

# Military Feminine Personal Nouns: A Corpus-Based Update to the Web Dictionary of Ukrainian Feminine Personal Nouns

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## Abstract

The paper investigates hundreds of newly coined feminine personal nouns from the military sphere and how corpus data can be used for their publication in online dictionaries. Particular attention is paid to the *Web Dictionary of Ukrainian Feminine Personal Nouns* (WDF) (2022, published on r2u.org.ua) and the *Alphabet of Feminine Personal Nouns*, as well as their coverage of these lexical items in comparison with other dictionaries. The use of the *General Regionally Annotated Corpus of Ukrainian* (GRAC) in the selection of words, compilation of the dictionary entries and the frequency list of said words are presented. Due to semantic analysis, five lexico-semantic groups of military feminine terms are determined. For updating the WDF, the author argues for the necessity of adding military subject labels to three of them. Using quantitative data from the corpus GRAC, a decision about the arrangement and quality of derivational alternatives among military feminine terms is drawn. These findings have affirmed the necessity to combine the approaches of traditional lexicography with the corpus-based ones, as well as to balance description with prescription.

**Keywords:** Military feminine personal noun, Web Dictionary of Ukrainian Feminine

Personal Nouns (WDF), r2u.org.ua, General Regionally Annotated Corpus of Ukrainian, GRAC, dictionary entry, subject labels

## 1. Introduction

Feminine personal nouns, also known as feminine terms, are a vibrant and growing segment of the Ukrainian lexicon. Their dynamic expansion through the derivation of new words has attracted the attention of linguists, including O. Synchak (2022), N. Kostusiak et al. (2020), V. Machek (2020), and N. Klymenko (2019). The linguists primarily investigate feminine terms by examining press articles (Kravets, 2021; Styshov, 2020; Navalna, 2017), works of fiction (Zayets, 2020; Brus, 2017-2018; Kaidash, 2017), and dictionary entries (Synchak & Starko, 2022; Tomilenko, 2021; Puzyrenko, 2012). Their research focuses on revealing the derivational models used (Neliuba, 2011; Semeniuk, 2000), studying the historical development of these terms (Brus, 2019), and exploring the impact of socio-cultural factors on their modern usage (Arkhanhelska, 2019).

Feminine personal nouns are primarily formed by adding a suffix to a masculine form to indicate the female gender. These terms encompass a wide range of female professions, positions, activities, actions, beliefs, community affiliations, places of residence, and other characteristics possessed by women. The usage of feminine terms

in texts has gradually become the subject of corpus-based studies in different languages (Machek, 2022; Koster, 2020; Elmiger, 2009). Researchers have also started to apply corpus data to study the system of Ukrainian feminine personal nouns (Starko & Synchak, 2023; Synchak & Starko, 2022).

One of the earliest studies on Ukrainian feminine personal nouns was carried out by I. Feketa (1968), who classified them into lexico-semantic groups. Recently, M. Brus (2019) has also applied the principle of thematic grouping of feminine terms in her monograph, complementing it with derivational and functional analysis, as well as diachronic and synchronic approaches. However, few researchers have examined the functioning of feminine terms within thematic groups or attempted to define the most dynamic group of feminine derivatives.

Using corpus data over the last 20 years, V. Starko and O. Synchak (2023) argue that the dynamics of using feminine terms in media texts correspond to their thematic groups. Thus, feminine terms from sports and military spheres have different dynamics of usage in the press. If sports feminine terms are produced dynamically throughout a 20-year term (with slight peaks during periods of championships or Olympics), then the number of women's titles in the military sector is growing dramatically, first, after Russia's armed attack on the territory of Ukraine in 2014 and the annexation of Crimea, and especially – after the full-scale invasion of February 24, 2022 (Starko & Synchak, 2023).

The focus of this study is on military feminine terms, which predominantly refer to women serving in the military (*генералка* '(female) general', *снайперка* '(female) sniper' etc.). However, it also includes women involved in logistics (*волонтерка* '(female) volunteer') or non-combat roles (*парамедикиня* '(female) paramedic' etc.). In recognizing the constant danger faced by these women operating in the military amidst war, we utilize military feminine personal nouns to acknowledge their contributions in this specific context. To delve into the examination of military feminine terms, an article by O. Mykhailova and T. Spilnyk (2019) and a brief passage in T. Kravets's dissertation (2019, pp. 154-155) are dedicated to this subject.

The Ukrainian media is actively creating new terms to depict the actions of female soldiers, while simultaneously developing nuanced meanings (Abetka feminityviv, 2022). These processes are happening at such a rapid pace that traditional dictionaries struggle to keep up. Instead, electronic dictionaries with the means of corpus data devise innovative methods of describing feminine personal nouns in dictionary entries.

## **2. Military feminine terms in the scope of online dictionaries**

The *Web Dictionary of Ukrainian Feminine Personal Nouns* (WDUF in what follows) is a corpus-based dictionary. It was compiled by Olena Synchak, with academic editing by Hanna Dydyk-Meush and academic consultation by Vasyl Starko

(WDF, 2022). The dictionary was published on the r2u.org.ua dictionary portal in early 2022. WDF includes approximately 2,000 female terms, with a particular emphasis on derivational variations such as *міністерка* – *міністриня* – *міністреса* meaning ‘(female) minister’. The dictionary provides full definitions, supplies illustrations from a GRAC corpus, and lists other dictionaries that register the feminine noun in question (Synchak & Starko, 2022). The corpus data is enhanced with input from a language panel and recommendations from the compiler. Because of the various methods used to collect and present linguistic data, this resource could be a robust foundation for the standardization of feminine personal nouns in the Ukrainian language (Synchak, 2022).

Military feminine personal nouns make up 5% of the total number of words in the WDF, that includes 76 military terms: *військовослужбовиця* ‘servicewoman’, *лейтенантка* ‘(female) lieutenant’, *воїнка* ‘(female) warrior’, *генералка* ‘(female) general’, *адміралка* ‘(female) admiral’, and others. Most of these words are not registered in explanatory dictionaries of the Ukrainian language, but they have made it into the WDF thanks to usage data discovered in the GRAC corpus (Shvedova et al., 2023) and Google search engine. Entries with derivational variants are nested (see Fig. 1 below), meaning that the definitions and illustrations are provided for each feminine form. All derivational alternatives are presented on an equal basis in order to assist readers in selecting the most appropriate feminine term.

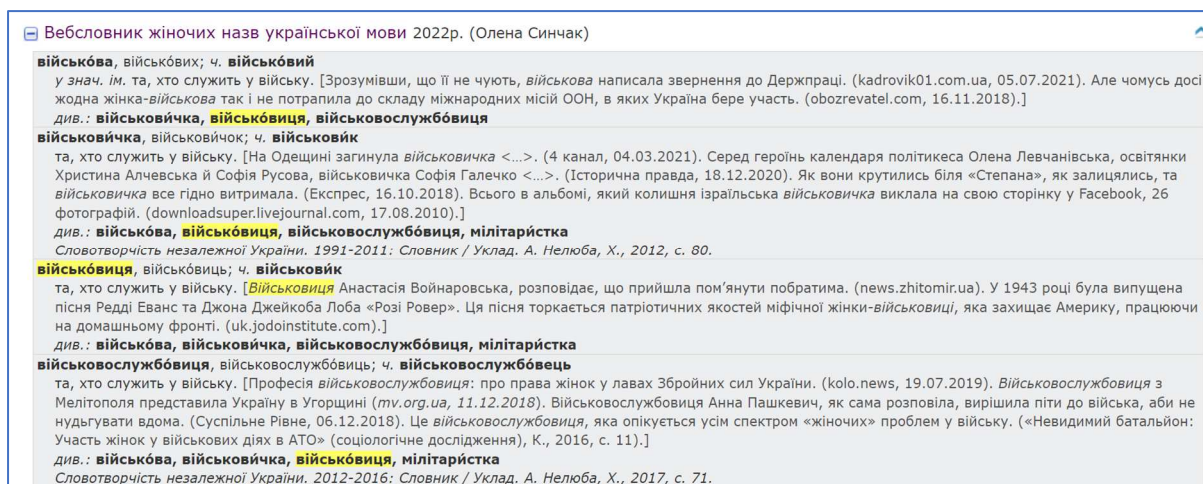


Figure 1: Derivational alternatives in the WDF (r2u.org.ua)

The online dictionary *Alphabet of Feminine Personal Nouns* (‘Alphabet’ in what follows) was created for the needs of the journalistic community, which highlights the war of Russia against Ukraine (Abetka femininityviv, 2022). It consists of 106 lexical items, among which 76 titles were taken from the WDF (r2u.org.ua, Lviv, 2022), and the remaining 30 were elaborated specifically for ‘Behind the Gender’ project, aimed at fair representation of women and men in Ukrainian media.

Despite the fact that the WDUF served as the inspiration for the ‘Alphabet’ dictionary entry, the lexicographic description of feminine terms in the latter has been slightly condensed (Fig. 2). First, only meanings associated with the military, a woman's participation in the war, or her new status as a result of the war are provided in the case of words with several meanings. Second, the dictionary only includes one word, such as *парамедиця* ‘(female) paramedic’, with a reference to other derivational alternatives included in the WDUF if one of the multiple alternative names is already well-known or has advantages over the others. However, if all derivational variants are equal (*миротвориця* // *миротворка* ‘(female) peacemaker’) or none of them has been established so far (*табірниця* // *таборянка* ‘(female) camper’), then all the options are given in the dictionary.

There are usage notes in the ‘Alphabet’ that are formed as a ‘Interesting to know’ section after certain entries, just like the ‘Recommendations’ section of the WDUF. In this section, attention is focused on the nuances of meanings, spelling variants or other aspects of using certain feminine terms in the military sphere. Feminine personal nouns unregistered in the WDUF are specially described for the project ‘Behind the Gender’, but later they will be added to the former.

- **гранатомётниця, гранатометниця; ч. гранатомётник**

Військова, яка стріляє з гранатомета, метає гранати. — Хто, як не ми? Історія *гранатометниці* та радіотелефоністки Сови, яка з 2014 в лавах ЗСУ (vikna.tv, 08.10.2022). *Гранатометницю* з Буковини нагородили Хрестом бойових заслуг (zahid.espresso.tv, 31.07.2022). Військовослужбовиця Збройних Сил України з позивним «Натаха» служить *гранатометницею* на передовій, неподалік Кримського. (Суспільне Донбас, 14.10.2021).

Figure 2: A dictionary entry in the ‘Alphabet of Feminine Personal Nouns’ (behindthenews.ua)

The primary distinction between these two dictionaries is revealed in the functional capabilities of the websites where they are hosted. If the *r2u.org.ua* lexicographic platform enables a full-text search (to search for feminine forms, you need to select the WDUF among other dictionaries on the platform), then on the *behindthenews.ua* website a search is only available by letters of the alphabet.

### 3. Method and material

The main aim of this study is to collect military feminine personal nouns in order to determine the frequency of their use in the corpus and to analyze changes in their semantics. By applying corpus data, I look for the best way to present military feminine terms in the updated version of the WDUF. For this purpose, 134 military

feminine titles are being analyzed. They were chosen based on the WDUF (76 titles) and the ‘Alphabet’ (30 titles) registries, and they were reinforced by those selected from the GRAC-16's unlemmatized military feminine personal nouns (28 titles). Thus, all the sources utilized in this paper are freely accessible.

GRAC is made up of a wide range of sources and texts and includes the most extensive and detailed metadata (Shvedova et al., 2023). The latest version 16 has recently been released, encompassing the period from 1816 up until 2022. Almost 1.9 billion tokens, or 1.5 billion words, make up the corpus as a whole. Mass media texts have been significantly increased in the most recent version of the corpus, especially for the years 2021–2022. There are many more media outlets now, and some have archives dating back 10–15 years. This makes GRAC a crucial tool for studies involving chronology (Starko & Synchak, 2023). This expansion of the corpus is crucial for the study of the feminine nouns in question since it enables to observe their usage as thoroughly as possible.

GRAC allows the creation of search queries through the use of the Corpus Query Language (CQL), which enables the combination of morphological and semantic tags (Starko & Synchak, 2023). For example, it is possible to search for feminine terms by utilizing the CQL query according to the most productive suffixes, such as *-к(а)*, *-иц(я)*, *-ин(я)*:

```
[tag="noun:anim.*"&lemma=".*ка"]  
[tag="noun:anim.*"&lemma=".*иц(я)"]  
[tag="noun:anim.*"&lemma=".*ин(я)"]
```

Using these CQL queries, unlemmatized feminine lexical items in GRAC-16 were identified and assigned the POS tag “unknown” through a semi-automatic approach. Lexical items were manually inspected and extracted from the list, confirming their usage in the corpus as references to women. This process identified over 2,000 feminine derivatives (more details are provided in: Starko & Synchak, 2023). From this list, 28 military feminine terms were selected through manual inspection.

These extracted from GRAC-16 new military feminine titles were complemented by those extracted from the WDUF and the ‘Alphabet’ registries, and a list of the frequencies of their use in corpus was created in decreasing order (Fig. 3). Although the relative frequency indicators are also provided, the order of the terms in said list is determined by their absolute frequency indications. In some cases, irrelevant contexts had to be seeded out manually. For example, for *капітанка* ‘(female) captain’. GRAC showed 85 contexts, which, in addition to the name of the woman, also contained the title of the headdress and the village's name. After the elimination of excessive uses, the number of contexts was reduced to 57.

The contexts for unlemmatized words were found through CQL queries for regular expressions (more details are provided in: Starko & Synchak, 2023):

[word=".\*демінер(ка|ку|кою|ки|ок|ками|кам)"] – search for words with suffix к(а);  
 [word=".\*мінометниц(я|ю|єю|і|ь|ями|ям)"] – search for words with suffix -иц(я).

▼	слово ▼	▼	абсолют ▼	відносі ▼	
1	героїня		25279	13,48	‘heroine’
2	захисниця		9245	4,93	‘(female) defendant’
3	волонтерка		8441	4,5	‘(female) volunteer’
4	льотчиця		5835	3,11	‘airwoman’
5	заручниця		1862	0,99	‘(female) hostage’
6	полонянка		1754	0,94	‘bondswoman’
7	партизанка		1190	0,64	‘(female) partisan’
8	військовослужбовиц		711	0,38	‘servicewoman’
9	ветеранка		538	0,29	‘(female) veteran’
10	медикиня		508	0,27	‘(female) medic’
11	парамедикиня		460	0,25	‘(female) paramedic’
12	солдатка		425	0,23	‘(female) soldier’
13	снайперка		374	0,2	‘(female) sniper’
14	медичка		316	0,17	‘(female) medic’
15	войовниця		310	0,17	‘warrior woman’
16	офіцерка		267	0,14	‘(female) officer’
17	радистка		239	0,13	‘radiowoman’

Figure 3: Frequency list of military feminine personal nouns (with absolute and relative frequency indicators)

Based on the corpus data, it is possible to compare the frequency of a word’s usage and to track its time dynamics. For instance, this chart (Fig. 4) was created using the relative frequency indicators in news texts in GRAC corpus for the period 2000–2022. It represents the usage dynamics of the nouns *військовослужбовиця* ‘servicewoman’ and *солдатка* ‘(female) soldier’. The chart indicates that the frequency of use of the noun *солдатка*, despite minor peaks in 2004 and 2017, is quite low. However, since 2015, the usage of the noun *військовослужбовиця* has rapidly increased, eventually surpassing the usage of the lexeme *солдатка*.

The rapid increase in the frequency of the noun *військовослужбовиця* is obviously related to the higher involvement of Ukrainian women in military operations brought on by Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2014 and the media's generally increased focus on women's involvement in the war. However, now and later the unequal coverage of the GRAC corpus throughout the years should also be taken into consideration.

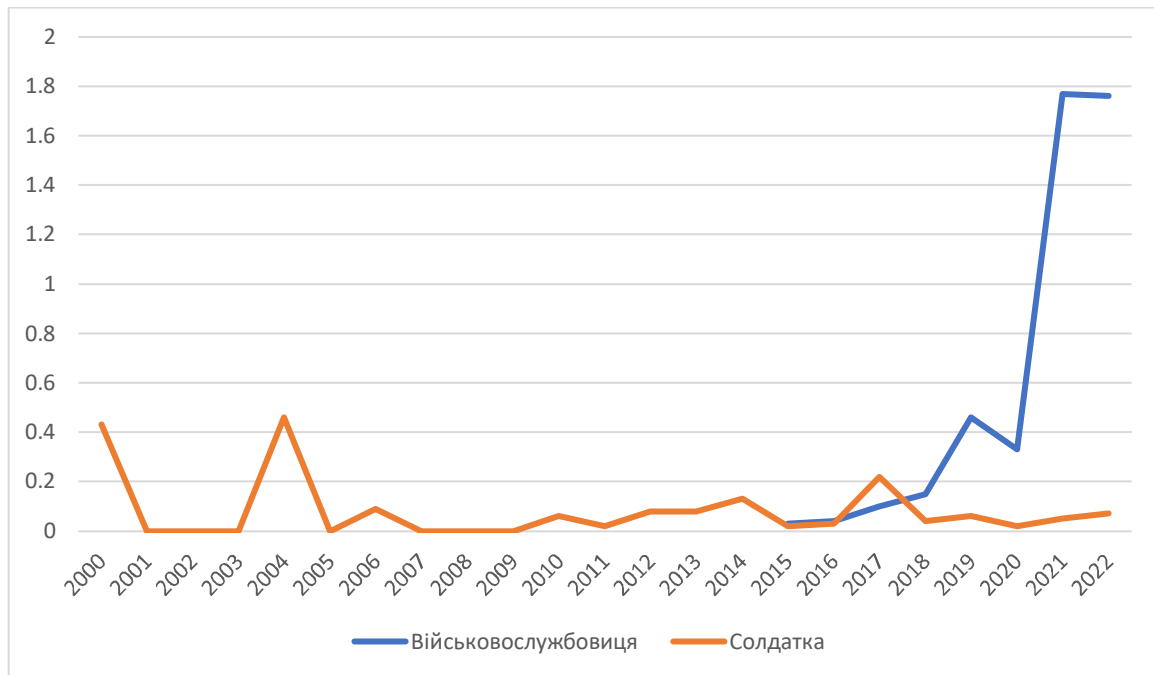


Figure 4: The dynamics of Ukrainian words referring to a female soldier (orange) and servicewoman (blue) in news texts.

In addition, the GRAC corpus provides authentic illustrations for dictionary entries. Thus, the meanings of military feminine terms will be compared based on examples from corpus and from the explanatory dictionaries. Due to this comparison, I hope to determine which words have changed their meaning in the setting of war, and which have lost their stylistic color. Based on this, new dictionary entries for the WDUF will be created.

#### 4. Experiment

As a compiler of the WDUF, the idea of using the corpus to investigate the frequency and dynamics of word usage drives me to explore, if it is worthwhile to display quantitative data from the corpus in its updated edition. Further information is included in the WDUF to describe derivational variants of feminine personal nouns: results of the language panel and author's recommendations. It seems that quantitative data could substantially supplement the author's argument in the recommendations.

Military feminine personal nouns have a lot of derivational variants (Fig. 5), so their



description in the WDUF should be accompanied with recommendations. Could the quantitative data from corpus provide insight into the most advantageous derivational variant? Can high frequency of word usage in the corpus give grounds to recommend one variant among others? Is it worth recommending to use a word created according to a better model despite being not the most frequent?

1. героїня – 13,48	геройка – 0,05	‘heroine’
2. льотчиця – 3, 11	летунка – 0,01	‘airwoman’
3. військовослужбовиця – 0,38	військовослужбовка – 0,01	‘servicewoman’
4. парамедикиня – 0,15	парамедичка – 0,01 парамедиця – 0	‘(female) paramedic’
5. (бойова) медициня – 0,27	(бойова) медичка – 0,17	‘combat (female) medic’
6. доброволиця – 0,05	доброволка – 0,01	‘(female) volunteer’
7. навідниця – 0,05	наводчиця – 0,01	‘(female) aimer’
8. піхотинка – 0,01	піхотиниця – 0,01	‘infantrywoman’
9. миротвориця – 0,01	миротворка – 0	‘(female) peacemaker’
10. ухилиянтка – 0,01	ухильниця – 0	‘a woman who evades military service’

Figure 5: Derivational variants of military feminine terms (with relative frequency indicators from GRAK-16)

The majority of the data in Figure 5 supports a quantitative approach. The most frequent variants are created according to better derivational models than less frequent words, for instance, the following pairs: *військовослужбовиця* – *військовослужбовка* ‘servicewoman’, *бойова медициня* – *медичка* ‘combat (female) medic’, *доброволиця* – *доброволка* ‘(female) volunteer’, *піхотинка* – *піхотиниця* ‘infantrywoman’, *миротвориця* – *миротворка* ‘(female) peacekeeper’, *ухилиянтка* – *ухильниця* ‘a woman who evades military service’ etc. Also, the second term in the pair *навідниця* – *наводчиця* ‘(female) aimer’ appears as a result of Russification language policy, and it gains low frequency in corpus. But in the pair *льотчиця* – *летунка* ‘airwoman’ the russified term predominates based on frequency of usage. Nevertheless, there are words, the use of which can be justified not so much by quantitative indicators, as by qualitative characteristics. For example, in the triad *парамедикиня* – *парамедичка* – *парамедиця* ‘(female) paramedic’, I prefer the latter term, which despite having no contexts of use in the corpus, occurs in several printed sources, and fits the principle of language economy best. A more detailed argument in favor of this title can be found in the corresponding article of the WDUF.



A twenty-year study of use dynamics for the nouns *медикиня* – *медичка* ‘(female) medic’ in news texts reveals an interesting trend (Fig. 6). From 2019, when the revised Ukrainian Orthography established rules on the creation of feminine personal nouns (Tomilenko, 2021, p. 39), people start using both terms in parallel. However, up to 2018, only the word *медичка* was used. But by 2022 the word *медикиня* acquires an unprecedented frequency in corpus texts. This testifies that people need guidance in feminization—a system of orthography with clear derivational rules. But dictionaries also play a tremendous role in the codification of feminine personal nouns.

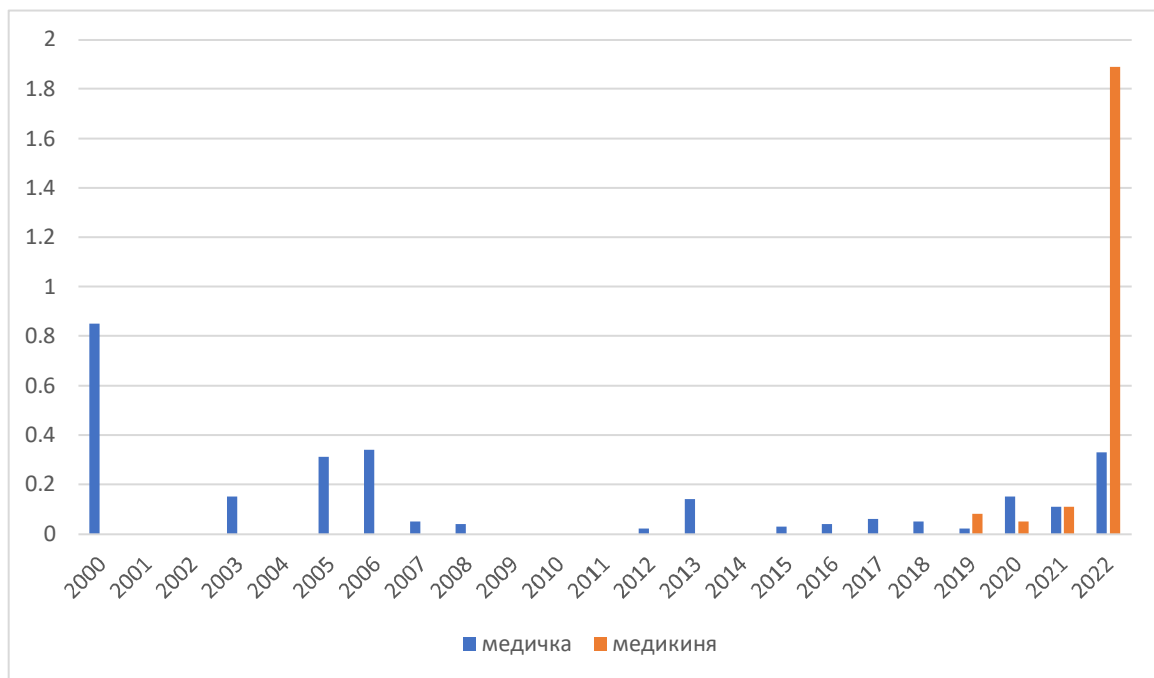


Figure 6: The dynamics of Ukrainian words referring to a female medic

After semantic analysis of the military feminine terms, we can identify five lexico-semantic groups (see Appendix I):

1. Names of women by military rank
2. Names of women according to action or function performed (military *nomen agentis*)
3. Names of women belonging to a military or other group
4. Names of women by characteristics and achieved results
5. Names of women from the enemy side.

On the list of feminine military titles, 4.5% of the words have both military and sporting meanings, including *снайперка* ‘(female) sniper’, *бійчиня* ‘(female) fighter’, *капітанка* ‘(female) captain’, *стрільчиня* ‘(female) shooter’, *резервістка* ‘(female) reservist’. The same ‘military’ in these words creates the semantic core, followed by

the semes ‘fleet’ or ‘police’, depending on the context. The seme ‘sport’ is located closer to the periphery, where additional semes (such as ‘organized group’ – *капітанка* or ‘struggle for something’ – *бійчиня*) are placed (Fig. 7).

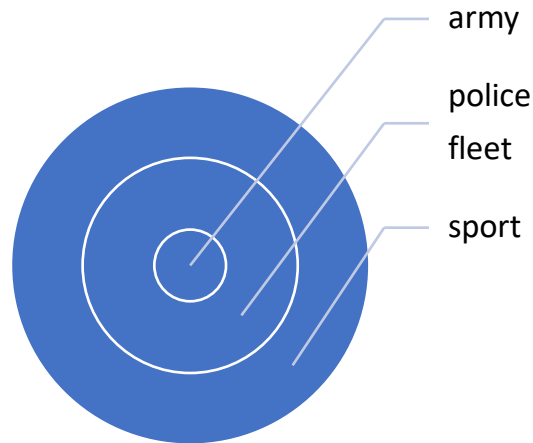


Figure 7: Semantic structure of feminine terms with ambiguous meanings ‘army + sport’

## 5. Results

This study has proved that the GRAK-16 is becoming a more reliable source for the study of feminine nouns in question than its earlier iterations. In particular, the updated GRAC-16 managed to find contexts for 84% of titles (113 words) from the list, only for 16% of the nouns (21 words) contexts were found in a Google search.

The analyzed material allows to clarify the definition of military feminine terms, which includes nominations used in reference to: 1. a woman directly participating in military actions (*сержантка* ‘(female) sergeant’, *танкістка* ‘tankwoman’ etc.); 2. a woman who serves in the supply and assistance link of the army (*волонтерка* ‘(female) volunteer’, *парамедиця* ‘(female) paramedic’ etc.); and 3. a woman involved in or affected by war (*партизанка* ‘(female) partisan’, *заручниця* ‘hostage’ etc). Most of the terms (97%) refer to Ukrainian women and only 3% denote women engaged in the war from the Russian side: *гауляйтерка* ‘(female) gauleiter’, *окупантка* ‘(female) occupant’, *ополченка* ‘(female) member of a pro-Russian militia or paramilitary group’, *бойовичка* ‘(female) combatant fighting in the side of the Russian occupation’.

The most frequent feminine personal nouns representing women's active participation in the military and at war were identified based on frequency (Fig. 3). Among the top 10 are the words *героїня* ‘heroine’, *захисниця* ‘(female) defender’, *волонтерка* ‘(female) volunteer’, *льотчиця* ‘airwoman’, *заручниця* ‘(female) hostage’, *полонянка* ‘bondswoman’, *партизанка* ‘(female) partisan’, *військовослужбовиця* ‘servicewoman’, *ветеранка* ‘(female) veteran’, *бойова медикиня* ‘combat (female) medic’. Although

*героїня* and *захисниця* have a long history, their usage in war-related contexts is relatively new. Nouns that depict the Ukrainian woman as a social actor who took on the difficulties of war, rather than, much less frequently, as a victim of war (*заручниця* ‘(female) hostage’, *polonianka* ‘bondswoman’), predominate in the examined list.

Frequency indications are crucial for lexicographic description in the WDUF, they are particularly important for arranging derivational variants and providing usage notes. Thus, it seems reasonable to include information about a word's usage frequency from corpus texts to support the sleeker derivational variant. In this way quantitative data from the corpus can be utilised for supporting the compiler's argumentation.

In addition, military feminine personal nouns have been tested for their recognition in the explanatory dictionaries: SUM-11 (1970-1980) and SUM-20 (2015-2023). As it turned out, barely a third (32.6%) of the 134 terms have a history dating back a century, and these titles are largely represented in explanatory dictionaries (e.g., *автоматниця* ‘(female) sub-machine gunner,’ *воячка* ‘virago,’ *зв'язкова* ‘signalwoman,’ *зенітниця* ‘(female) antiaircrafter,’ *кулеметниця* ‘(female) machine-gunner,’ *фронтівичка* ‘frontwoman,’ etc.).

However, the majority of the military feminine terms analyzed (67.4%) were developed between 2014 and 2022 and are not registered in monolingual Ukrainian dictionaries: *адміралка* ‘female admiral,’ *аеророзвідниця* ‘(female) air-scout,’ *армійка* ‘army woman,’ *військовослужбовиця* ‘servicewoman,’ *мінерка* ‘(female) miner,’ *миротворка* ‘female peacemaker,’ *снайперка* ‘(female) sniper,’ *танкістка* ‘tankwoman,’ etc. This once again proves that feminine terms do not arise as a tribute to fashion, but as a language system's response to social demands (Vplyv suspilnykh zmin, 2017, pp. 382). Since there was a need to name a woman as an active participant in the war, language actively provides such an opportunity.

Among these new coined terms, the feminine titles denoting military ranks, such as *полковниця* ‘(female) colonel’ and *офіцерка* ‘(female) officer’, are considered the fundamental vocabulary for news reports, however they are still uncommon in Ukrainian official military discourse.

Summarizing the lexico-semantic grouping (Fig. 8), we can acknowledge that the quantitatively largest group of military feminine personal nouns refers to women by the action or function they perform in the military (54%). The second largest group consists of names of women belonging to a military or other group (25%). The third group consists of names that refer to women by their military rank (12%).

It is suggested that not all selected feminine terms (see Appendix I) can be accompanied with a military subject label in the WDUF. In fact, this label can mostly be applied to the first three groups, including also nouns *ополченка*,

*бойовичка* from the fifth group. Except few examples, feminine terms from the last two groups primarily refer to women’s behavior or achieved results, not exclusively in a war context. For example, words like *героїня* ‘heroine’ or *звитяжниця* ‘female conqueror’ are predominantly used in the domains of arts or sports. While these words develop new meanings primarily in the context of war, their usage extends to much broader settings. Other words, like *ухилянтка* // *ухильниця* ‘woman who evades military service’, have a negative connotation as they express the act of avoiding military duty. Consequently, they also cannot be accompanied by a military subject label.

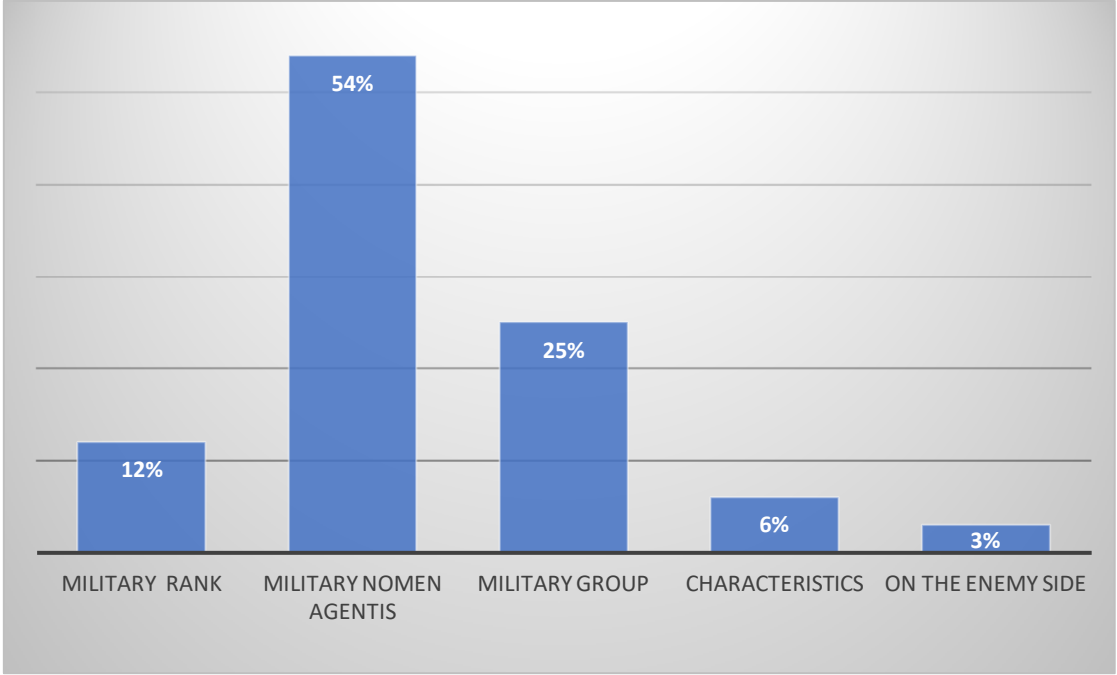


Figure 8: Lexico-semantic groups of military feminine personal nouns

### 6. Discussion

During one of the most turbulent periods in Ukraine’s modern history, Ukrainian women construct their own subjectivity and agency by taking part in humanitarian, volunteer, and military missions. As of 2022, the proportion of women serving in the Ukrainian military is 22%, which is one of the highest rates compared to other European nations. Women in Ukraine are standing guard for democratic changes as they defend the state’s integrity at the cost of their own lives.

To investigate the evolution of military feminine personal nouns, their definitions from recent dictionaries (WDUF and Alphabet), as well as explanatory dictionaries SUM-11 and SUM-20, were compared with their new contextual usage in GRAK-16. This analysis revealed a shift in meanings and nuances that occurred in several feminine terms following Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022.

Semantic change is evident, for example, in the word *героїня* ‘heroine’. In addition to the hitherto common meaning of “woman who distinguished herself in something”, journalistic texts dated 2022 (GRAK-16) have developed the meanings of “woman who performed a heroic deed” and “a woman outstanding in her abilities and activities, who shows courage, dedication and bravery in work and battle.” (Fig. 9).

<p><b>ГЕРОЇНЯ</b> [heroyinia] ‘heroine’</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. a woman outstanding in her abilities and activities, who shows courage, dedication and bravery in work and battle. – <i>Heroyi ta heroyini ZSU ne vidpuskaiut vorohiv bez boiu. (24 kanal, 2022). Vin podiakuvav kozhnomu heroievi ta heroini, yaki trymaiut oboronu Ukrainy vid tsoho teroru. (24 kanal, 2022). Heroi ta heroini shchodnia vmyraiut za nashu svobodu y sered nykh – zovsim yuni voiny, taki yak Oleksandra Anikieva. (24 kanal, 2022). Spodivaiemos, shcho naiblyzhchym chasom “Ptashka” povernetsia razom iz inshymy ukrainskymy heroiniamy. (www.0352.ua, Ternopil, 2022).</i> // <b>Slava heroyam i heroyiniam!</b> – one of the versions of the response to the greeting “Glory to Ukraine!”; the slogan of the struggle for the independence of Ukraine.</li> <li>2. woman who performed a heroic deed, distinguished herself in something. – <i>Mariupolskyi fotohraf naholosyv, shcho matir khlopchyka – heroinia, adzhe vriatuvala svoikh ditei. (24 kanal, 2022). Ne heroinia ya, ale chyniu tak, yak vchynyla b usiaka normalna zhinka &lt;...&gt;. (O. Pylypenko «Normalni liudy abo Dekameron staroi divy», 2011).</i></li> </ol>
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Figure 9: Example of a dictionary entry in the update to the WDUF

In 2022, in news texts, the name *героїнка* ‘heroine’ become widespread to denote a woman who shows courage and dedication either in battle or in fighting the enemy in the rear. Thus, in the first meaning, this word coincides with the meaning of the word *героїня* ‘heroine’, but in the second meaning, it contains the additional seme ‘fearless’ (Fig. 10).

<p><b>ГЕРОЇНКА</b> [heroyka] ‘heroine’</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. a woman outstanding in her abilities and activities, who shows courage, dedication and bravery in work and battle. – <i>My ne vtomymosia diakuvaty nashym vidvazhnym heroyam i heroykam, yaki shchodnia boroniat i zvilniaiut nashu Ukrainu vid okupanta. (Svoi.City, 2022). Pered vitanniamy khvylynoiu movchannia vshanuvaly pamiat vsikh heroiv ta heroyok, yaki zahynuly, zakhyshchaiuchy Ukrainu vid voroha. (Biliaivka.City, 2022). 84 riatuvalnyky, a zaraz spravzhni heroyi ta heroyky, buly zmusheni</i></li> </ol>
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	<p><i>vyzhyvaty pid prytsilom putinskykh voiak bilshe misiatsia. (Apostrof, 2022).</i></p> <p>// <b>Heroyka Ukrayiny</b> – the highest honorary title for exceptional services to the state and people of Ukraine. – <i>Prochytaye yiyi tvir Heroyka Ukrayiny, narodna artystka Ada Rohovtseva. (24 kanal, 2022).</i></p> <p>2. fearless woman who performed a heroic deed. – <i>Heroyka vykhodyla do vorohiv ta rakhuvala vorozhu tekhniku. (24 kanal, 2022). Pid chas aktyvnykh boiovykh dii u Volnovasi Iryna Romanchenko pokazala sebe yak spravzhnia heroyka, khocha sama zhinka sebe takoiu ne vvazhaie. (Volnovakha.City, 2022).</i></p>
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Figure 10: Example of a dictionary entry in the update to the WDF

A new definition of the term **захисниця** ‘(female) defender’ emerges as well, one that explanatory dictionaries have not yet recognized: ‘woman who protects the residents of her country, maintains the territorial integrity of her state’ (Fig. 11). The rest of the meanings of this term coincide with the definitions in dictionaries.

<p><b>ЗАХИСНИЦЯ</b> [zakhysnytsia] ‘(female) defender’</p>	<p>1. woman who protects the citizens of her country, protects the territorial integrity of her state. – <i>Boroniachy Ukrainu vid rosiiskoho vtorhnennia, zahynula zakhysnytsia Ukrainy Mariana «Kvitka». (Ukrainskyi prostir, 2022). Ta vona zalyshylas, prosyla ne zhality yii, bo vona zakhysnytsia ta ukrainka, yaka vykonuie svii oboviazok — riatuie pobratymiv ta tsyvilnykh. (Ukrainskyi prostir, 2022). Nekhai kozhen ukrainskyi zakhysnyk ta kozhna zakhysnytsia povernutsia dodomu, do svoikh ridnykh ta blyzkykh! (www.0352.ua, Ternopil, 2022). Zakhysnytsia Ukrainy z 26 okremoi artyleriiskoi bryhady ranishe pratsiuvala vchytelkoiu istorii ta vykladala do 2016 roku. (www.0352.ua, Ternopil, 2022).</i></p> <p>// <b>Den zakhysnykiv i zakhysnyts Ukrayiny</b> – the national holiday of Ukraine, which is celebrated on October 14. – <i>4 lypnia 2021 roku Verkhovna Rada pereimenuvala sviato na “Den zakhysnykiv i zakhysnyts Ukrainy”. (www.0352.ua, Ternopil, 2022).</i></p>
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Figure 11: Example of a dictionary entry in the update to the WDF

Another difference appears on the semantic level of the words **солдатка** ‘(female) soldier’, **полковниця** ‘(female) colonel’, **підполковниця** ‘(female) lieutenant-colonel’. Since 2014, these nominations are used to indicate the rank of the women in the

army, however SUM-11 recognizes them as andronymic titles that signify women by military rank of their husbands only.

It is possible to challenge the stylistic labels applied in the explanatory dictionaries for a number of feminine terms by looking at the broader contexts of their usage in corpus texts. In particular, words like *полонянка* ‘bondswoman’ (also designated as folklore), *войовниця* ‘warrior woman’ and *летунка* ‘airwoman’ do not need to be recognized as archaic in current situations. Similarly, the name *ветеранка* ‘(female) veteran’ has lost its colloquial meaning (although SUM-20 continues to label it that way), and the terms *командирка* ‘(female) commander’ and *медичка* ‘(female) medic’, in addition to colloquial usages, have developed neutral meanings.

In some military feminine personal nouns, the corpus texts testify to the development of metaphorical meanings that are not recorded in explanatory dictionaries. For example, the name *кулеметниця* ‘(female) machine-gunner’, in addition to the primary meaning of ‘fighter of a machine gun unit, machine gun shooter’, develops the figurative meaning ‘woman who works very fast’ (Vplyv suspilnykh zmin, 2017). The name *бійчиня* ‘(female) fighter’, in addition to the meanings 1) ‘female combatant during military operations,’ 2) ‘soldier, private,’ 3) ‘athlete who engages in combat sports,’ also expresses the figurative meaning ‘woman who fights to achieve something’ (WDF, 2022). Finally, the term *навідниця* ‘(female) aimer’ refers to both a civilian woman who directs artillery and a warrior who aims a grenade (Abetka feminityviv, 2022).

All these examples confirm that corpus-based dictionaries greatly surpass traditional lexicographic sources in providing a more accurate representation of how words function in context. Hence the corpus also enables users to “capture” the words’ figurative as well as literal meanings.

Military feminine personal nouns also function as part of fixed expression (*Слава героям та героїням!* ‘Glory to heroes and heroines!’, *Національна героїня* ‘National heroine’, *Геройка України* ‘Heroine of Ukraine’, *Захисниця України* ‘(Female) Defender of Ukraine’), collocations (*солдатка-контрактниця* ‘(female) contract soldier’, *військова летунка* ‘military airwoman’, *морська піхотинка* ‘(female) amphibious soldier’, *дешифрувальниця польотів* ‘(female) flight decipherer’, *бригадна генералка* ‘(female) brigadier general’, *заручниця обставин* ‘hostage of circumstances’), as well as idioms (*одна в полі воїнка* ‘alone in the field a warrior’, *звитяжниця духу* ‘(female) conqueror of the spirit’). It is obvious that dictionaries that list military feminine terms should also include these fixed expressions.

## 7. Conclusion

The proportion of women serving in the Ukrainian army is rising, and as a result, there are more instances of women and men being equally represented in the military discourse (*День захисників та захисниць України* ‘Day of the Male and Female



Defenders of Ukraine’; *Нашим відважним героям і героїкам* ‘to our brave heroes and heroines’), as well as in other areas of social life (*До уваги відвідувачів та відвідувачок мезую!* ‘Museum visitors, attention!’). The sharp rise in the number of military feminine nouns strongly proves that their use is not a tribute to fashion but rather the language system's response to a social demand: the majority of the feminine personal nouns in the military (67.3%) were produced between 2014 and 2022.

If Ukrainian explanatory dictionaries contain only a third (32.6%) of the military feminine personal nouns discussed in this article, then corpus-based dictionaries for describing such novel linguistic material have greater functionality at all stages of lexicographical work, from word selection to register, searching for contexts, up to the identification of metaphorical meanings, fixed phrases, and idioms, as well as the formulation of usage recommendations.

In the updated version of WDUF, the quantitative data obtained from the corpus will be used in the arrangement of the word-forming variant, as well as in the usage note to argue in favor of one of them. Adding subject labels can also enrich the WDUF's lexicographic description of feminine terms. However, mainly three lexical-semantic groups of military feminine personal nouns might be marked with military label: 1. names of women by military rank; 2. names of women according to the performed action or function (military *nomen agentis*); 3. names of women belonging to a (military) group.

In general, incorporating subject labels (such as military, sports, legal, medical, etc.) into the updated WDUF, along with utilizing the [r2u.org.ua](http://r2u.org.ua) platform's full-text search, can provide significant assistance. Firstly, it facilitates further exploration of feminine terms within thematic groups. Secondly, it helps unify the lexicographical descriptions of words within the same group. In the upcoming edition of the WDUF, it is fitting to maintain a combination of traditional lexicography approaches and corpus-based methods, as well as to balance description with prescription.

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dignity, life, and freedom. *Слава героям і героїням!* ‘Glory to the heroes and heroines!’

## Appendix I:

### Lexico-semantic groups of military feminine personal nouns

(In descending order of frequency in GRAC-16)

Names of women by military rank	Names of women according to the performed action or function	Names of women belonging to a military group or another group	Names of women by characteristics and achieved results
1. солдатка ‘(female) soldier’	1. захисниця ‘(female) defender’	1. військовослужбовиця ‘servicewoman’	1. войовниця ‘(female) warrior’
2. офіцерка ‘(female) officer’	2. волонтерка ‘(female) volunteer’	2. військовослужбовка ‘servicewoman’	2. героїня ‘heroine’
3. полковниця ‘(female) colonel’	3. льотчиця ‘airwoman’	3. військова ‘servicewoman’	3. героїнка ‘heroine’
4. лейтенантка ‘(female) lieutenant’	4. снайперка ‘(female) sniper’	4. армійка ‘army woman’	4. воїтелька ‘(female) warrior’
5. генералка ‘(female) general’	5. медикія бойова ‘combat (female) medic’	5. заручниця ‘hostage’	5. звияжниця ‘(female) conqueror’
6. сержантка ‘(female) sergeant’	6. медичка бойова ‘combat (female) medic’	6. полонянка ‘bondswoman’	6. ухильантка ‘a woman who evades military service’
7. капітанка ‘(female) captain’	7. парамедикія ‘(female) paramedic’	7. військовополонена ‘(female) prisoner of war’	7. титанка ‘(female) Titan’
8. хорунжа ‘(female) standard bearer’	8. парамедичка ‘(female) paramedic’	8. партизанка ‘(female) partisan’	8. ухильниця ‘a woman who evades military service’
9. підполковниця ‘(female) lieutenant-colonel’	9. радистка ‘radiowoman’	9. ветеранка ‘(female) veteran’	
10. поручниця ‘(female) guarantor, lieutenant’	10. комісарка ‘(female) commissar’	10. доброволиця ‘(female) volunteer’	
11. підпоручиця ‘second (female) lieutenant’	11. командирка ‘(female) commander’	11. доброволка ‘(female) volunteer’	
12. віцеадміралка ‘(female) vice-	12. командувачка ‘(female) army commander’	12. контрактниця ‘(female) contract soldier’	
	13. десантниця ‘(female) paratrooper’	13. диверсантка ‘(female) saboteur; attacker’	
	14. артилеристка ‘artillerywoman’	14. резервістка ‘(female) reservist’	
	15. танкістка ‘tankwoman’	15. госпітальєрка ‘(female) member of	
			Names of women on the enemy side 1. гауляйтерка ‘(female) head of the

<p>admiral'</p> <p>13. адміралка '(female) admiral'</p> <p>14. контрадміралка '(female) rear-admiral'</p> <p>15. майорка '(female) major'</p> <p>16. прапорщиця '(female) ensign'</p>	<p>16. кулеметниця '(female) machine-gunner'</p> <p>17. бійчиня '(female) fighter'</p> <p>18. воїнка '(female) warrior'</p> <p>19. стрільчиня '(female) shooter'</p> <p>20. навідниця '(female) aimer'</p> <p>21. зенітниця '(female) antiaircraft'</p> <p>22. воячка 'virago'</p> <p>23. постачальниця '(female) supplier, contractor (for the army)'</p> <p>24. фронтовичка 'frontwoman'</p> <p>25. аеророзвідниця '(female) air-scout'</p> <p>26. найманка '(female) mercenary'</p> <p>27. оборонниця '(female) defender'</p> <p>28. летунка 'airwoman'</p> <p>29. наводчиця '(female) aimer'</p> <p>30. підривниця '(female) demolition woman, sapper'</p> <p>31. мінометниця '(female) springer'</p> <p>32. коректувальниця '(female) spotter'</p> <p>33. гранатометниця '(female) bomber'</p> <p>34. дезертирка '(female) deserter'</p> <p>35. радіотелефоністка '(female) radio telephone operator'</p>	<p>the "Hospitaliers" medical battalion'</p> <p>16. нацгвардійка '(female) member of the National Guard'</p> <p>17. гвардійка 'guardswoman'</p> <p>18. айдарівка '(female) member of the "Aydar" military battalion'</p> <p>19. тероборонівка '(female) member of the "Territorial defense" group or battalion'</p> <p>20. азовка '(female) member of the "Aydar" military battalion'</p> <p>21. січовичка 'service woman in the "Ukrayinski Sichovi striltsi" Legion'</p> <p>22. оунівка '(female) member of the "OUN"'</p> <p>23. усуска 'service woman in the "Ukrayinski Sichovi striltsi" Legion'</p> <p>24. усусівка 'service woman in the "Ukrayinski Sichovi striltsi" Legion'</p> <p>25. мілітаристка 'servicewoman'</p> <p>26. військовичка 'servicewoman'</p> <p>27. військовиця 'servicewoman'</p> <p>28. дивізійниця '(female) division officer'</p> <p>29. призовниця '(female) conscript'</p>	<p>administrative-territorial unit occupied by Russia in Ukraine'</p> <p>2. окупантка '(female) occupant, invader'</p> <p>3. ополченка '(female) member of a pro-Russian militia or paramilitary group'</p> <p>4. бойовичка '(female) combatant fighting on the side of Russian occupators'</p>
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<p>36. миротвориця '(female) peacemaker'</p> <p>37. штурманка '(female) navigator'</p> <p>38. медіаторка '(female) mediator'</p> <p>39. авіаторка '(female) aviator'</p> <p>40. демінерка '(female) deminer'</p> <p>41. фасилітаторка '(female) facilitator'</p> <p>42. капеланка '(female) chaplain'</p> <p>43. саперка '(female) sapper'</p> <p>44. піхотинка 'infantrywoman'</p> <p>45. наємниця '(female) mercenary'</p> <p>46. воєнкорка '(female) war correspondent'</p> <p>47. воєначальниця '(female) commander'</p> <p>48. корегувальниця '(artillery) spotter'</p> <p>49. комбатантка '(female) combatant'</p> <p>50. чотарка '(female) lieutenant'</p> <p>51. автоматниця '(female) sub-machine gunner'</p> <p>52. дешифрувальниця '(female) decipherer'</p> <p>53. оперативниця '(female) operator'</p> <p>54. зв'язківниця 'signalwoman'</p> <p>55. гвинтівочниця 'riflewoman'</p> <p>56. піхотиниця 'infantrywoman'</p> <p>57. екскомбатантка</p>	<p>30. воєнчиня 'servicewoman'</p> <p>31. військовополонянка '(female) prisoner of war'</p> <p>32. атошниця 'servicewoman in the "АТО"'</p> <p>33. спецназівка 'servicewoman in the special forces unit'</p>
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	‘(female) ex-combatant’		
58.	медсанбатівка ‘(female) paramedic’		
59.	штурмовичка ‘(female) stormer’		
60.	артрозвідниця ‘(female) artillery scout’		
61.	воякиня ‘virago’		
62.	зв’язкова ‘signalwoman’		
63.	зв’язківка ‘signalwoman’		
64.	командорка ‘(female) commodore’		
65.	медиця бойова ‘combat (female) medic’		
66.	миробудівниця ‘(female) peacemaker’		
67.	миротворка ‘(female) peacemaker’		
68.	мінерка ‘(female) miner’		
69.	парамедиця ‘(female) paramedic’		
70.	пілоткиня ‘airwoman’		
71.	баталістка ‘(female) artist who depicts battles’		

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