

Gender

Ghana Armed Forces whip up girls' interest in military



From Biya Mukusah Ali,
SUNYANI

THE Ghana Armed Forces (GAF) has engaged more than 1,500 students, mainly girls, from 15 selected senior high schools (SHSs) in the Bono, Bono East and Ahafo regions to address

gender stereotypes and misconceptions about females taking up a career in the army.

Additionally, the sensitisation campaign, organised separately in different schools in the three regions was to educate the participants on career opportunities within the GAF to whip up the interest of young girls to pursue careers, particularly within combat

units of the GAF.

It was organised by the Women, Youth, Peace and Security Institute (WYPSI) of the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC), in partnership with the GAF and Funded by the Elsie Initiative Fund.

The sensitisation campaign, which is an ongoing nationwide programme, aims to help female students overcome barriers facing them in venturing into the GAF and promoting the GAF gender mainstreaming agenda of creating equal opportunities for men and women.

Schools

The beneficiary schools in the Bono Region were St James Seminary and SHS, Sunyani SHS, Notre Dame Girls' SHS, Odumaseman SHS, Twene Amanfo Senior High and Technical School and the Berekum Presbyterian SHS.

In the Bono East Region, Techiman SHS, Akumfi Ameyaw Senior High and Technical School, Our Lady of Mount Camel Girls SHS, Abrafi SHS and Tuobodom Senior High and

Technical School were selected to participate.

Students from the OLA Girls SHS, Serwaa Kesse Girls SHS, Boakye Tromo SHS, Bechem Presbyterian SHS and Hwidiem SHS in the Ahafo Region benefited from the sensitisation campaign.

During the programme, the potential applicants were educated on career options within the GAF. They were also provided with information on less-known opportunities in the military to enable them to make an informed choice.

International requirement

Speaking in Sunyani last Tuesday, the Command Logistic and Gender Adviser at the Accra Army Training Command, Colonel Dr Mohammed Wumbei, said it was an international requirement that there should be gender equality and equity in the recruitment and enlistment in the GAF.

He, however, explained that over the years, the GAF had realised that the number of females recruited and enlisted

into the GAF was not commensurate with the national population of females.

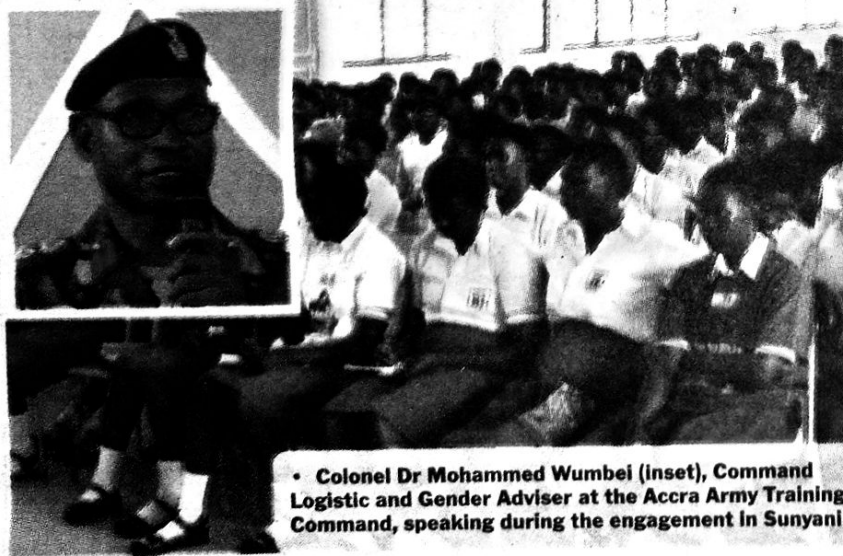
Col Dr Wumbei said the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 also required military establishments across the world to increase female participation in peacekeeping operations.

He explained that research conducted revealed that females were not interested in joining GAF while the few who joined wanted the soft way out, such as in the area of Combat Service Support Unit, which is a logistic unit.

Col Dr Wumbei said the purpose of the sensitisation was, therefore, to get females to join the GAF in combat roles to help them rise to the highest rank of the force.

Col Dr Wumbei said the GAF had also planned to organise town hall meetings to engage the public on the need to refrain from stereotyping and eliminate socio-cultural practices and customs that hinder girls from dreaming of joining the army.

For her part, a Senior Programme Officer of the WYPSI KAIPTC, Adelaide Ekua Otoo, who took the participants through gender mainstreaming in GAF, encouraged girls to join GAF.



• Colonel Dr Mohammed Wumbei (inset), Command Logistic and Gender Adviser at the Accra Army Training Command, speaking during the engagement in Sunyani