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# The Training Environment Of The Irish Defence Forces: Integrated Training, Bullying and Sexual Harassment

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## CHAPTER SIX

# The training environment of the Irish Defence Forces: integrated training and bullying in the workplace

In this chapter I will refer to recruit and cadet training within the defence forces in light of international trends in integrated training. Following the consideration of ‘commitment’ in terms of numbers of women recruited to the organisation in chapter five, this chapter assesses the “education” component of the setting (Reskin and Padavic, 1994). Through an examination of archival data (syllabi of training, training policy etc) and the data obtained at interview, an assessment of the PDF’s equality of opportunity agenda as it applies to the training opportunities afforded women in the PDF is possible. The chapter considers international trends in military training, the history of the training of women in the PDF (for both other ranks and cadets), and considers the data accrued from interviews conducted. The data gathered as a result of a discussion on training where PDF culture “makes its mark” on entrants led to an unexpected and unanticipated discussion of bullying and sexual harassment within the PDF. This discussion is included in this chapter as it flowed logically from a discussion of the training environment. It is in accord with the emergent design and database management (DBM) system of the research protocol.

### 6.1 International trends in integrated training

In 1972 in the U.S., women first entered the Reserve Officer Training Programmes on civilian college campuses. The U.S. Army in 1976 opened all of its service academies (the U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, the U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, and the Army Academy, Westpoint) to women. By 1980 all three academies were co-educational (Holm, 1991; Moskos, 1990). In 1978, Congress abolished the WACs and women were integrated across all the services. After the Gulf War, 86% of all service ‘Military Operational Specialities’ or MOSs are open to women in the U.S.

Following the Gulf War, it is taken as military doctrine in both the United States and Britain that women will participate in combat and combat support units on land, at sea and in the air. The location of female personnel in combat units, combat support, or logistical and echelon units has given rise to an integrated training requirement. Quite simply put, units and personnel that fight together ought to train together.

The results of integrated training during World War Two, as witnessed by Marshall (D'Ann Campbell, 1993: 302) were more successful than single-sex training. This finding was reinforced in the nineteen seventies:

The army has conducted a series of studies and field tests on women's impact on Unit Performance. (MAXWAC and REFWAC) It was found that women generally performed their tasks as well as men and that any unit degradation was negligible or statistically insignificant. That was not what the Army had expected to find. (Holm, 1993: 401)

Based on these findings, Congress urged the army to conduct a "Women in the Army" study (WITA) to explore the further integration of women. Holm comments on a familiar sounding problem: "meanwhile qualified women were being denied entry into the army because of arbitrary ceilings imposed on female enlisted accessions". (Holm, 1993: 401)

The WITA studies prompted the adoption of the Military Enlistment Physical Strength Capacity Test (MEPSCAT) designed to match the soldier with the job or MOS. (Maginnis, 1992: 29) In this 1982 'Department of the Army report on Women in the Army Policy Review' an effort was made to assign people on the basis of their observed abilities, as opposed to blanket bans based on sex. Integration of women and the integration of training continued apace up to the Gulf War. The Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces (1992: 16) concluded that, "training programmes for strenuous MOSs should be gender-neutral; i.e. identical for men and women". The United States Military Academy Report on the Integration and Performance of Women at Westpoint (for the Defence Advisory Committee on Women in the Services) - (DACOWITS) in February 1992 found:

The integration of women within the Physical Program has advanced a long way since the initial entry of women in 1976 (...) there is no basis for suggesting that the Academy has lowered standards to accommodate women. Women's physical standards are quite demanding (...) (and) women are performing exceptionally. (1992: 45)

Since this report was published, women have achieved the highest accolades in the Service Academies, with women becoming Cadet Captains in Westpoint and Colorado Springs. This proves that women can 'hack it' in a fully integrated training regime and the studies quoted above show that standards overall are raised.

This has again been confirmed in recent studies. The US Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine conducted a training experiment involving female participants in May of 1995. The experiment showed that after 24 weeks of training the women passed the

MEPSCATs for all MOSs. Furthermore, these women were found to be capable of lifting 75-100 pound weights. (As U.S. Servicewomen they were, on average, only 5 feet 3 inches in height). A similar experiment by the Ministry of Defence in England in December 1995 reached the same conclusion. (Brower, 1996: 13)

The gathering momentum of the integration of women in the military has yielded some dividends for female personnel. The U.S. National Defence Authorisation Act of 1993 repealed the 1948 statutory limitations of the assignment of women to many combat roles. The momentum has also yielded some recognition for female personnel. To counter discrimination within the military, the Army Secretary, Togo D. West, stated on December 29th, 1996 that the policy on recruitment and training was this:

If you want the best army, you choose the best people to do it, regardless of sex, regardless of race and regardless of background.  
(New York Times, 29th December, 1996: 14)

In effect this has opened up over 80,000 new jobs to women. (Gutmann, 1997: 20) It puts into perspective PDF policies in relation to recruitment which appear to limit the numbers of women gaining access to paid work in the military. It is clear, from the experiences of women in integrated formations, with their presence in Combat and Support Units, their co-location with men implies imperatively the necessity to train men and women together for a likely combat encounter. This is accepted best practice in both the US and British armies.

## 6.2 Recruit training within the PDF

The initial intake of women into the PDF prompted the military authorities to amend the training syllabus for recruits. A new and revised syllabus was drawn up in 1982, TS INF 8/90 (Females) and TS 10/90 (Females), tailored to what the General Staff felt were the needs of these female personnel. The new syllabi drawn up for women did not include section tactical training (offence and defence), counter insurgency training (COIN), or aid to the civil power training (ATCP OPs). The syllabi did contain an extended clerical, or Administration ('A') and logistics, ('Q') accountancy component. The women trained in an all-female platoon, were cloistered away from their male comrades. According to the military authorities:

There is very little difference in the training carried out by male and female two star soldiers in order to qualify them as three star soldiers. Females did not carry out any practical section/platoon in attack training and did not carry out patrols. Females did not carry out practical training in Cordon and Search and Riot Control. Females did however carry out a very comprehensive programme of training in Administration (39 hours) which their male colleagues did not complete. (Study Group, Female Soldiers, Director of Training, 11th November 1992: 2, para 4 - Confidential)

This syllabus almost guaranteed a pre-ordained gender division of labour within the PDF along gender discriminatory lines. The women who were trained in this way and assigned exclusively to the lower paid 'A' and 'Q' jobs within the PDF had no say in this policy. Oakley (1981:204) likens this assigned role, a role assigned without choice to the ascription of status based on caste:

Gender, like caste, is a matter of social ascription, which bears no necessary relation to the individual's own attributes and inherent abilities.  
(Oakley, 1981: 204)

The female recruit platoon of 1990 was trained in a similar fashion. Their training syllabus was modified and they were trained as a single-sex unit. At this time however, female cadets were being trained in a fully integrated environment, and it was decided to integrate the training of female recruits. This policy change took place in 1992.

I had direct personal experience of this change in policy in 1992. As Platoon Commander of the 37th Apprentice Platoon, based in the Army Apprentice School (AAS) in Naas, I was responsible for the military training, administration and discipline of this group of thirty or so apprentices. The Platoon included two female apprentices, the first females to be admitted to the AAS. These female soldiers underwent a rigorous regime of military training for a period of one year under my supervision.

I brought the entire group for endurance training, combat runs, circuit training, route marches, forced marches, and extended periods of intense tactical training. The group successfully completed exercise "Scratch" in the Glen of Imaal, an exercise designed as a 'battle inoculation' to test the physical and mental endurance of each soldier. The platoon went on several long range patrols carrying 70+ pound packs in addition to weapons and ammunition in the Wicklow mountains. We trained extensively in offensive and defensive tactics, on simulated fighting patrols in an 'advance to contact' scenario, and a series of 72 hour defensive exercises.

During all phases of training, the performance of the two women was of a very high standard. At no point on extended periods in the field did the hoary old chestnuts of 'battlefield hygiene', 'menstruation', 'privacy' or women's 'relative lack of upper body strength' become an issue. The women displayed the same strengths and weaknesses as their male counterparts. The women became an integral part of the platoon, bonded well with their peers and unit cohesion and morale were high.

This was also my experience when involved in training the recruit intake of 1994. I was platoon commander for one of the three recruit platoons enlisted in the Curragh Command. All three recruit platoons deployed to the Glen of Imaal in May 1994 for an extended period of tactical training. The female recruits performed to a very high standard. They experienced the same privations and tests of endurance in the field as their male comrades. There was no noticeable difference in performance between the sexes.

The performance of these women in training contradicted many of the oft-repeated myths surrounding women in combat conditions. As stated previously, the hoary old chestnuts of battlefield hygiene and infrastructural deficits did not impact on the performance of female personnel in the field. This is in contradiction to the patriarchal dynamic identified in chapter three which interprets women's difference as deficit, particularly in settings imbued with constructed masculinity, where the masculine is seen as the norm. An example of this type of thinking which interprets women's difference as deficit would be evidenced in the U.S. army's investment in the 'Freshette Complete System'. (Guttmann, 1997: 19) This device was designed to allow women to urinate whilst standing up in areas where "foliage doesn't supply ample cover". (Ibid.: 19) In all of the time I have spent in tactical training with women in static positions or on the move, I have never known this to be an issue. I do however remember whilst overseas during heavy shelling in Lebanon, (operation Grapes of Wrath), an individual (male) who got to his knees in order to urinate under the cover of a low wall. Had he been wearing the "Freshette Complete System", he might have been decapitated whilst standing. The consideration of such a device obviously had no basis in reality or in objective task analysis, a recurring theme within this study, the basis, or rationale for such a device was based on ideology, as opposed to experience and the reality of the battlefield.

### 6.3 Cadet training within the PDF

This section concentrates mainly on issues around cadet training raised at interview and from a documentary analysis of PDF syllabi and policy in this area. It will be followed by a section

on bullying and harassment as impacting on the training environment of the PDF and concerning both the recruit and cadet training environments.

Officer training in the PDF takes place in the Cadet School, Military College in the Curragh Camp. Cadet training is both physically and mentally demanding. The syllabus is designed to push candidates to their limit in order to assess their command and control in a stressful environment. A cadetship lasts for a period of twenty-two months with an intensive curriculum involving tactical, weapons and leadership training. The aim of the course is to convert a school leaver or graduate into a competent army officer. This 'conversion' is not simply the attainment of a professional qualification; it is the induction or immersion of the individual into the collective culture and ethos of the officer corps of the PDF. In the vernacular of the Cadet School itself, one becomes a 'believer'. This almost religious conversion echoes the bonding process evident in priestly elites and monastic communities.

The first intake of female cadets in the PDF was trained at Sandhurst in England in 1980. The second intake of female cadets was trained in the Cadet School. Their presence forced the military authorities to consider the issue of integrated training. The 'problem' of female cadets could not be exported to Sandhurst indefinitely, and the Cadet School were forced (significantly by an outside agency) to come to grips with the situation.

It was decided that the female cadets would not undergo the heavy weapons block of instruction on the syllabus, but would complete a dress and deportment course instead. The reason given for this decision was that the heavy weapons course was "inappropriate and too demanding" for women. (Interviewees 8, 24, 15/4/99, 11/8/99). This was despite the fact that these women had completed their small arms and 'section in attack' training. Qualified in section tactics (where one must 'close with and destroy the enemy'), these women had shown the necessary levels of fitness, skill at arms and aggressive command and control required at assessment.

A task analysis of this type of manoeuvre shows it to be the most physically demanding task required of the infantry soldier. A similar analysis of the support weapons commander's role show it to be a rather less demanding tasking. The objections of the college staff to women undergoing this training were based on cultural taboos rather than on physical reality. The problem of poor task analysis and curriculum design has been observed elsewhere in the military:

Military curriculum - design efforts are continually handicapped by shortage of experts (...) poor analysis of how to match training to jobs, inadequate performance measurements, inadequate prescriptions for deciding how to train.  
(Ellis, 1986: 1)

The College staff at that time were perhaps guided by prejudices and bias in relation to female personnel, rather than by an objective assessment of their potential. Rather than realising the full potential of these cadets, rather than training them in how best to exploit organic infantry firepower, the military authorities detailed them to attend dress and deportment lessons. This discriminatory treatment had the effect of seriously retarding the potential of these women as officers of the PDF. The practice was in breach of the guidelines for equality of opportunity in the workplace as outlined for the Public Service:

Departments should ensure that on and off the job training is equally available to all staff and encourage a balanced participation by both men and women in training opportunities available to them.  
(Par 18, Training: 7)  
(Equal Opportunity Policy and Guidelines for the Civil (Public) Service)

To deny women full access to training within the military setting denies them their full potential as soldiers. The reluctance on the part of the military to accept women as fully - fledged soldiers has been noted elsewhere. U.S. Congresswoman, Pat Schroeder pointed out:

(T)hat the admission of women to the service academies was inevitable and that she wondered why the Department of Defence was fighting it. She observed that bureaucracies are often not responsive to changing circumstances. Women should go to the service academies for the same reason men go - she said - to pursue a military career, to be pilots, to get a good education.  
(Holm, 1993: 308)

The problems highlighted in the segregation of female cadet training have to some extent been addressed and since 1990 all cadets, both male and female, undergo the same syllabus of training. Despite the initial resistance displayed by the military authorities to the notion of fully integrated training for men and women, this did not deter female personnel from pursuing a military career. Many women welcome the opportunity to challenge received beliefs about their proper place in society. One American officer stated that she "welcomed the challenge to confront chauvinists on a daily basis" (Moskos, 1990: 10).

This robust response towards chauvinistic attitudes was reflected in the views of those female personnel I interviewed. In discussing training, an issue which all of the women addressed in the interview schedule, a pattern of observations emerged. In discussing the status and roles

assigned women in the PDF the women I interviewed all referred to the issue of training, and the bearing it had on their deployment.

As mentioned earlier and discussed in chapter three, Adler (1994) would argue that women are segregated in the workforce as a means of limiting their status, and that this can be reinforced by 'Human Capital Inequities', in the form of being deprived of training opportunities. (Reskin and Padavic, 1994) The E.E.A. (1998) also warns of the dangers of lowering the training and work experience threshold for women. The women I spoke to had some interesting observations to make on the issue of training.

Of the sixty women interviewed, all of the women mentioned the issue of their training, and commented on its quality. They had many suggestions about how the quality of the training might be maintained and ways in which it might be improved. Of the sixty, eight stated explicitly that their training had not been up to standard, and that their training was not on a par with their male peers'. (Interviewees 2, 5, 8, 10, 19, 22, 24 and 32) Interestingly, all of these women were members of the first all-female recruit platoon, or members of the first two cadet classes. On the part of the former, as mentioned previously, these women were trained as a single sex unit and with a different syllabus of training to the men. In the case of the latter, these women underwent a different syllabus of training and did not undergo certain tactical phases including heavy or support weapons, and counter-insurgency training. Their comments on these issues make for interesting reading:

Nobody was ready for us. What we should and shouldn't do was so vague. We never went to the Glen of Imaal for tactical training (...) (A)t our passing out parade, our platoon wasn't allowed to carry weapons. And we had done weapons training. (Interview No. 2, 13/4/99)

Interviewee No. 5, also a member of the first female recruit platoon, resented this aspect of their training:

We didn't do a proper three star course of training. We lost out on some of the tactics. I was twenty-two. My dad was in the army. I knew it wasn't the same training. It belittled us. Like they tried to daddy us. I suppose it came from some misguided urge to protect us. It was a total, total disadvantage for us. (14/4/99)

One of the officers from the first cadet class to train in the cadet school had this to say:

We were the first batch to be trained in the cadet school. They wanted to see if we'd die if we fired a rifle etc. We didn't do the 84, the 60, or the GPMG SF. We were

“non combatant” at the time. Yes, and we got no Sam Browne when we were commissioned. That didn’t come until 1984 when the girls complained. We also did a grooming course. They got an air-hostess. We enjoyed it. It was very beneficial. As an officer, one’s expected to look the part and have a minimum of social skills. It’s a pity the guys didn’t do it as well. I know some who needed it (...) Of course, then you get subordinates and superiors calling you ‘luv’. And there are some senior officers who’ll embarrass the life out of you. Like when you’d be at a function and you’d have some eejit of a colonel falling over you making remarks. You’d never see them talking like that to one of the lads.  
(Interview No. 8, 15/4/99)

Interviewee No. 24 also mentions the grooming course:

We did a dress and deportment course. Right down to the basics, - like putting on eye-shadow. It did wonders for Lancome. The day before we were commissioned – they sent us loads of samples. I’ve stayed with them since. But we were very upset too. Doing walking classes when we felt we were soldiers. It was like they were pretending all along we were integrated but they treated us differently. We were definitely more integrated though than the first cadet class.  
(Interview No. 24, 11/8/99)

These eight women were unanimous in stating that their training was not as effective as that for their male colleagues. All eight were also adamant that the integrated training of the nineties was a huge improvement in the training environment. All agreed that they were handicapped in terms of being able to function as officers, and in competing for promotion by their being treated differently. They detailed to me many examples of this disadvantage. For example:

Because I missed out on the tactical training, I wasn’t allowed to train recruits. I looked to see the Brigade Commander. The Brigade Commander said no. “I wouldn’t like my daughter to do that job. I think you need a man to show troops what’s what. Anyway you’re not qualified”.  
(Interview No. 24, 11/8/99)

Of the remaining fifty-two interviewed, fifty were trained in an integrated environment. (Two of those interviewed were direct-entries, a doctor and a pharmacist, and neither of the two women underwent basic military training). The fifty who underwent integrated training felt they were every bit as effectively trained as their male peers. Many went so far as to say that they were better trained in that they had had to invest more effort than their male peers:

Even more so. Our basic level of fitness was lower. We had to train harder to make it.  
(Interview No. 15, 20/4/99)

We did the same training and more. We had to prove ourselves. We didn't even have the same facilities as the lads. We were under the spotlight. It was harder for us.

(Interview No. 27, 24/8/99)

Yes, and in other ways more. You're more determined for a start. You put up with more. You're pushed to your limit a lot more than the guys. On exercise Aughavannagh one of the guys hit the pain barrier and he said to me, "Now I know what it's like for the females – it's like this all the time for you". The sad part is, when our junior class came in, I heard one of the guys tell them, "In time, you'll learn to hate your females".

(Interview No. 29, 26/8/99)

Forty-three of the women interviewed expressed complete satisfaction with the integrated system of training. Many of those interviewed endorsed its value as a mechanism for unit cohesion, or the 'bonding' of troops.

During the training, one of NCO's just had a major problem with females. Not one of us. All of us. When we'd be out for a run, he'd say, 'all right girls, which one of you is going to drop out today?'. He was a pain in the arse. A sexist pig. When we were on tactics the first time in camo (camouflage) cream – he called us out and called us the oompah loompahs and made us walk past the lads. He would always make us sing 'Barney' songs in the truck. One girl in particular he used to call "fat arse". At the start of the training the lads were very distant. By the end, we got on great. We were all in it together. And when we passed out, the guys gave that bastard no end of shit. No one talks to him.

(Interview No. 14, 20/4/99)

Some of the NCO's would play the men versus the women thing, and end up saying, you're not as good as him and all that. But we all worked together. We were having none of it.

(Interview No. 20, 28/7/99)

Seventeen of the women interviewed, although in favour of integrated training, were critical of the manner in which physical training, and fitness in general is approached in the PDF in its training establishments. Many complained that the PT was "punitive", (Interview No. 1, 12/4/99) and the training was not "scientific or programmed". (Interview Numbers 3, 7, 9, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18, 26, 27, 28, 29, 31, 40, 45).

The PT was used primarily as a punishment. As an instrument for bullying. Having come from an athletic background, I would say the system was very poor. It didn't allow for individual variations.

(Interview No. 18, 23/7/99)

The attitude in PT always was: This is a boys' club. A big boys' club. They used to put the biggest guys up front and run the rest of us into the ground. It had nothing to do with training objectives. It had everything to do with humiliating the women.

(Interview No. 13, 19/4/99)

In the army you know, physical stature gets confused with competence all the time.  
(Interview No. 16, 21/4/99)

Twenty five of the women I interviewed in outlining this aspect of their training linked it to an abusive or bullying training regime, common to both the recruit and cadet intake. It is an aspect of training that makes for disturbing reading and certainly would give food for thought for the military authorities. The women's accounts of such incidents range in severity but were experienced by recruits, apprentices and cadets alike. The following are some examples.

In training we got a bit of stick for falling behind on runs. The NCOs would say, look lads, are you going to let these bitches away with it? Leave them behind, they're fucking useless.  
(Interview No. 20, 28/7/99)

Monkey see, monkey do. There was a fetish about fitness. And it has nothing, I mean nothing, to do with the job. But they used it as a stick to beat us with. In the cadet school, they used it to focus resentment on us. You come out with your confidence, your self-esteem – everything lowered.  
(Interview No. 26, 13/8/99)

The cadet captain had a real problem with women. Women shouldn't be in the army and all that. After one of the runs he told me that if I was a guy he'd have thumped me for slowing everyone down.  
(Interview No. 29, 26/8/99)

At the start of the training the NCOs thought they were on to a good thing with the three of us (females) in the platoon. When that didn't happen, when it came to P.T., it was abuse, abuse, abuse.  
(Interview No. 35, 7/9/99)

The P.T. was just a screw session. One NCO was an out and out bastard. He hated women. He used to call us fat cunts, fat cows, useless heaps of shit. The lads would see this and start abusing us too. It was their ticket. P.T. was his happy hour. I don't think he was mentally fit for recruit training.  
(Interview No. 45, 12/9/99)

Interviewee No. 44 summed up the attitude of many of the victims of this type of bullying;

Yes. There was the usual remarks from some of the NCOs. You know. There shouldn't be women. But they're just arseholes.  
(Interview No. 44, 11/9/99)

Of the seventeen women interviewed in the Lebanon, as the control group of interviewees, all seventeen felt that their training was as effective as that for their male colleagues. This is consistent with the attitudes of the sample of respondents interviewed at home. Of the

seventeen interviewed in Lebanon, nine specifically mentioned P.T. as an area that could be improved, and seven complained of the alleged abusive or bullying behaviour of training staffs at the training institutions, (all of this sample were trained as recruits in Brigade Training Depots). These responses are consistent with those elicited from the sample interviewed at home.

This aspect of the data was unexpected and unanticipated. I was not aware of the extent and range of such experiences for female personnel, nor was I aware of the depth of feeling that accompanied these experiences. Despite being a 'knowledgeable insider', I was never the victim of workplace bullying and was not sensitive to this aspect of PDF culture. The fact that much of the bullying and harassment reported at interview was sexual in nature may also explain my prior insensitivity to its existence. The fact that I am a male officer in a male-dominated environment may have contributed to this lack of awareness of the impact on female victims of the categories of incidents listed in this chapter. The non-reporting of bullying in the workplace or the 'invisibility' of bullying in the workplace is much commented on in literature on adult bullying and bullying in the workplace. (Randall, 1997; Costigan, 1998) There is a general recognition in this literature of the insidious nature of workplace bullying along with the phenomena of victim-blaming and the non-disclosure of bullying. This is perhaps illustrated by the reaction of my colleagues in the following incident. I raised the issue of bullying in the workplace in December 1998. At the Eastern Brigade RACO Conference, I proposed a motion that:

RACO adopt as policy the Health and Safety Authorities' Guidelines (1998) on bullying in the workplace.  
(RACO, E. Brigade Conference, Motion No. 22; Prop: Capt. T. Clonan. Sec: Capt. K. O'Sullivan, December 1998)

When I read out the motion, it was greeted with laughter. As I write, in October 1999, the motion has yet to be forwarded to the ADC.

The spontaneous laughter which greeted my proposal on the adoption of the Health and Safety Authority's guidelines on bullying in the workplace is perhaps symptomatic of a lack of sensitivity on the part of officers to this problem. Immersed in the 'masculine canteen culture' of the PDF, male officers, enjoying the privileges of rank and sharing the unquestioned cultural assumptions of a male dominated work environment, are perhaps not sensitive to the issue of the bullying of a small minority of female employees. I was certainly not conscious of this problem prior to interviewing female personnel for this study. I would have often seen pornography displayed in PDF workspaces and living areas, but would have

never given it a second thought, assuming that this was a convention peculiar to the 'masculine' setting of the military and an inevitable circumstance in a male dominated workplace. There are many portrayals of this masculine culture applying to the military in popular and commercial iconography. The 'pin up girl' is synonymous with soldiers, sailors and aircrew world-wide.

My sensitivity to this problem came about as a result of having engaged in reflective practice and professionalisation by research. The liberal feminist agenda advocates regulatory and educational initiatives to advance equality and parity of esteem in the workplace. The insight to the problem of workplace bullying and harassment gained through reflective practice and research, allied to the liberal feminist perspective adopted in the theoretical outline, leads me to conclude that there is a requirement for explicit policies to increase worker's sensitivity to this problem. The data which follows arose from a straightforward discussion on training and led to the categories which comprises the next section in this chapter on bullying, harassment and sexual harassment in the workplace. As the subject arose in the discussion of the training environment, it is included in this chapter on the training environment of the PDF.

#### 6.4 Bullying and Harassment within the PDF

Within the scope of the unstructured and informal interview format, certain common themes in relation to bullying and harassment arose from a general discussion of the training regime within the PDF. The headings, or themes discussed in this section are not intended as an exhaustive or authoritative account of bullying within the PDF. The categories of incidents included here are simply those which the interviewees raised themselves. The Health and Safety Authority, the EEA, and the law all provide for a more comprehensive list of what constitutes bullying, harassment in the workplace, and sexual harassment. What is examined in this section is, as I previously stated, what the women I spoke to brought up themselves. In this way, I have attempted to allow the data to speak for itself. It should be noted that this portion of the study was entirely unanticipated and that what follows constitutes an 'emergent' theme, or a 'broadening' of the research focus, "as the data suggests it". (Maykut, 1996: 64)

The issue of harassment in general and sexual harassment in particular arose out of a general discussion on the training environment of the PDF. Remarks such as the following provided an entree to the subject:

I know that we are all equal. But. I don't like the way women are treated, not as soldiers, but as women. As in sexual harassment. The younger women are experiencing a lot of sexual harassment (...) The lid is going to blow off this (...) There's a terrible fear of complaining though. You know. They'll say, "if they can't hack the hassle from the lads, then they're not fit to be a soldier".  
(Interview No. 2, 13/4/99)

The above mentioned interviewee, the second woman I interviewed, a sergeant with 18 years' service, provided the first indication of such a problem within the PDF. As a man, and as an officer, I had not experienced such harassment, and as such, presumed it did not exist. Its existence however was confirmed in interviews with other women, of all ranks. One female officer stated:

There is a huge problem in the Cadet School with sexual harassment, bullying and intimidation. It's a colossal problem. When the lid blows off this. How long will it take though? When women come out of the Cadet School, their self-esteem about their appearance, their confidence, their intelligence, everything is gone. They're made to feel useless. I wouldn't recommend the army as a career to women. No fucking way.  
(Interview No. 12, 19/4/99)

In discussing the matter further with the interviewees, the following categories, or common areas of experience arose. As stated in the methodology chapter, as a male interviewer, and as an officer, many of the women I spoke to may have been reluctant to disclose any or all of the information on this matter. Therefore I would repeat that what follows is not claimed as a comprehensive account of the issues raised, but more a qualitative insight into one aspect as experienced by women of the 'masculine' work culture of the PDF.

- Inappropriate comments on dress.

Of the forty-three women interviewed in Ireland, twenty-six mentioned the experience of having inappropriate remarks made to them about dress, (uniform and civilian clothes alike). Of the seventeen women interviewed in Lebanon, two mentioned such incidents. The type of remark reported in the interviews could be summed up in the following examples:

When I was a second lieutenant, I had one C.O. who would ask me if I was wearing a bra. He told me he preferred it when women didn't wear a bra. Also, after coffee one day, he got the adjutant to ask me not to cross my legs at coffee as it distracted the Commandants.  
(Interview No. 33, 31/8/99)

Another officer mentioned the following:

Yes, you would hear things. The adjutant in my first unit told me to go to the Quartermaster and get a tighter jumper. He said it would show off my figure better. (Interview No. 18, 23/7/99)

The women who mentioned these incidents stressed to me that these incidents were commonplace, and that “they go with the territory”. (Interview No. 8, 15/4/99)

One interviewee, a private with four years’ service summed the situation as follows:

Yes. You get so many comments on dress, you just ignore them after a while. They go in one ear and out the other. (Interview No. 21, 28/7/99)

These sentiments are echoed by an officer with three years service:

You know, they come out with things like, look at the arse of her in those combats, and such like. You get that. But you get so conditioned, so used to it, you don’t even notice any more. (Interview No. 29, 26/8/99)

Currently, there are no guidelines within the PDF which refer to inappropriate remarks about dress, or appearance.

- Inappropriate remarks about appearance.

Of the forty-three women interviewed in Ireland, sixteen reported incidents of inappropriate and offensive remarks made about their physical appearance with regard to looks, or body shape. Of the seventeen women interviewed in Lebanon, three mentioned such incidents. These incidents varied in seriousness. Many, such as interviewees 21, 32, 44 and 45 complained about constant references to their weight made by peers and superiors:

On P.T. once, when I was about 11 stone, the P.T.I. (P.T. Instructor), in front of the whole platoon, said I was a big girl. Or words to that effect. I wouldn’t like to repeat what he said. But they were very offensive remarks. (Interview 21, 28/7/99)

Interviewee No. 32 had this to say:

They say things about your body. Like, your arse, or your hips are too big, especially when you’re eating. (Interview No. 32, 1/9/99).

One interviewee related the following incident to me:

They say things in jest, which they really mean in earnest. It's a constant thing, but it's really bad overseas. One of the girls in my section had a problem with facial hair. The lads sellotaped a razor to her door. I reported the matter. It was treated like a practical joke, a prank. But she was devastated.

(Interview No. 19, 27/7/99)

- Remarks of a sexually explicit nature.

Of the forty-three women I interviewed in Ireland, eighteen of those gave accounts of incidents in which remarks of a sexually explicit and offensive nature were made to them. Of the seventeen women interviewed in the Lebanon, ten mentioned such incidents. This total of twenty-eight out of sixty of the population sampled represents almost half of those surveyed.

One interviewee, an officer with seventeen years' service, spoke about the severity of the matter as perceived by the women:

One guy, I walked into his office and he was reading a porno magazine. He showed it to me and said, I bet you'd be good at this. Some of the remarks people make are downright nasty. It's debilitating overseas. It's downright dangerous. Some of the women I know, especially the vulnerable ones, would be suicide risks.

(Interview No. 33, 31/8/99)

Of the twenty-eight responses I received on this subject, only one was reluctant to go into the detail of such remarks. (Interview No. 23) The following example however would be typical of the type of remarks outlined in the interviews.

When I was in stores getting kit issue, the Quartermaster said to me. If I was 30 years younger, you wouldn't bend down like that in front of me, I wouldn't be long giving you one up the arse.

(Interview No. 32, 1/9/99)

Of the twenty-eight incidents mentioned in the interviews, twenty-six of them involved a person senior in rank to the interviewee. Nowhere in the PDF, DFRs, SOPs or guidelines is there any reference to the use of explicit language, inappropriate language or innuendo.

One officer outlined the inhibition and frustration such an environment can produce:

As cadets we had one NCO in particular who used to make really disgusting remarks about our swimsuits. Now as an officer, nearly everything I say is given a double entendre. From talking to civvie friends, I'm assured it doesn't happen so much outside. It's at the stage that I've given up saying things in front of certain officers. I just say nothing at coffee now. I read the paper.

(Interview No. 16, 21/4/99)

- Unwelcome Advances in the Workplace.

Of the forty-three women interviewed in Ireland, twenty reported incidents involving unwelcome advances in the workplace. Seven of the seventeen women interviewed in the Lebanon detailed such incidents. Of the twenty-seven alleged incidents, twenty-five involved NCOs and officers senior to the interviewees. Under the terms of DFR A 7, relationships between superiors and subordinates are strongly discouraged. Such relationships, between members of different rank in the same unit are considered “prejudicial to good order and discipline”, and are therefore an offence under military law. DFR A 7, Administration Instruction, A 7, “Interpersonal Relationships in the Defence Forces” legislates for the disposal of charges in relation to unwelcome advances in the workplace. (This document is considered in more detail in the chapter on legal aspects of PDF policy in relation to female personnel). The attitude of female personnel to the army system in relation to dealing with allegations of harassment and assault is dealt with at the end of this section.

The following quotes from interviewees give an indication of the tenor of female personnel’s attitudes in relation to such incidents and the system in place for dealing with them:

In five years I’ve had numerous advances. In the first three or four months, going into the canteen at night was a minefield. Every night they’d be trying it on. As recruits, we had to live in, there was nowhere else to go to socialise and relax. Except you couldn’t relax. One guy came into my room at 3 a.m., and tried to sleep with me. I had him charged. We had gone to the CS about him before. We’d warned him about this guy before. Nothing was done. They wouldn’t give us a lock. Nobody tried to stop it. He ended up being charged with being out of bounds or some other minor thing. He got away with it. It took two years and two attacks on females before he was allowed to go on voluntary discharge.  
(Interview No. 30, 29/8/99)

One private with two years’ service described an incident in training:

One NCO in particular couldn’t take no for an answer. That NCO. We got a night pass. We bumped into the NCOs. That guy came on very strong. I told him no way. He made the slit your throat sign and said, wait ‘til Monday. He gave me a hard time after that. He obviously couldn’t handle rejection very well. I had a serious incident with him in the gas chamber. He was inside. He came over and told me to take the mask off. I said no. He ripped the mask off my face. I was coughing and retching. He grabbed me by the neck and kicked me out the door. This incident was reported by a male colleague. I was paraded by the Platoon Commander and asked if I wanted to make a complaint. But after what happened, I was so scared I said no.  
(Interview No. 14, 20/4/99)

This fear of making an official complaint, especially when the interviewee is of junior rank or service, was quite marked and evident in the responses of the women interviewed. Of the twenty-seven who detailed such incidents, only two said they felt confident enough to complain. (These two were officers, Interviewee No. 24 and Interviewee No. 33)

The following examples give an idea of such reservations:

I've had a lot of harassment overseas. I've had two serious incidents. One involved an officer here. He stopped me in the Comcen (Communications Centre) one night when he was orderly dog, (orderly officer) and tried to kiss me. I told him to stop. He told me if that's the way I wanted to play it, I'd be going home on chalk one (thereby forfeiting two weeks overseas allowances). When I blew him out like that I found from then on it was, 'You can't do this, you can't do that'. I feel like saying it at my annual confidential. But I've everything to lose. I'd never get overseas again. (Interview No. 39, 10/9/99)

Interviewee No. 42, also serving in Lebanon, told a similar story:

I don't want to say. Just, someone senior to me. You don't want to be on your own with him. I found that out pretty quick. I had to deal with it myself. He's known for it. If I had complained I would have been told to cop on. (Interview No. 42, 11/9/99)

These experiences appear common to women of all ranks. Several officers, (nine of the nineteen interviewed) reported such incidents during the interview. The following are some examples:

I was the new second lieutenant in barracks. I was so young, around 20. There was the usual slieven there. A Captain. He's a commandant now. He made a completely unwelcome move on me. It happened on my first night as orderly officer. I was so proud of myself mounting and dismounting the guard. Then this happened. He took complete advantage of his rank and my innocence. When I think of it now, what he did to me. He completely undermined me. (Interview No. 18, 23/7/99)

The vast majority of the women interviewed in relation to this topic, twenty-five out of twenty-seven felt that they were not in a position to complain and expressed serious reservations about the army's system with such complaints. This aspect of the data is dealt with in more detail at the end of this section.

- Offensive Graffiti, Notices, In Workplace.

Offensive graffiti arose repeatedly as a subject for discussion during the interviews. Of the forty-three women interviewed at home, twenty brought up the subject of offensive graffiti. Of the seventeen women interviewed in Lebanon fourteen referred to the issue of offensive graffiti. Offensive graffiti is commonplace in certain PDF work areas. From my own observations and the observations of the women at interview, these locations are most

commonly guard rooms, toilets, transit billets in training areas and on posts in Portlaoise Prison and overseas.

Whilst the military authorities cannot be held to account for random acts of vandalism and the appearance of graffiti in the workplace, their reaction to, and manner of dealing with such a phenomenon, can be seen as an indicator of their attitude to their employees' welfare. The existence, prevalence and nature of such graffiti is also an indicator of the workplace culture and attitudes to women in the workplace.

Of the thirty four women who raised the issue of graffiti in the workplace, all of them highlighted as offensive, obscene references to women in the PDF. Of these thirty-four, twenty detailed examples of graffiti which made a personal reference to them, and which named them. In the vast majority of these cases, (seventeen out of twenty) the obscene text would appear on a sentry beat, or sentry post just prior to the woman being rostered for such duty. In some cases, an obscene note would be left in a prominent position. Many of the women interviewed complained about the army's attitude to such incidents:

You get a lot of graffiti in the magazine (Ammunition depot). Like 'x' did the entire third battalion. If you want a ride, call 'x' in the orderly room. You just have to put up with it. No one will own up to it, and the CS will say he's more 'important' things to be doing.  
(Interview No. 28, 25/8/99)

When it happened to me, it was like this. I was on duty in Portlaoise. The corporal called me in and said, "look at this". He was laughing. So were the lads. It was something about me, and my name was written there. There wasn't much point in complaining to the corporal.  
(Interview No. 31, 31/8/99)

When I was on the Magazine guard, I came across some graffiti about a colleague. It was on the beat. I complained to the corporal. He laughed at me.  
(Interview No. 32, 1/9/99)

Another private had a similar attitude to the problem:

There's lots of graffiti about us on the posts. It's not just offensive, it's hurtful. I just try to wipe it off. It's too much hassle to complain. Sure who'd listen anyway?  
(Interview No. 44, 11/9/99)

One private referred to what could be described as an institutionalised form of graffiti, with offensive 'cartoons' photocopied in the orderly room and posted on notice boards:

When we were doing our recruit training there was a poster put out. It had the five of us on it. Naked from the waist up. It had an NCO shouting at us, “we do all the nagging here”. It was left up all day. That night during details, (cleaning offices, training areas etc.) we tore them down. The next day, the Platoon sergeant warned us that it was an offence to interfere with, or otherwise deface a unit notice board. (Interview No. 21, 28/7/99)

Interviewee No. 2 (13/4/99) also referred to obscene notes/cartoons on official notice boards. It would appear that all ranks, including officers, are exposed to offensive and personalised graffiti:

I had a bad time in USAC, (University Service Army Complement, Renmore, Barracks, Galway). It started with obscene things written on my pigeon hole (mail box). I complained. Then someone started drawing obscene things on my door. I repainted the door myself. More than once. But it only got worse. I got a name then for rocking the boat. Some of my classmates still won't talk to me. (Interview No. 33, 31/8/99)

Not all of those whom I interviewed were dissatisfied with the army's response to this issue. Two of the thirty-four who brought up the subject expressed satisfaction at how the matter was dealt with. Interviewee No. 40 had this to say:

I had this happen once. Something really bad was written about me on the Guard Room. I complained straight away to the CS. He backed me up 100%. It hasn't happened since. They made the Guard Commander clean it off. No one will write stuff now. (Interview No. 40, 11/9/99)

The other interviewee who expressed satisfaction in relation to this issue took matters into her own hands:

We had graffiti in the Guard Room. Some of us were named in it. Cheeky bastard. So we had a chat and we went to the C.S. We said we wouldn't do duties until it was painted over, or got rid of. That was the end of that. (Interview No. 35, 7/9/99)

- Exposure to Pornography (films) in the Workplace.

Of the forty-three women interviewed at home, twenty-nine stated that they had been in a workplace situation, i.e.: a guardroom, canteen, mess, or recreation room where a pornographic film was being played. Of the seventeen women interviewed in the Lebanon, twelve reported such an experience. Over two-thirds of the women interviewed confirmed their exposure to this phenomenon, mostly in the form of pornographic video tapes, and in two instances, in the form of a pay per view, soft porn channel. Most of the incidents took place in guard-rooms (twenty-nine) and overseas (eight). Four of the incidents took place in the cadet's mess.

From listening to the women's accounts of what they experienced a pattern begins to emerge. The following examples illustrate this pattern:

In my experience, blue movies are a common feature of guard-rooms.  
(Interview No. 5, 14/9/99)

The B.O.S., (Barrack Orderly Sergeant) said to me on my first guard duty, "I hope you don't fucking think that because you're a woman that I won't be watching a blue movie tonight. I always watch one, and I'm not stopping for you".  
(Interview No. 10, 16/4/99)

I was on stand to. I was told to go out on the beat, there's a film we want to watch. So I went. But I would be very uncomfortable about it. You know, on duty with twelve guys watching a porno movie. But you say nothing. It's hard enough to be one of the lads, but if you cause ripples, in the long run you'll only get a bad name for yourself. So you forget about it. You wouldn't get a good hearing anyway. Officers come and go.  
(Interview No. 21, 28/7/99)

It was my first duty. My first guard in the Brughha, (Cathal Burgha Barracks, Rathmines). They put one on (pornographic video). I asked them to turn it off. They wouldn't. So I went out on the beat. I would have been laughed at if I complained.  
(Interview No. 45, 12/9/99)

Many officers complained of the problem of pornographic films in workplace locations. Of the nineteen officers interviewed, nine complained of this problem. The most senior of those interviewed, a Commandant (and a Medical Officer) was exposed to this phenomenon:

There are plenty of blue movies played overseas. The battalion is awash with pornography. Up in the Medical Aid Post where I worked, the medical orderlies would have them on. I'd have to tell them to switch them off. There was nowhere to look.  
(Interview No. 22, 9/8/99)

One captain stated:

There were porno films being played in the mess. And no, I never complained. I just used to walk out.  
(Interview No. 33, 31/8/99)

A number of officers I interviewed related an interesting record of an incident that took place when they were cadets:

As cadets, the Bravo channel was being played at night in the cadet's mess. And there were some soft porn films being run on it. When we walked into the room, they wouldn't turn it off. The situation got worse and worse. They started putting on porno videos. After a confrontation with the guys, because it wasn't fair on the junior cadets – it wasn't a good example either – we approached a female member of the cadet school to have it sorted. The females all got paraded over it. The lads found out we'd gone to the office. There was a lot of hassle.  
(Interview No. 13, 19/4/99)

This account was corroborated by the account of another officer of the same incident:

They were watching soft porn, on the Bravo channel. And the cadet's mess is for everyone. The junior cadet females wouldn't go in because of it. So I told them to stop watching it. They hid the remote control. Then the next night when I came in, they put on a porno video. We went to the office and complained. Myself and the other girls suggested that the Bravo channel be deactivated and blue movies be banned in the mess (...) (W)e were paraded by the Company Commander. We were all disciplined – the girls – for not “handling it right”. We got into the shit for complaining. The Class officer said that he wasn't going to interfere, that as cadets we should be able to sort it out. When the guys found out, they were obnoxious. It got worse after that.  
(Interview No. 17, 22/7/99)

An alarming feature of these two accounts is the parading and cautioning of complainants. Exposure to the phenomenon seems to have been widespread and universal. Most of the women interviewed seemed reluctant to complain and did not appear empowered to do so. The structures for such grievances do not exist. Pornography, in whatever form, is not referred to in any PDF, DFRs, SOPs guidelines or administrative instructions. Its apparent prevalence is surely an unhealthy aspect of workplace culture. I doubt if it would be tolerated elsewhere. I cannot imagine a pornographic film being played in a financial institution, in a university faculty, or in any factory setting. There is a requirement surely for the military authorities to address this problem, and to refer to it specifically.

- Exposure to Pornography (Posters, Screensavers etc.) in the Workplace.

Of the forty-three women interviewed at home in Ireland, thirty-one mentioned that they had been exposed to pornographic images in the form of posters, calendars, playing cards, screensavers in the workplace. These images were encountered in stores, (seventeen of the sites), offices, (eleven of the sites), workshops, (two of the sites) and in a gymnasium (one of the sites).

Of the seventeen women interviewed overseas, fourteen stated that they had at one time or another been exposed to such images. This exposure took place in stores (nine of the sites),

and offices, (five of the sites). Most of the women interviewed indicated that the practice of displaying such images was declining. Nevertheless, the women interviewed found such images when encountered, offensive:

You don't see the page three girls so much now. Most of the lads would be mortified if we caught them with those on the wall. But you still get the die hards with them up. Usually in stores. One sleazy old bastard in our unit even asks you, "what do you think of the tits on her?"  
(Interview No. 42, 11/9/99)

Yes, you still get the porno posters around the place. Here and there.  
(Interview No. 45, 12/9/99)

It would appear that all ranks, privates, NCOs and officers are exposed to this phenomenon. One officer, a captain with eighteen years' service had the following experience:

I was overseas in Naqoura. When I logged on to the computer, I was greeted with a screensaver of a naked woman. I got the I.T. guys to replace them all. I was nearly going to put Brad Pitt or George Clooney on there, but I think we scanned in something boring – I think it was a tank of some sort.  
(Interview No. 24, 11/8/99)

One interviewee, a sergeant, with eighteen years' service reported the following:

I used to play cards with the guys in the transport pool. They had a deck of cards with pictures of these topless women. So I asked them to get another set, which they did. That was it. They also took down a few dodgy posters that were there.  
(Interview No. 19, 27/7/99)

Many of the women interviewed reported complaining about images they encountered in the workplace, (thirty out of forty-five). Their complaints appear to have been reasonably effective with all of them reporting some reduction thereafter in the prevalence of such images. It could be argued that this was a phenomenon that could be readily reported due to its blatant, concrete and publicly demonstrable or provable nature. There is also a link between the status (in terms of rank and/or experience) of the woman and their willingness to complain:

Just after I was commissioned, you'd see a fair few posters of naked women around the place. I used to pretend they weren't there. Like, when you're the new Second Lieutenant you don't want to make waves. But now I've clamped down on it. No way would I tolerate it now.  
(Interview No. 29, 26/8/99)

Of the fifteen who reported encountering such images, and who expressed a reluctance, or fear of reporting or complaining to the military authorities, fourteen were private soldiers with only a short period of service, on a five year contract. Their responses varied but the following examples illustrate the general thrust:

There are a lot of those posters in the 'Q' stores. When we're going for our kit issue as recruits they were there. A year later they're still there. You'd be mad to complain. You'd be a laughing stock. You'd just get a name for yourself.  
(Interview No. 20, 28/7/99)

You're better off just to ignore them. They'd say, "if you can't hack a few pictures here, how could you possibly handle six months in the Leb. With the lads?"  
(Interview No. 27, 24/8/99)

As stated previously, there is no specific mention or reference to pornographic images in DFRs, SOPs or administrative instructions, nor are there any guidelines or policy documents, which explicitly prohibit their display.

- **Obscene Phone Calls and Letters.**

In the course of interviewing the women for this study, a total of twenty-six women reported having been subjected to obscene phone calls, or having received obscene/nuisance mail in the workplace. Twenty of the forty-three women interviewed at home indicated that they had had such an experience. Six of the seventeen women interviewed in the Lebanon indicated such an occurrence had taken place. Eight of the women reported receiving obscene phone calls whilst at their work extensions, or working on a switchboard in the signals cell. (One of the eight received such a call over a VHF radio whilst overseas). Ten of the women interviewed reported a combination of both obscene phone calls to their work extensions, and obscene letters to their work and home addresses. One of these ten reported being in receipt of "hate" mail, and "hate" calls of an obscene nature. Eight of the women interviewed reported having been in receipt of 'nuisance' mail and telephone calls. Curiously, all eight were officers. These letters and calls were all from senior officers and consisted mainly of inappropriate overtures and were not obscene in nature. Five of the women interviewed named one particular individual officer who would send them photographs of himself along with outline proposals of friendship with a view to relationship and possible marriage. Three of these women complained about this matter to their superiors. Two of these were subsequently paraded by their commanding officers and warned of the dire consequences of making such an allegation about a senior officer:

I've had poetry written, invitations to lunch, even phone calls to home from a senior officer. A senior officer with whom I had a direct working relationship. I was pestered by this guy for months. I couldn't believe it was happening. I did not experience any support from my C.O. in this regard. I was actually paraded by him after I approached him on the matter. He informed me that I should be aware that it is an offence under military law to make a false allegation against a superior. He told me to think long and hard about it. Now, lest there be any confusion here, this wasn't friendly advice, this was a threat. The army doesn't try to deal with these problems. It's more inclined to cover them up.  
(Interview No. 23, 10/8/99)

One of the women however got what she felt was a satisfactory response from her CO:

I got a lot of unwelcome advances from this senior officer. I got letters. I got photos he took of me when I was a cadet. Pictures he took of me at the Christmas dinner. It was bizarre. I said it to the CO. He said to keep the letters, and to keep a diary of any calls. He said that he'd put a stop to it immediately, and that if I wanted I could initiate an official complaint. At the time I was happy enough to just have it stop. And it did. He just ignores me at coffee now. Thank God.  
(Interview No. 7, 15/4/99)

The majority of the women who reported such incidents, however, were not happy with the army's response. In this example, the interviewee felt that her persistence in complaining about a form of harassment finally led to some action being taken – but that the manner in which her complaint was dealt with was unsatisfactory and left her with no redress:

I kept getting obscene phone calls on the beat. Now, it had to be one of the guys who knew my stint there. I tried leaving the phone off the hook, but it meant not being contactable by the BOS. This was going on for weeks. I complained to the C.S. I suggested we trace the calls. He said Signals said this was impossible. Now that's a bare faced lie. They just didn't want it (trouble) in the unit. I kicked up one hell of a racket about it and gave the C.S. an ultimatum. So, they said they'd put an LED display phone in. They never did. Oh, and surprise surprise, the calls stopped. I had no proof either. (To take the matter to higher authority)  
(Interview No. 25, 2/8/99)

- Sexual Assault in the Workplace

Of the forty-three women I interviewed at home, ten alleged that they had been the victims of a sexual assault in the workplace. Of the seventeen I interviewed overseas, two alleged they had been the victims of a sexual assault in the workplace. The nature of the alleged assaults ranged from touching, to allegations of attempted rape and rape. The allegations of assault were made by privates, NCOs and officers. Given that the PDF is such a small community, many of the incidents outlined to me would be “common knowledge” to many personnel in the form of rumour and hearsay. All of the women bar three appealed to me not to link their accounts to events to their biographical outline, as they did not wish their stories to be

identified with them. All of the women interviewed were critical of the manner in which the army handles such incidents:

What happened to me constituted a sex assault. One of my buddies witnessed the whole thing. I wouldn't have a chance against him. I've no faith in the system. No way.  
(Interview No. 28, 25/8/99)

One interviewee, a captain with seventeen years' service, summed up the situation as perceived by these women as follows:

I was assaulted. I complained. I did not get equitable treatment. Women in the PDF are not encouraged to complain about these issues. They are not encouraged to report on them. The army is more concerned about how it looks than if a woman gets raped. And if you do, the court sits in hell and Satan's the judge. I would categorically state, that if any woman in the army is harassed, assaulted or raped, inform the Garda Síochána, not the military police, otherwise you will not get justice.  
(Interview No. 33, 31/8/99)

## 6.5 Chapter summary

Section one of chapter six concentrates on international trends in military training with reference to integrated training for male and female personnel. The section highlighted studies in the United States and Britain, which show that integrated training raises the standards of performance of units with integrated units outperforming single sex units. (Holm 1993; DACOWITS, 1992; Brower, 1996) These studies, combined with the performance of women in combat in such conflicts as the Gulf War have led in the United States to the US National Defence Authorisation Act of 1993 which has repealed the 1948 statutory limitations on the assignment of women to many combat roles. The trend in the international military has been towards a greater integration in training and deployment of female personnel.

The focus of section two is on recruit training within the PDF. The existence of separate syllabi of training for male and female platoons is confirmed in the documentary analysis of the relevant training circulars. (TS INF 8/90; TS 10/90) These syllabi of training were used for the all female platoon recruited in 1990. This policy was changed in 1992 with the decision on the part of the military authorities to conduct fully integrated recruit training in integrated units. The section contains accounts of the experiences of such integrated training gained within the setting. Section three is concerned with cadet training within the PDF and traces the trend towards the full integration of such training. Section three mirrors section two

to the extent that both show evidence of a deliberate trend towards integrated training for female personnel in the Defence Forces.

Section three contains data on the integrated training environment of the PDF obtained at interview. Of the 60 women interviewed for the study, 8 were trained in the segregated training environment with separate syllabi of training for male and female personnel as described earlier in the chapter. All eight expressed the opinion that the training they received in this segregated environment was not up to standard. Of the 60 women interviewed, 50 were trained in a fully integrated environment with the same training opportunities and experiences as their male peers. All 50 of these women expressed the view that their training was as effective as that for their male colleagues. Forty-three of these women endorsed the integrated system of training advocating integrated training as appropriate for an integrated service. Seventeen women however, were very critical of the emphasis within this training, particularly in the area of physical training, which they felt was punitive and linked to a tendency toward bullying within the setting. Twenty-five of the women interviewed linked aspects of their training to bullying in the workplace. This linking of the training environment of the PDF to bullying in the workplace led to the discussion of bullying and harassment included in this chapter.

Section four incorporates the data obtained at interview on bullying and harassment in the PDF into this chapter. As stated earlier, certain recurring themes or 'categories' of bullying and harassment suggested themselves for inclusion within the chapter as a result of the data obtained at interview. Of the 60 women interviewed, 28 alleged that they had been exposed to inappropriate remarks on dress within the setting. These inappropriate remarks are alleged to have been offensive and often sexual in nature. Nineteen of the women reported that they had endured inappropriate remarks on their physical appearance within the setting. Some of the remarks were overtly sexual in nature and all were distressing to those concerned. Twenty eight of those women interviewed alleged being subjected to inappropriate remarks of a sexually explicit nature within the workplace setting. Twenty-six of the women identified the alleged perpetrators as being NCOs or officers of senior rank to themselves. Twenty-seven of the women interviewed reported being on the receiving end of unwanted advances within the workplace setting with twenty five allegedly involving NCOs and officers senior to the interviewees. Of these 25, only two felt that they were in a position to complain about the matter. Thirty four of those women interviewed complained of being exposed to sexually explicit and offensive graffiti within the workplace. Some of the women interviewed outlined examples of graffiti that was personalised and some outlined explicit and offensive material appearing on official unit noticeboards.

Forty-one of the 60 women interviewed reported having at one time or another being exposed to pornographic films in PDF work and living spaces. The women concerned identified guard-rooms, locations overseas, and the Cadet's Mess as common locations for such exposure. Forty-five of the women interviewed reported having been exposed to other forms of pornography within the workplace including pornographic posters, playing cards and screensavers.

Of the 60 women interviewed, 26 stated that they had received obscene letters and phone calls in the course of their service in the PDF. Twelve of the 60 women interviewed alleged that they had been victims of sexual assault. Of the 60 women interviewed, 59 complained of some form of harassment or bullying within the PDF. Of the 60 women interviewed, none had ever been consulted in any way or canvassed for their opinions on any aspect of PDF training or issues around bullying and harassment.

In terms of the army's grievance procedures, or system of redress, the interviewees were almost unanimous in their expression of non-confidence in existing structures. Many of the women interviewed spoke of a fear of complaining, particularly vulnerable women, i.e.: women of junior rank serving in a five year contract capacity. One interviewee, a sergeant with eighteen years' service expressed her concerns to me in this area and her fears for more vulnerable women:

You know, the individuals concerned don't want to rock the boat. They have to listen to inappropriate and lewd subjects in guard-rooms. They have to put up with remarks made about females, and about females' sex lives. These girls are too intimidated to complain.  
(Interview No. 2, 13/4/99)

When we complained we were punished. The company commander said it reflected poorly on us as potential officers. We did it out of desperation. They had no respect for us. The guys in the class had no respect. But especially the officers. We looked up to them. And it turns out, they've no respect either.  
(Interview No.13, (19/4/99)

On any complaints about sexual harassment, the army tends to do damage limitation and try to minimise the effect. Certainly they're not properly dealt with.  
(Interview No. 16, 21/4/99)

The data gathered in this chapter raises many questions about the training environment of the PDF which will be dealt with in the conclusion.

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