

Case study on the utilization of women in the Ukrainian military

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Abstract

Experts are concerned about the lack of troops and security vacuum due to the low birth rate in the Republic of Korea. They consider policies to expand the proportion and role of female soldiers to address these issues. In this regard, We would like to introduce the successful use of female personnel in the Ukrainian military and draw implications for the Korean military. This will provide a clue to offset the shortage of troops in the Republic of Korea.

Keywords: *Female workforce, female workforce in the Ukrainian military, strengths of women, expansion of female military enlistment, civil-military convergence, utilization of female workforce in future warfare*

1. INTRODUCTION

The South Korean Army has been implementing various policies to address the issue of low birthrates, which is one of the biggest topics in our society and is expected to lead to a shortage of troops and a security gap. One of these policies is to expand the proportion and scope of female soldiers, which is likely to become a reality considering the current population decline.

A recent Stanford University experimental study confirmed that gender diversity improves knowledge outcomes.[1] This is not limited to science and research, but there are cases in the military where women's strengths are fused with men's manpower, and gender diversity improves mission performance.[1] Based on this premise, it is evaluated that the case of using female personnel in the Ukrainian military will not only overcome the shortage of troops, but also help improve mission performance through gender diversity. In reality, the Ukrainian military actively utilizes women not merely in non-combat fields but in combat-related fields such as air assault, sniping, and anti-tank attacks. Therefore, the case of the utilization of women in the Ukrainian military could provide clues to offset the critical challenge of the shortage of troops that the South Korean Army is facing.

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2. CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

According to the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense, as of 2020, there were an estimated 31,000 female soldiers serving, including over 4,000 officers, which accounted for 15.6% of the total military personnel. As the war with Russia continues, the number of women enlisting has been expanding, and as of March 2021, the proportion of female soldiers reached 22.5% of the total military personnel, the highest in the world. Not only is the percentage of female soldiers high, but over 13,000 of them are currently serving as combatants, and of those, at least 5,000 are deployed to the front lines performing various duties [2].

Since Ukraine lifted some legal restrictions on women's military service in 2018, allowing women to serve in regular combat units such as artillery, armor, snipers, and infantry commanders, the role and proportion of female soldiers has dramatically increased in just four years [3]. In this chapter, we will examine the cases of Ukrainian women soldiers performing various duties, from front line combat units to field hospitals, and derive implications for our military.

2.1 Airborne Brigade

Tatiana Zaritska, who worked as a nursery teacher, volunteered to join the military with her husband to defend her country during the 2014 Russian attack on the Crimean Peninsula. Starting from preparing food and organizing clothing for soldiers, she now has 18 successful parachute jumps and serves as a veteran officer (Lieutenant) in the 25th Airborne Brigade as of January 2022, performing close combat missions[4].

Zaritska's station is in the Donetsk region, which has been in an official deadlock since the July 2020 ceasefire, but the Russian army has violated the ceasefire more than 900 times as of January 2022, with grenade attacks, mortar shelling, and machine gun fire. As a result of these attacks, nine Ukrainian soldiers died in December 2021, and three were injured in a single week in January 2022. She still moves quickly on unpaved roads to avoid sniper fire, and drives at night without using headlights to avoid artillery fire. Despite the ceasefire, the situation is just like the front line. She hopes for a peaceful resolution but is worried about Russian attacks and stands on the front line to defend her country.



Figure 1. 1st Lieutenant Tatiana Zaritska former nursery teacher services on the frontline[5]



Figure 2. 25th Airborne Brigade trains anti-tank weapon on the front line[6]

2.2 Special Forces Sniper

Recently, a total of 90 people applied for the Donbass Special Forces Sniper selection in 2022, and 5 were finally selected, including 3 women. Prior to 2018, combat positions in the Ukrainian military were not open to women. There was a perception that it was inappropriate for women to perform missions in combat units and at the front lines, and this perception continued even after some legal restrictions on women's military

service were lifted in 2018. However, the selected female snipers overcame the high competition rate with their unique concentration, composure, and meticulousness. These female snipers left their husbands and children behind to join the military, and are ready to excel on the front lines with a strong sense of mission, carrying suicide grenades knowing that if captured by the Russian military, they could be raped, tortured and executed. In addition to the recently selected snipers, dozens of female snipers are already active on the battlefield. The achievements and abilities of these female snipers have led military officials who were initially skeptical of training women as snipers to praise their abilities, saying, "Female snipers are agile, can move quickly, and have strong endurance" [7].



Figure 3. Ukraine Sniper Training[8]

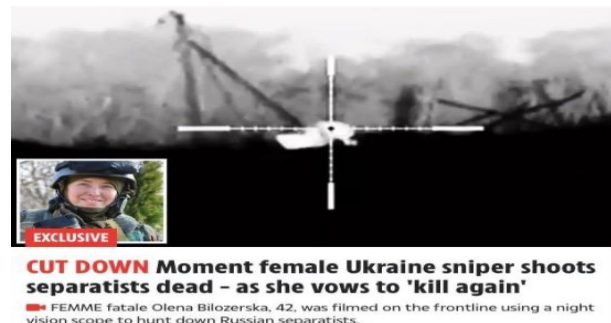


Figure 4. Ukraine Female Sniper Olena Bilozerska in action[9]

2.3 Anti-tank Unit

Tetiana Chornovol is a mother of two, a journalist, and a former member of parliament who is a prominent figure in Ukraine. However, she is currently serving as a Stugna-P anti-tank missile gunner in the Ukrainian army to repel Vladimir Putin's forces and defend her country's freedom. Her mission is to prevent the Russian army from approaching the capital city of Kiev from the north. She was monitoring attacking Russian tanks on the front line outside Kiev when the first tank entered the range of the anti-tank missile, and she destroyed it. With the destruction of the lead tank, the Russian army halted its attack and retreated. She is one of many Ukrainians who enlisted to defend their country, and their fierce resistance has prevented the Russian army from seizing the capital of Kiev for 27 days since the invasion on February 24, 2022[10].

2.4 Cognitive Warfare Unit

On the fourth day of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, middle-aged women Nataliya Mykolska and Valentina Synenka founded the Data Battalion, an organization that performs cognitive warfare related to the information war surrounding Ukraine and Russia. The Data Battalion is still operated by more than 60 women today. Its mission is to collect and distribute less well-known content to the public from Mariupol, Bucha, Kramatorsk, and Izyum based on an online database of witnesses' photos, videos, and statements collected at the Ukrainian front line. Such content is used by the press, government agencies, and international investigators around the world. The activities of this Data Battalion can be seen as a war against Russia's false information and is just as difficult and important as the actual war on the front lines. The Data Battalion began to release its online database to the public on March 6, 2022, and has since shared over 4,400 videos, 20,000 photos, and more than 120 witness statements, which have been viewed over 5 million times on various social media platforms. By clearly exposing the truth about Russia's atrocities and mass killings of Ukrainians to the world, the Data

Battalion continues to contribute to Ukraine's victory[13].



Figure 5. The former member of the Ukrainian Parliament, service member and operator of an anti-tank guided missile weapon system on the front line[11]



Figure 6. She is a service member and operator of an anti-tank guided missile weapon system examines the Russian tank which she destroyed in a recent battle at a position on the front line[12]



Nataliya Mykolska
@mykolska

THE WORLD DOES NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT IS HAPPENING IN UKRAINE — SPREAD THE TRUTH ABOUT RUSSIA'S WAR CRIMES.
@dattalion an open database with over 1000 video footage from real hotspots of Russia's war against Ukraine taken by Ukrainians, actual witnesses, civil citizens.



Figure 7. Ukraine Dattalion's action[14]

2.5 Front-line Field Hospital Medical Team

On November 14, 2022, the city of Kherson in southern Ukraine was liberated due to the retreat of the Russian army. However, the eastern region near the Russian border is still experiencing intense fighting, resulting in numerous casualties. In these front-line conditions, pharmacists Olia and anesthesiologist Valeria are serving with dedication on the front-line emergency response team. They volunteered for duty when the war broke out and have endured the brutal conflict while serving in Bucha, Irpin, Bakhmut, and other places[15]. Medical support on the Ukrainian front lines is vastly different from what we typically envision as normal medical environments. According to a report by the World Health Organization (WHO) on February 24, 2021, since Russia invaded Ukraine, there have been 715 attacks by Russia on medical facilities and medical personnel in Ukraine. Of these attacks, at least 630 were directed at medical facilities, resulting in over 100 deaths and 129 injuries[16]. Olia and Valeria's frontline emergency response team has also been subjected to ongoing missile and artillery attacks by Russia, with two nearby medical facilities and five medical personnel already losing their lives. The Washington Post has praised the frontline medical team for quietly carrying out their duties in the midst of the danger of war crimes in Ukraine, describing them as Ukraine's secret weapon.



Figure 8. Olia accompanies a wounded soldier in the ambulance to the main hospital[17]



Figure 9. Valeria treats a wounded soldier in the treatment room[18]

3. IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Identifying fields where women's strengths can be utilized

Through examples of the use of women in the Ukrainian military, various fields where women's strengths can be utilized were identified. The Ukrainian military utilized women's concentration, calmness, and meticulousness as snipers and tank gunners, and used their situational awareness and analytical abilities as intelligence agents. If our military explores fields where women's strengths can be applied, as in the case of Ukraine, we can more efficiently utilize women's personnel in future wars. Furthermore, as the proportion and role of women in the military expands, it is believed that the military can overcome the shortage of troops in various situations by utilizing women's reserve forces, anti-aircraft units, and even absorbing female personnel from other institutions such as fire and police departments.

3.2 Expansion of the scope of female soldiers' enlistment (officers/non-commissioned officers → officers/non-commissioned officers/enlisted personnel)

Currently, our military only allows female soldiers to enlist as officers and non-commissioned officers. However, not only the Ukrainian military mentioned earlier, but also militaries around the world including the US, allow women to enlist as officers, non-commissioned officers, and enlisted personnel, and women are advancing into fields that were previously thought to be limited to men. In the US, they are implementing "Gender Integrated Infantry Basic Training" to reduce the physical performance gap between men and women, and conducting gender-neutral fitness tests to recognize combatants regardless of gender [19]. If our military also expands the scope of female soldiers' enlistment to all ranks and positions, and implements programs to reduce the physical performance gap between male and female personnel, we can more effectively utilize female soldiers than we do now.

3.3 Civil-Military Integration for Advanced Technology and Energy Development

The Ukrainian data battalion mentioned earlier started as a private organization and was integrated into a non-governmental organization that actively supports fields where military capabilities alone are insufficient, such as cognitive warfare and information warfare.

Our military can apply this type of civil-military integration strategy as well. The civil-military integration strategy is a strategy in which private and defense companies collaborate to develop technologies that can be applied in both civilian and military fields. This strategy can promote the development of core and advanced

technologies, especially in advanced areas such as artificial intelligence (AI), unmanned systems, and robots, by utilizing the vast technological and human resources of the private sector.

In addition, diverse female talent from various companies and research facilities, regardless of gender or military service, can contribute to the military while maintaining their current jobs, providing a means for communication and cooperation with the private sector, such as the civil-military integration strategy.

South Korea's birth rate hit an all-time low of 0.78 in 2022, and it is predicted to fall to 0.7 in the future[19]. As a result, the population will continue to decrease, and the resources available for military conscription will continue to decline. Therefore, various policies are being implemented to prepare for the decline in military personnel resources that corresponds to the demographic cliff. Among them, various measures utilizing female talent are being considered. However, despite the increasing need for utilizing female talent in the military, there is not much research on this topic. Such research and the utilization of female talent are necessary changes for winning in the changing future battlefield of the Korean Peninsula. We look forward to various follow-up studies related to this topic.

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