes	Yes
37	44	Mobilized	Deputy battalion commander for personnel	Deputy battalion commander for personnel	Yes	-
38	-	Voluntarily	Tactical medicine, private, delivery, interface	Deputy battalion commander, inspector for relations	Yes	Wants to be a minister of the armed forces
39	-	Voluntarily	Private	-	No	Doesn't know
40	24	Voluntarily	Machine gunner	-	Maybe	Yes
41	35	Voluntarily	Senior soldier	nurse clinic	No	Yes
42	33	Voluntarily	Staffing support	Junior sergeant, TED Senior assistant chief of staff	Yes	-
	18	-	Volunteer			

Table A.2. Information about male and female experts

Item	Name and surname	Place of work or other expert affiliation
	Nataliya Dubchak	Retired major, former volunteer advisor to the Minister of Defense on Gender Issues (2010) Gender policy officer (special position, which was introduced in the 2008 by decree of the Minister of Defense). Service in the Armed Forces of Ukraine: 1992 to 2010
	Kateryna Levchenko	President of the International Women's Centre «La Strada-Ukraine». Was advisor to the Minister for Human Rights and Gender Issues, Ministry of Interior (2 periods: 2004-2006, 2008-2010).
	Larisa Kobelyanska	PhD, associate professor, expert on Gender Policy, UNDP expert.
	Olena Suslova	Chairman of the Women's Information Consultative Center
	Olena Biletska	Lawyer, head of the NGO «Women's Guard» 1.5 years engaged in the war, women in the military.
	Maria Ionova	Deputy of Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Co-head of «Equal Opportunities Caucus».
	Volodymyr Sologub	Freelancer, Ukraine Today Made five or six stories (based on an approximately one- week stay in the ATO zone)
	Nataliya Korzh	Show director, "Ukraine Today", director of the English language documentary "Tortured Femininity" ¹
	Nataliya Nagorna	Correspondent at TSN «1 + 1», reports from the ATO zone

Table A3. List of online materials used for content analysis

Item	Description of online sources
1.	Women in the ATO: Conditions of mobilization // ICTV Facts. February 4, 2015 // http://fakty.ictv.ua/ua/index/read-news/id/1541549
2.	Head of National Guard: Women may be trusted with complicated missions // BBC Ukraine. July 31, 2015 // http://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/news_in_brief/2015/07/150731_rl_army_women
3.	Mobilization will be voluntary for women - Military expert // Slovo i dilo. January 21, 2015 http://www.slovoidilo.ua/articles/7007/2015-01-21/mobilizaciya-dlya-zhencshin-budet-dobrovolnoj-voennyj-ekspert.html
4.	The general staff HQ advised that women may be mobilized in the ATO // Channel 5. February 4, 2015 // http://www.5.ua/ato-na-shodi/y-genshtabi-povidomili-yakih-jinok-mojyt-mobilizyvat-v-ato-69175.html
5.	Ukrainian women told why they went to fight in the ATO // TSN. September 29, 2014 // http://tsn.ua/ukrayina/ukrayinski-zhinki-rozpovili-chomu-voni-pishli-voyuvati-v-ato-371067.html
6.	Stories from the ATO. Woman with truth sector // Reporter. June 5, 2015 // http://report.if.ua/gazeta/akcent/istoriyi-z-ato-zhinka-z-sektoru-pravdy
7.	ATO Through the eyes of a woman. Frankivsk woman told about the war in the East // RAY. August 17, 2015 // http://trkrai.com/?m0prm=25&showItem=13564
8.	Peterson N. Meet Ukraine's women warriors // The Daily Signal. August 11, 2015 // http://dailysignal.com/2015/08/11/meet-ukraines-women-warriors/
9.	Woman in the ATO zone: Poltava woman is a volunteer and serves with her loved one // Kolo. October 8, 2014 // http://kolo.poltava.ua/novini-poltava/alla-fedorchenko-23244.html
10.	Maria Berlinska: Give women a chance to legally defend their homeland // Hromadske Radio. July 4, 2015 http://hromadskeaudio.org/gromadska-hvylya/mariya-berlinska-dayte-zhinkam-mozhlyvist-legalno-zahyshchaty-batkivshchynu
11.	Service women in the ATO zone are fighting equally with men // TSN. November 9, 2014 // http://tsn.ua/video/video-novini/zhinki-viyskovi-u-zoni-ato-voyuyut-na-rivni-z-cholovikami.html
12.	Titish G., Tetyana Rychkova: I cried twice during the war. The second time when i was at the Ministry of Defense // Ukrainian Pravda. April 6, 2015 // http://life.pravda.com.ua/person/2015/04/6/192127
13.	Ukrainian women join volunteer units: "The feeling of fear spots gets disconnected in hot" // Segodnya. June 13, 2014 http://ukr.segodnya.ua/regions/kharkov/Ukrainskie-zhenshchiny-idut-v-otryady-dobrovolce-CHuvstvo-straha-v-goryachih-tochkah-otklyuchaetsya-.html
14.	Shydlovska E. Five stories of Nadiya Savchenko // BBC Ukraine. April 17, 2015 // http://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/entertainment/2015/04/150306_savchenko_impressions_she
15.	Sindelar D. Ukrainian pilot Nadiya Savchenko. A bit of biography // Radio Liberty. April 11, 2014 // http://www.radiosvoboda.org/content/article/25453913.html
16.	A fragment of the book of Nadiya Savchenko. "Strong name Nadiya" // Istorychna pravda. June 28, 2015 // http://www.istpravda.com.ua/blogs/2015/07/28/148497/
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29.	Now women may be drafted // Strike. January 20, 2015 // http://firstsocial.info/news/teper-pid-prizov-potraplyat-i-zhinki
30.	Yana Zinkevych, Serves in the ATO Zone: At first I memorized the faces of men i rescued. Now, I don't. // Espresso TV, September 2014 http://espreso.tv/article/2014/09/12/chomu_ukrayinski_zhinky_vidmovlyayutsya_vid_myriho_zhyttia_ta_yidut_voyuvaty_na_donbas
31.	Pictures of pretty women who volunteered to the ATO // Obozrevatel. January 16, 2015 http://lady.obozrevatel.com/beauty/75129-foto-samyih-krasiviyih-zhenschin-uchastvovavshih-v-ato.htm
32.	Incredible confession of a woman in the ATO Area. Video // STB. August 29, 2014 http://www.stb.ua/ua/2014/08/29/44172/
33.	As military women are welcomed in the ATO area. Video // ICTV. March 9, 2015 http://fakty.ictv.ua/ua/index/view-media/id/83892



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