
Women in the armed forces ? changes over time

May 29, 2015 - 15:35 - Source:[Read the full story at the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment \(FFI\)](#) [1]

New results from FFI age cohort studies are now available in English.

Since April 2008, the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (FFI) has carried out a research project amongst enrolled cohorts. An important goal has been to identify the necessary measures to increase the share of women in the Norwegian Armed Forces.

New methods used

Over the last two years the project has carried out a large quantitative time series analysis amongst 2000 enrolled soldiers of the Brigade Nord and the Norwegian Special Command Forces. The study investigates the different factors that determine the change in motivation, well-being, interaction, basic values, and efficiency amongst the soldiers over time. This research makes use of a set of new methods in behavioural economics.

“Research on age cohorts will therefore continue to be an important strategic tool in the Armed Forces’ personnel development”, says Frank Brundtland Steder, Principal Scientist at FFI and leader of the research team.

“By attending large conferences and conventions, often with the top political and defence leadership present, this project has contributed to greater understanding and knowledge of strategic issues regarding the personnel recruitment and selection process, and how to retain the personnel – women in particular – in the Armed Forces”, explains Steder.

Sharing Norway’s experiences

The international demand for Norway’s experiences in this field has gradually and noticeably increased, and the book *Military Women – The Achilles Heel in Defence Politics?* is now available. The findings from the first five years of FFI’s project amongst enrolled cohorts were published in the Norwegian anthology *Militære kvinner – Forsvarets akilleshæl?* in March 2013.

“The English version of the anthology will be used actively in the international effort to increase the share of women in the Armed Forces worldwide. FFI takes part in several international working groups where the issues discussed in this book are central. The Norwegian Defence Ministry is pleased to present FFI’s effort to their international collaborators – recently to a group of representatives from South Korea”, says Steder.

Part of long term planning


The project’s effort, reflected in the anthology, is also put to use in the Norwegian Armed Forces’ long term planning work. At present FFI is an active participant in the Chief of Defence’s Official Advisory Study on

the Future of the Norwegian Armed Forces, in the Expert Commission on Norwegian Security and Defence Policy and the Conscription Advisory Committee.

“The Expert Commission investigates the prerequisites to solve the most demanding challenges connected to security policy and war, while the Conscription Advisory Committee is concerned with questions connected to how the Armed Forces should utilise the general conscription duty – for the best of the Armed Forces and the civilian society – given the changing tasks and needs of the Armed Forces”, explains Steder.

The findings from the project will be important to the Conscription Advisory Committee’s evaluation of the various consequences of female conscription.

[Read the full story at the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment \(FFI\) \[1\]](#)

 [Admiral Louise Kathrine Dedichen \(in the middle\) is the first woman in Norway who is appointed officer, and she is one of the three female officers in the Armed Forces with the highest degree. \(Photo: FFI\) \[2\]](#)

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