

WOMEN IN THE CZECHOSLOVAK ARMED FORCES,  
1945-1989

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After the Second World War, there was debate about whether women should continue to be permitted to serve in the Czechoslovak armed forces or whether the military sphere should be reserved for men. The decision to allow women to join the army was not exclusively based on ideological assumptions by the communists ruling after 1948, however: Pragmatic reasons relating to the needs and interests of the military as well as of the state as a whole likewise played a role.

This article deals with women in the Czechoslovak armed forces between 1945 and 1989. After laying out the legal foundations for women serving in the military,

it investigates the attitude towards female soldiers adopted by the army leadership and whether it changed over time. A particular focus lies on the first half of the 1960s, when the recruitment of women was temporarily suspended. Subsequently, the motivations for women to sign up for army service are examined, and finally, using images of motherhood and women in military uniforms, the question of the femininity of female soldiers is discussed.