Body Count: The Politics of Representing the Gendered Body in Combat in Australia and the United States

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Abstract

This thesis is an exploration of the construction of the gendered body in combat in the late twentieth century, in Australia and the United States of America. While it is not a military history, aspects of military history, and representations of war and warriors are used as the vehicle for the analysis of the politics of representing gender. The mythic, the material and the media(ted) body of the gendered warrior are examined in the realms of 'real' military histories and news coverage, and in the 'speculative' arena of popular culture. Through this examination, the continuities and ruptures inherent in the gendered narratives of war and warriors are made apparent, and the operation of the politics of representing gender in the public arena is exposed.

I have utilised a number of different approaches from different disciplines in the construction of this thesis: feminist and non-feminist responses to women in the military; aspects of military histories and mythologies of war specific to Australia and the United States; theories on the construction of masculinities and femininities; approaches to gender identity in popular news media, film and television. Through these approaches I have sought to bring together the history of women in the military institutions of Australia and the United States, and examine the nexus between the expansion of women's military roles and the emergence of the female warrior hero in popular culture. I have, as a result, analysed the constructions of masculinity and femininity that inform the ongoing association of the military with 'quintessential masculinity', and deconstructed the real and the mythic corporeal capacities of the gendered body so important to warrior identity. Regardless, or perhaps because of, the importance of gender politics played out in and through the representations of soldier identity, all their bodies must be considered speculative.

In Loving Memory of Boyd Robert Buttsworth

1928-1998

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Introduction: Sanctified Bodies

Gender, combat, and war have always been inextricably linked. If war stories have dominated the construction of histories and national identities, then the gendered roles these stories assign must be examined and pulled apart if the narrative is ever to be satisfactorily analysed. War stories, both remembered and speculative, have been treated in Australia and the United States as if they are unassailable, central to sacred national memory. The historical instability of soldier identities has been glossed over, and their changing shape over time has been largely ignored. Further, the dependence of often celebrated masculine soldier identity upon ideologies of sex and gender difference remains undertheorized. As Henri A. Giroux explains, in his analysis of the film *Good Morning Vietnam*, the tandem acts of remembering and forgetting are of equal importance in the construction and consecration of identity: such shaping of memory is crucial to the cultural processes of gendering of war and warriors. Henry A. Giroux uses the following quote from Salman Rushdie to illuminate the ways in which some aspects of 'national character' are reified in popular memory while others are forgotten.

> Ideas, texts, even people can be made sacred …but even though such entities, once their sacredness is established, seek to proclaim and to preserve their own absoluteness, their inviolability, the act of making sacred is in truth an event of history. . . .And events in history must always be subject to questioning, deconstruction, even to declarations of their obsolescence. To respect the sacred is to be paralysed by it.[1]

Giroux's article deals with the ways in which pedagogy and politics work through popular culture to perpetuate national mythologies. Exemplifying

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[1] Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981 – 1991*, Penguin Books, London, 1991, p.416, cited by Henry A. Giroux ,"Memory and Pedagogy in the "Wonderful World Of Disney" Beyond the Politics of Innocence", in Elizabeth Bell, Lynda Haas & Laura Sells (eds), *From Mouse to Mermaid: The Politics of Film, Gender and Culture*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington & Indianapolis, 1995, p.43.

these mythological constructions are texts like Disney's *Good Morning Vietnam* which extended the representation of the Vietnam War as an end of innocence and a coming of age for post-Vietnam generations in the United States. The ideas posited by Giroux and Rushdie, relating to the construction of memory and the role of representation in reinforcing national mythologies, can be applied to soldier identities in both Australia and the United States. This thesis demonstrates that masculinity is sacred to soldier identity, and soldier identity embodies aspects of the sacred for national identity. If "to respect the sacred is to be paralysed by it", and masculinity is a part of the sanctity of soldier identity, what then are the possibilities for reinventing gendered soldier identity in ways which accommodate women?

This thesis examines the ways in which, in Australia and the United States, war throughout the twentieth century has polarised masculinity and femininity through the elevation of masculine soldier identity, and the ideological separation of home and battle fronts. That the gendered nature of these stories is so frequently taken for granted is a phenomenon worthy of examination, and a crucial issue this thesis takes up and attempts to deconstruct. Times of crisis often reveal the fluidity of gender construction. Therefore, while martial masculinity has been placed on a pedestal, the boundaries that divided the social roles undertaken by men and women in the first half of the twentieth century became blurred in the face of labour shortages and war-time necessities. In the latter part of the twentieth century, in turn, technology and the lack of a clear 'front line' have meant that the distinction between combatant and non-combatant has become much more arbitrary. The implications of this lack of distinction for the sanctification of the masculine combat soldier have led to widespread anxiety. The female warrior, even when purely fictional, is a threat to the gender binary that upholds masculine dominance in western society. She threatens to dislodge the elite position held by the male warrior, undermine the potency that accompanies the sanctioned use of violence and, by

extension, the power held by men and masculinity in broader society.[2] The dominance of martial masculinity depends partly upon ideologies that define men as defenders/combatants and women as passively being defended/non-combatants. If the defended can defend themselves, then the power and privilege accorded the defenders can be questioned and undermined.

The construction of soldier identity as exclusively masculine, and the assumption that this form of masculinity is 'natural' and unchanging are both still widely in evidence. Even conservative military historians and commentators such as Martin Van Crefeld acknowledge that the exclusion of women from the military in general, and combat in particular, relates to maintaining and affirming an exclusive form of masculinity.[3] However, what they do not do is challenge how 'natural' this process is, nor do they question the power relationships that are reinforced via this exclusivity. The failure to analyse masculinity as a construct that is unstable and

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[2] Analyses of the relationships between patriarchy and power are diverse and complex. Liberal feminists have been mostly concerned with issues of access and equity in professional and educational life and have emphasized the rights of individual women to fulfil their potential and maintain their personal autonomy. This perspective means that liberal feminism aims to level the playing field, particularly in public life, and sees patriarchy as a part of the institutional inequities that women have faced, but that they can break down. For a liberal feminist perspective on patriarchy see Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, New York, Dell, 1974. Marxist feminists perceive the dominance of patriarchy to lie in the relationship between men, the means of production and private property. See Christine Delphy, *Close to Home: A Materialist Analysis of Women's Oppression* (trans & ed. Diana Leonard), University of Massacussets Press, Amherst, 1984; Catherine MacKinnon, "Feminism, Marxism, Method and the State: An Agenda For Theory", *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, v.7, No 3, Spring 1982, pp.515-544. The radical feminist approach sees masculinity and violence as intrinsically linked and inseparable, and the power of patriarchy as dependent upon the violent oppression of women. See Andrea Dworkin, *Our Blood: Prophecies and Discourses on Sexual Politics*, G. P. Putnam, New York, 1982; Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1975. For an interpretation of patriarchy as performance see David Buchbinder, *Performance Anxieties: Re-Producing Masculinity*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1998; see also Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Routledge, New York & London, 1990. For a diverse approach which takes into account the relationship between class, race and masculinity see R. W. Connell, *Masculinities*, University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1995. While these approaches to the relationship between patriarchy and power are all very different, they all make reference to the importance of violence, or the threat of violence, to the dominance of masculinity in social relations.

[3] Martin Van Crefeld, *Men Women and War: Do Women Belong on the Frontline?*, Cassell & Co, London, 2001, p. 124.

constantly changing is evident even in forums where gender is supposedly under discussion.[4] An analysis of masculinity is even often absent from texts that aim to break through the silences of women's wartime and military experiences. A failure to interrogate changing constructions of masculinity, as well as femininity, means that military masculinity is still positioned as the norm, reinscribing the position of power the masculine warrior has in Australia and the United States.

This thesis seeks to redress these assumptions of a 'naturally' masculine soldier identity through an exploration of a number of counter-realities: the absence of women from narratives of war and national identity; the presence of women on the battlefield and in military institutions which contradicts these narratives; the ways in which warrior mythologies have changed over time to assimilate the experiences of different wars and their political outcomes; and the subversive potential of cinematic and televisual narratives in which the female warrior hero plays a dominant role. There have been an increasing number of studies, particularly from the United States, about the experiences of military women and their representation in the media. However, little attention has been paid to the links between these media representations and the nexus between the movement of women into combat roles and the emergence of the female warrior hero in late twentieth-century popular culture.

There are a number of scholarly approaches, and different kinds of material, examined in this work. In order to work through the issues of gender and representation it has been necessary to engage with feminist and non-feminist approaches to, and discussions of, the military and military women, as well as some mainstream military history. This thesis is *not* a military history, although it does incorporate historical material relating to the militaries of Australia and the United States. Rather, combat and war have been utilised as a vehicle for examining representations of gender in

[4] For analysis of the instability of masculinity see Buchbinder, *Performance Anxieties*.

the public sphere. This focus leads to utilising historical, media and popular cultural material in an attempt to unravel the gender politics of soldier identity.

The analysis of a wide range of material, both visual and written, is important to the deconstruction of gendered narratives and gendered bodies. Book covers, newspaper articles and photographs, and film and television texts are all key indicators of the ways in which combat and soldier identity define public expressions of gender and sexuality. It has been necessary to engage with media and feminist theory in order to conduct this analysis, from works dealing with the way visual representations are an expression of power and politics,[5] to theoretical material on social politics,[6] gender performativity and the many different approaches to the gendered body on material, symbolic, and mythic levels.[7] It is through readings of the body that the potency of the figure of the soldier in both Australia and the U.S. can be understood and potentially undermined.

The title of this work, *Body Count*, is an allusion to a number of key themes that are explored throughout. Bodies are the vehicles, victors and victims of war. Bodies are also inseparable from the ways in which gender and identity are conceived. The material body is always mediated by the myth-making conceptions in which it is clad, and the success of soldiering traditions depends upon the way bodies can be constructed and reconstructed mythically and symbolically, even if the material body has been blown apart. Arguments that seek to reserve war

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[5] See for example John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, Penguin Books, London, 1977; John Fiske, *Power Works, Power Plays*, Verso, London & New York, 1993; Iain Chambers, *Border Dialogues: Journeys in Postmodernity*, Routledge, London & New York, 1990.
[6] See for example Carol Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1988.
[7] Butler, *Gender Trouble*; Susan Bordo, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture and the Body*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles & London, 1993; Buchbinder, *Performance Anxieties*; Moira Gatens, "Corporeal Representation in/and the Body Politic", in K.Conboy, N. Medina & S. Stanbury (eds), *Writing on the Body: Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1997, pp. 80-89; Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, 1994.

and combat for men as exclusive articulations of masculinity rely upon generalisations about femininity and the female body, and the ways in which women are identified collectively with these generalisations. Femininity has been historically associated with, and read through, the female body; but in war, when women have participated, their bodies have not been counted. The phrase *Body Count* is also important in that all soldiers who die in combat are reduced to being bodies to be counted, as are civilians whose homes are destroyed. This phrase gained wide usage during the Vietnam War, where units of U.S. soldiers reportedly competed for the highest 'body counts'.[8] The technology of the 'body count' erased the individual identities of those killed, and in classifying dead Vietnamese civilians and soldiers alike in this way their differences were elided, but their Difference was enhanced, allowing an easier separation of the U.S. or Australian soldier from his victims.[9]

Soldier identities in Australia and the United States are the main focus here for a number of reasons. My interest in the emergence of the female warrior hero in popular culture was the original impetus for this work. Most of the cultural products and characters I discuss emanate from the United States, but have been screened/viewed in an Australian context. Therefore, it was clear that there was a need not only to examine the cultural context in which these texts were produced, but also the context in which they were viewed, hence the need to compare the dominant warrior traditions of both nations. Comparisons between Australia and the United States are significant and illuminating for other reasons as well. The two nations have been allies throughout the twentieth century, and the faithful compliance to this friendship has been illustrated a number of times throughout the course of writing this thesis. The most recent example of this alliance was the Australian Government's commitment of Australian troops to the U.S.-led war in Iraq early in 2003, without United Nations

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[8] Lieutenant-Colonel David A. Grossman, *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society*, Back Bay Books, New York, 1996, p. 220.
[9] Grossman, *On Killing*, p. 220.

sanction and despite unprecedented public protests against this action. Australia and the United States have fought in the same major conflicts of the twentieth century from the Great War, the Second World War, Korea, Vietnam, and the first and second Gulf Wars. There are similarities between debates about and approaches to women's military service in both countries. And while there are differences in the specificities of the soldier mythologies of both countries, there are similarities in the processes by which these mythologies have been gendered.

In Australia, ANZAC[10] mythology dominates historical constructions of war and the soldier, and inflects current representations in the media and popular consciousness. There has been much writing about, and discussion of, the role of the ANZAC in Australian mythology and national identity. However, explicit discussions of the ways in which ANZAC mythology is gendered, and therefore the ways in which this mythology affects current constructions of gendered soldier identity, have not been as prolific as similar discussions about the construction of the American soldier. In the same way, the publication of histories of Australia's military women are few and far between in comparison to the growing number of U.S. publications in this area. Where scholarship does exist in Australia, it has tended to focus on the anecdotal and experiential and is, for the most part, not theorized in the same way as the work of Cynthia Enloe or Jean Bethke Elshtain, for example.[11] There are almost no contemporary memoirs available in Australia, in comparison to Carol Barkalow's *In the Men's House*,[12] which details her experiences as one of the first female cadets to be admitted to West Point after 1976, or *Call Sign*

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[10] This acronym stands for Australian and New Zealand Army Corps.

[11] See Cynthia Enloe, *Does Khaki Become You? The Militarization of Women's Lives*, Pluto Press, London, 1983; "The Politics of Constructing the American Woman Soldier" in E. Addis, V.E., Russo, & L. Sebasta, (eds), *Women Soldiers: Images and Realities*, St Martin's Press, New York, 1994, pp. 81-110; *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives*, University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 2000. Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Women and War*, Basic Books, New York, 1987.

[12] Carol Barkalow (Capt.) with Andrea Raab, *In the Men's House*, Poseidon Press, New York, 1990.

Revlon which details the career and death of Kara Hultgreen, one of the U.S. Navy's first female combat pilots in the mid 1990s.[13]

In the United States much more attention has been paid to gender, military experiences and soldier identity in the press. Often focussed through controversy, like that surrounding the first women to attend West Point, and later all male "para" military colleges such as the Citadel and Virginia Military College during the late 1990s, the position of U.S. military women appears to have been much more publicly fraught, and fought over, than that of Australian military women. The relative invisibility of Australian military women may be a form of "gender camouflage" in action. However, it can also be partially attributed to the greater militarization of American society.

Many post-Vietnam representations, and reinventions, of Australian soldier identity have occurred in cinematic and televisual texts. These representations, such as *Gallipoli* (1981), and *ANZACS* (1985), have tended to be related as "realistic" soldier stories. They have become so intertwined with Australian soldier-tradition that these texts and *Breaker Morant* (1980), as well as older cinematic texts such as *40,000 Horsemen* (1941), were used as a part of the documentary series *Australians at War* (2001) which was produced and televised to coincide with the centenary of Australian Federation in 2001.[14] These texts were presented unproblematically to stand in for newsreel footage: sometimes as visual display used to accompany the voice-overs of returned servicemen, blending the mythologies produced in the past with those of the present.

In contrast to trends in the United States, Australian war narratives have not been fused with much more speculative televisual and cinematic texts. Australia has no *Rambo* (1982-1988) equivalent in cinema, or *Buffy*

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[13] S. Spears, *Call Sign Revlon: The Life and Death of Navy Fighter Pilot Kara Hultgreen*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, Maryland, 1998.
[14] Michael Caulfield (Producer), *Australians at War*, written & directed by Geoff Burton, ABC Video, Beyond Productions, 2001.

the Vampire Slayer (1997-2003) on television where references to warrior identity, and war experiences (particularly Vietnam War experiences) help to frame present or futuristic storylines. Films and television shows that slip between the genres of action and fantasy have been common vehicles in the United States for such depictions. In Australia, references to soldiers and war experiences have been more limited to more "real" genres – like soap opera or television mini-series.[15] Perhaps the smaller spill-over into other forms of cultural expression can be linked to the smaller and more separate nature of Australian military culture than that which exists in the United States. It must also be recognised that the film and television industries in Australia are much smaller than those in the United States, and therefore the scope for ongoing and varied productions is also much smaller.[16]

Cinema and television have played a significant role in the construction of soldier identity, and what James William Gibson calls "paramilitary culture"[17] that has arisen in the United States since the Vietnam War. Where ANZAC mythology and the carnage of Gallipoli dominate Australian war narratives,[18] the construction of the American frontier has coloured the way wartime landscapes are depicted in the United States. Mythology arising from the American Civil War was inevitably informed by frontier battles and the American Revolution, but the legacies of the Civil War have also contributed to contemporary soldier identity, and the ways patriotism has manifested itself throughout the

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[15] For example, the popular soap opera *The Sullivans* depicted life in Australia during the Second World War and ran from 1976-1983, longer than the war itself! While many episodes did focus on the experiences of soldiers overseas, it is best known for its depictions of life at home during the 1940s. Vietnam veteran characters have made a number of appearances in Australian soap operas such as *A Country Practice* and *Home and Away*.

[16] The opening and use of American studios based in Australia, like the studio in Sydney where films like *The Matrix* have been produced, further blurs the lines between productions and cultural origin. However, even when such films are produced in Australia, they cannot be seen to be "Australian" films.

[17] James William Gibson, *Warrior Dreams: Paramilitary Culture in Post-Vietnam America*, Hill and Wang, New York, 1994.

[18] The connection to Gallipoli as central in this way was demonstrated in 2002, where it served as the location for an Australian conference on war and peace.

twentieth century.[19] Twentieth-century cinematic representations of "how the West was won" have further informed the construction of soldier identity since the rise of the Western as a genre in the U.S. during the 1950s and 1960s.[20]

Critics such as James William Gibson, Richard Slotkin, Susan Jeffords, and Jean Bethke Elshtain all recognise the potency of cinema in the construction and reimagining of soldiers' experiences and identities in the late twentieth century.[21] Elshtain asserts that most war stories reached the public via written history texts and personal narratives, but concedes that "[a]lthough wars are primarily bequeathed to us as texts, war movies have a far greater impact on popular culture… these images reach millions."[22] Just as "war movies" have reached millions, so too has footage of the Vietnam War shown on television, and later footage of the Gulf War where American servicewomen were the subject of unprecedented media coverage. War stories, and the journalists who relate them, are considered so important to a nation's war effort that they need to be carefully controlled. The world witnessed this control most overtly in the 2003 war with Iraq, and the creation of the 'embedded' journalist. These were journalists who actually travelled with particular military units and provided what appeared to be an insider perspective. The compromises to

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[19] See John Pettegrew, "'The Soldier's Faith': Turn-of-the-century Memory of the Civil War and the Emergence of Modern American Nationalism", *Journal of Contemporary History*, v.31, 1996, pp. 49-73. See also Cecilia Elizabeth O'Leary, *To Die For: The Paradox of American Patriotism*, Princeton University Press, Princeton New Jersey, 1999.

[20] Richard Slotkin has documented and analysed the connections between constructions of frontier mythologies, the cowboy in the late nineteenth century through wild-west displays and his successors on the silver-screen, and the spill-over with military culture and identities. Slotkin sees the addition of military drills to the displays of 1893 as a way of 'modernizing' the frontier hero by 'militarizing' him. See Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation*: *The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America*, Harper Perennial, New York, 1992, p.88

[21] James William Gibson, *Warrior Dreams*: *Paramilitary Culture in Post-Vietnam America*, Hill and Wang, New York, 1994; Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America*, Harper Perennial, New York, 1992; Susan Jeffords, *The Remasculinization of America: Gender and the Vietnam War*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1989; Elshtain, *Women and War*.

[22] Elshtain, *Women and War*, p.12. Elshtain displays here a tendency to give primacy to written texts – 'authentic' history texts – despite her acknowledgement of the importance of popular, and populist, cinematic texts in the construction of soldier identity in public consciousness.

journalistic integrity that being in bed, or embedded, with the military are still being debated, as is the military and state manipulation of media and information.[23]

In Chapters One and Two I discuss the cultural amnesia that envelopes the roles women have played in war and the military, that I argue can be seen as a part of the "forgetting" that applies to the gendered construction of soldier identity. Chapter One outlines briefly the historical positions of military women in Australia and the United States. This chapter also outlines the historiographical presences and absences, the ways in which feminist scholarship sometimes contributes to the gaps in the historical and academic record,[24] and some of the ways the feminine body is defined as collectively incapable of being effective in combat. Women's status as 'official' non-combatants means that the possibility of evaluating how successful they might be in combat is very difficult. The perceived limitations of women's physical strength in comparison to that of men continue to be cited to restrict women from joining the units which define the elite in the military, and more broadly, which define masculinity. The chapter examines some of the cultural difficulties encountered by military women. The erasure of differences between male soldiers' individual identities and abilities, and the processes of memorialising which centre on sacrifice and the transcendence of the body, are a part of the process of making masculine soldier identity sacred and untouchable. The emphasis on women's bodies as collectively different than men's bodies is a part of

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[23] See "War Spin", Reported by John Kampfner, Produced by Sandy Smith for BBC TV, first screened on BBC 2 18 May 2003. Screened in Australia on *Four Corners*, ABC TV, 9 June 2003.

[24] At a local feminist conference in 1999 I was asked if, given the subject matter of my paper, I was "pro-war": it was implied my time would be better spent looking at pacifist movements. A similar event occurred at a later conference when a colleague presented a paper on terrorism, and she was asked if she supported the position of the group she was discussing. In both instances the questions came from people professing to be feminists. These are questions that would not be asked of male scholars and they underlie many of the problems for feminists who believe these events and issues cannot be ignored. To ignore war and combat as topics of inquiry is to reinforce the gender binary through which war is associated with masculinity and which informs assumptions about what topics may be appropriately examined by female scholars.

this process, and these traditions of memorialising and forgetting are examined in both Chapters One and Two.

Chapter Two, "Gonna Make a Man Out of You", analyses the complexities of gender and soldier identity utilising the tandem concepts of transformation and gender camouflage. Through these concepts, the ways in which gender is performed in uniform become apparent. An important aspect of the ways in which gendered soldier mythologies function is the conflict between, and conflation of, individual and group identities. The heroism of individual male soldiers is attributed to all men, where the inferred weakness and unpredictability of the female body is attributed to all women. The capabilities and heroism of individual women are treated as exceptional, and therefore isolated from mythologies of collective femininity.

The concepts outlined in Chapter Two are utilised in Chapters Three and Four in order to examine in greater detail the specificities of soldier identity in Australia and the United States. In their separate contexts both Australian and American soldier identities demonstrate ways in which military masculinity is separated from, and elevated above, other forms of identity in society. The origins of these models are extremely important, and so I have examined, generally, the ways soldier identities in both countries emerged. The main focus throughout, however, is the way in which these models manifest themselves in the late twentieth century, and the links between martial mythologies and popular film and television. Elements of the ways in which the soldier has been constructed in the early twentieth century in Australia, and from the American Revolution through the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries in the United States, are important to the understanding of more contemporary models. By comparing and contrasting the evolution, maintenance, and elevation of masculine soldier identity in these two countries it is possible to evaluate

the feasibility of representing a female warrior hero within the parameters of traditional models.

Chapter Three, "Casting the Bronze", examines Australian soldier identities. This chapter is an exploration of the uses, changes, and continuities of ANZAC mythology, and the facets of soldier identity which, under close examination, stand to fracture the mythology. Being cast in bronze or cased in marble in war memorials provides an apt metaphor for an identity which is supposed to be solid and visibly bounded, and visibly masculine, but which belies the changes and transformations which occur to allow different experiences to be encompassed in this national mythology.

Chapter Four, "Femininity: The Final Frontier", examines the prevalence of frontier mythologies in the war narratives of the United States and the threat femininity poses to the "impenetrable" masculinity so important to masculine soldier identity. Until that which is beyond a frontier is conquered, it is perceived as a threat, partly because what is beyond a frontier is unknown. Changing constructions of gender and the way gender roles are performed render aspects of identity unknowable, and uncertain. So if masculinity is not a certainty underpinning American soldier identity, such shifts in gender roles threaten the boundaries of that identity and in turn that of American manhood. A frontier is a boundary: it may not be cast in bronze, but it signifies the protection of values and identities on one side, and pushing to eliminate or assimilate threats beyond that boundary. A frontier can be extended, but it can also be besieged, and masculinity under assault is a dominant theme present in the examination of soldier identity in the United States. If a frontier is besieged for any length of time, it becomes a *front line* – a position to be held and defended in a fixed position if it cannot be advanced. Attempts to maintain and consolidate the masculinity of soldier identity are subject to similar processes: the recognition of the way soldier identities are gendered

intensifies the struggle to solidify the masculinity of the warrior, and to defend its front lines against the shape-changing femininities that, in their conservative idealisation, should define the frontier itself.

Chapter Five, "Speculative Bodies", moves beyond the histories of soldier identity in the United States and Australia and examines the emergence of the female warrior in film and television in the latter part of the twentieth and early part of the twenty-first centuries. Just as the post-Vietnam action heroes and cinematic war stories are refracted through contemporary gender anxieties and national fictions, the speculative female warriors in this chapter are both products of, and commentary on, the ways in which masculinities and femininities come into sharp relief in combat settings. The speculative female warrior hero is very much sister to the women who have been narrated to the sidelines of war stories and hence national histories. If it is not possible to evaluate the success of women in combat in the 'real' world, then perhaps it is only in the speculative world that the political ramifications of the female warrior can be adduced? If the skills and abilities of individual military women are not investigated, tested, or are ignored in favour of generalised speculations, then the examination of fictions, even fantastic fictions, must provide some clues as to how the narrative politics in the 'real' world can be subverted or blown apart. The myths and restrictions of femininity and the female body are played out, and played with, in the cinematic and televisual texts examined in this chapter.

After my conclusion, it seemed pertinent to briefly discuss an incident that has most recently brought into sharp relief the competing narrative strands that seek to contain feminine potential: the ongoing saga of Pfc Jessica Lynch. *Who's Afraid of Pfc Lynch* briefly examines the media(ted) body of this young woman who was badly wounded and taken prisoner in Iraq early in 2003. The 'real' story of her rescue, which we may

never know, pales to insignificance beside the ways in which narratives of gender and race shifted the definition of this young woman from female warrior, to helpless victim, but always as the 'all-American girl'. The ongoing media interest in Jessica Lynch, the various ways she has been described in comparison to others who were taken prisoner at the same time, and the furore over the veracity of her rescue are a part of the complex picture of the politics of gendered representation.

If women are ever officially combatants, and it is their bodies being counted, how will the mythologies that overlay feminine bodies work? Asserting that women have always been absent from war denies the civilian casualties that accompany any military action, and erases their bodies from mainstream war narratives. Similarly, denying the significance of the speculative female warrior places limitations on representations of femininity, where the fictional warrior has often been incorporated into, and has centrally informed, the narrative construction of military masculinity. A refusal to examine the importance of the female warrior-hero in popular culture is one more tactic in denying the existence of a narrative tradition in which women play an important part. It is another means by which women's experiences are isolated as aberrant. All this leads to the numerous questions: should women participate officially in combat in any great numbers will their uniformed bodies be treated the same way as those of their male counterparts? Will the soldier's body continue to be constructed as masculine thus camouflaging gender difference? Or is it possible for a soldier's body to be feminine and regarded as sacred? Many of these questions remain in the realm of speculation. This thesis, however, reveals the complex processes and politics of representation that underlie debate about women, combat and war, in the past and in the present.

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Tinker, Tailor, Soldier…Slut? – Women, Combat and the Military in Australia and the U.S.A.

Introduction

When the rattle of gunfire dies and the storytellers pause in their reminiscences, a palpable silence descends. That silence pertains to the experiences of women and war. War in the twentieth century has been a narrative that constructs women as absent from spheres of combat, their experiences negated by discourses of gender and geography. Although women from both the United States and Australia have performed countless vital tasks that keep armies marching, they are mostly absent from mainstream histories and perceptions of war and combat. One thing many of these women have in common, however, is that regardless of the myriad acts they have performed in war, they have all been sexualized in one way or another: hence the title of this chapter. The apparently oxymoronic 'woman soldier' has caused such great anxiety throughout the twentieth century that she has been defined as either promiscuous or homosexual and always poses a threat to the masculinity of military identity.[1]

The historiography and scholarship of war is marked by a lack of attention to gender and identity, and reinforces the marginalization of military women. Jean Bethke Elshtain, in *Women and War*, describes war as "a structure of experience" and "war stories" as a dominant means by which the western world has been interpreted and experienced.[2] From

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[1] Leisa D. Meyer, *Creating G.I. Jane: Sexuality and Power in the Women's Army Corps During World War II*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1996. Meyer discusses the ongoing problem the 'woman soldier' posed in the United States, with comparisons up to the present. The incongruity of femininity and martial identity have made this phrase a particularly difficult one to present in ways that the public and the military have found acceptable. I will be discussing this further below.

[2] Elshtain, *Women and War*.

trenches to ticker tape parades, *his*tories of the twentieth century in Australia and the United States have been largely related as those of pre-war, war and post-war, exemplifying the predominance of war as a narrative of nation. This is a narrative structure within whose confines the presence and importance of women are left unspoken, defined and constrained by the constructed frailties of their bodies and a culture of gender dualism. War and combat dominate the history, historiography, iconography and cinematography of two nations, whose geographic distance from battlegrounds have allowed and encouraged a distinction between battlefront and home front. Twentieth-century war stories position women 'safely' in the latter, absent from 'the action'. The dominance of the war narrative, and such constructions of absence, enhance the marginalisation of women from discourses of nation and politics. The validity of women's experiences - from the operation of anti-aircraft batteries in the Second World War, to more recent debates over women flying combat aircraft, and serving alongside men on submarines - is thus undermined.

This chapter explores the involvement of women in the military institutions and battles of the United States and Australia in the twentieth century. The absence of women from the historiography of war, and development of the dueling narratives of home and battle front (which reinforce the presence of women in one sphere and their absence from the other), provide vital context for an examination of representations of women and combat. Definitions of 'appropriate' pursuits for women have centred not only on physical capability but also on the sexualisation of women's bodies. The attempts to define women as absent hinge on notions of 'acceptable' femininity, and seek to ignore, downplay, and even ridicule evidence that counters the relegation of women to the 'other side' safely at home in the kitchen. Both prior to and during the conflicts of the twentieth century, women have fought alongside, and at times disguised themselves in order to fight as, men. When women themselves were not fighting they

were performing the myriad tasks necessary to keep the military marching. In war stories women have played the parts of occasional and exceptional heroines, but more often they have nursed and cooked and sewed and cleaned. These narratives have depicted women as either chaste (the heroines) or promiscuous/deviant (when 'servicing' armies, or donning a uniform) in the script of battle. War and combat are narratives not only of nationalism and economics, but also of gender and gendered bodies. War narratives are never merely about the presence of one group and the absence of another. The examination of gender and combat reveal the ways that battle lines are never fixed in ways that uphold strict gender dualism, but rather demonstrate the constant renegotiation and blurring of positions, roles, and gendered identities.

The following sections seek to provide the context for issues, differences, and similarities surrounding women in combat and combat support roles in Australia and the U.S. throughout the twentieth century. The first part of this chapter deals briefly with the historiography and different positions assumed on women in the military and combat, both feminist and non-feminist. The second section focuses in more detail on the experiences of women in Australia, and the third on the experiences of women in the United States.

Reconnaissance: Assumptions, Positions and Absences relating to Women and War

Historiography

In many ways the histories of women in the armed forces in Australia and the U.S. from World War I to the present are similar. Certainly, the reasoning used to maintain the rigid gender demarcation within the armed forces, both in and out of times of crisis in these two nations mirror each other in numerous ways. Debates in both countries have focused on: upper body strength; pregnancy; menstruation; the potential need and cost of

separate toilet and shower facilities; the risk of injury, sexual assault or death in combat situations; and the effects upon 'unit cohesion' of having women in combat.[3] All of these issues have been dealt with in ways that have evaluated and defined the capabilities of women as a group, rather than assessing servicewomen as individuals in the same ways as servicemen. These concerns focus on the gendered, and sexualised, bodies of women.

Despite the commonality of concerns, the attention paid to them in Australia and the United States differs. In many instances the larger size of military institutions and their higher public profile in the United States have meant that a greater degree of attention has been paid to gender issues there than in Australia. The strong presence of American media influence and the tendency to make the American situation a reference point in both the Australian media and in academic writing heightens this disparity. Occupying a subordinate referential position to the United States downplays the specificity of the Australian integration of women into the armed forces, for example in the 1999 decision to allow Australian Navy women to serve alongside men on submarines. This trend for subsuming specifically Australian experiences within American traditions of representation can be found in media and popular cultural material, meaning that representations of women in war, and combat, in Australia are often 'borrowed' from elsewhere.[4]

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[3] Eleanor Hancock, "Women, Combat and the Military", *Journal of Australian Studies*, no. 37, 1993, pp. 88 – 98. M. C. Devilbiss, "Gender Integration and Unit Deployment: A study of GI Jo", *Armed Forces and Society*, Summer 1985, v.11, no. 4, pp. 523 – 552. Captain M.S. Barry, RAEME, "Do we really want Equality for Our Women in the Armed Services?", *Australian Defence Force Journal*, no. 101, July/Aug, 1993, pp. 5 – 21.

[4] An example of this is "Enemies in the Ranks", *Cleo*, December 1998, pp. 102 – 108, an Australian women's magazine, dealing with sexual harassment in the Australian Defence Forces, which uses as a 'hook' a photograph of Demi Moore in the film *GI Jane*. Another example of this is Herschel Hurst's article "Annie Get Your Gun" which in very cursory ways tells of the expansion of combat related roles for women in the Army, *Pacific Defence Reporter*, v.16, no. 10, April 1990, pp. 9 – 10. At a conference held in May 1999 at the Australian Defence Force Academy on "Women in Uniform", the primacy accorded to the North American experience was reinforced with the two main opening

Mainstream military historians in both Australia and the United States, still treat the experiences of women as peripheral and simultaneously ignore and uphold the politics of masculinity that require this exclusion. Particularly in the last twenty years in the United States, there has been more attention paid to the politics of gender and war and to the lives of women who have participated in the military pastimes that have had such a defining influence on national narratives. This attention has mainly come about through the publication of the memoirs of military women, and the research undertaken by feminist historians and scholars. Non-feminist commentators on the military have not integrated the experiences of women into their work, unless it is to point out how women undermine military readiness and cohesion.[5] In Australia the amount of publication in this area is much smaller and a more methodical scholarly interest in military women is very recent. Most historians' accounts of the experiences of women during the Second World War in Australia have been almost exclusively focused on the home front. Very little attention has been paid to military women. Those accounts that have been published tend to be largely anecdotal. Few scholars have sought to integrate these anecdotal accounts into a larger, more theorized, picture of the ways in which gender and military identities work. However, this trend is gradually changing with the publication of recent histories such as Jeanette Bomford's *Soldiers of the Queen* (2001), a detailed history of the Women's Royal Australian Army Corps.[6] The publication of more recent experiences of Australian military women are also largely absent from this body of work.

Official military histories of both Australia and the United States, even in the 1990s, describe war and wartime with only fleeting reference

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papers given by prominent speakers from the USA and dealing with the experiences of American servicewomen.

[5] For a very pointed example of this see Van Crefeld, *Men, Women and War*.

[6] Janette Bomford, *Soldiers of the Queen: Women in the Australian Army*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2001. Bomford comments on the lack of historiography in Australia in this area which provides a useful comparison to the situation in the United States.

to women's involvement. *Australia: Two Centuries of War and Peace* (1988), contains only brief references to the 'mobilisation' of women: placing women outside the 'important' activities and ramifications of war reinforces notions of their marginality.

> Certainly war could broaden the range of socially acceptable activities open to women, but more importantly it reinforced the centrality of masculinity and ensured that women remained peripheral.[7]

War has not 'officially' taken place within Australia, and there are no Australian heroines equivalent to those within the United States' experience. Although official histories are now recognising white settlement in Australia as an invasion, and hence as an act of war,[8] there has been little attention paid to the roles of either Aboriginal or white settler women in this conflict.[9] Richard White makes a brief statement that Aboriginal war may be seen as an exception when examining gendered roles – "Women on both sides were often in the firing line when hostilities broke out and they fought back", he assumed that the "formal acts of aggression" remain the domain of men. [10] A further duality emerges

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[7] Richard White, "War and Australian Society" in M. McKernon and M. Browne (eds), *Australia: Two Centuries of War and Peace*, Australian War Memorial in association with Allen and Unwin, Canberra, 1988, p. 408.

[8] While military histories do not treat at any length the European invasion of Australia as an undeclared war there is a strand in Australian historiography in which this is asserted and debated. See for example Henry Reynolds, *The Other Side of the Frontier : Aboriginal Resistance to the European Invasion of Australia*, Penguin Books, Ringwood Vic, 1982; Henry Reynolds, *Why Weren't We Told? : A Personal Search for the Truth About Our History*, Viking, Ringwood Vic., 1999.

[9] A useful example of the emerging scholarship in this area is contained in Patricia Grimshaw (et. al.,) *Creating A Nation*, McPhee Gribble, Ringwood Victoria, 1994, p.145, cited by Chilla Bulbeck, *Social Sciences in Australia*, Harcourt, Sydney, 1998, p.107. "The only recorded incident of an Aboriginal woman leading men was the Tasmanian Wayler, in 1825, a woman who spoke English and had a knowledge of guns. Several European women also participated in the fighting, but mainly in defence of homesteads. More often, indigenous and white women have been represented as standing a little back from the bloody frontier. White women, it would appear, rarely killed Aborigines and sometimes did not know of a planned attack, perhaps because they would 'tip off their best servants': 'Killing blacks, like having sex with black women, was men's business'" However, what this extract does reveal is that similar patterns of representation continue, even in scholarship seeking to broaden the perspectives on race, gender and Australia's frontier battles.

[10] White, "War and Australian Society", p. 407.

between 'formal' or recognised acts of aggression, and 'informal' events which are consequently dismissed as part of 'real' warfare. However, if women's actions when they were in the 'firing line' are combative, the dualism inherent in gendered war narratives breaks down. The line between home and battle, 'formal' and 'informal', 'defender' and 'defended' is no longer a means by which strictly defined and separated notions of masculinity and femininity may be entrenched and alternative tropes must be developed to maintain the binary opposition upon which patriarchal dominance depends. Even the chapter on dissent in *Australia: Two Centuries of War and Peace* skims over women's activities in pacifist movements in favour of men's trade union activities.[11] Women's struggles during the Second World War for better pay and conditions, which led to strikes in many workplaces including munitions factories, are not included in this dissenting 'tradition'.[12] Similarly the protests of such organisations as the Women's Service Guild against the 'rounding up' of young working women suspected of having venereal disease,[13] are not classed as being a part of the 'dissenting tradition'. *Australia: Two Centuries of War and Peace* therefore, reinforces assumptions that femininity is not only peripheral to war, but has no part in activist politics even on the 'homefront'.

These assumptions about the peripheral nature of women's war-time activities are present in other Australian military histories. Jeffrey Grey's *A Military History of Australia* opens with a disclaimer:

> Some matters receive relatively little treatment: the role and impact of returning veterans upon their society or the

[11] Alan D. Gilbert & Ann-Mari Jordens, "Traditions of Dissent", McKernon and Browne, *Australia: Two Centuries of War and Peace*,pp. 338 – 365.
[12] For a detailed account of women's work and the ways in which they negotiated their wartime work responsibilities see Gail Reekie, "Shunted back to the kitchen? Women's responses to war work and demobilization", in Jenny Gregory (ed.), *On the Homefront*, University of Western Australia Press, Crawley, 1996 pp. 75 – 90.
[13] See Sara Buttsworth, "Women Colouring the War Time Landscape", Gregory, *On the* Homefront, p. 69.

> roles of women in the armed services. This reflects significant gaps in the literature on Australia at war rather than any particular bias on my part.[14]

First published in 1990, this work does predate more thorough investigations which have stressed the importance of activities and experiences on the home front during World War II. However, the bias in secondary source material available is reinforced and becomes part of the bias of the historian in not expanding further upon this point or interrogating the narrative structures which enable such easy occlusions to continue. Grey also fails to recognise in his 'Select Bibliographies', any histories detailing women's wartime participation such as *Australian Women at War*,[15] first published in 1984. Other histories, such as Joyce Thomson's *The WAAAF in Wartime Australia*[16] or Eileen Tucker Reilly's *We Answered the Call*,[17] dealing with women in the Australian Women's Army Service (AWAS), appeared shortly after Grey's military history. These publications indicate that research *was* being conducted into women's roles in Australia's military institutions and the 'gaps' were not as unbridgeable as Grey implies. The primacy such historians give to certain kinds of sources over others widens the gap further between the historical recognition of the contributions of women and men.

Works from the 1980s and 1990s, such as *Australian Women at War*, *We Answered the Call*, and *The WAAAF in Wartime Australia* are dominated by anecdotal evidence and oral material, and in the first two works in particular, the tone is often nostalgic. The ways in which these works have been constructed and situated reinforces the 'auxiliary' status

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[14] Jeffrey Grey, *A Military History of Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990, p. 6.
[15] Patsy Adam-Smith, *Australian Women at War*, Thomas Nelson Australia, Melbourne, 1984. This book examines women's activities from the Boer War to the Second World War.
[16] Joyce Thompson, *The WAAAF in Wartime Australia*, Melbourne, 1991. For an earlier discussion of the WAAF, see E.M.Robertson, *WAAAF at War: Life and Work in the Women's Auxiliary Australian Airforce*, Mulleya, Canterbury, 1974. Once again, secondary sources dealing with the WRANS are much more difficult to trace.
[17] Eileen Tucker Reilly, *We Answered the Call*, E. Reilly, Cloverdale, WA, 1991.

of women who were in active service during the Second World War. These books also mirror the ideology in which women were only mobilised during times of crisis. They focus largely on World War II but do not extend content or analysis beyond 1945 to include the politics of demobilisation. The revised edition of Grey's *A Military History of Australia*, which was published in 1999, makes fleeting mention of women in industry during the Second World War, but does not discuss women in the services during that conflict. He mentions these services only in passing and notes that getting the women's services up and running in the 1950s, after they had been disbanded in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, was very difficult and generated a great deal of resistance despite *man*power shortages.[18]

Janette Bomford's *Soldiers of the Queen* seeks to rectify some of these silences. This history details the Women's Royal Australian Army Corps (WRAAC) that was established in 1951 and was finally fully integrated in 1984 (thus disappearing as a separate corps). Bomford has also noted the emphasis on the home front and on nursing in Australian scholarship, and the ways in which ideals that align pacifism with an ideal femininity are present even in those histories that do discuss women and war.[19] Siobhan McHugh's *Minefields and Miniskirts*, on Australian women and the Vietnam War, is a prime example of this association of femininity with pacifism. McHugh opens her work describing how difficult it was for her to "be dispassionate about rape and violence" or "to be casual about death" because of her own pregnancy while writing the book. She makes an explicit opposition between her role as a mother and giver of life, and the masculinised war she discusses which cost so much life,[20] despite her need to document and open up to scholarly investigation

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[18] Grey, *A Military History of Australia*, pp. 201-202.
[19] Bomford, *Soldiers of the Queen*, p. 3. Some of those studies on the home front are Kate Darian-Smith, *On the Home Front: Melbourne 1939-1945*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 1990; Kay Saunders & Raymond Evans (eds), *Gender Relations in Australia: Domination and Negotiation*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Sydney, 1992.
[20] Siobhan McHugh, *Minefields and Miniskirts: Australian Women and the Vietnam War*, Doubleday, Sydney, 1993, p. x. McHugh's statement in the context of her book and

the women who were involved in military conflicts. Other work, such as Marilyn Lake and Joy Damousi's collection *Gender and War*, while necessary in establishing the ways women have been sexualized in order to minimize their impact on the armed forces, replicates this pattern of sexual marginalization.[21] The only article in this collection on women in the armed forces who were *not* nurses is Ruth Ford's "Lesbians and Loose Women: Female Sexuality and the Women's Services During World War II".[22] While Ford teases apart some of the sexual mythologies underpinning women's war time service, her focus highlights the ways in which, whatever tasks women perform in the military, they are represented as sexualized bodies. This collection, too, favours the homefront and pacifist activities in its focus on women's experiences.[23]

In Australia there is no equivalent to Jeanne Holm's *Women and the Military*, which covers women's involvement in the U.S. military from the War of Independence up to its publication date of 1982. The absence of such a history in the Australian context reinforces the lack of a 'tradition' for Australian military women. Similarly, although there have been articles published which attempt to navigate the Australian feminist response to women and the military, more comprehensive work seems to be lacking - there is no Australian equivalent to the work of Elshtain or Enloe. Could these lacunae be an indication of the ongoing problem women's military involvement poses for feminists?[24] Given the

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ideologies surrounding femininity and difference are discussed in more detail in Chapter Two.

[21] Joy Damousi & Marilyn Lake (eds), *Gender and War: Australians at War in the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge University Press, New York & Melbourne, 1995.

[22] Ruth Ford, "Lesbians and Loose Women: Female Sexuality in the Women's Services During World War II", in Damousi & Lake, *Gender and War*, pp. 81-104.

[23] For example Kate Darian-Smith, "Remembering Romance: Memory, Gender and World War II", Lake & Damousi, *Gender and* War, pp. 117-129; Joy Damousi, "Socialist Women and Gendered Space: Anti-Conscrription and Anti War Campaigns 1914-1918", Lake & Damousi, *Gender and War*, pp. 254-273;Ann Curthuoys, "'Shut up, you bourgeois bitch!': Sexual Identity and Political Action in the Anti-Vietnam War Movement", Lake & Damousi, *Gender and War*, pp. 311-341.

[24] A paper given by Dr Katharina Agostino of McQuarrie University at the "Women in Uniform" conference held in Canberra in May 1999, attempted to navigate feminism's response to women and the military but failed to convey the specificity of the Australian response, or the possible significance of a lack of response.

importance of war and the soldier to Australian national identity, such absence of wide-reaching analysis is disturbing.

The United States is a highly militarized society, with a complicated relationship between its civilian and military institutions. War and soldiering are just as, if not more, important to U.S. national identity as they are in Australia. And in the United States, histories of war often omit details that would undermine constructions of war as a solely masculine pursuit. For example, the experiences of women are ignored by popular historian Stephen E. Ambrose in his book *Americans at War*.[25] It seems that according to Ambrose all Americans are men, and only the military – even in the twentieth century – is involved in war. If the twentieth century in Australia is the "age of the common man",[26] in America it is very much the age of generals, if Ambrose is anything to go by. Interestingly, where both *Australia: Two Centuries of War and Peace* and *A Military History of Australia* build a picture in which the military functions as a part of broader society, Ambrose constructs the military in the United States as existing almost for and by itself, enjoying an autonomy which is certainly not present to the same degree in the Australian context. A reading of Ambrose suggests that his is a history of "Great Men", from Custer to MacArthur, and a catalogue of the quirks that made them great. There is no reference to the auxiliary services that are necessary for the maintenance of an army, medical corps are absent, and events like the massacre at My Lai in Vietnam are put down to the loss of control of one (individual) platoon leader. He was a notorious rather than a "Great Man", but still a crucial example of the individual driving history.

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[25] Stephen E. Ambrose, *Americans at War*, University Press of Mississippi, Jackson, 1997. While Ambrose is not the most highly regarded for his scholarship, he is popularly known and drawn upon in populist representations of war – e.g., Stephen Spielberg's *Band of Brothers* television mini-series. I have utilized him here as a representation of popular history and its omissions.

[26] Grey, *A Military History of* Australia, p. 2.

According to Ambrose, the armed forces do not function in a vacuum, but rather as an extension of the 'right' of democracy. The functioning of the military and the fighting of battles are, however, not placed within the broader social context. For example, the links between war and politics are the only connections to a broader context in this work, and through these links the military functions as a bastion of formal 'masculine' activity. Despite the media attention received by military women during operations Desert Storm and Desert Shield, their activities are never mentioned by Ambrose. Just as the link forged by the media coverage between activities in the Gulf and attitudes at 'home' escapes his attention. The Gulf War, like the other conflicts in Ambrose's work, is not about people but about masculine politics, and it is not even about men, but about 'Men'.

Where the emergence of an individual female warrior hero marginalises the activities of women in war, does the 'Great Man' examination of war have the same effect for the 'men' actually fighting? Joseph J. Ellis, in his article on Vietnam, takes a very different view to Ambrose. The 'ordinary' soldier, in a war where the inability of leaders to lead is palpable, must increase in significance which begs a revision of the construction of 'Great Men'. In interviewing army officers who had served multiple tours in South East Asia, Ellis found,

> [t]hey believed that all efforts to make war intelligible to the uninitiated were hopeless, that the notion of power or command in battle was an illusion, that nobody comprehended what was going on, and that they were in the grip of vast historical forces beyond their or anyone else's control.[27]

The war that forced the armed forces of the United States and Australia to take steps to revise their images, also begs for revision of the way in which

[27] Joseph J Ellis, "Learning Military Lessons from Vietnam: Notes for a Future Historian" in T. Travers & C. Archer (eds), *Men at War: Politics, Technology and Innovation in the Twentieth Century*, Precedent, Chicago, 1982, p. 217.

the history of war and combat is written, and thus the way in which the 'history of human relations' is constructed. The change in composition and structure of the military that followed the Vietnam War also led to the amendment of policies on the exclusion of women. However, the battle over women's bodies and their meanings and abilities is ongoing, with cultural bias wearing the camouflage of biological and sexual imperatives.

While feminist historical scholarship has enabled many more forays into the world of war refracted through gender theory, most mainstream political science and historical works on war do not discuss the politics of gender in any way: those who do attribute 'gender' only to women.[28] Joshua Goldstein has noted that a recent survey of literature relating to the scholarship of war and peace conducted by Michael Doyle contained "six gender-related index entries but devotes only one-tenth of 1 percent of its space to gender. All the gender references concern women".[29] The gender politics of war extend to its scholarship where anyone not male (and to a large extent white[30]) is sidelined and remains auxiliary.

Feminist Positions

Many of the historiographical gaps regarding military women stem from the uneasy relationship feminist scholars have with the idea of women participating in war. Much of this discomfort stems from the patriarchal masculinity of military institutions. Should women want to be a part of an institution which is dependent for its very identity on the dominance of men and masculinity? If women survive in these institutions, what does it cost them in terms of their own gendered identities? How can women be complicit in a system that aligns power with military violence? These are

[28] Joshua S. Goldstein, *Gender and War*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001, p. 34.
[29] Michael Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace: Realism, Liberalism and Socialism*, W. W. Norton, New York, 1997, cited by Goldstein, *Gender and War*, p. 34.
[30] The issues of race are further discussed in each of the following chapters.

just a few of the questions that plague any feminist approach to the experiences of women in the military. There are a number of different political positions feminist scholars take in relation to military institutions and warrior identity. Joshua Goldstein divides these positions into three main strands, although he admits that many feminists adopt and combine different elements from each position.[31] These three strands are identified by Goldstein as liberal, difference and 'postmodern' feminism.

First, liberal feminism treats the issue of women's access to the military as one of equal opportunity. Liberal feminism focuses on the rights of each individual to perform whatever job of which they are capable regardless of gender. The exclusion of women from the military is a simple issue of discrimination, and for women to be able to function as equals they must have equal access to all realms of public and private life on the same footing as men. Liberal feminists reject the idea that women are by nature more peaceful than men.

Difference feminists, according to Goldstein, see women as innately different from men, and view these differences as something to be celebrated and more broadly respected in mainstream culture. Within this ideological perspective, women as nurturers (and often this can be read as mothers), are more effective in 'conflict resolution', more inclined to be peaceful, and much less likely to be aggressive than men. Some see these differences as biological, others as a result of culture. A key tenet of many who subscribe to this kind of feminism is that women cannot change the patriarchal nature of institutions, such as the military, by joining them. Women are instead better off staying apart from these institutions.

The third strand Goldstein identifies is "postmodern feminism". A postmodern feminist, "questions the assumptions about gender made by both liberal and difference feminists. Rather than take gender as two

[31] Goldstein, *Gender and War*, pp. 39-52.

categories of people that really exist (whether they are very different, or hardly different), postmodern feminists see gender itself, and gender roles in war, as fairly fluid, contextual, and arbitrary".[32]

Different theorists take different approaches in trying to categorize the multiplicity of feminist positions on women, war and the military. Ilene Rose Feinman, unlike Goldstein, divides the feminist approach only into two main groups: feminist antimilitarists and feminist egalitarian militarists. She argues that

> [f]eminist antimilitarists oppose the military for its use of violent diplomacy, and associate that violence precisely with the military's culture of virulent masculinism….On the other hand, women interested in joining the military, scholars recovering histories of women in the military, and supporting policies to expand women's professional roles in the military . . . insist that it is women's right and even responsibility to perform martial service, because the military is the *sine qua non* of full citizenship and thus, equality. Feminist egalitarian militarists use equal rights discourse and policies to insist that women play a full and unimpeded role in the military.[33]

Both categorizations developed by Goldstein and Feinman have merit, and both acknowledge the myriad positions taken by feminist politics and scholarship.[34] In many ways it is difficult to unravel the different inflections taken across the variety of feminist scholarship. Cynthia Enloe is what Feinman would call a feminist antimilitarist and yet her work has been crucial in mapping the struggles and achievements of women in the United States military. One of the problems with Enloe's work is that she

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[32] Goldstein, *Gender and War*, p. 49.
[33] Ilene Rose Feinman, *Citizenship Rites: Feminist Soldiers and Feminist Antimilitarists*, New York University Press, New York & London 2000, p. 2.
[34] This is unlike the many conservative opponents of women in the military who lump all feminists together and do not appreciate the diversity of opinion or approach within feminist communities. For examples of this see Van Crefeld, *Men, Women and War*; Brian Mitchell, *Women in the Military: Flirting with Disaster*, Regenery Publishing, Inc, Washington D.C., 2001, and any number of letters to editors of newspapers every time the issue of women in combat is raised in the public forum.

comes very close, in her arguments that many women are in one way or another militarized, to denying the possibility of female agency. Despite her important contributions to historiography and theorizing gender and war, her arguments in *Does Khaki Become You?*, and the more recent *Maneuvers*, run the risk of categorizing servicewomen and women in industries and places that support military bases purely as victims.[35]

Further complications arise when an essentialist form of feminism is combined with anti-militarism, such as that informing Sara Ruddick's *Maternal Thinking*.[36] These arguments are stridently echoed by *anti*-feminist militarists such as Elaine Donnelly in the United States.[37] Women have no place in the military because they are more peaceful, less aggressive, less physically strong, and should stay where they belong: at home mothering children. Goldstein's 'difference feminism' is also complicated when engaging with the experiences of women in the military who achieve results despite lesser physical stature because they do things *differently*. Here military women have used arguments that women are different from men in an attempt to overcome those who would use those differences against them. For example, during the Second World War two WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service – the women's auxiliary branch of the United States Navy) were left on their own to place heavy truck tyres in a loft. The men had left them to their own devices knowing the women were not as strong as they were and hoping to be able to lord it over them on their return. They came back to

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[35] See Enloe, *Does Khaki Become You?*; Enloe, *Maneuvers*. An example of the very fine line that Enloe treads is how easily her work can be misinterpreted if presented to a non-academic audience in the wrong way. In 1999 Dr Agostino sought to outline the different positions feminists have regarding military experience at the *Women in Uniform* conference held at the Australian Defence Force Academy in Canberra. The audience was largely servicewomen, some of whom interpreted Agostino as saying they were all victims and dupes of the patriarchal military. The women amongst whom I was sitting were quite upset and did not understand that Agostino was trying to demonstrate the diversity of feminist responses and cited Enloe to do this. Enloe herself has acknowledged the difficulty of pointing out the misogyny of military culture to the women who have worked so hard to achieve in the armed forces, and the danger of appearing condescending in their direction. Enloe,*Does Khaki Become You*, p. xvii.

[36] Sara Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking: Towards a Politics of Peace*, The Women's Press, London, 1989.

find the tyres neatly stacked where they should be: the women had used their brains and rigged a pulley.[38]

For a long time, in the women's auxiliary branches of both the U.S. and Australian militaries, chief officers maintained that women were different but equal, and therefore were equipped to do different tasks from men.[39] The arguments of the Second World War that pleaded for women to serve to 'free a man to fight' were underpinned by this kind of logic. Such emphasis on difference meant not only that the association of masculinity with soldiering was not disturbed, but also meant that, as women moved into certain kinds of work, these occupations were increasingly 'feminized' and therefore of less value. The division of labor that the WAC in the United States faced was often based upon the assumption that women were more manually dexterous than men and therefore more suited to clerical work. Similar assumptions underpinned the ways in which women were made responsible for medical or kitchen duties. The tasks that were perceived as appropriate for women in the civilian world were replicated within the military, often regardless of where women's abilities and skills were most needed.[40] Proponents of gender difference, therefore, run a very high risk of having women grouped collectively against a cultural standard of their skills and interests. This leads to discrimination based upon generalizations that are often in direct conflict with the abilities and desires of individual women. In patriarchal institutions such as the military, it can also lead to certain occupational specialties being viewed as inferior and less professional than those in which men, rather than women, are concentrated.

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[37] Feinman, *Citizenship Rites*, p. 3.
[38] D'Ann Campbell, "The Regimented Women of the World War II", in J. Elshtain & S. Tobias, *Women, Militarism and War: Essays in History, Politics and Social Theory*, Rowman & Littlefield, Savage MD, 1990, pp. 107-122, p. 113
[39] See Meyer, *Constructing G. I. Jane*, and Bomford, *Soldiers of the Queen*.
[40] Meyer, *Creating G. I. Jane*. Meyer also goes into great detail exploring the way racial prejudice within the WAC, and within the Army generally, further restricted the occupations open to women depending on their colour. African American women, regardless of their skills, were often forced to undertake menial labour at a much higher rate than white women were.

Corpo(real?) Capacities

Restrictions on women in the military, particularly relating to the possibility of female combat soldiers, most often hinge upon misconceptions about the differences between men's and women's bodies. There are several commonly cited 'problems' women pose to efficient military function and deployability: menstruation and personal hygiene; pregnancy; lesser upper body strength and general physical fitness than men. Other issues related to the construction of femininity are women's supposed lack of aggression or 'killer instinct', and the disruption of unit cohesion that the presence of women supposedly poses.

Of all women's bodily functions, pregnancy is the one of the most likely to be cited by opponents of women in the military, and the infantry in particular, as a reason demonstrating that women do not belong in a war zone. [41] Contemporary critics of military women have pointed to the number of women in the U.S. Armed Forces who had to be returned home due to pregnancy during the Gulf War in 1991. The deployability rate of women during this conflict was ninety-one percent where that of men was ninety-eight percent. This disparity has caused some to argue that women were deliberately getting pregnant so as not to have to go to war. What such critics ignore was the unprecedented number of reserves who were called upon to fight, and the fact that the pregnancy rate for women during the Gulf War was the same as the pregnancy rate during peace time. Furthermore, statistics indicate that servicemen miss more work time due to injury or disciplinary problems than servicewomen miss due to pregnancy.[42]

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[41] Crefeld, *Men, Women and War*, p. 216; Mitchell, *Women in the Militar*, p. 156.

[42] See Capt. Adam N. Wojack, "Integrating Women into the Infantry", *Military Review*, Nov-Dec 2002, http://www-cgsc.army.mil/milrev/English/NovDec02/wojack.asp, Accessed 06/03/03. See also Linda Bird Francke, *Ground Zero: The Gender Wars in the Military*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1997 who cites the following statistics: In 1975 a Navy study found that men lost 190,000 days to drug rehabilitation and another 196,000 days to alcohol rehabilitation - almost twice the "time lost" by women to pregnancy. By

Physical fitness and upper body strength are perhaps the biggest obstacles to women wanting to succeed in the military, and to access combat specialties. Women are judged as a whole to be far weaker than men, rather than their being assessed upon individual corporeal capacity. Lifting capacity, the area of greatest difference between men and women, is used as the key marker of women's lack of ability to perform when carrying packs, heavy equipment, or injured comrades. Generally, more than ten percent of military women can outlift the lowest ten percent of military men.[43] However, this does not mean that there are not individual women who can outperform this standard. Fitness standards all use the male body as the norm, but they do not measure things such as overall stamina and resistance to fatigue, where it is possible women will outperform men.[44]

Some of the most strident objections to women being allowed into new occupational specialties have come from military men. These men perceive that women 'get it easier' because the physical fitness tasks they have to perform differ from those the men have to perform. These tests have always been normed for physiological differences according to age, and yet when performance standards were adapted for women, many perceived women were getting a better deal.[45] The pressure on women to conform to standards that are inappropriate for the female body at the

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1990 the cost of pregnant women to the military was once again in the spotlight. A new study showed that the average cost of the early returns for men was $7,174 (U.S.), while the average cost for women due to pregnancy was $2,046 (U.S.). Among medical evacuations, AIDS and substance abuse accounted for up to 8%, pregnancy for just under 1%. For a popular debunking of many military myths relating to women see Captain Barbara A. Wilson, USAF (Ret), http://userpages.aug.com/captbarb/myths.html, Accessed August 2003.

[43] Goldstein, *Gender and War*, p. 162.

[44] Goldstein, *Gender and War*, p. 161. See also Eleanor Hancock, "Women as killers and killing women: the implications of 'gender-neutral' armed forces", in Michael Evans and Alan Ryan (eds), *The Human Face of Warfare: Killing, Fear and Chaos in Battle*, Allen and Unwin, St Leonards NSW, 2000, p. 168.

[45] See Clare Burton, *Women in the Australian Defence Force Two Studies: (1) The Cultural, Social and Institutional Barriers Impeding Merit-based Progression of Women. (2) The Reasons Why More Women are Not Making the Australian Defence Force a Long-term Career,* Department of Defence, Canberra, 1996, ES-25, ES-26, & p. 1.

present time, compounded by uniforms and shoes that have often only been modified in terms of size from male uniforms and equipment, rather than being designed with the female body in mind, have all contributed to high rates of injury among servicewomen at the Australian Defence Force Academy and in military academies in the United States.[46] These higher injury rates, combined with standards that men perceive to be inferior to those to which men comply, all contribute to the still common attitude that women are physically incapable. None of these fitness tests are specific to performance in particular occupational specialties, and yet it is these same physical fitness tests that are used as the reason to keep women out of the infantry.

Perceptions regarding unit cohesion and the notion that women disrupt the necessary bonding between male military personnel are also a major problem. Some of these issues pertain to physical fitness, with critics of integrated training and integrated units claiming that men do not perform to their highest standards if they see women able to pass tests they see as less rigorous than those to which male personnel are subject. In addition to the issue of gender-normed testing is the possibility that men are forced to 'carry the slack' for women who are not as capable as they are, causing friction and doubling up on work loads.[47] The United States Marine Corps and the Army require both men and women to pass a final seventy-two hour training exercise that "simulates battle activities in an unforgiving combat environment". There is little difference indicated by current graduation rates between male or female candidates in either

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[46] See Burton, *Women in the Australian Defence Force*, E-25. See also *Congressional Commission on Military Training and Gender Related Issues*, Washington D.C, July 1999. v I – IV, Commission Chairperson: Anita K. Blair, p. 2. This report notes the need to take into account gender and age in devising new physical fitness standards. See also D'Ann Campbell & Francine D'Amico, "Lessons on Gender Integration from the Military Academies", in Francine D'Amico & Laurie Weinstein, *Gender Camouflage: Women and the U.S. Military*, New York University Press, New York, 1999, pp. 72-73.

[47] For examples of such critics see Stephanie Gutmann, *The Kinder, Gentler Military: Can America's Gender-Neutral Fighting Force Still Win Wars?*, Scribner, New York, 2000; see also Van Crefeld, *Men, Women and War*, and Mitchell, *Women in the Military*.

institution.[48] Recent government studies in Australia and the U.S. indicated that men and women who have trained together in mixed units perform well and have few or no cohesion problems. Those units where there are only one or two women, or units which are exclusively male but then have to 'deal with' female personnel are the ones that suffer problems in terms of cohesion.[49]

Another objection to women's presence in combat units, and the potential disruption to cohesion that female personnel pose, concerns the supposed protectiveness men feel towards women. It has been posited that these chivalric impulses may impede men's performance in a combat zone. There has been no evidence of this, but the contradiction here in terms of ideal soldiering and gender is very apparent. Men in both the United States and Australia are supposed to look out for their 'mates', but if one of their 'mates' is a woman somehow this shifts the discourse to be recast as a performance problem.

Another major point of contention that is raised regarding women in the military is the supposed sexual distraction women pose for men. This argument runs along the lines that men may 'compete' with other men for the attentions of women in their units, women would be a distraction, men and women may engage in sexual activity at inappropriate times affecting performance outcomes, friction between 'couples' may lead to orders not being obeyed and lives being put at risk. None of those who advance these arguments concede the possibility that all of these issues have been put to the test by homosexual servicemen in combat. To acknowledge this would mean conceding that homosexual men have had a long standing presence in the military regardless of attempts to weed them

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[48] Maj. M. Nicholas Coppola, Maj. K. G. La France & Henry J. Carretta, "The Female Infantryman: A Possibility?", *Military Review*, Nov-Dec 2002, http://www-cgsc.army.mil.milrev/English/NovDec02/copolla.asp, Accessed 06/03/03. See also Department of Defense, American Forces Press Service, "Right of Passage", October 2001, www.defenselink.mil/specials/basic/, Accessed 06/03/03.

[49] See Burton, *Women in the Australian Defense Force*, p. 86. See also *Congressional Commission on Military Training and Gender Related Issues*, p. x1.

out. It would also mean conceding that perhaps homosexual men can be very good soldiers. Similarly, if women are constantly sexualized in this way it is seen to be their fault and their problem, rather than a problem endemic to the kind of masculinity fostered in a military environment. Sexual harassment is an extension of women's supposed sexuality, with critics of women in the military laying the blame for harassment incidents with women claiming harassment rather than with male personnel and the military as an institution. If women venture where they do not belong, and according to these critics they do not belong in the military, then they get what they deserve.[50]

All these objections indicate that women in the military are restricted according to perceptions of their abilities that may be far from the truth. They also often say more about the fragile boundaries of military masculinity than they do about women's capacity to be soldiers. And once again, regardless of the task at hand, or individual ability, women's bodies are judged collectively as weak or frail or maternal, and always sexualized.

Women in the Australian Military

Australian women have been involved directly, and indirectly, with war and the armed forces since the Boer War when a contingent of Australian nurses battled appalling conditions in South Africa. During the Great War the tradition of nursing was continued and 2,229 nurses served overseas as a part of the Australian Army Nursing Service between 1915 and 1919.[51] Women's desire to participate in the 'events that shaped the nation' was exhibited in other ways also, but their enthusiasm and efforts were often rejected. After the Australian Women's Services Corps was inaugurated in

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[50] Melissa Herbert, *Camouflage isn't only for Combat: Gender, Sexuality, and Women in the Military*, New York University Press, New York, 1998, p. 30. See also Van Crefeld, *Men, Women and War*, p. 10. Van Crefeld seems to believe that men are falsely accused of sexual harassment on a regular basis, and that the military careers of leading male officers should be considered more important than the harassment of military women.

[51] Holmes, "Day Mothers and Night Sisters: World War One Nurses and Sexuality", in Damousi and Lake (eds), *Gender and* War, p. 45. For a comprehensive history of women in military nursing in Australia see Jan Bassett, *Guns and Brooches: Australian Army Nursing from the Boer War to the Gulf War*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1997.

1916, they repeatedly offered the services of their members to the military in a wide range of capacities, but were resoundingly rebuffed.[52] In more non-traditional fields, groups of women demonstrated their abilities to wield weapons. Once again they were ordered to avoid activities for which only men were suited, as the *Brisbane Courier* indicates following the establishment of a women's rifle club to assist in 'home defence' in 1914:

> Whatever glamour may surround the woman shootist, and no one has anything but encouragement for a women's rifle club, it must be remembered that war is a man's game, fighting is the man's way of settlement.[53]

The notion of women being capable of anything other than knitting socks was alien and abhorrent and is exemplified by the tone of mild ridicule used to describe "Russia's Fighting Women" in the *Kalgoorlie Miner*:

> Lying side by side in beds in the town hospital were five girls of the legion of death…One peasant girl had a German helmet beside her. "I saw a German in front of me…and stabbed him with my bayonet and pulled the trigger at the same time. I killed him and took his hat for a souvenir", she smiled delightedly.[54]

The delight this Russian peasant girl seemed to take in violent killing is portrayed here as quite perverse. The alter ego to the 'angel of the house', the guardian of civilization, is the vampire, whose mindless blood lust is more terrifying and dangerous than any man in uniform.[55] This *Kalgoorlie Miner* has used humour to reinforce notions of what is 'suitable' for girls (and these peasant girls are eminently 'unsuitable'), but it also draws upon a tradition of viewing the combination of femininity and violence as evil and destructive, and woman as the 'illegitimate' soldier. Her sexuality is a

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[52] Carmel Shute, "Heroines and Heroes: Sexual Mythology in Australia, 1914 – 1918", in Damousi and Lake (eds), *Gender and War*, p. 32.
[53] *Brisbane Courier*, 7 October 1914, cited in Shute, "Heroines and Heroes", p. 33.
[54] *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 19 October 1917, p. 3.
[55] For an artistic history of portrayals of femininity and perversity see Bram Djikstra, *Idols of Perversity*, Oxford University Press, New York and Oxford 1986. Issues relating to women not playing by the 'rules' of combat, and their 'unpredictability' are discussed further in the following chapter.

secret weapon for her use, and to be used against her, but she must, in order to keep the angel housed, be characterised as either weak, or disruptive and uncontrollable.

Not until the Second World War was women's labour formally organised on an extensive scale in order to free up as many men as possible to fight. There was still strong opposition, however, to women wielding weapons and women who joined the services in any capacity other than nursing were not allowed to serve overseas until May 1945.[56]

Although the Women's Australian Auxiliary Air Force (WAAAF) began recruiting in early 1941, the demand for women's services was not great. The need for women in the armed forces became a priority only when the Pacific War escalated in December 1941, as in the United States. The establishment of the Australian Women's Army Service, the Women's Royal Australian Navy and the Australian Women's Land Army followed that of the WAAAF, and in August 1942 the War Cabinet listed these auxiliary forces under the Defence Act. More than 27,874 WAAAFS[57] were recruited during the course of the war, 35,800 AWAS,[58] and 2,509 ratings with the WRANS.[59] By June 1943 there were 44,700 women in the defence forces with 8,846 of these in the nursing services.[60] As Patsy Adam-Smith states, "[T]he Australian Army Nursing Service was naturally the first of the three army women's services in the field, and its members served in every battle area where the Australian army fought."[61] Nurses once again were the exception to the rule of women not being exposed to the horrors of war, or being in close proximity to combat.

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[56] Bomford, *Soldiers of the Queen*, p. 7.
[57] Thompson, *The WAAAF in Wartime Australia*, p. 347.
[58] "Gross Enlistments of Army Personal to October 1945", Australian War Memorial, 113, Item 4.
[59] Vic Jeffery, Public Relations Officer Stirling Naval Base, Personal Communication, 1996.
[60] Adam-Smith, *Australian Women at War*, p. 142.
[61] Adam-Smith, *Australian Women at War*, p 149.

The question of women being taken prisoner was one of importance even when Australian women were not allowed to serve overseas, because since the women were in uniform, it was feared they could be treated as spies. This led the War Cabinet, as early as March 1941, to state that WAAAFS were entitled to be treated as Prisoners of War as a result of their military status.[62] The restriction on women serving overseas led to those Australian servicewomen working at the Allied General Headquarters being replaced by American women when Macarthur moved to the Philippines. Once again it was only legitimate to expose nurses to the dangers of fighting. Women who served in non-nursing capacities were removed from the perils that being in close proximity to combat posed to their womanhood. The nurse's veil acted as a symbolic shield to the horrors of war, and the implicit damage to nurses' femininity these horrors could cause. Women in the services performed a multitude of tasks. However, as is exemplified by the Searchlight Stations which were operated by AWAS, these women were allowed to do anything but load and fire weapons. Notions of future motherhood and the societal implications of mothers "having the deaths of other mother's sons" on their hands restricted the possibilities and usefulness of servicewomen.[63] Fifty years later, the issue of whether or not women should be put into a position where they will kill is still alive, and similar reasoning is given both by feminists and non-feminists alike.[64] Similar to the situation in the U.S., these restrictions may possibly have had ramifications other than those of maintaining the moral purity of the mothers of Australia's future. It is possible to view these curtailments as an example of maintaining those 'skilled' professions

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[62]Adam-Smith, *Australian Women at War* p. 230.

[63] This statement is attributed to the controller of the AWAS, Sybil Irving. Adam-Smith, *Australian Women at War*., p. 268. See also Ann Howard, *You'll Be Sorry! Reflections of the AWAS from 1941-1945*, Tarka Publishing, Dangar Island, 1990, p. 20.

[64] See above. These arguments are most often cited in connection with women and citizenship. See April Carter "Women, Military Service and Citizenship", in *Gender Politics and Citizenship in the 1990s*, Barbara Sullivan & Gillian Whitehouse (eds), University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 1996, pp. 100 – 119. Essentialist feminists such as Sara Ruddick also premise women's difference to men and hence their abhorrence for war upon motherhood. See Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking*.

dealing with weaponry as a 'masculine' domain, not weakened either literally or symbolically by the touch of feminine hands.

Rumours of sexual promiscuity and homosexuality surrounded the Australian women in uniform, just as they did their American counterparts. Recruitment advertising stressed the way the 'girls' could maintain their femininity, and even glamorized participation in the women's auxiliaries, stressing the smartness of uniforms and using images of women immaculately made-up [Figures 1 & 2]. Some images were augmented by those used in the advertisement of products like Rexona soap, where fresh faced, smartly turned out servicewomen smiled at handsome servicemen, implying romance and 'happily ever after'. These glamourized images, while attempting to stress that women in uniform would not lose their femininity, compounded the problem of the sexualization of servicewomen. In attempting to quell the fear that women who joined the services would become 'masculine', this kind of promotion and advertising may have fuelled the prejudice towards servicewomen by portraying them as potential sex objects. The public was very resistant towards women joining the military, and rumours of licentious behaviour among servicewomen abounded. For many young women part of the attraction of joining the services was the possibility of living independently away from the family home for the first time. The separation of women from the domestic sphere coincided with and compounded fears of unchecked female sexuality, which were an undercurrent to the 'man'-power requirements of a national emergency.[65]

The need to confine women's involvement in the military to times of 'crisis', and the economic constraints of maintaining a peace time militia, meant that most women were demobilised and the auxiliary forces were disbanded in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. Despite, or perhaps because of, the encapsulation of women's military

[65] See Buttsworth, "Women Colouring the Wartime Landscape".

experience to the crisis of World War II, the prevailing images in Australian iconography of women in uniform come from this period. The same combination of glamour and efficiency that was deployed to attract women to the services represents them and the contribution of 'Australian womanhood' to popular memory, overshadowing any more recent contributions, or images linking women and combat.[66]

[66] See "It's Great to Say 'Remember When…'", *Wartime – The Official Magazine of the Australian War Memorial*, No 5, Summer 1999, pp. 3 – 9., for some of these images. The cover to Damousi and Lake (eds), *Gender and War*, which is a *Women's Weekly* image from the Second World War depicting a young man and woman, in uniform, in a passionate embrace.

Figure 1 An example of Recruitment Advertising for the Australian Women's Army Service that stressed 'fashion' and femininity. [Collection of the Australian War Memorial used by Carolyn Newman to illustrate her article "It's Great to Say Remember When", *Wartime: Official Magazine of the Australian War Memorial*, No 5, Summer 1999, p. 5.]

Figure 2 – A representation of a fresh faced member of the AWAS on the cover of *Wartime: Official Magazine of the Australian War Memorial*, No 5, Summer 1999.

In post-war Australia, the National Service Scheme became law in 1951 and all 'male British subjects normally resident in Australia' had to register. This new scheme and the pressures that had resulted from the regular services' involvement in Korea, and from 1955 in Malaya, led to an extreme manpower shortage. The Women's Royal Australian Army Corps (WRAAC) had been instated in November 1950, following much resistance to a peacetime utilisation of women. The WRAN followed suit in 1951, while the RAAF had throughout simply continued to defy government regulations on quotas of female personnel. However, in spite of the necessity of using women in defence institutions, the women's branches of the services were the first to have to cope with budget and staffing cutbacks and remained only a small percentage of enlisted personnel.[67] The Women's Services remained separate from the mainstream military. During the 1950s this separation was the only way to make military women in peacetime acceptable to the government and the public. The WRAAC was only fully integrated into the regular army in 1984.[68] Once again women were both the solution to manpower shortages, and the victims of economic forces, a pattern that dominates recruitment of women in both the United States and Australia, and which is a concern even now for feminists. The national service scheme, unpopular with the Australian public, was suspended in 1959 and not reinstated until 1964-65 when the Australian government committed to involvement in the Vietnam War.

There has been a prevalent attitude in Australia that 'there were no women in Vietnam'. As Siobhan McHugh points out, this attitude not only ignores Australian women (of whom there were about 1,000 civilian and

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[67] Grey, *A Military History of Australia*, p. 201.

[68] Bomford, *Soldiers of the Queen*, discusses the benefits of segregating the women's corps as well as the drawbacks. At least within the separate corps, women's issues were treated as important, and women were not being compared against norms of masculine performance and behaviour. While the separate WRAAC corps encouraged notions of difference, and reinforced entrenched views about 'women's work', once the corps had been integrated military women had to deal with the masculine warrior culture of the Army without mitigation.

military personnel), and women of other nationalities who lived, worked and served in Vietnam during the conflict, but also reinforces the invisibility of the Vietnamese population, both male and female.[69] Australian women in the services earned only two-thirds of their male counterparts in Vietnam, in contrast to the American women who had equal pay. According to McHugh some women perceived a conflict of interest in being both military-personnel and nurses. The discipline of the army interfered with 'normal' interactions with patients and other servicemen in ways that Red Cross and civilian nurses did not experience. The automatic officer status conferred on nurses, combined with non-fraternisation regulations, served to reinforce their isolation within the army of which they were supposed to be a part.[70] These feelings of isolation, and the perceived conflict between being a nurse and being a member of the army, echo similar feelings experienced by nurses during both World Wars.[71]

The ways in which American experiences have dominated Australian popular perceptions have tended to assume a synchronicity between each, when historical reconstruction has in many emphasized their difference.[72] The reminiscences pieced together by McHugh and her interviewees are an example of one of disparities between Australian and U.S. portrayals of the Vietnam War experience. These differences highlight the need to understand the specificity of Australian experience, and the significance of that specificity. McHugh's collection of reminiscences stresses the caring and nurturing of Australian nurses who

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[69] McHugh, *Minefields and Miniskirts*. No members of the WRAAC went to Vietnam, unlike their counterparts in the nursing corps, attitudes about military women serving overseas remained similar to those that had prevailed during the Second World War. See Bomford, *Soldiers of the Queen*, p. 68.
[70] McHugh, *Minefields and Miniskirts*, p. 21.
[71] See Holmes, "Day Mothers and Night Sisters: World War I Nurses and Sexuality".See also Adam Smith, *Australian Women and War*.
[72] The current work of Lachlan Irvine, a PhD student who began his candidature at UWA, and former president of the Vietnam Veteran's Association in Australia, is an example of this. During his work in progress seminar in 1999, he made it very clear that he perceived the Australian Forces and their conduct in ways that differ vastly from American representations of soldiers out of control and addicted to drugs. Australian soldiers were able to help members of local populations because this element of undisciplined brutality

worked with both military and civilian populations. This is vastly different from admissions on the part of anonymous contributors to Mark Baker's *Nam: The Vietnam War in the Words of the Men and Women Who Fought There*,[73] one of whom admitted to not wanting to resuscitate a Vietnamese prostitute. Another admitted withholding medicine that was in short supply from Vietnamese patients because she saw them as the enemy.[74]

Following the Vietnam conflict the Australian military continued to recruit women in small numbers, mainly in medical and administrative positions. The Defence Force was granted a number of exemptions to the 1984 Sex Discrimination Act, and was able to keep women out of combat roles through these exemptions and the difference in definition between 'combat' and 'combat related' roles. Prospects for women in the Defence Forces were actually further limited by sections of the Act, which effectively barred women from serving on Naval ships, combat or tactical aircraft and a large part of the ground forces in the Army.[75] Female cadet officers finally gained access to Australia's premier military training academy, the Royal Military College Duntroon in 1986, but as Eleanor Hancock points out, the eventual participation and problems experienced by these cadets received neither much public nor media attention at the time.[76]

In 1990 the exemptions present in the 1984 Sex Discrimination Act were waived and employment in 'combat related duties' was opened to women. Changing social attitudes and possibly the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal decision in 1989 to open all combat areas except

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was not a part of their experience. See later chapters on Australian and U.S. soldier mythologies for more details.

[73] Mark Baker, *NAM: The Vietnam War in the Words of the Men and Women Who Fought There* Quill, New York, 1982.

[74] Mark Baker, *NAM*., pp. 158 – 159.

[75] Barry, "Do We Really Want Equality of Employment for our Women in the Armed Forces?", p. 6.

[76] Hancock, "Women Combat and the Military", p. 88.

submarines to women influenced this Australian waiver.[77] Therefore, since December 1992, Australian women have been eligible to compete for 67% of Army positions, the exclusions being infantry, armour, artillery and combat engineering. In both the Navy and the Air Force the restrictions are much more minimal, and women have recently gained the right to serve on submarines. Women have acted as a part of peace keeping forces in Cambodia, Rwanda and Somalia and have also participated in the Gulf Wars of 1991 and 2003. Of all the forces the Army has been the most resistant to the idea of opening up all positions to women, citing women's inadequate body strength and unit cohesion as the main reasons for their exclusion.[78] The movement of women into some combat roles in the Navy in 1990 met with the same lack of attention as the entrance of women to Duntroon.[79] Feminist academic Robyn Ferrell expresses concern at the 'lack of disturbance' caused by this infiltration of a previously sacred masculine domain. Rather than a movement towards equality and a breakdown of traditional gender roles, Ferrell instead interprets the military as having shifted shape, becoming a 'feminine body' that is expendable, where the masculine body has become aligned with the machine. According to her analysis, there has been no change in the symbolic value of gender roles, merely redefinition of value in accordance with the

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[77] The Canadian experiment suffered from limited interest and the need to integrate women as quickly as possible with little in place structurally to assist this change. A high attrition rate resulted from a lack of prescreening or a need to meet minimum physical standards before assignment. Opponents of women in combat may cite this as an example of why women should not be present at all, rather than examining the high attrition rate as a failure of the system. See Lt. J A Weatherill, "Gender Awareness within the Australian Defence Force", *Australian Defence Force Journal*, no. 117, Mar./Apr., 1996, p. 46. See also Rene Denfeld, *Kill the Body the Head Will Fall*, Vintage, New York, 1997, p. 122.

[78] Personal Communication with Kath Sperling, lecturer, Australian Defence Force Academy, April 15 1999. This is also backed up by the fact that it is in the army that the largest number of positions is closed to women.

[79] Robyn Ferrell, "The Military Body – Women in Combat Roles", *Independent Monthly*, July 1991, p. 16. It may be possible that the lack of public and media attention to these moves relates to the weight of the symbolism attached to the Navy in the Australian imagination. Certainly when moves to open up combat roles in the Australian Army were once again under scrutiny in January 1999, the public furore and media attention were huge – could this be as a result of the role the army and the soldier (the 'Digger') have played in the construction of national identity and mythology, in contrast to the Navy which does not hold the same sway over popular consciousness or memory.

'feminisation' of other work as previously discussed.[80] This speculation is worthy of consideration and points to the complexities of the ways in which military identities are gendered. However, the metaphorical association of the masculine body with the machine is not a new one and the nexus between power, violence and military masculinity has not shifted, despite the increasingly varied roles women in the military play. Until women are formally accepted, and officially recognized, in significant numbers into combat roles it will be impossible to assess whether or not the politics of the gendered militarized body have changed.

Sexual harassment in the Armed Forces remains one of the areas in need of urgent attention, and receives a large amount of media attention which popularly portrays women as victims, and reinforces the notion that women 'can't cut it' in the military. The 1992 scandal over allegations of sexual assault and harassment on board HMAS Swan in 1992 led to a Senate inquiry which has resulted in the enforcement of a zero tolerance policy toward sexual harassment.[81] Four officers were censured, and the then-Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral McDougall, admitted that neither ships nor personnel had been adequately prepared for the integration of servicewomen.[82] However, an overall change in military culture and the way in which servicemen and women are 'initiated' has still not been closely examined. Nor has the impact of the 'digger' tradition upon service women, which Sue Walpole, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commissioner in the early 1990s, argues is partly responsible for the isolation of women in the services.

> A big part of the problem…is the enormous pressure on people not to go outside the group to solve group problems. If they can't get satisfaction from senior

[80] Ferrell, "The Military Body – Women in Combat Roles".
[81] See The Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade, *Government Response to "Facing the Future Together" Report on Sexual Harassment in the Australian Defence Force*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1994.
[82] Carolyn Nordstrom, "Sexual Harassment in the Military", *Pacific Research* 6 (3), November 1993, pp. 30 – 31, p. 30.

> officers [sic]. For women to take the next step and…[move] outside the services to lodge their complaint, takes extraordinary courage.[83]

'Mateship', it seems, protects mates, but it cannot protect women who are excluded from both the tradition and masculinist language from which the term is derived. Nor can women escape the sexualisation of their bodies, which are not made uniform through the donning of fatigues, but carry the historic symbolism of sexual availability that is implicit when women step outside traditionally feminine pursuits.

In the 1999/2000 conflict in East Timor, the issue of women in combat once again received wide media coverage. Military women played an active role in East Timor in many roles including military police and as a part of protection for Major General Peter Cosgrove who was the commander-in-chief. Similarly, Australian military women were deployed to the Persian Gulf in the 2003 strikes against Iraq. While the East Timor campaign coincided with the commissioning of a review on women's roles in the military and led to a flurry of media attention, the more recent deployments have received very little. But while the sight of women heading off to war with their male comrades may have been normalized, the fate of women being allowed into the infantry has still not been decided, with Prime Minister John Howard referring the issue to 'public opinion' in 2001.[84]

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[83] Kerry O'Brien, "Letting Their Defenses Down", *Time Australia*, November 22 1993, v.8, no. 47, p. 13.

[84] For television depiction of military women in East Timor see "Women in Combat", *Sixty Minutes*, Nine Network, 27 February 2000. Examples of the media coverage on the women in combat issue and the deferral of a decision see Robert Garratt, "Warrior Women", *The Australian* (Features section), 10/04/01, p. 13; Geraldine Capp, "Reith Wary of Women in War", *The West Australian*, 15/05/01, p. 7; Simon Kearney, "Women Can Go Into Battle", *Sunday Times*, 13/-5/01, p. 2

Women in the U.S. Military

Prior to the First World War, there is evidence to suggest that women in the United States participated on an informal basis in the military, both in the provision of support services and on the battlefield itself. Folklore arising from the War of Independence, such as the 'Legend of Molly Pitcher', had its origins in the tens of thousands of women who participated in the conflict, both in and out of uniform.[85] This legend is an example of the ways in which the participation of women in battle has attained mythical status. The number of women who participated in this war remains unsubstantiated, and their actions have been portrayed as an anomaly rather than a part of a long tradition of women's military participation. Margaret Corbin is the individual to whom the legend is often attributed. Corbin, the first woman to whom Congress awarded a disability pension, became famous after being wounded while tending her husband's cannon in the Battle of Fort Washington.[86]

According to Linda Grant De Pauw, there were thousands of women who participated in the battles of the Revolutionary War in the United States. Their role was not just as nurses or 'camp followers', but as 'army women'. Many of these women crossed the battle fields under heavy fire to carry water to the cannons which needed to be swabbed down at regular intervals – hence the 'pitcher' part of Molly's fame. Transformed into a written text in 1859, Molly Pitcher as a character was placed within a framework of appropriate individual wifely devotion.[87] In attributing bravery to a single woman acting out of love, rather than as an

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[85] Linda Grant De Pauw, "Women in Combat – the Revolutionary War Experience", *Armed Forces and Society*, v.7, no. 2, Winter 1981, p. 209. See also Jeanne Holm, *Women in the Military*, Novato CA, Presidio Press, 1982, Chapter One.

[86] WREI, "Women in the Military – Did you know? Some Interesting Historical Facts about American Women and the Military", www.wrei.org/military/didyouknow.htm, Accessed April 1999.

[87] For a number of accounts where stories have been re-cast to align soldier-women with prevailing attitudes of 'acceptable' femininity see Julie Wheelwright, *Amazons and Military Maids*, Pandora, London and San Francisco, 1994 edition. For an examination of a folkloric tradition of women in 'unconventional' roles, and the presence of women sailors and soldiers in song, see Pauline Greenhill and Diane Tye (eds) *Undisciplined*

example of courage shown by many women vital to the war machine, the potential disruption of the gender binary that elevates the male soldier is defused. Thus, many women carrying out a task crucial to the operation of weaponry were conflated to one folkloric heroine who was, as an exception, unthreatening and made to conform to notions of feminine propriety through the romantic story of a wife looking after her husband.

From Joan of Arc to 'Molly Pitcher', the portrayal of women soldiers as individual legends has reinforced the construction of war as an arena in which women should not be, and normally are not, involved. The movement between individual and collective capabilities, motivations and participation, and the ways in which they are conflated and confused is a recurring theme when discussing women and combat. In this case the involvement and ability of many women is fused to become the exceptional one woman/legend. When women take on formal roles in the military institutions of the late twentieth century they are not assessed according to individual physical capabilities, but according to collective 'norms' which are blind to the strengths and weaknesses of the individual. Similarly, the 'downfall' of individual women, who are constructed as 'exceptional', is used as an indicator of reasons why women collectively should continue to be marginalised in the military.[88]

Bolstering the myth of the exceptional individual female hero is the lack of records kept on numbers of women who have participated in different conflicts, and details of the functions. Just as the homefront/battlefront division obscures the diversity of experience of women in twentieth-century conflicts, the inadequacy of traditional categories to encompass the range and fluidity of the tasks undertaken by

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Women: Tradition and Culture in Canada, McGill – Queens University Press, Montreal and Kingston, 1997.

[88] Contemporary examples of this include Shannen Faulkner's 'failure' to survive at the Citadel military academy, Kelly Flinn's public disgrace in 1998 for adultery after being the first woman to fly a B-52 bomber jet in the U.S. Air Force, and the death of Kara Hultgreen in 1994 who was the first woman to qualify to fly a naval fighter jet.

women contribute to the gendered silences of the war narrative.[89] In North America women in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-centuries[90] were not recorded as part of an army's functioning or budgeting, their rights to rations were limited and the tasks they performed obscured through official records.[91] Another factor masking roles and numbers was the class composition of women involved. Gillian Russell is able to portray in some detail the 'antics' of aristocratic women such as Georgina, Duchess of Devon during the War of Independence, due to newspaper reports, diaries and letters.[92] As Paul Fussell points out in *The Great War and Modern Memory*,[93] the dominant story of the Great War is transmitted through the writings of educated, upper class officers. The experiences of the rank and file have not survived the passing of time, either because they were not written down or because they have not received the amount of notoriety accorded other sources. Similarly, women 'followers'/soldiers have also been prejudiced by the lack of written material recorded about them or by them. But where no one denies the existence of white male ranks, regardless of recording of their personal experiences, the presence and importance of women on the battlefield is continuously questioned. The myth overshadows and marginalises the involvement of many women on many different levels, and bolsters notions of normative, peaceful, defended, and defendable womanhood.

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[89] Goldstein, *War and Gender*, has undertaken painstaking research into the presence or absence of a significant contribution by women on the battlefield. He places great emphasis on the 'burden of proof', while failing to grant adequate attention to the fact that historical sources that have survived, have not, for the most part been written by women, and that women's activities have always been granted little or no attention in traditional histories and political treatises. This occurs throughout but see particularly pp. 11-15.

[90] And the twentieth century in some instances. In my research for "Women Colouring the War-time Landscape", I was unable to obtain statistics on the number of women from Western Australia who had joined the WRANS (Women's Royal Australian Navy) during World War II, as these numbers were just not collated at the time.

[91] See Enloe, *Does Khaki BecomeYou?*, Chapter One "The Military Needs Camp Followers".

[92] Gillian Russell, *The Theatres of War: Performance, Politics and Society 1793 – 1815*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1995, pp 38 – 40.

[93] Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, New York and London, Oxford University Press, 1975.

By the time of the entry of the U.S. into the Great War in 1917, the lines demarcating gender roles in the military had become more firmly entrenched. Women were for the most part formally restricted to the role of nursing, 10,000 serving overseas during the period.[94] The Navy recruited women as "yeomen" to take up clerical roles during this conflict. This recruitment presented a problem: in the Navy all personnel had to be officially assigned to a ship, yet women were forbidden to serve at sea. The solution devised was to 'assign' these servicewomen to a ship which had sunk previously and lay at the bottom of the Potomac River.[95] Distance from the theatre of war, and late involvement in the conflict, are significant when examining the restrictions in place upon the use of women in the services. Unlike internal conflicts, where women bearing arms can be viewed as a part of 'defending' the hearth and therefore not representative of a flouting of domestic ideology, conflicts on foreign soil in formal capacities would severely threaten notions of defending "womenandchildren".[96]

In the immediate aftermath of the Great War all women in the services other than nurses were demobilised. Although 34,000 women had served in the military during the participation of the United States in this conflict, it was still seen as an unsuitable arena for them on an ongoing basis.[97] Attempts were made to formulate plans for the use of women in the armed forces in the 1920s, but they foundered. It was not until after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbour in December 1941, and the United States entered the Second World War as a combatant in both Europe and the Pacific that the use of women's labour to supplement and replace men in non-combatant roles was even seriously considered.

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[94] Holm, *Women in the Military.*, p. 10.
[95] Holm, *Women in the Military*, p. 12.
[96] Cynthia Enloe coined the merged phrase "womenandchildren" in her work on women and the military. "Womenandchildren: making feminist sense of the Persian Gulf Crisis", *The Village Voice*, 25 September 1990.
[97] Holm, *Women in the Military*, p. 17.

By 1943, 23% of the Army was engaged in clerical activities, and by 1944 this figure had risen to 35%[98]. The need to utilise so many capable 'fighting' men behind the lines was an impetus to introduce the idea of women in uniform, the need for military discipline outweighing ideals of femininity. The Women's Auxiliary Army Corps (WAAC) Act was passed in July 1942, giving women partial military status, which was upgraded to full military status by June 1943 when the WAAC became the WAC. Women were accepted on the same basis as male Navy reservists by July 1942 and gained entry to the Marines by 1943. By the end of the war 350,000 women had voluntarily entered the U.S. military services at some time.[99]

Where the majority of women in the Army were confined to clerical duties and excluded from employment involving the carrying of weapons, the other services had a broader range of activities to which women had access. By 1944 all the link airplane instructors at Cherry Point in North Carolina were women Marines, and other activities undertaken by them ranged from packing parachutes to control tower operations. Unlike British women who successfully staffed anti-aircraft batteries, the U.S. government never allowed its servicewomen to be involved in activities where they would be using 'real' weapons.[100] There were 1,830 female pilots in the auxiliary branch of the Air Force, the WASPs (Women's Airforces Service Pilots). Although these women were trained to fly all manner of aircraft they were never granted full military status.[101] The restrictions on women in combative roles meant WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service) could not serve on ships. A modified version of this restriction was still in place for Navy women until the 1990s. While no law explicitly prohibited women from

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[98] D'Ann Campbell, *Women at War with America*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge Mass., & London, 1984, p. 19. See also Holm, *Women in the Militar*,. Chapter Seven.
[99] Campbell, *Women at War with America*, p. 20.
[100] Campbell, *Women at War with America*, pp. 38 – 39. This was in spite of a secret experiment whereby in 1942 400 WAACS were trained in the use of anti-aircraft batteries in the Washington area, and proven more than capable.
[101] Devilbiss, "Gender Integration and Unit Deployment: A Study of GI Jo", p. 550.

participation in the infantry, combat exclusion laws were in place that prevented women from serving on combat ships, and from flying combat aircraft. These exclusions came under scrutiny following the highly visible presence of women in operations Desert Storm and Desert Shield in 1990 – 1991, and were lifted shortly after that war. The first woman to attend combat pilot training in the Air Force did so in 1993, and in 1994 women received their first permanent assignments to Navy warships.[102]

Objections to women's involvement during the Second World War related to prevailing notions about 'suitable' occupations for women. Rumours of immorality and a loss of femininity once a uniform was donned bolstered these objections. Gossip was rife about servicewomen recruited in order to 'service' men, complementing fears of women being in charge and thereby losing their femininity, or alternatively, of feminising the military.[103] Women were never meant to be in a position where they could be in the line of fire or become prisoners of war, but this did not protect all staff. Where the women's auxiliary services may not have been directly exposed to these risks, nurses certainly were. Nursing had, by the time of the Second World War, become an acceptable career for women, and their exposure to the horrors of war was not considered in the same light as it was for other women. Nurses were taken prisoner in the Pacific War but this was viewed as 'accidental' and therefore the risk was deemed more acceptable than that of sending women into war as combatants.

The majority of the women who had served during the war were demobilised in the immediate aftermath. By 1948 Congress, recognising

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[102] Herbert, *Camouflage isn't only for Combat*, p. 5.

[103] Campbell, *Women at War with America.,*pp. 39 – 45. For an indepth discussion of what was a very well organized slander campaign conducted against the WAC see also Meyer, *Constructing G. I. Jane*. Ongoing fears remain that the military is being 'feminised', and some conservative commentators believe that feminist lobbying for women's equal participation in combat roles is actually a deliberate ploy to weaken the effectiveness of the U.S military and thus eventually cause its downfall. See David Horowitz "Ms America Goes to Battle: The Feminist Assault on the Military", *National Review*, 44, 5 October 1992, pp. 46 - 49.

the necessity to use women's services in an emergency but unwilling to implement or recognise any permanent value of women in the military, abolished special women's units. Instead, by way of the Women's Armed Services Integration Act, provisions were made for a small number of women to be army reservists. However, the Act stipulated that women never make up more than 2% of the total military,[104] nor were they permitted to rise to a rank any higher than Lieutenant Colonel.[105] This situation remained largely unaltered until after the Vietnam War, when a shift in image was deemed desirable, and the necessity of looking to a new pool of labour following the abolition of the draft meant that military institutions and governments once more reassessed women's capabilities.

The Equal Rights Amendment in 1971 compelled military institutions to examine the criteria that had hitherto restricted women to medical and administrative roles, and to start investigating the implications of the combat exclusion policies. In 1973, in the wake of the Vietnam War, the U.S. Army became a purely voluntary organisation. Concerns about manpower shortages and an unspoken reluctance to allow that force to be dominated by black men, led the military to attempt to recruit "[the] least undesirable human pool of the reserve army of labour"[106] – white women. However, numbers of women recruited remained low and even during the Vietnam War they remained under 2%.[107] Between 1971 and 1981, the percentage of women in the armed services grew to 8.5%.[108] This transition from being used as labour in a 'crisis' with defined boundaries, duties, and time span, to being a part of regular forces, meant the perils of 'feminisation' were no longer mitigated by wartime necessity.

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[104] Devilbiss, "Gender Integration and Unit Deployment: A study of GI Jo", p. 550.
[105] Ms Carolyn Becraft, Assistant Secretary of the United States Navy (Manpower and Reserve Affairs), Keynote Address given at "Women in Uniform Conference" at ADFA, Canberra, 12 May 1999.
[106] Nira Yuval Davis, *Gender and Nation*, Sage Publications Ltd., London, 1997, p. 98.
[107] Becraft, Keynote address, "Women in Uniform Conference".
[108] Devilbiss, "Gender Integration and Unit Deployment", p. 550.

Sexual issues remain some of the major stumbling blocks for servicewomen, and are intrinsic to the sexualisation of women's bodies and their treatment as pathological and unpredictable.[109] Fraternisation, sexual harassment and, until recently, the relentless pursuit of homosexuals and lesbians in the military, dominate the discussion of women in any capacity in the military. As access to combat roles has become an increasingly hot topic, these issues gain sharper focus and are put to different uses.[110] A 1981 study revealed that women were discharged from the U.S. Navy for homosexuality at a rate two and a half times higher than that for men, which implies a much higher degree of scrutiny into the private lives of military women than men, leading to a higher attrition rate.[111] The rate of discharge of homosexual women indicates that as women move into more and more occupational specialties, sexuality is still being used to discredit, then destroy, the career chances of individuals.

As women have gained a permanent status in all the branches of the military, access to combative roles and the distinction between combat and combat-related duties has received increasing, if sporadic, attention. The debate surrounding women's physical capabilities dominated proceedings before women were finally granted access to military academies in 1976. A former Army Chief of Staff made the statement that

> [M]aybe you could find one women in 10,000 who could lead in combat, but she would be a freak and we're not running a military academy for freaks…The pendulum has gone too far…They're asking women to do impossible things. I don't believe women can carry a pack, live in a foxhole, or go a week without having a bath.[112]

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[109] See above.
[110] Enloe, *Does Khaki Become You?*.
[111] Enloe, *Does Khaki Become You?*, p. 143.
[112] *Washington Post*, 30 May 1976, cited in Martin Binkin & Shirley J Bach, *Women and the Military*, The Brookings Institution, Washington DC, 1977, p. 50.

The question of how many men in 10,000 could lead in combat, and what kind of 'special' capabilities required for men in these positions that may appear 'freakish' in civilian society, was never asked. Instead, women were collectively categorised as physically incapable. Social expectations of femininity were mixed with ideas about female physical capacity in this argument. Reference to an anticipated lower tolerance for dirt exposes the issue of women in combat as one that is as much about cultural expectations as it is about combat readiness. The crucial nature of combat capabilities as an entrance requirement to these academies indicated a much bigger issue: that is, in order to gain promotion as an officer, combat experience is crucial and women have effectively been prevented from rising as high as they might through the ranks because of this exclusion.[113]

In 1978 six U.S. Navy women sued for the right to serve aboard ships in the court case *Owens vs. Brown*. Their success meant that the Navy had to open ships up to servicewomen, but led to the reclassification of ships according to whether they were 'combat' or 'auxiliary' in function, women only being allowed to serve on 'auxiliary' ships. Arguments against the issue of mixed crews serving at sea pitted the morale of Navy wives against that of the female officers.[114] Implicit in this debate was the notion that women had less value to the Navy as serving crew members, than they did in the traditionally 'feminine' support role of wife. Again it was implied that women in uniform were a 'moral' and a sexual threat to the wellbeing of men at sea. Changes to the military draft

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[113] "The Facts About Women in the Military 1980 – 1990". Factsheet at www.inform.umd.edu, pp. 3- 4, Accessed May 1999. Since their admission to West Point and other elite military institutions, women have consistently performed well. In 1990 both West Point's Rhodes Scholarship winners were women and in 1989 Cadet Kristen Baker became the first woman to be appointed as Brigade Commander and First Captain of the West Point Corps of Cadets. The case of Shannen Faulkner is possibly one of the most well-publicised incidents of a woman trying to gain access to the previously all-male bastions of military colleges. In 1995 Faulkner applied for and gained an injunction allowing her access to a place at 'the Citadel', a military college which had until then never admitted women, unlike West Point and many others which have been open to women since 1976. Faulkner, unable to cope with harassment, and appearing to fail the gruelling physical training, pulled out of the college after only a short time. The arguments that ensued focussed on her physical inability, as a woman, to cope with the requirements of an elite military force.

legislation in 1981, which meant the potential reintroduction of conscription, saw the issue of women and combat come before the Supreme Court as the compulsory registration of women for the draft was discussed. The legal exclusion from combat made women conscripts too difficult to administer, according to Army officials, and the Supreme Court upheld this reasoning.[115] During the early 1980s the debate over women in the military and their relationship to combat duties receded in importance as economic recession made male recruitment much easier, and the five year plan for increasing the numbers of women serving from 8% to 12.4% was scrapped.[116]

However, the 1983 invasion of Grenada again ignited the debate surrounding women's positions in the military, and their relationship to combat duties in particular. More when 170 Army women were involved in the invasion of Grenada. These women participated as military police, signal and communications officers, helicopter crew chiefs, maintenance personnel and ordinance specialists.[117] The line drawn between combat and combat-related duties was obviously blurred. The Grenada operation paved the way for the more obvious participation of women in the 1989 invasion of Panama, where over 800 women participated in various occupations. The profile of women's proximity to, and involvement in, combat situations was heightened when Captain Linda Grant led a group of military police in a successful raid against a military dog kennel. The Department of Defense denied this was a combat operation, maintaining that the long-standing ban on women in combat was still in force, in spite

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[114] Holm, *Women in the Military*, p. 326.
[115] "The Supreme Court Opinions on Limiting the Military Draft to Men", *The New York Times*, 26 June 1981, cited in Holm, *Women in the Military*. p. 153.
[116] Judith Hicks Stiehm, "*Female Soldiers, Combatants or Non Combatants* & *Women in Khaki: The American Enlisted Woman* – Book Review", *Signs*, v.9, Spring 1984, p. 508. The use of women as an economic stopgap in the military has worried some feminists. Funding cuts and the change in role of the U.S. military following the end of the Cold War may lead to women being the 'first to go', and that these changes could become an overt reason for an active discrimination against their recruitment. Similar economic issues may also face the Australian Defence Forces. See Carter, "Women, Military Service and Citizenship", p. 102.
[117] WREI Factsheet, p. 4.

of the obvious crossing of the 'line in the sand' between combat and non-combat operations.[118]

Operations Desert Storm and Desert Shield in 1990-1991 appear to have been a watershed in dealing with the issues surrounding women in combat roles in the United States' military. There were 40,000 women involved in operations in the Gulf in a wide range of capacities. Proximity to bombing and missile launching, even if not actually involved in the firing of these weapons themselves, made attempts to deny the equal danger to male *and* female personnel impossible. The high profile of women in the Gulf forced the administration to reevaluate certain inequities in the combat exclusion policy, whilst also seeking not to overstep publicly acceptable mores of notions of appropriate action.[119]

One of the major problems cited in relation to women participating in combat situations is the possibility of their being taken prisoner. The possibility of sexual assault of women soldiers in the hands of the 'enemy' is at the forefront of many arguments against women in combat roles. Such a scenario is considered to be bad for male morale and unit-cohesion, and dangerous in that it may make men more prone to give up vital intelligence if women in their units are threatened with rape. This argument fails to recognise the possibility of men being sexually assaulted. It also places a different value on the bodies of women than on those of men, in a similar way to the discussion over whether or not the public could 'cope' with the sight of young American women coming home in body bags.[120] The

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[118] Enloe, "The Politics of Constructing the American Woman Soldier", p. 98. For more details see the following chapter.

[119] Becroft, Keynote Address, "Women in Uniform Conference". Becroft saw the mobilisation of the large numbers of women who were reservists as a major factor in the education of the American public. This situation was unprecedented and meant that women's participation was very much a local issue rather than a distant issue of the Pentagon. Local communities followed stories of their friends and neighbours in the media, and received a different insight into the functions of military women.

[120] The proponents of these arguments appear to forget that since the Second World War nurses have both been taken prisoner and killed although not in combative roles. It is also conveniently ignored that women in combat zones are still under threat even if not in a 'combat' role, and that they may die whether or not they are allowed to wield a weapon to

United States military and the American public were directly confronted by both of these situations during the Gulf War. Two women were taken prisoner, one of whom later admitted to having been sexually assaulted, and eleven were killed[121]. These incidents were used in arguments that aimed to maintain the exclusion of women from serving in combat aircraft, which was upheld by the Presidential Commission into Women in Combat in 1992.

In defining women as the objects of sexual attacks from outside the military, the internal problems of sexual harassment and assault were effectively minimised. These issues became the focus of public scrutiny just after conclusion of the hostilities in the Gulf in September 1991. A female officer, Lt. Paula Coughlin, who had attended the Tailhook Convention in Las Vegas, made public the assaults she had received there at the hands of fellow naval officers. The scandal resulting not only from the misconduct at the convention, but also the failure of the Navy to initially conduct a satisfactory investigation, highlighted the plight of many servicewomen. The Department of Defence investigation revealed that eighty-three women and seven men were assaulted during the Tailhook Convention of 1991. Twenty-three officers were found to deserve punishment from the Navy for indecent assault and a further twenty-three officers were similarly found to have been guilty of indecent exposure. 117 officers were judged guilty of complicity in these acts, and others of 'conduct unbecoming'.[122] As Admiral Kelso, Chief of Naval Operations, admitted,

> Tailhook brought to light the fact that we had an institutional problem with women…it was a watershed event that has brought about cultural change.[123]

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ward off an attack. This point also raises interesting issues as to the more 'accepted' idea of men coming home in body bags and the different symbolic value attached to this. See the following chapter.

[121] Enloe, "The Politics of Constructing the American Woman Soldier", p. 103

[122] Office of the Inspector General (Department of Defense), *The Tailhook Report (The Official Inquiry into the Events of Tailhook '91)*, St Martin's Press, New York, 1993, p. 2.

[123] *The Tailhook Report*, p. ix.

Nevertheless, the problem is still 'with women', and is therefore marginalised as a women's issue, although acknowledgement of the need for a 'cultural change' has resulted in some public shifts in attitude regarding women's treatment. Incidents like 'Tailhook' have also served to bolster the arguments of those who want women to remain excluded from certain sectors of the military and combat roles in particular. Women in combat roles were even used as a background reason for the violent and disrespectful acts that took place during Tailhook '91. The introduction to *The Tailhook Report* claims that the incidents that took place during the 1991 convention were 'tamer' than those preceding it.[124] This statement indicates a tradition of sexual misconduct. And yet, in accounts tabled before the conclusion of the report, women's high profile presence during the Gulf War and the possibility of opening up combative roles to women are cited as possible triggers for the violence of 1991. The report indicates that men wanted women excluded in order to protect their own employment:

> The heightened emotions from the Gulf War were also enhanced with the forthcoming…downsizing of the military, so you had people feeling very threatened for their job security and to more than just their jobs but their lifestyle. So you had people worried about what was coming down with the future…This was the woman that was making you, you know, change your ways. This was the woman that was threatening your livelihood. This was the woman that was threatening your lifestyle. This was the woman that wanted to take your spot in that combat aircraft.[125]

Here, women are portrayed not only as the victims of violence but also its cause. Women threaten lifestyles and livelihoods when they gain access to combat roles. Women also affect the 'glamour' associated with certain

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[124] *The Tailhook Report*, p. vii.
[125] *The Tailhook Report*., pp. 83 - 84.

occupations. Once an occupation is 'feminised' the prestige attached to it appears to be diminished.[126]

This diminution has in the past led to the reclassification of work according to gender access, for example in the previously mentioned reclassification of ships as 'combat' or 'auxiliary'.[127] Tailhook '91 was cited in the 1994 Congressional Report on women in combat by one of those opposing the widening of combat roles for women, as an example of what society should expect when it exposes, and encourages women to violence. Elaine Donnelly,[128] a conservative member of the Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces stated that,

> [I]f the abuse of women at the Tailhook convention was a shocking violation of our values as a Nation, and it was, why is it any more acceptable to witness predictable abuse of women at the hands of enemy thugs? Citing Tailhook to justify the unnecessary exposure of women to the violence of combat and the risk of capture is like saying street crime against women is wrong but organized crime is o.k.[129]

Donnelly depicts women as passive and in constant need of shielding. This appeal to ideologies of protection ignores the culture of violence and disrespect towards women within the Armed Forces, and circumvents the military's responsibility for the misogyny that appears to be endemic

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[126] See Meyer, *Constructing G.I. Jane* for examples of the ways certain tasks were 'feminised', and then devalued, like clerical work but also work like signaling.

[127] Or the roles women had in the development/maintenance of electrical systems relating to the Manhattan Project and their classification as 'non-technical'. Enloe, *Does Khaki Become You?*, p. 186. See also "Women of the Manhattan Project", http://www.childrenofthemanhattanproject.org/HICC/HICC_WOMEN.htm , Accessed 03/07/02 Caroline L Herzenberg & Ruth Howe, "Women of the Manhattan Project", *Technology Review* Vol. 26, No. 8, Nov-Dec 1993 pp. 32-40. This reclassification is not specific to the military although examples abound in the mobilisation of women in war time industries. See Campbell., *Women at War with America*.

[128] Elaine Donnelly is the founder for the right-wing conservative "Center for Military Readiness", and is opposed to women in the military.

[129] *Women in Combat: Hearing before the Military Forces and Personnel Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services House of Representatives, One Hundred Third*

within this culture. Significantly, the flipside to the culture of violence exhibited at the Tailhook convention, but still a part of its patriarchal underpinnings, is the kind of chivalry Donnelly referred to and which placing women in combat threatens to disrupt.

> Good men respect and defend women. Women should not be required, as the price of equality, to sacrifice this fundamental principle that governs civilized order. Permitting women in combat is egalitarianism of a different order than providing opportunities for them to become doctors, lawyers and members of the United States Senate.[130]

These 'good men' were not much in evidence at the Tailhook Convention. Could this have been a fault of the women who had overstepped the boundaries of civilised society? The behaviour of servicemen towards women of occupied countries, or countries where there are military bases, is not factored into the picture of the chivalrous warrior. Civilian women under these circumstances often suffer violence at the hands of occupying forces, and yet they do not wield arms.[131] Perhaps a civilian is not always civilised and therefore worthy of chivalry? Ideologies of racial and moral superiority that play a large part in the construction of U.S. national identity must certainly inflect the ways women in occupied territories are perceived and treated.[132] Only certain women are recognized within this code of chivalry, and their rights as citizens are not always explicit in their civilian status.

Women bearing arms disrupt the code of chivalry, and yet where they are not permitted to do this, their citizenship status and rights as equal

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Congress, first Session, Hearing held May 21 1993, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, 1994, pp. 56 – 57.

[130] Alternative views submitted by Samuel G Lockerbaum, Elaine Donnelly, Sarah F White, Kate Walsh O'Beirne, Ronald D Ray, as a part of the Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces, *Women in Combat – Report to the President*, Brassey's (U.S.), Washington, New York & London, 1993, p. 61.

[131] See Enloe, *Does Khaki Become You?*, particularly chapter 2 "The Militarisation of Prostitution".

[132] See Chapters Two and Four below.

members of society are questionable. The question of women and citizenship and the implicit rights and obligations of defending the nation state is one that continues to plague feminist theorists, and colours their reactions to the relationship between women and the military. Navigation of an opposition to military culture is fraught with the danger of endorsing arguments used by conservative proponents of excluding women, including the essentialist position that underpins the chivalric code.[133]

There appear to be contradictions within military culture regarding acceptable and unacceptable violence and "good men" having access to permissible violations of women's bodies in certain situations. As Carol Stabile points out, the 'protection scenario' is dependent upon the characterisation of women as the 'essentially' civilised, and as the inherently non-violent part of Western society. This portrayal is necessary in order to legitimate violence committed against 'barbaric' populations of both sexes, but particularly the defenceless women of 'uncivilised' cultures. "A civilised society…loses its civilized status by socializing the angel of the house to be the soldier in the field."[134] A similar argument can be made for the maintenance of a professional army: in order to remain civilised, civilians must remain apart from the mechanics of killing that are the means of their defence. In order for the carnage and damage of the Vietnam War not to be repeated this separation of spheres must be maintained, and women are an integral part of this endeavour.[135]

It was not until President Clinton was inaugurated that changes to the combat exclusion laws in the U.S. were made. In April 1993 the

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[133] See Carter, "Women, Military Service and Citizenship".
[134] Carol Stabile, *Feminism and the Technological Fix*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1994, p. 108.
[135] See Ellis, "Learning Military Lessons from Vietnam: Notes for a Future Historian", p. 220. Although Ellis makes no reference to women at all, it is not difficult to extend his argument in order to see its gendered nature. Ellis sees the Vietnam War as the death of the ideal of the 'citizen soldier' because of the recognition of the need to separate civilians from exposure to war and warriors. Thus the military culture, which appears to have an independent status in the United States in ways that appear much more separate than in Australia, is even further isolated from the functioning of wider society.

authorisation for the first woman to become a combat fighter pilot occurred, and the U.S. Air Force announced that it was training ten women to fly fighter planes. In 1994 the old 1988 rules on risk in ground combat were redefined, opening up new opportunities for women in the Army and Marine Corps. This redefinition, however, still maintained the need to keep women from the risk of direct contact with the enemy and enemy fire, reinforcing notions of 'protector' and 'protected', and failing to officially recognise the obsolete nature of such a distinction in modern warfare.[136] The first female B-52 pilot, Kelly Flynn, was the subject of much publicity, much of it negative when she was court-martialed for fraternisation in 1997. Flynn's abilities as a combat pilot were subsumed under the menace that her femininity and sexuality posed in the masculine bastion of the military, just as her photogenic appearance and 'glamour' overshadowed her abilities as a pilot in her role as 'covergirl' in much of the media. Questions once again arose as to whether women should in fact be allowed into these military roles given their obvious propensity for disruption.

Debates surrounding women's place in the military of the United States, and whether or not women should be or are capable of participating in combat, are ongoing. Military operations in Afghanistan at the turn of the twenty-first century, and in Iraq in 2003, have provided more arguments both for and against changing the gender balance and identity of the military.[137] War within, or civil war/revolution, appears to have been the forum for the emergence of the soldier heroine in the United States, even if she is deemed aberrant from the rest of the female population. When the focus of battle cannot be separated from the domestic 'feminine'

[136] Carter, "Women, Military Service, and Citizenship", p. 101.
[137] More detail on later military operations is contained in Chapter Four on soldier identity in the United States, and in the epilogue "Media(ted) Bodies".

sphere of hearth and home, women were more likely to be involved, and have their involvement in war and combat recognised.[138]

The narration of the wars of the twentieth century, in both Australia and the U.S. seems to have mitigated against the emergence of female soldier heroines. Women were moved, albeit often reluctantly, into official roles of ambulance drivers, nurses, cooks, land army 'girls' and members of the auxiliary forces. Their 'auxiliary' roles, which were by definition subordinate to those of men in the services 'proper', and the tight regulations governing their participation, denied their inheritance of any tradition of the mythical warrior heroine. Their proximity to the 'front' wherever it may have been was, however, still a means of blurring the boundary between defended and defensible, as is indicated by the moral panic surrounding the sexuality of women in uniform that continues to the present day. Military women pose a threat to the apparent stability of masculine soldier identity, and the politics of gender binarism that underpin the potency of the male warrior.

[138] In many ways, the terrorist actions of 2001 in the U.S., and 2002 in Bali, highlight further how arbitrary the distinction between home and battle front are, and how redundant ideologies of protection can be.

2

…Gonna Make a Man Out of You: Transformation and the Gendered Construction of Soldiers

Introduction

Strong, impenetrable, hard, and aggressive, to be a soldier has been constructed as an expression of masculinity in its most pure and extreme form since Homer sang the praises of Achilles and Odysseus.[1] Defined by and defining an appearance of coherent masculinity, the traits exhibited by the soldier have traditionally distinguished not only 'the men from the boys',[2] but men from women and the masculine from the feminine. This chapter examines the gendered construction of the soldier and the ways in which this has changed over the twentieth century, creating a framework within which the specificities of soldier identity in Australia and the U.S. can be examined in Chapters Three and Four.

In this chapter and the two that follow, I compare and contrast soldier mythologies from Australia and the United States, highlighting differences and commonalities between the soldier identities of both countries. I question how these identities, which appear to be so crucial to the narration of 'nation', simultaneously draw from and feed constructions of gender. The differences in the kinds of material available regarding each

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[1] See Helen Pringle, "The Making of an Australian Civic Identity: The Bodies of Men and the Memory of War", in Geoffrey Stokes (ed), *The Politics of Identity in Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1997, pp. 92 – 104. Pringle speaks generally about the ways in which classical allusions help to define the quintessential warrior, placing value on the company of men above all else, and the ways in which these allusions have helped construct the ANZAC identity of the Australian soldier. See also Robin Gerster, *Big-Noting: The Heroic Theme in Australian War Writing*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1987. Gerster discusses the ways in which classical eulogising of war became a dominant way of describing Australian and Australian forces particularly in World War I, in great contrast to the disillusionment that is so prevalent in writings about the Great War from a British or a European perspective.

[2] An interesting point to note, and explored in more detail later in this chapter, is that in spite of soldiering being the occupation whereby 'real men' are made, soldiers in the twentieth century in both Australia and the U.S. are referred to as 'our *boys*'. The idea that warfare is a game did not die with Rupert Brooke during World War I, and the ever-changing technologies employed in modern warfare and increased attention paid to the actions and identity of the pilot of supersonic aircraft add to this notion.

nation make this kind of analysis complex. In Australia, soldier and national identities have largely been defined either in terms of, or against, the "ANZAC legend" since the First World War. I discuss how this 'legend' (re)presents gender and examine whether or not this overarching national myth can allow the space for a female soldier hero. In the U.S., while no overarching 'myth' directly relating to the soldier is apparent, traits similar to those that inform the 'ANZAC' constructions are present. Legends and imaginings of the frontier inform many aspects of soldier identity and war narratives and these filter through to representations of the soldier in the twentieth century.[3] The heightened media visibility of women in the military in the United States, the larger size of the armed forces and a much more militarized society than exists in Australia, has given rise to a more concentrated effort to explore soldier identities in terms of gender. More studies have been conducted, particularly since the Gulf War, on the construction of the female soldier/warrior in the U.S. than in Australia. It is from the United States that the film and television texts in which those female warrior heroes, to be discussed in later chapters, have largely emerged, and then circulated in an Australian context. This makes the international comparison crucial in order to be able to perceive how globalising film and television sources in which the female warrior hero is prominent, can be assimilated into, or fracture, the gendered identity of combatants in specific nations.

The construction of the gendered warrior is a site where the material body and the symbolic body intersect. From tall, straight, immaculately uniformed and tightly controlled soldiers on the parade-ground, to the use of the word "corps", to damaged bodies broken and bleeding on the chaos of the battlefield, no discussion of gender, or soldiers, is possible without reference to bodies and what embodiment

[3] John Wayne provides a wonderful bridge between these two kinds of identities, being present almost archetypically in Westerns and later in War films. A striking comment emerges from some written Vietnam War narratives in that this war was nothing like that which John Wayne movies had led some soldiers to believe. See for example Baker, *Nam: The Vietnam War in the Words of the Men and Women Who Fought There*, p. 33.

means. Discussions about whether or not women should be allowed into combat roles are dependent upon physical capabilities both real and imagined – and tasks set to determine physical fitness are always based upon the speculative body of a *male* soldier.[4] This body is speculative as it is based on an 'ideal' – one to which many men do not conform. The soldier's body is speculative in other ways: soldiers' bodies are mythologised and mourned as symbols of sacrifice and heroism, and through this mourning they transcend the physical bodies so important to their 'living' construction. Anne Balsamo in discussing the construction of the "techno-body" neatly encapsulates the ways in which the capacities of the material body exist in conjunction with highly contested ideological readings of those capacities:

> At the point at which the body is reconceptualized not as a fixed part of nature, but as a boundary concept, we witness an ideological tug of war between competing systems of meaning, which include and in part define the material struggle of physical bodies.[5]

Nowhere is the boundary between the materiality of the gendered body and its meanings as highly contested than through the construction of soldier identity. The boundaries between 'the masculine' and 'the feminine', which maintain a heterosexist binary in which masculinity is always superior are subject to skirmishes and fierce defences. Indeed ideologies of an "embattled masculinity" are extremely important to the construction of soldier identity in the late twentieth century, particularly in the United

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[4] There is ongoing tension as to the 'different' physical tasks female recruits undertake and a feeling that somehow they are bringing down standards as a result. However these physical fitness tests are not task/role based, but rather, based on optimal masculine performance. Tests do not exist that examine areas in which women may outperform men like long term stamina and the ability to withstand extremes of temperature. The norm is the masculine body – despite also the fact that not all men conform to these standards. See discussion on *H-MINERVA@H-NET.MSU.EDU*, "Physical Standards for Military Men and Women", December 2001 (Similar discussions occur at regular intervals on this list).

[5] Anne Balsamo, *Technologies of the Gendered Body: Reading Cyborg Women*, Duke University Press, Durham & London, 1996, p. 5.

States.[6] The gendered body cannot be viewed as 'natural': the material capacities and limits of the body do not exist without cultural intervention and discursive reinvention.

Examination of masculinity is an important entry point for analysis of the impact of the female warrior upon the politics of representing gender, combat, and the male soldier. The traditional warrior in Western culture is always male, white, and heterosexual. 'He' embodies the 'ultimate' expression of masculinity, in spite of this masculinity being something that must be instilled rather than something all men have or are. Yet gender issues in many discussions of the warrior relate only to women, and are glossed over so as not to disturb the streamlining of masculine embodiment.[7] The selective nature of gender invisibility is an important part of the male soldier identity and the survival of the female soldier. Assessment of the subversive and threatening potential of representations of women in combat, and the ways in which efforts have been made to contain this potential, is not possible without analysis of the composition of masculine warrior culture through, against, and around which the female warrior has been composed.

While historical elements are present at all times throughout this analysis it must be emphasised that the main thrust of this thesis is the examination of contemporary warrior culture. The ways in which the gendered warrior is remembered, constructed and re-constructed in the present are all a part of the production of cultural memory and are articulated through the concepts of transformation, gender camouflage and the tensions between individual and collective gendered identities (outlined below). Chris Healy, in his work on the uses of memory sees, "museum displays, statuary, historic houses, history books, films, image-making, graveside orations and the myriad ways in which relationships between past and present are

[6]For an example of a discussion of this see Susan Faludi, *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man*, William Morrow and Company, New York, 1999. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Four in the section on soldier identity in the United States.

performed" as "constituting the field of social memory".[8] In Healy's framework,

> social memory is made up of relatively discrete instances in a network of performances: enunciations in historical writing, speaking, (re)presentation and so on; the surfaces of historical discourses; the renderings of memory practices.[9]

In analysing the manufacture and uses of gendered soldier identities, historical narratives, war-memorials, book covers, cinematic and televisual texts are all a part of the fabric of collective memory. None of the experiences from different texts or memorials detailed in this and subsequent chapters exists in the absence of discourse.[10] They are all articulated as parts of the "network of performances" that are the ways the politics of gender are played out on the bodies of warriors.

My discussion of gender and the construction of the warrior hinges on three interconnected concepts: transformation, gender camouflage and the differences and contradictions between individual and collective identities. Transformation is the process through which soldiers are made out of civilians (and separated from civilian society), through training and associated rituals. It is also a means by which heroes are made of some of those soldiers, and national identity is forged through processes of memory, myth, and narrative. Gender camouflage refers both to the ways in which female (and male) military members have often been forced to subsume any characteristics that may be defined as 'feminine'. It also refers to the facets of masculine soldier identity which simultaneously heighten the outward appearance of 'masculine' heterosexual behaviour, while attempting to disguise the ways in which gender identity is a cultural

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[7] For an explicit example of this see Grossman, *On Killing*, p. xii.
[8] Chris Healy, *From the Ruins of Colonialism: History as Social Memory*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997, p.4.
[9] Chris Healy, *From the Ruins of Colonialism*, p.5.
[10] See Joan W Scott, "Experience", in *Feminists Theorize the Political*, ed. Judith Butler and Joan W Scott, New York , Routledge, 1992, pp.22-40.

construct played out on the body making the 'masculine' the norm and therefore making the masculine warrior appear 'ungendered'. While at first glance these two concepts appear disparate, and analytically incompatible, they actually complement each other in illuminating the instability of, and contradictions present in, gendered soldier identity. The hidden fissures running through the bronzed and embalmed figure of the masculine warrior hero are illuminated by the use of the concepts of transformation and gender camouflage. Both of these ideas shed light on ways in which gendered identity can be construed as performative. Judith Butler's analysis of gender as performance is particularly salient to the deconstruction of soldier identity. If gender is "a cultural performance" and "naturalness" is a part of that cultural performance "constituted through discursively constrained performative acts that produce the body through and within the categories of sex",[11] then the 'natural' alliance between masculinity and the warrior hero is not, after all, so natural. Nor are the barriers established to maintain this alliance. Transformation and camouflage are important elements of any performance, and are layered by the performer in order to convince the audience, and the other players, of the authenticity of that performance. From the donning of uniforms, to the display of musculature, the spectacle that is the gendered warrior is inscribed on and between soldiers, and in the attempted separation of soldiers from civilians.

The ways in which individual and group identity coalesce and compete, are important to both transformation and gender camouflage. Both are aspects of the ways in which gender is performed. Maintaining heterosexist masculine primacy, and the primacy of the masculine body, is vital to the defence of the identity of the male warrior hero. As will be discussed below, this identity is dependent upon the ideological assumptions that allow a collective potential for individual capacity. As Judith Butler maintains, "the 'unity' of gender is the effect of a regulatory

[11] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. viii.

practice that seeks to render gender identity uniform through a compulsory heterosexuality".[12] The construction and maintenance of a gender binary depends upon the collective polarisation of masculine and feminine identities. The military, more obviously perhaps than any other institution, depends upon the appearance and performance of compulsory heterosexuality. If identity was examined upon an individual level, then a proliferation of 'genders' and 'sexualities' would have to be recognised and the heterosexual fiction that ensures the primacy of the white male heterosexual would dissolve. Similarly, if military men and women were all evaluated on individual strengths and weaknesses, then the masculine heterosexual binary that maintains and is maintained by the externalisation of the feminine would dissolve. Group norms, or the gendered assumptions applied to collective masculine or feminine identities/bodies, assist in the continued exclusion of women and the feminine and maintain the primacy of the masculine warrior hero.

Transformation

Transformation is crucial to masculine identity, and in particular to masculine soldier identity. The movement from one state of being to another tends not to have the fluidity of 'becoming' through which De Beauvoir[13] so eloquently described femininity. Rather, 'real' men are made - moulded and manufactured from the rudimentary material of adolescents, or the imperfection of those who do not conform to hegemonic ideals, or those who have not experienced the requisite rites of passage. De Beauvoir's famous statement was intended to apply to the ways in which women are made compliant to, and are bound by, the social strictures and expectations of femininity in any given historical context. However, in revealing the culturally constructed nature of gender identity, she also implies the potency inherent in the process of 'becoming'. The process of becoming denies a fixed rigidity of identity; rather it illuminates the

[12] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 31.

potential power of a more fluid means of self-construction. In revealing this potency, the danger to identities that must appear fixed is also revealed – the danger to masculine warrior identity. The 'making' of men (and soldiers) implies elements of control that are not present in the idea of 'becoming', a process that carries with it all the unpredictability traditionally assigned to the binary opposition that aligns men and masculinity with reason and civilization, and women and femininity with the chaos of nature. What the following discussion shows is that this distinction is a semantic but necessary one in order to maintain the fictions of coherent and 'natural' gender identities.

The necessary transition from one form of identity to another is crucial in the construction of soldier identity. However, contradictorily, transformation is also the very element that destabilises constructions of masculinity, which are so dependent upon an appearance of coherence and solidity. Boys are transformed into men by participating in battle, a rite of passage belying the assumption that 'manliness' is natural to all males. Men are transformed into soldiers, their individual characteristics subsumed under military collective identity and uniforms. There have even been stories told of homosexual boys hoping the military experience will turn them into 'real', i.e. heterosexual, men.[14] Soldiers are transformed into heroes through the process of narration and separation from the group identity. Individual characteristics are effaced when soldiers are viewed as bodies, to be honed, moulded, used, counted and buried - the final transformation to be played out being that of death. Warrior mythologies transform the stories of men on battlefields, but are also fluid rather than rigid, changing over time to encompass different experiences and expectations.

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[13] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1983 [trans. H.M. Parshley; first published 1953], p. 295.
[14] See Randy Shilts, *Conduct Unbecoming Lesbians and Gays in the US Military*, St Martin's Press, 1993.

Contrary to ideals of solid stable masculinity, the construction of the soldier is subject to change depending upon historical context and popular re-imaginings, and these forms of temporal and representational transformation are crucial. As R. W. Connell has pointed out, even conservative theorists have had to acknowledge and incorporate changes in the construction and expression of masculinity over time. This shift can be seen in the ways gun lobbies and men's groups have argued for a *return* to "natural" masculinity that has been lost and/or obscured by modern values and lifestyles.[15] At times an overarching myth like that of the ANZAC in the Australian context can help to mask these changes. However, the periodic reinvention of the ANZAC legend demonstrates the fluidity of the soldier model, despite traditions which seek to demonstrate the immutability of soldiers' bodies and identities.[16] Technological innovations have characterised the modern military in the twentieth century in both countries and have meant that the skills and capabilities required of the soldier, and the way in which the soldier is represented visually, change rapidly. Conversely there are elements of continuity in the ways in which the soldier hero is constructed, assisting in the creation of an appearance of a coherent masculinity. The ways in which technology and perspectives on the body are combined also contribute to this process of moulding the warrior.

War has been narrated as a rite of passage for both men and nations, implying movement from a state of incompleteness to one of maturity. The narrative of war as the dominant western narrative of the twentieth century is infused with the potency of transformation. This transformation is narrated as a finite process of becoming – with war as the end, and the means of attaining stability of identity. The fluidity inherent in the notion of 'becoming' is defused through the use of war narratives to structure and punctuate twentieth century history. The narrative construction of clearly delineated pre- and post-war periods allows the continuities of social

[15] Connell, *Masculinities*, p. 288.

change that underlie the catalysts of military crisis to be neatly encapsulated and ignored. The evolution of standing armies in both Australia and the United States in the latter half of the twentieth century defies this parenthetic construction of the war narrative. The very phrase 'rite of passage' implies a contained linear process, culminating with the emergence from the ritual of a complete being – or nation.[17]

Australian mythology of nation is inextricably bound with the participation of Australian forces in international conflicts, with the 1915 battles at Gallipoli being cited as the Australian nation's 'baptism by fire' by historians in the latter half of the century.[18] Marilyn Lake has argued that "one of the greatest political struggles in Australian history [was] the

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[16] See below and in Chapters Three and Four.

[17] The completeness of the 'rite of passage' can be seen as a masculine process in contrast to the 'birth of the nation', the reproductive implications of which appear to be feminine. However, 'rite of passage' and 'birth of a nation' are phrases which are often used interchangeably and, when utilised in the description of endeavours which polarise the masculine and the feminine, reassert the liminality of feminine associations in either process of becoming. See Carole Patemen, *The Sexual Contract*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1988, pp. 36 & 87. Patemen has examined the necessary sexual subordination that underpins and makes possible 'the social contract' by which so much of modern western society has been regulated. As a part of this subordination – 'the sexual contract' - classic contract theorists appropriated the creativity of reproduction as a masculine, rather than a feminine process, in the movement from the old world to the "creation" of the modern world. According to both Filmer and Locke, women were merely the 'empty vessels', the containers for new life for which men were ultimately the main progenitors. This was a means of separating the process of reproduction from association with the feminine body. Women could be the instrument for new life, but men were the ones who shaped future identities. And, as the ultimate extension of this reproductive creativity men 'beget' political and social life, being the only ones capable of acting in a rational way, as socially constructed individuals, in the public sphere. The 'birth of a nation' is the ultimate expression of the creation of political right and must therefore be seen as a part of a traditionally masculine narrative of political ideology and identity. The 'birth of a nation' (to which the manhood of a country's population is inextricably bound), the making of 'real' men through soldiering and soldiers out of men, are parts of this transformational narrative. The very notion of 'nation' is a masculinist concept and therefore must come into being through male activity – and sacrifice. See also Elshtain, *Women and War*, p.75. Elshtain traces the "discourse of war and politics" from ancient Greece to the present. Notions whereby the "strength of the state" and thereby the "manhood" of the State is tested are still very much a part of modern thinking.

[18] Advertising that appeared in late 1999, early 2000, to encourage interest in the celebration of the centenary of Australia's Federation, disregards this mythology attempting to recreate 'the birth of the nation' as taking place with the first Federal Parliament. The voice over makes the statement that Australia was forged in peace and not war, ignoring the impact of the invasion of the lands of Aboriginal people and the rhetoric surrounding Gallipoli. The centrality of masculinity to Australian identity remains unquestioned and the absence of women and the feminine is palpable in this community awareness campaign.

contest between men and women at the end of the nineteenth century for the control of the national culture" which culminated in deification of the 'bushman'.[19] Annabel Cooper takes this argument one step further and claims that one of the resulting functions of ANZAC mythology was to "centralise masculinity and marginalise femininity."[20] Lake has later argued in her description of the rhetoric surrounding Gallipoli as 'Mission Impossible', that the constructed importance of the soldier to the 'birth of a nation' appropriates the reproductive power which defines femininity and the importance of women, reinforcing their position in the wings of the national identity stage.[21]

In the United States, in spite of the late entry into both World Wars, the character of the nation as international 'rescuer' and guardian of 'democracy', elements of which had been present throughout the nineteenth century, was solidified in the twentieth century.[22] Indeed, the tardiness of United States' involvement in the World Wars in some ways magnifies their characterisation as rescuer, coming in at the eleventh hour and 'saving' the day for the rest of the world.[23] This construction complicated the experiences and narratives of men fighting in Vietnam where the moral high ground was difficult to discern and impossible to

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[19] Marilyn Lake, "The Politics of Respectability: Identifying the Masculinist Context", p. 116.

[20] Annabel Cooper, "Textual Territories: Gendered Cultural Politics and Australian Representations of The War of 1914 – 1918", *Australian Historical Studies*, v.25, no. 100, 1993, pp. 405-406.

[21] Marilyn Lake, "Mission Impossible: How Men Gave Birth to the Australian Nation – Nationalism, Gender and Other Seminal Acts", *Gender and History*, v.4, no. 3, Autumn 1992, pp. 305 – 322.

[22] American involvement (and interference) in the affairs of other nations particularly where the United States had economic interests has been well documented by Walter LaFeber in *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion 1860-1898*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca & London, 1963. The characterisation of the twentieth century as the period in which America came into its own (through the might, and "right" of its military) in the public forum is exemplified by the photograph, taken in May 2000, of a poster introducing an exhibition on the United States' military at the Smithsonian American History Museum in Washington D.C. which is captioned, "The American Century – The Armed Forces on the World Stage 1919 – 1991".

[23] The rise of the comic book hero like Superman in the first half of the twentieth century expounds this notion, and the idea that truth and justice are 'the American Way'!

maintain, and the political objectives were never clear.[24] However, it has been maintained throughout later conflicts, through the dominant role of the United States in United Nations 'peacekeeping' missions. The need to mitigate the difference in construction between the United States' role in the Vietnam War and other conflicts for domestic audiences was apparent in operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm during the Gulf War. The United States' participation in the Gulf was actually discussed as a means of belatedly 'winning' the Vietnam War that America 'lost'.[25]

For both Australia and the United States there has been a sense that participation in international conflicts has assisted a definition of identity that has splintered, in differing degrees, from that of the colonial powers from which they emerged. The American Revolution is crucial to the way in which the United States has constructed itself as an independent power, and the soldier spirit that emerged from this conflict and the Civil War feeds into the way in which the 'American nation' was narrated in the twentieth century.[26] More apparent in the United States than Australia, due to its larger population and dominant role on the international stage, the transformations effected by the wars of the twentieth century have drawn a sharp distinction between the fading 'old world' (i.e., Western Europe and

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[24] Stephen E. Ambrose has demonstrated that the Vietnam War had more to do with a rhetoric of containment of communism than any direct threat to the United States either physically or economically. He notes "In the early sixties, few important officials argued that South Vietnam was essential to the defense of the United States, but the attitude that "we have to prove that wars of national liberation don't work" (a curious attitude for the children of the American Revolution to hold) did carry the day." Steven E. Ambrose, *The Rise to Globalism: American Foreign Policy Since 1938*, (sixth revised edition), Penguin Books, New York, 1991, p. xv. The reasons for being in Vietnam were never clear enough to justify such a long conflict that was so expensive in lives and materials and which caused such unrest at home.

[25] For a discussion of the way the media helped the U.S. to 'win' the Vietnam War in the Persian Gulf see Daniel C Hallin, "Images of the Vietnam and the Persian Gulf Wars in U.S. Television", in Susan Jeffords and Lauren Rabinovitz (eds), *Seeing Through the Media: The Persian Gulf War*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1994, pp. 45-57. See also Michelle Kendrick, "Kicking the Vietnam Syndrome: CNN's and CBS's Video Narratives of the Persian Gulf War", in the same collection, pp. 59-76.

[26] See Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America*, Harper Perennial, New York, 1992, for analysis of the omnipresence of the myths of the "frontier" in the construction of twentieth-century warrior identities. Reconstructions of the War of Independence and the break from Britain have been

Britain in particular) and the rising star of the new. Australia fought battles on the international stage to attain domestic autonomy and experience its 'birth of a nation'. The schism with Britain, however, has never been a complete one.

The 'birth of a nation' of Australia, must still imply the dependency of an infant on its mother in terms of identity, although by the 1990s this was highly contestable as evidenced in the referendum held on whether to sever the connections of constitutional monarchy in 1999. A demonstration of the potency of the soldier to Australian identity, and the relationship with Britain, was the role of the Returned Servicemen's League (RSL), in commentary upon the Republican issue. Bruce Ruxton, the outspoken President of the Victorian RSL, made this statement that he was to repeat often up to and through the Constitutional Convention of 1999, that the Victorian RSL,

> will never agree to this country becoming a republic. We are proud to be associated with the Queen, who is our patron, and who, as this country's head of State, has never once put a foot wrong. Show me a politician with such a record.[27]

The concerns of the RSL are taken into consideration whenever issues of the symbols of national identity are in question, from the Republican issue to whether or not Australia should change its flag. The prominence of this organisation, dominated by white male veterans, reinforces the connection between the white male soldier and national identity.

The U.S. which had already had its War of Independence by the time Australia was having its mettle tested in the Great War, was transformed into an international power through the conflicts of the twentieth century.

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prominent in the late twentieth century with the appearance of the film *The Patriot* in 2000, starring Mel Gibson.

[27] B.C.Ruxton, 'State President, The Returned Services League', Melbourne, Letter to the editor, *The Australian*, 31 January 1992, p. 10.

The War of Independence was a much more definite break with the 'mother country' – a conflict with Britain, rather than a role which emerged from Imperial cooperation. Was the War of Independence therefore, much more a 'rite of passage' than it was the (cooperative, dependent) 'birth of a nation'? While Australia relegated femininity to the sidelines of both military identity and national representation, did the United States' rite of passage eliminate the possibility of a feminine identity altogether? Was gendered identity rendered more fluid in this process of becoming, or was this the beginning of the 'gender camouflage' so crucial to the male warrior identity?

Transformation is crucial to soldier identity in other ways. Construction of the soldier also actually hinges upon the metamorphosis of men. This 'quintessential expression of masculinity' is not something to which all, or even most, men have access, and even when access is open, the occupation of a warrior is something to which men have to be moulded. Barbara Ehrenreich asserts that in the United States ordinary men and warriors are very different:

> The difference between an ordinary man or boy and a reliable killer…is profound: The man or boy leaves his former self behind and becomes something entirely different, perhaps even taking a new name…In the fanatical routines of the boot camp, a man leaves behind his former identity and is reborn as a creature of the military – an automaton and also, ideally, a willing killer of other men.[28]

Not all men become soldiers, and yet being a soldier has been characterised as the purest expression of masculinity possible. Also absent from the soldiering 'key' to masculinity is the point that not all soldiers go into battle, and the experiences of battle itself have changed drastically

[28] Barbara Ehrenreich, *Blood Rites: Origins and History of the Passions of War*, Metropolitan Books, Henry Holt and Co., New York, 1997. pp. 10 – 12.

over the last century.[29] Ehrenreich's description of the changes required of those who become soldiers is useful particularly when examining soldiering as the 'natural' expression of masculinity – a masculinity for which there is only one form and expression. However, her analysis of war, warrior-making and their causes is somewhat problematic, particularly as a result of the cross-cultural generalisations made throughout the text. There is also a lack of distinction made between conscripts and volunteers, and the difference in motivation between generals and politicians, and the foot soldiers they command and manoeuvre.[30]

Further, Ehrenreich replicates part of the notion she wishes to refute, by failing to recognise these differences, participating in the naturalisation and homogenization of soldier identity. Michel Foucault's concept of the 'docile body' complements Ehrenreich's analysis of the 'transformation' of men into soldiers and makes explicit the need for

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[29] Similar language is applied to police and sometimes firefighters. They are characterized as 'warriors', often regardless of their actual role, and women face similar battles in gaining acceptance.

[30]Ehrenreich, *Blood Rites*, p. 9. "Wars do not begin with battles and are often not decided by them either. Most of war consists of *preparation* for battle – training, the organisation of supplies, marching and other forms of transport – activities which are hard to account for by innate promptings of any kind. There is no plausible instinct, for example, that impels a man to leave his home, cut his hair short, and drill for hours in tight formation." Ehrenreich fails to account for economic reasons of joining an army, or for the implications of the draft. In Australian soldier mythology, for example, the difference between the volunteer and the conscript is a crucial one, with the volunteer constructed as much more manly, and conscripts feminised in comparison. This distinction stems from the Australian involvement in the Great War where the Australian Imperial Force was the only participant present that was completely made up of volunteers. The Australian armed forces participating in later conflicts had this legacy to live up to, which fractured the experiences of those drafted to participate. The documentary *Australians at War*, which was released in 2001 to coincide with the centenary of Australian Federation (once again implicitly linking the idea of nation with the importance of soldier identity), refers to the ways in which "nashos" (national service conscripts) gained acceptance during the battles in New Guinea during the Second World War. In including these experiences in this documentary, the mechanisms of inclusivity so important to the continuation of the ANZAC legend can be seen at work, smoothing over previously held differences in order to present a coherent picture to the present public imagination. However, despite these attempts to blur the disjunctures in Australian soldier mythology, the struggle for acceptance by conscripted soldiers must be viewed as a struggle nonetheless. There is a similar thread running through material from the United States, in which conscripts are somehow deemed lesser soldiers, and therefore lesser men. However, it is not as central to

'discipline' in the construction, and control of, individuals. In twentieth-century military institutions the statement that, "disciplinary coercion establishes in the body the constricting link between an increased aptitude and an increased domination",[31] is just as pertinent to the way in which control is exercised over recruits, as it was in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that were the object of Foucault's examination. The discipline required to transform men into soldiers aims to weed out those not suited to the life of a warrior and becomes more restrictive (and necessary) as the ranks are scaled. This enactment of power over the individual in order to give coherence, and optimum functioning, to the group identity assists in the construction of the 'natural' aptitude of men for battle and military life. The 'docile body' is where the political economy of power plays itself out, moulding that body to the use for which it is required. How ever all-encompassing the discipline of the institution, resistance is still an important balance to the concept of conforming, docile bodies. It is important to question what kind of differentiation exists between those who are forced into an institution and those who volunteer.[32] If political economy is inscribed on the body, do bodies in the military willingly submit to a certain kind of inscription if they are volunteers? Foucault's tendency to treat the body as if it were *tabula rasa*, malleable material merely waiting cultural and discursive imprinting, appears to have little room for a notion of embodiment that combines the material, the discursive, and the individual. He also, in his examination of 'docile bodies', does not examine gender as an effect played out on the corporeal tablet, despite the fact that constructions of gender inform just how 'docile' a body can be read as being.[33] The 'docility' of the military body poses particular problems for the dominance of masculinity upon which

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the American tradition as it is to the Australian, there having been some sort of conscription in existence in the U.S. since the War of Independence.

[31] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1991 (first published 1975), p. 138.

[32] For some of the limitations of Foucault's treatment of resistance in *Discipline and Punish* see Lois McNay , *Foucault a Critical Introduction*, Polity Press, 1994, pp. 99-100.

[33] Balsamo, *Technologies of the Gendered Body*, p. 21.

soldier identity is so dependent, and the mythologies and memorializing of the soldier often contain elements which seek to counter the damage the appearance of 'docility' can potentially cause.[34]

Another factor to consider in the issue of 'docility' is the association of national service with patriotism. An extension of this notion is the belief with bearing arms and facing death and dismemberment for the nation-state during war-time should facilitate the granting of rights to minority groups in non-military contexts. Women's suffrage and citizenship have been linked to the possibility of women being allowed to serve in the military, as has the performance of other groups of men in war that have then led to an expansion of their rights. An example of this was universal manhood suffrage being granted in Britain in 1918 following the enormous sacrifices made by those of "lower classes". African American rights organizations often viewed the participation of African American soldiers in the Second World War as "an exchange for first-class citizenship".[35] The carnage of the Vietnam War, and the large numbers of conscripts who lost their lives in horrific circumstances in a war that was neither popular nor morally justifiable to many, led to the abolition of the draft in the United States in 1973. So while discipline has been exerted upon the body of the soldier, both volunteer and conscript alike, this body does not exist in the military sphere alone, and can have ramifications for wider society, the potential to cause ripples in the existing power structures. The conscripted body can be read differently to that of volunteer, even though the difference may not be marked on the body clearly for the outsider to visibly discern. In the construction of soldier identity these differences are important, and the lack of immediately visible differentiation between individuals who are uniformed complicate the ways in which these bodies are narrated and read. The superimposed

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[34] For examples of this see Chapters Three and Four.

[35] Brenda L. Moore, "Reflections of Society: The Intersection of Race and Gender in the U.S. Army in World War II", in Mary Fainsod Katzenstein & Judith Reppy (eds), *Beyond Zero Tolerance: Discrimination in Military Culture*, Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, Boulder, New York & Oxford, 1999, p. 133.

uniformity, present in the functioning of the military and within the work of some cultural theorists, perpetuates the myths of a homogeneous soldier identity and of homogeneous masculinity.

While the process intrinsic to warrior identity is that of 'making men', soldiers are often referred to as 'our boys'. This reference to an incomplete masculinity is another indication of how important, and yet destabilising, transformation is to the male warrior. It is also exemplary of mechanisms which attempt to smooth over the fissures in twentieth century masculinity which requires an autonomous subjectivity, but which in a martial context must be a 'docile body'. Soldiers must make themselves overtly subject to the ritual discipline of their superiors, right up through the chain of command. The demarcation of 'our boys' operates to separate the military from the men in power at State level, and indicates a hierarchy of masculinity, in spite of the inscription of ultimate masculinity on the bodies of soldiers. The distinction between the 'men' in charge and the 'boys' on the frontlines also resonates with the Cartesian mind/body split. Soldier 'boys' are literally the youth, the energy and 'bodies' required to execute the plans of action formulated by the "men" in charge who are the ones in power - and the ones who hold the dominant position that forms this binary opposition, as the mind in control over the body. Patriarchal culture does not just depend upon the dominance of masculinity over femininity. The constant struggle for dominance of one expression of masculinity over another is just as important to the maintenance of patriarchy.[36] 'Boys' are also often the main body of the armed forces, separated not only from policy makers, but also from officers who make decisions and wield power from within military institutions. Making men, who are able to be controlled, requires a rendering of them that implies a need for direction. Referring to members of the military as boys facilitates the implication of the docility of the bodies who are standing up to be counted.

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[36] See Buchbinder, *Performance Anxieties*.

The designation of soldiers as 'boys' also assists in the process of separating actions of war that would not be acceptable in civilian life. If a soldier is following orders, the responsibility of his actions is to a certain extent abrogated. This shift in responsibility is not possible if a soldier is an autonomous man, an individual, and can be viewed as an example of an active negotiation and use of the 'docile body' inscription, by the 'boys' in question. If 'our boys' becomes 'our boys and girls', as it did during media coverage of the United States forces during the Gulf War,[37] what happens to this complex notion of responsibility? Are women, with their links to passivity and being 'civilised', able to defer the consequences of their actions in battle in the same way as 'the boys'? A further paradox denoted by the use of 'the boys' is that if boys are incomplete, in transition, their identities and their bodies are not solid and may be penetrable - which is in complete contradiction to the model of the impenetrable soldier, the quintessential man.

Where the soldier narrative can be seen to have become the 'very epitome of manhood',[38] it may have very little to do with the ways in which soldiering is experienced. This contradiction between the dominant narrative of masculinity and the breadth of actual experience is discernable in the Australian context, with particular reference to the construction of masculine mythologies from the Great War, which still resonate today. Prior to the Great War, the 'bushman' was the dominant Australian male icon. The sturdy man of infinite skill and adaptability which made him perfect to confront and overcome the challenges of the brave new world of the fledgling white nation of Australia, he was popularised in the poetry of

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[37] Stabile, *Feminism and the Technological Fix*, Chapter Four.

[38] Carolyn Steedman, *The Radical Soldier's Tale: John Pearman 1819 – 1908*, Routledge, 1988, p. 37, cited by Graham Dawson, *Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, Empire and the Imagining of Masculinities*, Routledge, London and New York, 1994, p. 21. Although Steedman's analysis focuses on the experiences of working class men in nineteenth-century Britain, elements of these experiences have filtered through and parallels can be seen in the way in which war opened up a narrative that transformed 'ordinary' (ie working class) men into 'real' or extraordinary men.

Henry Lawson and Banjo Patterson and the *Bulletin* magazine. The legend of the 'bushman' hinges on symbolism of colonial masculinity conquering, and emerging from, a hostile, 'untamed', feminised landscape. This construction facilitates the transference of these characteristics to the 'Digger' or 'ANZAC' heroes of Gallipoli and the Western Front, and informs the gendered polarisation of the 'birth of the nation' of 1915. This transference of attributes occurred despite that fact that even at the turn of the century most of the population was urban, not rural. In examining the writing of C. E. W. Bean, one of the chief propagators of the ANZAC myth, Ken Inglis points out that the education of Australian soldiers had not largely been obtained in battling the bush. Rather, "[t]he unromantic fact is that most Australian soldiers had gone to school in the suburbs."[39] Peter Weir, in his 1981 film *Gallipoli*, makes a brief acknowledgement of the importance of outback skills to ANZAC mythology and the ways in which these skills were not common to all Australian soldiers. Frank, one of the heroes of the film, is a city boy from Perth and has no equestrian skills, yet manages to join the 10th Light Horse to be with Archie. An element of ridicule is present as Frank attempts to learn to ride. Weir's 1980s representation of the Great War soldier experience makes light of the 'actual' differences between the 'boys', and in his subsequent glossing over of these differences, strengthens the appeal of the ANZAC tradition.

The heroes of the American 'Wild West', from literary and cinematic texts, similarly inform the construction of American soldier identity throughout the twentieth century. However, the mythology does not have the apparent coherence nor is it as overarching in the United States. The urgency with which national stereotyping of the Australian character (refracted through the bushman and then the ANZAC) occurred during the first half of the twentieth century is not as prominent in the United States. The conflicts that had begun to forge national identity in the

[39] Ken Inglis, "The ANZAC Tradition" [first published in *Meanjin*, No 100, March 1965], in John Lack (ed.), *ANZAC Remembered: Selected Writings of K.S. Inglis*, History Department University of Melbourne, 1998, p. 28.

United States had been underway long before 1914 in the conflicts of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[40] While the conquering of 'virgin country' is equally as important to the construction of heroes from the United States, its links to the 'ordinary soldier' are not as apparent. The different role of the 'ordinary soldier' in the iconic constructions of the United States and Australia, provide important illumination of this issue and will be discussed further in the following chapters.

It is also through narrative that individual soldiers are isolated and enshrined as heroes. Just as 'nation' is brought into being by war histories, "the heroism and virtue of the patriotic soldier is secured, not by his actions, but by their narration in terms of quest structure. The very possibility of the soldier hero is shown to be a narrative construct."[41] Where war transforms men into soldiers, narrative transforms soldiers into heroes. Soldier narratives isolate individuals from that collective identity, which is crucial to the functioning and image of the modern military. It is only through the transformation of soldier to hero, however, that individual characteristics of the warrior can be perceived.[42] Hence, the quest for heroism is both crucial and contradictory to the soldier identity, particularly in military institutions of the twentieth century. While the qualities of courage and determination appear self-evident in the soldier, the modern military functions as a *group* of soldiers. The singling out of an individual for 'uncommon valour' elevates the soldier from the ranks, and from the collective of which 'he' is a part. This elevation can cause friction in the relationship between these two kinds of identity. The collective is

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[40] See Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation*.

[41] Dawson, *Soldier Heroes*, p. 56 uses and critiques N. Frye, *The Anatomy of Criticism*, Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ, 1957, pp. 186 – 97. Dawson although seeing Frye's model as problematic due to its a-historical nature still finds it indispensable to his analysis of the soldier hero. Paul Fussell's work upon the literary traditions that preceded and sprang from the Great War also emphasises the importance of ways of telling in shaping and distinguishing the experience of the soldier. See Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*.

[42] The difference in value accorded the singling out of military women in the Gulf War in particular will be discussed later in the chapter. The continuous movement between individual and group identities and the implications for gendered constructions are of ongoing importance to this analysis.

intrinsic to effective soldier identity, and yet this is in conflict with liberal humanist discourse, which endows the individual (male) with supreme value and potentially heroic dimensions within patriarchal society.

Sociologist David Morgan exposes these competing strands in constructions of soldier identity, in his analysis of masculinity and the "Theater of War". He identifies one "focusing on the warrior, the heroic individual, and the other focusing on "brothers in arms".[43] This conflict within soldier identity is illustrative of the tension between the importance of the individual and the necessity of group cohesion in the modern nation state.[44] Modern warfare does not allow as much opportunity for the former and Morgan indicates that the priority assigned to group cohesion may even have detrimental effects upon those who display individual heroism. Instead, he argues that,

> Heroism may become identified with particular units or sections of the military – the marines, the paratroops, the SAS – rather than with any one individual. War memorials celebrate abstracted unknown soldiers rather than the heroic deeds of identifiable persons. [45]

However, Morgan does note the importance of individualism to modern American society and comments that even though the group may be more important to the effective functioning of the military, the individual remains important to the way in which the military is represented to the non-military world.

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[43] David H Morgan, "Theater of War: Combat, the military and masculinities", in H Brod & M Kaufman (eds) *Theorizing Masculinities*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1994, p. 174.
[44] See Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*.
[45] Morgan, "Theater of War", p. 174. "Public accounts of war may focus on human-interest stories or on the individual eccentricities or even heroisms of military leaders." The ramifications of this 'singling out' when applied to women, particularly in the Gulf War, and the ramifications of the narration of the 'human interest story' will be explored below.

Joanna Bourke similarly asserts that 'heroism' is impossible in modern warfare, due to the inescapable linkage of 'the hero' with carnage.[46] However, individuality in areas non-military is crucial to constructions of masculinity and, as previously asserted, the autonomously functioning rational individual is one of the key distinctions conventionally made between constructions of masculinity and femininity. This accounts for the need to single out heroes in war narratives, creating a bridge between the military experience and broader representations of masculinity. It is possible to conflate individual and group identities through the body of the 'unknown soldier', where this body represents every soldier and every soldier is, when refracted through this body, a hero. The construction of 'heroism' for consumption by the civilian public is necessary to counteract the effects of twentieth century warfare which, Bourke asserts, render 'real' heroism impossible.

The importance of the 'Unknown Soldier' to the representation of war has implications other than the broad signification of anonymous heroism required to integrate group and individual identities as indicated by Morgan. The body of the unknown soldier becomes in death a signifier of sacrifice and an immediate reminder of the frailty of the body. However, the bodies of 'the fallen' not only indicate the weakness of penetrable flesh. Contradictorily, when following the adage that emerged from the Great War and which continues to resonate today in Australia, "Age shall not weary them". In spite of succumbing, the dead are the only ones guaranteed to continue to conform to the mythology of the tall and

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[46] Joanna Bourke, *An Intimate History of Killing: Face to Face Killing in Twentieth-Century Warfare*, Granta Books, London, 1999, pp. 124–125. "The link between savagery and heroism was commented upon by men in the field, who regarded 'heroes' as inhuman and unreliable.[For instance, see Michael Herr, *Dispatches*, London, 1978), p. 14 and Roger W. Little, 'Buddy Relations and Combat Performance', in Moriss Janowitz (ed.), *The New Military. Changing Patterns of Organization*, New York, 1964, p. 205.] As one self-styled 'hero' from the Vietnam War acknowledged: "I became a fucking animal. I started fucking putting fucking heads on poles. Leaving fucking notes for the motherfuckers. Digging up fucking graves. I didn't give a fuck anymore. Y'know, I wanted -. They wanted a fucking hero, so I gave it to them. They wanted fucking body count, so I gave them body count."[Unnamed Vietnam veteran, quoted in Jonathan Shay,

upright soldier, not aging, forever young, and possessing perhaps a larger presence in death than in life. The significance of the sacrifice embodied by "the fallen" partly stems from and feeds into mythologies of the sacrifices made by Christ – language and more concrete manifestations in some memorials use imagery that hearkens back to the Crucifixion. Once again, the importance of the connection between individual and collective masculine identities is inscribed between the names of the many who died, and the representation of the single "unknown". Just as the frail body of the individual Christ was sacrificed for the eternal life of a collective population, the "unknown soldier" and all those he represents, gave his life for a greater good or glory.[47]

It is during peacetime that that 'the fallen' are assimilated into legends of the heroic soldier. As Joanna Bourke succinctly notes of the male body: it is "dismembered on the battlefields, re-membered in peacetime."[48] In her discussion of ways in which the deaths of so many thousands of young men were dealt with through the entombing of an 'unknown warrior' after the Great War in Britain,[49] Bourke recognises that this ritual is a way of maintaining the integrity of the soldier body. The maintenance of this integrity is also a means of justifying such wholesale slaughter in post war contexts. All dead soldiers are 'canonised' through this ritual, and heroic narratives mitigate the distance between the embalmed and the embodied. Just as the disintegrated bodies are symbolically reassembled, it is also during peacetime that soldier identities are constructed and woven into the fabric of national narrative.

Achilles in Vietnam. Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character, New York, 1994, p. 83.]

[47] A sculpture originally designed for the Sydney war memorial depicted a figure of a woman on a cross, standing above the bodies of "the fallen", complicating ideas of who has sacrificed what for whom. If femininity can be read as being aligned with peace, even though there are contradictory associations between femininity and civilization, then this memorial would have been a constant and controversial reminder of what it is that is destroyed when 'men' go to war. This design attracted so much outcry it was never actually erected. See ABC documentary *Australians at War*.

[48] Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male – Men's Bodies, Britain and the Great War*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1996, p. 210.

While men transformed into soldiers can be viewed as an extreme expression of masculinity, and soldiers transformed into heroes provide a bridge between combat experiences and broader social constructions of masculinity, soldiers can also be viewed as bodies. They are necessary numbers, cannon fodder to be removed in body bags. Soldiers are bodies to be counted and deployed. This is another twist in the paradox of the gendered soldier. If, as Elizabeth Grosz has asserted, women carry the cultural weight of corporeality for the whole population,[50] defined and constrained as they have historically been by their bodies, does this mean that a part of the transformation of the male body into a soldier is a feminising process? The vulnerability of the collective identity and the purpose for which soldiers are amassed belie narratives of enduring strength. Corporeal bodies are both the strength and the weakness of the soldier and the hero. There is an emphasis in military recruiting campaigns on the honing of skills and bodies. What is never alluded to are the risks implicit in military service, and the vulnerability of bodies in uniform. The anger and dismay displayed at the number of body bags in readiness for United States troops during the Gulf War indicates the need to preserve the stability of the impenetrable soldier in the public imagination.[51]

In order to maintain the construction of the male warrior, reference to the facts of gruesome potential dismemberment and death must be limited. However, whenever the possibility of the female combat soldier is debated, one of the primary arguments raised against it, in both Australia and the United States, has been that the public will not deal with women

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[49] Rituals concerning the 'unknown soldier' have had prominence both in Australia and the United States.
[50] Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, 1994, p. 22.
[51] For debate over whether or not war efforts could survive once the body bags started piling up during the Gulf War, particularly with the ways in which graphic images can be accessed with some immediacy through the media see: N Gibbs & R Ajemian, "Can a Pro War Consensus Survive?", *Time*, 18/02/1991, v.137, Issue 7, p. 32, and J Alter, "Does Bloody Footage Lose Wars?", *Newsweek*, 11/02/1991, v.117, Issue 6, p. 38.

coming home in body bags. This issue appears to loom larger with government and military policy makers than with members of the public themselves, but it recurs with predictable regularity.[52] The fear of the public response to women coming home in body bags may be due to a difference in value inscribed on masculine and feminine bodies. The reproductive role seems inescapable for the female body, making it appear to be less expendable than that of the male in the context of war. On a grossly simplified socio-biologistic rendering of such assumptions, it takes fewer men than women to continue a bloodline, a man being able to father many children simultaneously. If national and/or cultural identity is to have any continuity, the reproductive capacity of the female body must be protected. [53] The construction in war narratives of women as passive producers of the next generation needing to be protected reinforces the active masculinity of the soldier. The incorporation of women into combat roles transgresses this clearly gendered delineation and threatens the very reason for being which has underpinned soldier identity.

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[52] See Thomas E Ricks and Steve Vogel, "'Killed in Action': Is Gender an Issue", *The Washington Post* (online), http://www/washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A58342-2000Oct22.html, Accessed 10/02/2001. This also ignores the fact that military women have in fact been brought home in body bags before – US and Australian nurses have been killed in many conflicts during the 20th century.

[53] The ways in which an ethnic group can be 'contaminated', and rape therefore used as a form of genocide, erasing ethnic and cultural continuity, were grotesquely demonstrated during the conflict in Bosnia in the 1990s. For an examination of the ways in which rape had to be reconceptualised as violence that has not only gendered but ethnic ramifications see, Darius M. Rejali, "After Feminist Analyses of Bosnian Violence", in Lois Ann Loretzen & Jennifer Turpin (eds), *The Women and War Reader*, New York University Press, New York and London, 1998, pp. 26-32. What this example also illustrates is that the 'protection of women' by not allowing them to fight in the military, does not prevent rape, or other kinds of violence, being inflicted upon them. The abuses of civilian women are often 'forgotten' when the potential for rape is raised as a reason to keep women out of combat forces. There is also a link between the corporeal connection of female reproductive capacity and the symbolism of the 'birth of a nation'. In discussing the absence of women from the Holocaust narrative *Shoah*, Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer explore the idea that the women who were killed came to represent death without the possibility of regeneration, racial demise with no possible reprieve imbued in the reproductive capacity of women's bodies. This may account for some of the differences between the ways in which the male and female body can be represented in death. See Marianne Hirsch & Leo Spitzer, "Gendered Translations: Claude Lanzemann's *Shoah*", in Miriam Cooke and Angela Woolacott (eds), *Gendering War Talk*, Princeton University Press, Princeton New Jersey, 1993, p. 13.

Male soldier bodies are characterised as the ultimate in impenetrable masculinity. This construction is what in part allows the suspension of disbelief regarding the distance between soldier identity and the corporeal fallibility bound up with death. The extreme masculinity of soldier identity depends in part on it having been constructed in opposition to the female body, which has traditionally been characterised as vulnerable – and penetrable. The symbolic vulnerability of the female body allows no such distance between the representational and the corporeal. The very real possibility of harm, the potential rending of limbs, and the piercing of flesh are built into constructions of femininity, and their denial in masculine identity allows ideologies of protection, and oppositional mythologies of armoured masculinity to continue. Therefore if women are put into combat situations there is a direct link between their presence and destruction, a direct reminder that to be a soldier is to risk life and limb, and a breakdown of the binary opposition that endows the masculine warrior hero with cultural primacy and power. The mythologies of impenetrability so crucial to the construction of soldier identity are under direct threat by the reminders of mortality inscribed on the female body.

Gender Camouflage

Whilst becoming a warrior is the ultimate expression of masculinity and manliness, this masculinity is also taken so much as a given that the gendering of soldier identity is something that has seemed only to become problematic with the destabilising presence of the female warrior. The normalising of masculine identity is a form of gender camouflage. When applied to masculine identity, gender camouflage is a way of glossing over differences between men, and countering the unstable, yet necessary, transformation so crucial to being 'made a man'. The invisibility of women in the narration of war is another form of gender camouflage,

signalling the construction of combat as a purely masculine endeavour. When women entered the armed forces in Australia and the United States during the early part of the twentieth century their importance was downplayed, but their gender difference was heightened through their separation from the regular armed forces.[54] Upon entering the 'last bastions' of masculinity following the Vietnam War, gender difference has been utilised to both promote and denigrate the female warrior, but gender camouflage has been a survival mechanism for women in the armed forces.[55] Becoming 'one of the boys' and adopting the masculine warrior identity as their own, however problematic this may be, is another area where the combined concepts of transformation and gender camouflage can be seen operating in tandem. The tension between the need for visibility to counter the idea that women are absent, and the need to be invisible and 'just get the job done' in order to be treated 'equally', has been present throughout many areas of society and different strands of feminist discourse. Whether in the civilian world or clad in khaki, the debate on 'sameness' and 'difference' remains a debate on sameness and difference. It is an ongoing and particularly pertinent issue in the struggle over the construction of gendered soldier identity in the late twentieth century.

Crucial to this discussion is the implicit assumption that only women are 'gendered'. The male and the masculine have long been recognised as the norm against which the deviant female and feminine are defined and hence gendered. David Buchbinder recognises this representational norm when he asks the question "Do men have a gender?" and concludes that "*men are in a special sense gender-less, precisely because the masculine is thought of as the universal and neutral/neuter*

[54] See Chapter One for details of the way in which women were characterised as auxiliaries in both Australia and the United States until well after the Second World War.
[55] Barkalow, *In the Men's House*; Herbert, *Camouflage Isn't Only for Combat*; Missy Cummings, *Hornet's Nest*, 2000. These narratives will be discussed in more detail in the section on United States' soldier identity.

term"[original emphasis].[56] Defined in western culture by what it is not, in order to maintain its 'genderless' state masculinity must repudiate both the feminine and the homosexual. Thus the complex relationship between gender and sexuality is conflated in order to maintain the gender binary which enables the maintenance of a masculine heterosexist hierarchy.[57]

Military culture, as possibly the most overtly extreme expression of this hierarchy, has also attempted to exclude both the female and the homosexual. Where exclusion has not been possible, or where the contest has been deferred, a subsuming of gender and sexual identity has been required to maintain the appearance of a unified heterosexual masculine ascendancy. An example of this is the US military's policy of "don't ask, don't tell, don't pursue", which was the Clinton administration's solution to the 'problem' of gays in the military. Masquerading as a policy which protects the privacy of an individual's sexual preferences, the "don't ask, don't tell, don't pursue" policy is really a way of forcing a suppression of non-heterosexual sexual identities, and reinforcing the 'naturalisation' of heterosexual masculinity.[58] The association of heterosexuality with the public sphere and homosexuality with the private – something to be hidden – is preserved by this policy, which maintains the possibility of ejecting gay personnel should they overtly express their sexuality, while appearing to encourage a more tolerant attitude towards homosexuality in the military.[59] In associating homosexuality with 'the private', the notion that this form of sexuality is 'feminine', an identity that has also been

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[56] Buchbinder, *Performance Anxieties*, p. 122. For an historical account of the ways this form of 'gender-less' ness has been accorded to men since early modern-times see Hilda L. Smith, *All Men and Both Sexes: Gender, Politics and the False Universe in England 1640-1832*, The Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, Pennsylvania, 2002.

[57] Buchbinder, *Performance* Anxieties, p. 124.

[58] For detailed examination of the ways in which homosexuality has been dealt with by the US military and culminating in the "don't ask, don't tell" policy see Shilts, *Conduct Unbecoming*. See also Katzenstein & Reppy (eds), *Beyond Zero*.

[59] For a specific example of the fallout suffered by gay personnel as a result of this policy see Deroy Murdock, " 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell': One Casualty", *Independent Gay Forum*, 2001, http://wwww/indegayforum.org/articles/murdock2.html, accessed 4/11/2001. The case of First Lt Steve May, an Army Reservist who despite exemplary service received an

traditionally confined to the private sphere,[60] is bolstered, thus lending support to arguments that homosexuality and masculine warrior identity are incompatible. Joe Sartelle maintains that an integral part of this 'naturalisation' of heterosexual masculinity is the 'heterosexual alibi' that is dependent upon, and facilitator of, the marking of sexual and gender differences.

> [The] open presence of homosexuals is considered intolerable within the already extremely homoerotic context of military life because it undermines what we might call the "heterosexual alibi", the security "straight" men can feel despite the constant homoeroticism of their lives because of the belief that gay men are fundamentally and identifiably different from themselves.[61]

It is the 'fundamental' and 'identifiable' differences of *others* that assist the construction of men as genderless. When these 'differences' are not identifiable within a group of men, the stability of this genderless identity is simultaneously upheld and threatened. While homogeneous appearances are maintained despite individual differences in gender and sexual identities, the instability of heterosexual masculinity compounds pressure to insist upon and rigidify the heterosexual alibi. The (in)visibility of women and femininity has a similar dual function in the maintenance of the masculinist hierarchy so crucial to warrior identity.

The visible marking of an institutionalised military also makes one force stand out against another, and reinforces the difference between the soldier and the civilian population 'he' is meant to serve and protect. A constantly recurring refrain in American narratives of the Vietnam War is

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honourable discharge on 17 September 2000, following a public acknowledgement of his sexuality in a civilian context.

[60] The association of femininity with the 'private sphere' and masculinity with the 'public sphere' has been well documented in many places. For example see Kate Pritchard Hughes, "Feminism for Beginners", in Kate Pritchard Hughes (ed.), *Contemporary Australian Feminism*, (Second Edition), Longman, South Melboune, 1997, pp. 1 – 29.

that it was impossible to tell who the enemy were – they were invisible among the civilian population, rendering every civilian a potential enemy, which was a justification used to explain and excuse atrocities like the My Lai massacre.[62] David Grossman's work *On Killing*, details this and other justifications used when atrocities are committed. He too argues that a transformation is necessary in order to produce not only soldiers, but effective killers. Training camp and the donning of uniforms are all a part of this process. Grossman argues that most men are not natural killers and must be trained in order to break down natural, and social, revulsion for the taking of the life of another.[63] This argument is an important one in a field dominated by arguments that it is 'natural' for men to be soldiers but 'unnatural' for women. Joanna Bourke makes a similar point in her book *An Intimate History of Killing*, detailing the many tools and rituals required in assimilating the experiences of killing, particularly when moving back into civilian life. Bourke, however, also details soldiers who have expressed joy in the kill and documents the diversity of experience and reactions of soldiers from Britain, the United States, and Australia to illustrate and highlight the heterogeneity of the soldier experience.[64]

The failure of Grossman's analysis is, however, its gender blindness. While continually making the point that the 'killer instinct' has to be instilled in men when they become soldiers, and that some never overcome their 'natural' revulsion for the killing of one of their own species, Grossman does not deal with this in terms of a constructed masculinity. Rather, the strength of his argument is diluted by his failure to

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[61] Joe Sartelle, "Fantasies of Straight Men: Some Thoughts About Gays in the Military", *Bad Subjects*, Issue #5, March/April 1993, http://www.eserver.org/bs/05/Sartelle.html, Accessed 5/11/2001.

[62] For first hand accounts see Baker, *NAM: The Vietnam War in the Words of the Men and Women who Fought There*. This issue of the invisibility of the enemy is constantly replayed in cinematic representations of the Vietnam War, for example Francis Ford Coppola's 1979 film *Apocalypse Now*. There are many other examples of this.

[63] Grossman, *On Killing*.

[64] Bourke, *An Intimate History of Killing*. Bourke, however, makes similar elisions of cultural difference as does Ehrenreich. While discussing experiences which differ between the national groups, Bourke does not theorise different soldier traditions, or different expressions of soldier identity as masculine.

engage in an overtly gendered analysis, and in his acceptance that the warrior will 'naturally' be male. Grossman explicitly states in "A Brief Note Concerning Gender" which appears in the acknowledgements rather than within the confines of the text proper, that

> War has often been a sexist environment, but death is an equal opportunity employer…With but one exception, all of my interviewees have been male, and when speaking of the soldier the words of war turn themselves easily to terms of "he", "him", and "his"; but it could just as readily be "she", "her", and "hers". While the masculine reference is used throughout this study, it is used solely out of convenience, and there is no intention to exclude the feminine gender from any of the dubious honors of war.[65]

Grossman fails to acknowledge the intricate politics of gendered language and also fails to appreciate that part of the problem presented by women and warriors is the fact that they are not able to be easily fused – if at all. This is a perfect example of the way in which 'gender' is perceived as only applying to women. The way in which the forms of masculinity necessary in the construction of the male warrior are naturalised undermines the value of Grossman's anti-essentialist argument on the suitability of men for killing.

Grossman's utilisation of gender camouflage is not unique. As discussed in the previous chapter, soldier narratives are one of the means by which women have been placed outside the dominant ways of 'telling' the twentieth century. Historians of war have been complicit in the construction of the gender invisibility of the warrior. As Linda Grant De Pauw succinctly comments:

> Feminist historians find military history unattractive; women as nurturers and peacemakers, even as victims, are more appealing than women who go to war. For military

[65] Grossman, *On Killing*, p. xii.

> historians, the absence of women in battle appears self-evident.[66]

However, just as Grossman fails in his attempt to undermine the essentialism of the masculine/killer nexus, De Pauw, while attempting to counter the cultural amnesia regarding women as warriors from both feminist and non-feminist perspectives, assumes an untenable position which enhances the absences she critiques:

> [h]istorians who search these pages for a gendered analysis of war may be surprised by my refusal to provide one…Through the centuries one of the most striking characteristics of women in combatant and combat support roles is that they perform them not as women but as human beings. Gender becomes an issue when history omits the detail that some brave warriors were women, and war stories then reinforce prescribed gender roles and expectations. But history books do not alter the truth of what happens on the day of battle.[67]

Apart from ignoring the ways in which history books construct 'the truth'[68] affecting the ways in which 'what happened on the day of the battle' is interpreted, De Pauw reinforces the gender invisibility of the narratives she critiques in stating that her analysis is *not* gendered. In attempting to grant women the autonomy of individual subjectivity which acting as a 'human being' implies, De Pauw attempts to gloss over the gendered specificity of the experiences of the women she documents. She fails to acknowledge that 'human beings' have been characterised as generically masculine, even if references to '*man*-kind' are absent. Even if

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[66] Linda Grant De Pauw, *Battle Cries and Lullabies: Women in War From Prehistory to the Present*, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1998. p. xiii. De Pauw then cites John Keegan as an example of this, "Warfare is…the one human activity from which women, with the most insignificant exceptions, have always and everywhere stood apart…If warfare is as old as history and as universal as mankind, we must now enter the supremely important limitation that it is an entirely masculine activity." [John Keegan, *A History of Warfare*, New York, Alfred A.Knopf, 1993, p. 76.] The amnesia that comes over historians when dealing with women and war has been a constant thread during the late 1990s on the *H-Minerva* discussion list which was coordinated by DePauw until 2001.

[67] De Pauw, *Battle Cries and Lullabies*, p. xiv.

the characteristics of one gender group are subsumed by another, this does not mean that gender disappears. On the contrary, it is present in both groups, and is evidence of the power accorded masculinity over femininity. In even admitting that some roles are traditional for women and some are not, De Pauw constructs a gendered analysis which should acknowledge a collective gendered identity. This example to some extent crystallises the tension inherent between individual and group identities – both masculine and feminine.

In the late twentieth century, the singling out of individual women from their collective military identities illustrates the potential disruption posed by the female warrior of the heroic narrative so important to masculine soldier identity. Celebrated women are perceived as aberrant and therefore once more narrated out of mainstream discourse. They have also been penalised for the attention paid to them as (gendered) individuals at the expense of a homogeneous group portrait.[69] Linda Bird Francke in her analysis of the fate of Captain Linda Bray of the United States Military Police, who led a successful raid on a military attack-dog compound in Panama in 1989, makes an explicit connection between her 'singling out' and subsequent public discrediting of her record. The American platoon led by Bray engaged in a firefight with Panamanian soldiers at a Panamanian attack-dog compound near Panama City.[70] Bray and twelve of the fifteen women under her command had engaged in combat, but women could not be 'officially' in combat, regardless of their actions, due to the Army's combat exclusion policy. As Congresswomen Patricia Schroeder argued, "once you no longer have a definable front, it's impossible to separate combat from noncombat. The women carried M-16s, not dog

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[68] See E.H Carr, *What is History*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1964, and many, many subsequent analyses on 'historical truth' and the 'truth effect' of authoritative texts.
[69] See Linda Bird Francke, *Ground Zero: The Gender Wars in the Military*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1997. See also Enloe, "The Politics of Constructing the American Woman Soldier".
[70] "Fire When Ready, Ma'am – The Invasion Reopens the Debate on Women in Combat", *Time*, January 15, 1990, p. 29.

biscuits".[71] While this comment is very succinct and illustrates the shortcomings of the combat exclusion policy, the phrase "The Women carried M-16s not dog biscuits", was then used to caption a photograph of Bray at the site of the kennel in a *Time* magazine article. Anchoring the photograph to only a part of the argument lends an air of the ridiculous to the efforts of Bray and the other women in Panama, in spite of the tone of the article which appears to be quite positive. This way of dealing with the events of 1989 recurred, undermining the seriousness and dedication of the female military police, and Bray in particular, in Panama.[72] Such singling out of individual women, therefore, can function to trivialise the importance of their actions, unlike the way in which individual men are made heroes.

Controversy raged over the U.S. combat exclusion policy and the fine lines between combat and combat support following the incident in Panama, with all the incumbent debates about pay and promotional possibilities which combat duty implied for the male soldier. The ensuing maelstrom centred upon Bray:

> Everyone wanted – and got – a piece of Linda Bray, served up with enthusiasm by Public Affairs. If the Military Police captain was giving a positive image to the Army then why not showcase her? That highlighting Bray would be good for the Army outweighed the inevitable harm such exposure would inflict on Bray from a military culture that stressed teamwork over the individual. And so Bray was ordered to the slaughter.[73]

The media characterised Bray as a hero, as much for her having been one of the first women to engage "hostile troops in modern battle"[74] as for her handling of the situation. The way in which her actions seemed to indicate

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[71] "Fire When Ready Ma'am".
[72] See Stabile, *Feminism and the Technological Fix*, p. 115, and Enloe, "The Politics of Constructing the American Woman Soldier", for a discussion of these media issues.
[73] Francke, *Ground Zero*, p. 57.
[74] "Fire When Ready Ma'am", *Time*, Jan 15 1990, p. 29, cited by Francke, *Ground Zero*, p. 58.

the need for change in the military's gender-based policies, however, separated her from the group identity of not only her team but also the military as an institution. This situation was not one that could be tolerated, resulting in the destruction of Bray's reputation by members of her unit and military officials, in an attempt to close ranks and excise the individual who exemplified possible problems for the collective. Francke has indicated that the construction of Bray as an individual, rather than a member of the collective, is a tactic that has been widespread in a number of situations revealing a reason, and a means for maintaining, some of the hostility towards women within the United States military. These women are not "part of the team", and their presence is seen to overshadow the activities and importance of their male comrades at arms who are, after all, the statistical majority.

For example, the attention focussed upon the women who died during the Gulf War appeared 'unfair' in contrast to the low-key approach to the deaths of male compatriots.[75] Similarly, Francke attributes the harassment of women in the services to the way in which "individuals don't count in the military…The military culture is driven by a group dynamic centered around male perceptions…and the affirmation of masculinity. Harassment is the inevitable result".[76] Individuals when singled out are often derided for 'feminine' characteristics, reinforcing the separation of women from the 'manly' collective. Where the narration of 'heroes' helps to bridge the gap between the military's group identity and the construction of masculinity in the broader community, it helps to confirm the status of the female warrior as aberrant and destructive to masculine soldier identity. Individual and group identity for women is already complex when examined in the light of the constructed capacity of the female body. As explored in the previous chapter, generalisations regarding women's abilities and their physical 'fragility' have worked to

[75] Francke, *Ground Zero*, see Prologue "The Life and Death of Major Marie Rossi" and Chapter Three, "Public Victory, Private Losses – The Price of Progress in the Gulf".
[76] Francke, *Ground Zero*, p. 152.

keep women out of combative roles – individual women who have proved that they can perform are effectively marginalised as exceptions, individual women who do not perform to these standards are used as the rule.

The singling out of female soldiers, their separation from the solidarity of the group, is informed by another construction of gendered identity – that which has traditionally not allowed the representation of women to be imbued with the benefits of collective action, or agency.[77] This construction is facilitated by the figure of the 'undisciplined' woman and her body. Much exclusively masculine warrior mythology depends upon the notion that women in war do not follow 'the rules', which makes them dangerous, both to their companions and their enemies. Transgressor of the gender order, the female warrior is unpredictable and anathema to the delicate balance between the individual and group identities upon which the representation of the military functions.[78] The disruption of perceptions of the way things should be when women actively participate in combat is more threatening than actual physical ability and skill. In Vietnam, for example, compounding the problem of the invisible enemy was the participation of women in Viet Cong activities.

> In any other war, you knew who the enemy was, he wore a different uniform, might have had different coloured skin,

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[77] For the difficulties/impossibilities of representing women with collective political agency, particularly when represented through and individual body, see Gatens, "Corporeal Representation in/and the Body Politic", 83.

[78] An illustration from the First World War of the destructive potential of a woman, even in imaginary form, is the poem "Women are not Gentlemen" by Harley Matthews, an Australian soldier. This poem describes the ruthlessness with which a sniper, supposed to be female, picks off soldiers on a whim and to satisfy perverse desires for blood. 'She' does not abide by the rules of gentlemen at war, and recognises none of the niceties that govern male soldiers' behaviour. Once, however, it is discovered that 'she' "was a man, poor bastard, all the time", the vitriol disappears and instead there is pity and wonder. Harley Matthews, "Women are not Gentlemen", Les Murray (ed.), *The New Oxford Book of Australian Verse*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1986, pp. 123 – 130.
See also Bruce Clunies Ross, "Silent Heroes", Anna Rutherford & James Wieland (eds), *War: Australia's Creative Response*, Dangaroo Press, West Yorkshire, 1997, p. 175. Clunies-Ross avers that this recognition of the misogyny of soldiers is 'hardly compatible' with the ANZAC legend. However, he has not dealt with the gendered construction of the soldier and I would argue that this misogyny, although never overtly recognised, is very much a part of the way in which the ANZAC is constructed.

> different facial features…But in Vietnam, the man who was helping around the camp by day, might be an enemy at night…Never before had our men had to face the problem of fighting women and children. Our Western society doesn't teach you to treat women that way; you don't expect women to be carrying weapons, to be shooting at you…[79]

The transgression of the gender order, the shift from defended to aggressor, often resulted in women being treated more ruthlessly than men were when captured. Any mitigation in violence that may have been accorded women who obeyed the rules and did not participate in combat, disappeared when dealing with the female members of the Viet Cong.

> Often the person we were wiring up [in order to torture] would be a young woman who was maybe comely. There were all kinds of sexual overtones to that. Domination. The misogyny of war is being denied women, and then having your only contact with women in some sort of subjugated position.[80]

The inability to identify the enemy visually is compounded by the blurring of traditional western gender roles. The eroticisation of killing and the sexual objectification of women's bodies add to this heightening the sense of confusion and anger directed by male soldiers at its perceived cause.

While the construction of the male warrior ignores masculinity as a gendered construct, it is simultaneously dependent upon the immediate visual recognition of the gender difference of women. A way of containing the threat to the gender order that such women embody is to characterise them as guerrillas and terrorists. If these women cannot be recognised as a part of an organised military outfit which plays by 'the rules', they are not only fair game, but can be constructed as not being real soldiers and not a threat to arguments which have their bases in biologically determined polarised gender roles. Gerard J. De Groot bluntly argues that "since

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[79] McHugh, *Minefields and Miniskirts*, p. 178.

terrorists are by definition pariahs, women terrorists do not threaten the gender order."[81] In so stating, De Groot defuses the destructive potential, and transgressive nature of the female warrior, and is complicit in the maintenance of gendered divisions in representations of combat. Martin Van Crefeld holds a similar position. He states that while insurgencies prove that women are "as determined, and as capable of withstanding the greatest stress, and the most gruelling conditions" as men, they nonetheless are rarely placed in positions of command, are often treated more leniently when captured, and always return to the domestic sphere once the revolt is over.[82] These women are distinguished from their male comrades, and singled out from other women, and the way women behave in 'normal', or peace time. Still separated and marginalised, the female warrior is denied the protection the group identity the military can afford and characterised as a dangerous individual. The threat she poses is thus contained and separated from the integrity of the corps of masculine soldier identity.

Compounding the metonymic associations of femininity and chaos are the ideologies of race that inform gendered soldier identities. In many ways the transgressions that female Viet Cong soldiers posed were minimised in contrast to the threat posed by the further facet of their 'otherness' – their racial difference. The association of non-white women with nature that must be tamed, and threat that must be defused, has been analysed at length by theorists of racial and gender politics. Susan Bordo explores the ways in which 'white' female bodies carry different signification to 'black' female bodies which have been habitually

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[80] Baker, *NAM: The Vietnam War in the Words of the Men and Women who Fought There*. p. 215. See also Susan Jeffords, *The Remasculinization of America: Gender and the Vietnam War*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1989.
[81] Gerard J De Groot, "Women Warriors", *Contemporary Review*, v.266, May 1995, pp. 257–260, p. 259.
[82] Van Crefeld, *Men, Women and* War, p. 125. What distinguishes Van Crefeld from De Groot, is that Van Crefeld has an agenda to prove that women have never been, and will never be 'soldiers' and that they have no place in the military. Van Crefeld's assertion that female prisoners are treated more leniently is in complete contradiction to accounts of the ways in which female prisoners were treated during the Vietnam War, and the constant, much publicised fears of rape that are raised whenever the issue of women in combat is under discussion.

associated with a "burden of negative bodily associations" which partly stem from the history of slavery. "By virtue of her sex, she represents the temptations of the flesh and the source of man's moral downfall. By virtue of her race, she is an instinctual animal, undeserving of privacy and undemanding of respect."[83] When these notions are applied to the Vietnamese woman who wields a gun, or throws a grenade, the physical and sexual hostility inflicted on her body are a means of defending the integrity of the ideal western warrior and add symbolic weight to those worthy of his protection. That white women - symbolic guardians of civilized virtue yet simultaneously never quite full citizens - should be allowed to participate in combat violates the validity of the dichotomy of protector/protected upon which male warrior identity depends.

The presence of white women in the armed forces highlights major contradictions present in the construction of the warrior. 'Whiteness' is an important element of the ideal soldier in both the United States and Australia. Many of the arguments used to keep women and homosexuals out of the military were also used in the first half of the twentieth century to keep African Americans out of the military, and later, in segregated units. Interestingly, despite the obvious connection between the importance of 'bodies' to combat, and ways in which non-white people, like white women, have carried a heavier burden in terms of cultural constructions of corporeality, African American soldiers were relegated largely only to support units until 1948. If 'lesser' men could be effective soldiers, then where was the value of combat in the construction of an ideal masculinity?[84] Ideologies of race and gender have long influenced what can be classified as 'skilled' labour, and tasks in the military are no exception. The signification of Christ-like sacrifice, and the ways in which certain kinds of representation of the body can provide a way of going beyond embodiment, also have bearing on this issue. Richard Dyer's analysis of

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[83] Bordo, *Unbearable* Weight, p. 11.
[84] See Shilts, *Conduct Unbecoming*, p. 33. Shilts makes direct comparisons in arguments of exclusion which have been based on race, gender and sexuality.

'whiteness' and his discussion of the associations of whiteness not only with superiority but with purity and transcendence in Western culture, has particular relevance when applied to the contradictions embodied in, by and through the soldier.

> *Christianity*…is founded on the idea…of incarnation, of being that is in the body yet not of it…All concepts of *race*, emerging out of eighteenth century materialism, are concepts of bodies, but all along they have had to be reconciled with notions of embodiment and incarnation. The latter become what distinguish white people, giving them a special relation to race. Black people can be reduced to their bodies and thus to race, but white people are something else that is realised in and yet is not reducible to the corporeal or racial.[85]

White women are a part of what makes the sacrifice of white men worthwhile. And while they are supposed to be protected, as a result of the sanctity accorded the *white* flame of sacrifice that is associated with the warrior, when recruitment in the United States dwindled in the post-Vietnam era, recruitment of women was seen as a means of minimising the effect of the growing number of black and Hispanic men who were joining the armed forces.[86]

The associations of 'whiteness' with civilization, despite the non-traditional roles military women play, was present in coverage of the Gulf War when white American military women were actively contrasted in the media to the veiled 'oppressed' women of Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Kuwait.[87] The need to maintain the white ideal soldier is compromised by real 'manpower' concerns which mean both non-white, and non-male, soldiers have had to be recruited. This demonstrates that discourses of race and gender do not merely intersect, but are articulated categories and add to the

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[85] Richard Dyer, *White*, Routledge, London & New York, 1997, pp. 14–15.
[86] See Chapter One.
[87] See Stabile, *Feminism and the Technological Fix*. See also the contrasts present in Dr Frederick Stanwood, Patrick Allen & Lindsay Peacock, *Gulf War: A Day by Day Chronicle*, Reed International Books in conjunction with BBC World Service, London, 1991.

contradictory relationship between ideal soldier models and the corpo*real* necessities of the modern military, and reveal further incoherence in representations of masculine warrior identity.[88]

The cultural readings of "whiteness" inherent in the ideal soldier must be read in tandem with the need to both externalise any expression of femininity and to symbolise femininity in such a way that the heterosexuality of soldiers as a collective is reinforced. Analysis of soldier identity, such as that conducted by Ehrenreich[89] and Theweleit,[90] stresses the need for the excision of any feminine traits from the soldier, and the promotion of bonds of all-male companionship, for a coherent masculine warrior identity. In making soldiers out of recruits, building up 'real men', femininity must be signified as external. This may be achieved through a variety of means: the simple device of the artificial line between home and battle-fronts; the denigration of 'feminine' traits; silence about the presence and contribution of women in war within war narratives, or the construction of women's contributions as isolated incidents; the vilification and/or ridicule of women in warrior roles, are all ways of marginalising femininity. This need to maintain a clear boundary between the masculine and feminine is a common theme in the examination of soldier masculinities. Graham Dawson, in his exploration of British constructions of the soldier-hero, perceives a pattern in adventure narratives from the nineteenth century to the present, of a distancing from anything domestic and its implicit connection to femininity.[91] Joanna Bourke, however, disputes this assertion in her analysis of English soldiers during the Great War. These analyses of the English soldier experience are important particularly to Australia where the colonial legacy remains important to the

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[88] For discussion of the notion of articulation see Ann McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*, Routledge, New York & London, 1995, p. 5.
[89] Ehrenreich, *Blood Rites*.
[90] Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, v.1.
[91] Dawson, *Soldier Heroes.,* p. 63. Dawson reiterates this point in his later deconstruction of the myths surrounding Lawrence of Arabia.

construction of identity. Bourke sees the necessities of warfare rendering gender identities more fluid - at least as far as domestic tasks were concerned, with soldiers having to mend their own clothes and cook for themselves - and identifies a longing for the domestic hearth and home.[92] However, this longing is still for something external and is set up as a statement of the 'real' (based on letters from the men in the trenches) to contest the narratives that are constructed post-war and which are deconstructed by Dawson. The 'domestic' tasks performed by soldiers were also performed outside the home. The spatial shift partially negates any perceived shift in the 'gendering' of particular occupations, and it is possible to read a male soldier sewing on his buttons as looking after himself, where a woman mending in the home is interpreted as being in the service of others. One setting stresses self- reliance, the other, sacrifice and dependence.

The analysis of the soldier as a gendered construction, the implications of the 'intrusion' of women into what have been characterised as bastions of masculinity, and the emergence of the female warrior hero in popular culture, illuminate the fissures in 'coherent' identities and reveal their inherent instability. It is paramount for soldier identities to be based upon a strict gender binary, which marginalises the feminine completely. The experience which manufactures 'real men', cannot be made open and available to women. This would devalue the very foundation of the soldier-hero – his exclusive, and excessive, masculinity. An example which directly alludes to this, is that of the furore which arose upon the acceptance of Shannen Faulkner to the Citadel, an elite para-military college in the United States.[93] Faulkner gained access to this previously 'all-male' institution when the school's administration failed to recognise

[92] Bourke, *Dismembering the Male*, p. 133.
[93] The Citadel is not a military academy with direct links to the Armed Forces, unlike West Point or the Naval Academy at Annapolis. However, they adopt an identity that mimics very closely military traditions and formulations and a percentage of the 'cadets' do go on to military careers. The importance of places like The Citadel and the V.M.I. (Virginia Military Institute) is in its illustration of soldier identity in the United States, which is not confined to the military proper.

on the written application that *Shannen* was a woman.[94] The application forms contained no question as to the sex of potential cadets and the assumption was made that Faulkner was male. Immediately upon discovering their mistake the school's administrators revoked the acceptance and the issue went before the courts.[95] Faulkner's successful court case, which was based upon the public funding allocated to the Citadel, opened the way for the possibility of co-education in one of the 'last bastions' of masculinity. The absence of a question regarding the sex of the applicant is a blatant example of the gender-blind assumptions of this institution. Susan Faludi also makes the point that this attitude of gender-blindness ignored the presence of women at this 'all male bastion' who were present in non-cadet capacities. There were female teachers and administrators while "an all-female, (and all-black) staff served the meals in the mess hall".[96] In representing itself as 'all-male', the Citadel followed the patterns of all martial storytelling and cast a cloak of gender-invisibility over its walls.

Judi Addelston and Michael Stirratt analyse the Citadel and its ambition of turning boys into 'whole men' as a means of investigating the 'construction of hegemonic masculinity'.[97] As Addelston and Stirratt point out regarding the difference between 'sex and gender',

> Shannen Faulkner embodies The Citadel's anxieties about the conflation of these two concepts. If a *female* were to enter the corps, then becoming a "whole man" – the

[94] The assumptions about gender and naming are an extension of the gender camouflage that swathes masculinity. If a soldier is mentioned with surname and rank, e.g., Sgt Smith it will be assumed that that soldier is male. This normative assumption about masculinity and soldier identity is one of the reasons that Shannen Faulker got into the Citadel, and also why she created such a furore – in her application she passed for a man. It is interesting to note that in the rescue of Pfc Jessica Lynch (see conclusion) that her first name, that clearly reveals her gender, is present in almost all of the news coverage, and her rescue has been titled "Saving Private Jessica" in some publications.
[95] Susan Faludi, "The Naked Citadel", *The New Yorker*, September 5, 1994, pp. 62 – 63.
[96] Susan Faludi, "The Naked Citadel", p. 62.
[97] Judi Addelston & Michael Stirratt "The Last Bastion of Masculinity: Gender Politics and The Citadel", in Michael S Kimmel & Michael A Messner (eds), *Men's Lives* Allyn & Bacon, Needham Heights, MA, 1998, p. 205. The ambition to create 'whole men' is cited directly from the handbook of the Citadel in 1992 – 1993.

> *performance* of hegemonic masculinity – is called into question. For if a woman can render the same performance as a man – achieve a Citadel degree – then there is little left to The Citadel's claims of the sexual dimorphism necessary to create "whole men". [98]

The rigid masculinity of the Citadel soldier, threatened by the possibility of a female performing well in the same setting and by the necessary acknowledgement of the fluidity of gender constructions, closely resembles that of the *Freikorps* of Theweleit's analysis, despite cultural and temporal distances between the two. The need to excise the 'feminine', and the binary that establishes anything feminine as weak and lesser, is exemplified in the training of recruits when to be 'a girl' is derided. The creation of 'whole men' and the emphasis upon the transformative effect of military experience are threatened by women's potential. They are also threatened by the shift of women from the position of defended to defender, from passive to active – if there are no women to be protected, what is the point? If women can be successful warriors - as women - then the experience must not be as valuable, and the performance of hegemonic masculinity is exposed for just what it is – a performance.

The debates raging in the United States over the need to defend 'warrior-culture' make overt and constant reference to this peril, exemplified in an article by Thomas Ricks in *The Wall Street Journal* in 1997. Ricks quotes retired Air-Force Colonel Sam Gardiner as being extremely worried about the gender equality having the effect of "undercutting the identity-building value of military experience." Pertinently, Gardiner claims that

> If a girl can do it – say be a fighter pilot – then it ceases to be a rite of passage.[99]

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[98] Addelston & Stirratt "The Last Bastion of Masculinity: Gender Politics and The Citadel", p. 206.
[99] Thomas E. Ricks, "Army Faces Recruiting Obstacle: A Less Macho Image", *Wall Street Journal*, 15.7.1997, p. 1/20.

What impact does this camouflage or the gender of the warrior have on enlisted females who both have to go through this process of being 'made a man', and whose femininity must be signified as external and other to soldier identity? The singling out, and then undermining, of female heroes can be seen as a part of the process to maintain the sexual dimorphism necessary for the expression of 'quintessential masculinity'. Recognition of the infinite variation of individual capacity, in both men and women, would irreparably breach the heterosexist binary which is the lynchpin of the dominance of masculine warrior identity. Not only does the process of isolating and denigrating female abilities reinforce the misogyny already present in military and para-military institutions, but it allows a certain amount of space for the harassment of women in the services, which has been so prominent over the last 10 years in both Australia and the United States.[100]

An added dimension in the construction of seemingly impermeable boundaries between the masculine and the feminine has been the ongoing struggle to characterise the military as an all-male, *heterosexual* institution. There has been a reinforcement of the 'external' nature of femininity in the military context through the use of visual images which place women in opposition to the disciplined masculinity of the military, but in ways which reinforce the straight as well as the rigid. These images are those of wives and girlfriends saying goodbye, waiting at home or greeting with kisses and tears at the end of the separation from 'their men'.[101]

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[100] Francke, *Ground Zero*, p. 156. See also Alison Smith, "Bad Habits, or Bad Conscience? Sexual Harassment in the Australian Defence Force", in Mitchell Dean & Barry Hindess (eds), *Governing Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998, pp. 70 – 86. For a government sponsored report that was commissioned as a result of the gender problems in Australian military culture see Burton, *Women in the Australian Defence Force Two Studies.*

[101] See Stabile, *Feminism and the Technological Fix*, Chapter 4 "Semper Fidelis: Daughters in their Father's Military".

Some of the rituals that have persisted in the Service Academies in the United States attempt to preserve nineteenth century visible gender differentiation, with military men performing the central protective role, and women on the margins reinforcing masculine dominance and power. The emphasis on the all-male exclusivity of these institutions manifests itself in nostalgia for the past, marginalising the women who have been present as cadets since 1976. The post-Civil War public reinstatement of martial gender division, exemplified in the Grand Army Review of 1865 where veterans marched and women waved and cheered from the sidelines, persisted into the late twentieth century in certain rituals enacted at West Point Military Academy and at the Naval Academy at Annapolis.

In comments made to Billie Mitchell by a female West Point graduate in 1991 some of the problems inherent in the institutionalized forms of masculinity that persist from the nineteenth century became apparent. During the graduate's time at the academy her company had declared one day 'Old Corps Day' and imitated 'the good old days' through modifications to their uniforms. This caused great concern among the female cadets as the implications of 'the good old days', "meant a West Point without them".[102] In protest, many of the women broke from the gender camouflage of their normal uniforms, and wore their cadet issue skirts and pumps which caused great hostility on the part of their male comrades who accused them of bad faith and 'a lack of camaraderie'. The appearance of the seamless masculinity of the history of West Point was ruptured when women first entered the academy in 1976. The persistence of rituals that emphasise the exclusive masculinity of this institution,

[102] Billie Mitchell, "The Creation of Army Officers and the Gender Lie: Betty Grable or Frankenstein?", in Judith Hicks Stiehm (ed.) , *It's Our Military Too! Women and the U.S. Military*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1996, p. 51. When I took part in the public tour of West Point in June 2000, the tour guide took great lengths to describe some of the courtship rituals that take place among the cadets. Cadets are not allowed to marry, so many marriages happen upon graduation. In the Chapel there is a side aisle that is often referred to jokingly as an 'escape' aisle for the bride should she decide marriage to a military man is not what she wants after all. The guide had no answer to the question what if both parties are cadets, or the groom is a civilian. This anecdote, and others,

depend upon the gender camouflage of the women who attend. By donning of the feminine version of their uniforms the female cadets visibly disrupted the gender camouflage upon which the myths of masculine exclusivity, and therefore the privilege of male cadets, depend. For overt signs of femininity to appear within the ranks undermines masculine heterosexual dominance.

Other rituals that occur at Annapolis overtly externalize versions of 'helpless' femininity, again signified through the use of clothing. Carol Burke describes the problems female midshipmen at Annapolis face with respect to traditions they are forced to accept but in which they cannot fully take part. One of these is the ceremonial 'Color Parade' which is held during graduation week, in which the girlfriend of the midshipman who commands the company is dressed up like a southern belle – the 'color girl' – to inspect the color company.[103] As Burke has pointed out, the problem is not the girl or the costume *per se* but rather with the obvious comparisons "between the women in uniform and the costumed symbol of feminine beauty, the jewel of the parade". The racial and gender problems with this ritual are alluded to by Burke when she questions if it is foreseeable if a black midshipman and his black girlfriend will ever take these roles in the parade, or whether there will ever be a 'color boy', should a woman ever command the color company.[104] The possibility that should at a time in the future the commanding midshipman (of either gender) be gay further complicates this question. Current policies that attempt to mask the sexuality of service-members – "Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Pursue" – assist in the gender camouflage so important to the heterosexual, hyper-masculine soldier identity. If the presence of a female 'southern belle' assists in maintaining the masculine integrity of the corps, to visibly shift the gender and sexuality of the participants could potentially irreparably damage this integrity. It is interesting to note that an

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despite women's presence in the Academy for nearly thirty years, has no room for problems female cadets may have with some of the rituals or folklore, or for their own.

[103] Burke, "Pernicious Cohesion", p. 207.

image of the 'Color Parade' that appeared in the *Baltimore Sun* in 1994, is on the cover of Joshua S. Goldstein's *War and Gender* [Figure 3].[105] That this image of externalized hyperfemininity appears on the cover of a work that attempts to deconstruct the gender politics that underpin war and the military, is interesting and perplexing. Goldstein does not discuss the image in any depth, nor the fact that it replicates the gender binaries that underpin the cultures he is critiquing. The remnants of nineteenth-century soldier identity and military culture gloss over the gender differences of cadets, and carry forward the marginalization of femininity and the importance of women's contributions that was present in the wake of the Civil War into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

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[104] Burke, "Pernicious Cohesion", p. 207.
[105] Goldstein, *War and Gender*.

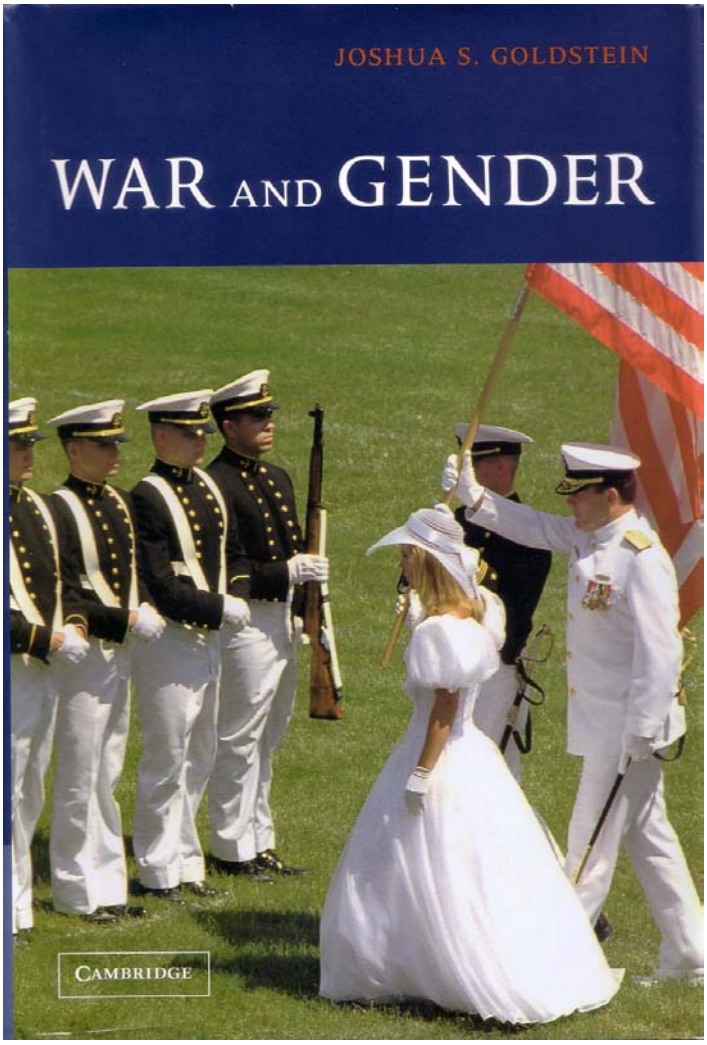

Figure 3 – The cover to Joshua Goldstein's *War and Gender* [Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001] presents the exclusion of femininity from the masculine military corps.

Another trend is that of the depiction of hyper-feminised women as pin-ups – sexy seductive bodies for men to both protect and conquer. In Peter Finn's *Vietnam Dispatches* images of women are few and there are none of Vietnamese women or women in uniform. They range from two crudely drawn cartoons featuring naked women used to count off the days before a soldier goes on leave to 'pin-ups' from *Overseas Weekly* of two young blonde women in bikinis captioned "…perhaps intended to counteract the charms of the local Vietnamese Girls".[106] This captioned cutting precedes "Dispatch 5 – December 1967: 'Sin City – Shanty Town'", which describes the evils of the brothels which sprang up to cater for soldiers. Not only are these blonde bikini-clad women set up in opposition to the masculinity of the soldier, but they also reinforce the 'otherness' of Vietnamese women who in contrast were perhaps not real women at all. There is no visual representation of these women who are described as 'heavily painted Vietnamese harlots'.[107] Rather, there is a clipping depicting abandoned children in an orphanage from a "Shanty town built for sin".[108] The potency of visual representation and those who are absent therefrom is reinforced by reference to the 'invisible' in the body of the written text. What these representations also indicate is the way in which women's bodies are commodified, as pin-ups or prostitutes. The Vietnam War became a product to be consumed directly in the home through television coverage, and has ongoing impact as a 'product' in the cinema and television industries. Women are simultaneously consumed as sexualised bodies and consumers of constructions of male warriors and their war stories.

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[106] Peter Finn, *Vietnam Dispatches*, Access Press, Perth, 1998, pp. 42 – 43, p. 26. On p. 66 the cover of *Overseas Weekly* depicts one of the same bikini-clad women in the corner opposite a larger photograph of the head and shoulders of a smiling GI in combat gear. This is a direct example of the need to signify sexual femininity in order to reinforce the masculinity of the soldier. Another interesting part of this representation is the fact that the sexy 'body' shot is juxtaposed to the head of the soldier, a traditional distinction in the portrayal of masculinity and femininity. John Berger's work on semiotics in his ground-breaking book *Ways of Seeing* explored these differences in representation of gender in advertising.

[107] Finn, *Vietnam Dispatches*, p. 28.

The cultural amnesia which informs the gender camouflage of most war narratives is facilitated by the ways in which war is encapsulated, not only temporally, but spatially. There is an assumption that civilian populations are separate from armies to the extent that the civilian populations of occupied territories are rendered invisible. The racial otherness of the Vietnamese population to the Americans and their allies rendered them both invisible and indistinguishable from 'the enemy'. Siobhan McHugh has commented upon the absence of women from 'official histories' of the Vietnam War. The attitude of the Returned Servicemen's League was that there were 'no women' in the Vietnam War. As McHugh points out, this not only ignores the women from Australia and the United States who were in Vietnam in a wide variety of occupations, but also completely ignores Vietnamese women.[109] The Caucasian blinkers of visual Vietnam representation remain with the publications like that of Peter Finn.

Figure 4 – The opening photograph of Siobhan McHugh's *Minefields and Miniskirts* [Doubleday, Sydney, 1993]..

Interestingly, the first photograph in McHugh's book [Figure 4] is of a scantily-clad entertainer. The purpose of *Minefields and Miniskirts* is to illustrate and make visible the wide variety of women and occupations from Australia and the United States who were active in Vietnam throughout the

[108] Finn, *Vietnam Dispatches*, p. 29.
[109] McHugh, *Minefields and Miniskirts*, p. 104. Helen Keynes a woman who had spent time working in Vietnam had a conversation with Dr Peter Edwards the official historian of the Vietnam War. " I said to him 'I was there. I was there for two years', and he said 'That's interesting.' And I said 'Well aren't you even going to ask me about it?' and he said 'Oh no, I'm writing the *official* version of the war'. In other words…the official version of the war *consciously* excludes women's experiences."

war. However, the use of such an image of sexualised Caucasian femininity to open a war narrative replicates ways in which femininity has been constructed as necessarily external, and in opposition, to the masculinity of the male warrior. It also assists in reinforcing the ways in which soldier-masculinity is constructed as heterosexual. The construction of visual signifiers of hyper-femininity, whose passivity is implicit through the patriarchal male gaze,[110] reinforces the active domination by male soldier identity. If the masculine soldier identity requires the externalisation of femininity and is necessarily heterosexual, the presence of the female pin-up may be seen to assist in the transformation of boys into men. Heterosexual sexual intercourse confers the distinction between adolescence and manhood, and inscribes it upon the male body. If soldiering is a rite of passage to ultimate masculinity, then it must incorporate the possibility of heterosexual sex in order to counter the possibility of homosexuality latent in any grouping made up exclusively of men. As it is necessary to exclude 'real' women from this group, the external visual symbol of femininity provides the contrast crucial to the sexual dimorphism underpinning soldier identity. This renders McHugh's choice of opening photograph extremely problematic. Another factor complicating this selection is the way in which McHugh prefaces her work with a statement which focuses on her own body and biology as an example of the differences between men and women and their attitudes to war.

> While I was writing this book, I became pregnant with my first child, which has probably had a sublimated effect on

[110] See Berger *Ways of Seeing*. See also Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", (originally publushes in 1975 in *Screen*) in *Visual and Other Pleasures*, Macmillan, London, 1989, pp. 14-26. Mulvey was one of the first theorists to discuss the gendering of the gaze and the implications for the politics of representation. While there are problems with her assessment that active gazing is only possible from a masculine perspective, within patriarchal ideology the assumption of implied passivity in the objectification of the female body is one of the factors that underpins masculine dominance. Richard Dyer, "Don't Look Now", in Angela McRobbie (ed.), *Zoot Suits and Second-Hand Dresses: An Anthology of Fashion and Music*, Unwin Hyman, Boston, 1988, p. 202. Dyer discusses the association of powerlessness with notions of activity/passivity. "…to look is thought of as active; whereas to be looked at is passive", with the problems inherent in the male pinup.

> me too – it's hard to be dispassionate about rape and violence as you feel the child move in your womb, or to be casual about death as you prepare to give birth. Women *are* different from men; it may be just a biological necessity, but I rejoice that it is so. For too long we have had only a male-oriented view of what happened in Vietnam.[111]

The connection of this statement of difference with the opening photographic plate and the structures whereby representations of the female body are used as the necessary sign which indicates pure and separate masculinity, structures which McHugh is actually critiquing, is one that demands further thought. While voicing the previously unvoiced and providing important perspectives which have been ignored and silenced, McHugh is still operating within the structures and constraints of war narrative which also says women are different and must be external to war stories and the construction of warriors. Women's bodies cannot be incorporated into the 'body' of the war narrative and the gendered dichotomy necessary to the robust soldier identity is maintained.

An image that recurs from the Second World War onwards is that of a woman positioned seductively in front of heavy machinery. Examples from the Second World War include the painting of voluptuous women onto the noses of fighter aircraft. Such images reinforce the notion of the requisite positioning of a sign for femininity in close proximity, but nevertheless external to masculine soldier identity. The frailty of the female body is often reinforced in these images by their scant clothing, and this serves in turn to bolster the impenetrability of the male warrior. The female form is dominated by the machinery in the background, which in turn is an extension of the soldier's body. Published in *The Australian* for ANZAC Day in 1999, an article about army nurses who served during the Vietnam War was illustrated by a photograph of a nurse in a bathing suit walking past tanks on a beach.[112]

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[111] McHugh, *Minefields and Miniskirts*, p. x.
[112] This photograph appeared on front page of the ANZAC Day edition of *The Australian* in 1999.

The bathing suit worn by the nurse heightens her difference from the military equipment behind her. If she had been in uniform, her body covered, her 'femininity' would have been less easily discernable and the juxtapositioning with masculinity of the soldiers (and their machinery) less effective. The tanks in the background blend with the male soldiers who drive them, machinery and masculinity becoming extensions of one another. This effectively reinforces a traditional dichotomy which aligns masculinity/men with technology and femininity/women with nature. The nurse's body is clearly visible, and vulnerable, in front of the armoured, impenetrable, manufactured war machinery.

While in the 1990s there has been work done to rectify the silences regarding women's involvement in the Australian armed forces during the Second World War, the use of this particular image is problematic in the same way as McHugh's opening photograph, bringing forward in time the polarity of the narration of war, and the gendered body. The importance of work such as McHugh's should not be ignored, and it needs to be acknowledged that the photographs used in her work are from the personal collections of her interview subjects. The images, in part, in very literal ways, redress the invisibility of women during the Vietnam War. However, the problem with these images lies in the way they remain uninterrogated as if they have only one context, and one possible interpretation that is self evident. As in a great deal of

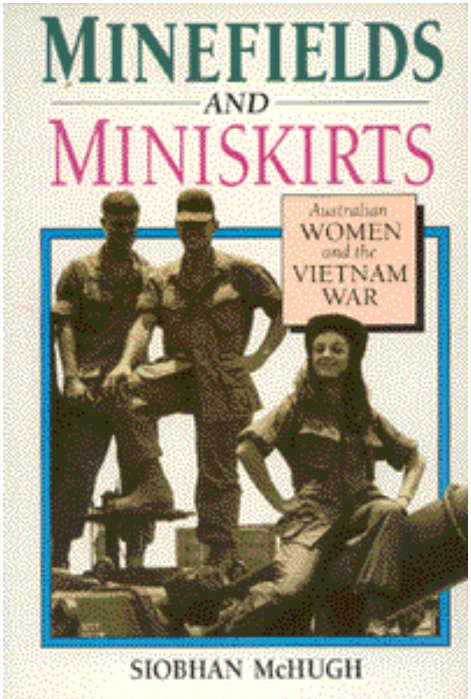

Figure 5 – The Cover of Siobhan McHugh's *Minefields and Miniskirts* fails to interrogate the sexualised nature of the feminine body in uniform.

scholarship,[113] the gender politics of visual representation are unproblematised in McHugh's work, despite the contribution she makes to scholarship on women and war. The cover and title of McHugh's book *Minefields and Miniskirts* [Figure 5] complicate the gender issues she explores, in the same way as the photograph used to open the first chapter. The title juxtaposes weaponry and short skirts, covering the war stories contained within with the sexualised garb which perpetually swathes the activities of women. The cover depicts a laughing woman in fatigues with long dark hair, seated on (almost astride) a large (phallic) gun, being watched by two men in U.S. uniforms in the background.

While fully clad, the playful nature of this juxtapositioning links the body of this young woman to that of the performer depicted inside, her pose openly flaunting the (hetero) sexual connections between women and male soldiers through the presence of military machinery. The need to maintain the contra-positioning of gendered signification is indicated through a similar photograph which appeared on the cover of *Triad*, a magazine published for and about the Australian armed forces, in 1979 [Figure 6].[114]

This photograph is particularly significant given one of the lead articles which appeared in the previous issue – Major M J Castle's "Women in Combat Roles". Castle analyses both whether women should be allowed into combat, and whether they are capable of it following the expansion of women's roles in the Australian military throughout the 1970s.[115] Castle actively questions whether the reasons for maintaining the distance between women and combat roles are physiological or cultural. He concludes that there is a combination of factors to be dealt with, but in critiquing these he also reinforces to a degree some of the biological

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[113] See previous discussion of Goldstein's cover image.
[114] *Triad*, Autumn 1979, No 13. [Cover]
[115] Major M J Castle, "Women in Combat Roles" [Edited Version of a paper presented at an Australian study group on the Armed Forces and Society Conference, Duntroon, ACT, 1978], *Triad*, No 12, 1978, pp. 24 – 66.

essentialism underpinning discourses of exclusion. The ‘cover-girl’ for the following issue, a bikini clad woman casually wandering past a tank on a beach, visually counters the possibilities for gender integration posited by Major Castle. The note, which explains the photograph, is as follows:

> Miss Elizabeth Martin, 21, student teacher… walks nonchalantly along Murray’s Beach, seemingly oblivious to the heavy Army machinery working behind her, unloading stores from a landing craft during Exercise Mud Lark, a logistics-over-the shore operation held during October last year at Jervis Bay. This photograph and other exercise views…are the work of Corporal A. Lautenbach, of Defence Public Relations, Canberra.

Figure 6 – Photograph on the Cover of *Triad*, Autumn 1979.

An exercise in 'Defence Public Relations' as well as logistics, this photograph and its caption attempt to imply how 'natural' it is for the positioning of a near-naked woman close to, but outside, military masculine equipment. The caption, however, also reveals how crafted this opposition is. It is highly unlikely that any civilian would be allowed to just wander past a military operation in progress. It is just as improbable that her expression would be naturally 'nonchalant'. The inclusion of "Miss Elizabeth Martin's" details indicates that the photographer had some contact with the 'object' of the photograph either before or after the snap was taken which undermines the possibility of it having been spontaneous. This is an example of the way in which images are never innocent of the cultural and ideological context within which they appear. The way this cover follows the serious issue of women in combat, its careful crafting, and the attempt to convince the reader that there is anything "nonchalant" about this photograph reveal an investment in maintaining and fortifying the binary distinction between civilian feminine bodies and male warriors and their machinery. The transgression of gender identity that incorporating women into military combat poses is countered and its impact minimised.

Conclusion

Transformation, gender camouflage and the constant tension between individual and collective identity are all elements present in the construction of soldier identity in Australia and the United States. These concepts are utilised to construct and separate the soldier from 'his' civilian counterparts, and to maintain the boundaries and power hierarchy between masculinity and femininity.

The following chapters examine these identities in closer detail, their similarities and cultural specificities. In many ways the media can be seen as one instrument blurring the carefully constructed boundaries between the masculine warrior who is separated from the domestic setting

of passive/protected women. The presence of television, which has placed war in the western living room every night, makes women the consumers of war in ways that were not possible prior to the twentieth century. The role of women as consumers of something from which they have officially traditionally been excluded may be an important reason for the production of female warrior heroes. And the audience for 'real' war has had to be, and is, considered by policy makers who concede the need for contained periods of combat with minimal "body counts".[116]

The boundaries between home and battle fronts and the separation of the masculine soldier identity are blurred almost to the point of invisibility if the relationship between the spectacle of war, the speculative bodies of male soldiers, and the immediacy of consumption that television provides are considered. The ways in which film and television have been used to narrate war and the bodies of warriors is integral to this analysis and paves the way for the discussion and dissection of the possibility of the construction of a female warrior in both countries.

The Vietnam War appears to be a turning point for both countries when dealing with the representation of the soldier. The end of the Vietnam War marked not only a need to recast the soldier, but was a watershed in the recruitment of women into the armed forces, as discussed in the previous chapter. The post-Vietnam era has also seen the ascendancy of the female warrior hero in popular culture. There have been sporadic references to the female warrior as an anomaly throughout history, from the Amazons to Boadicea, Joan of Arc and Molly Pitcher. However, as women have taken on greater roles in modern military institutions in the late twentieth century, instances of the representation of the female warrior appear to have increased.[117] There is therefore an

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[116] See for example, Alter, "Does Bloody Footage Lose Wars".
[117] Examples of this interest in exploring and (re)establishing the tradition of the female warrior from ancient time to the present are Antonia Fraser, *The Warrior Queens: Boadicea's Chariot*, Mandarin Paperbacks, London, 1988 and De Pauw, *Battle Cries and Lullabies*.

implicit need to examine this phenomenon itself for clues about shifts in the construction of the soldier and the gendered bodies of warriors.

3

Casting the Bronze – Australian Soldier Identities

The key to soldier identity in Australia is the ANZAC legend. Stemming from the Great War, the 'ANZAC' dominates the construction of the warrior even at the dawn of the twenty-first century, and has been intrinsically linked to the narration of the Australian nation. The acronym ANZAC stands for the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, and has been applied to all Australian troops who participated in the First World War, but has been more specifically linked with the ill-fated campaign on the beaches of Gallipoli in Turkey in 1915. In spite of its longevity the importance of the ANZAC, and the way in which 'he' has been present in public consciousness, has not always been consistent.[1] The ANZAC legend has since become detached from this acronym. While incorporating the bravery and sacrifice of the slaughter at Gallipoli, the ANZAC legend has become synonymous with 'the spirit of Australia' – all that is brave, noble, heroic, strong, tall, beautiful, white - and male - that has ever come out of this former British colony. While soldiers from New Zealand were a part of the corps, they rarely receive more than a passing mention in Australia, overshadowed by the construction of ANZAC as a legend which defines Australian manhood. It is interesting to note that there appears to be a dearth of comparative material on ANZAC mythologies from the two countries. One major difference is that while the warrior in Australia is coded as white, in New Zealand warrior traditions from the Maori population have been incorporated into soldier identity.[2]

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[1] For the waxing and waning of the legend and the ways in which ANZAC mythology appear see, Lack (ed.), *ANZAC Remembered – Selected Writings of K. S. Inglis*. See also Peter Cochrane, *Simpson and the Donkey – the Making of a Legend*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1992.

[2] ANZAC Day is treated with similar reverence, and links to national identity in New Zealand as it is in Australia. Common themes are also nationhood and peace, rather than a focus on war. Interestingly ANZAC Day underwent a renaissance of popularity in the 1980s very similar to that experienced in Australia and is viewed as a "repudiation of war and a celebration of New Zealand's national identity." See "ANZAC Day – A History", *NZHistory.net*, http://www.nzhisotry.net.nz/Gallery/ANZAC/ANZACday.htm, Accessed

The bravery of the ANZACs is referred to whenever there are issues of national definition at stake – whether in relation to the entry into armed conflict from World War II to East Timor, or changing the Australian flag. The ANZAC legend has been utilised in different ways, and elements of ANZAC mythology are present in public discourse even when no direct reference to this heritage is made.[3] The ANZAC tradition has, however, not always been flexible enough to assimilate the experiences of all Australian soldiers (even from those in the First World War). Those men who did not 'fit' the tradition, are still defined against it. Veterans of the Vietnam War have been the most acute example of this, fighting for a 'welcome home parade', which finally came about in 1987. It can in fact be argued that those soldiers who are not defined as 'heirs' to the tradition have actually been 'feminised' through this exclusion from the soldier construction so crucial to Australian identity. However, while feelings of exclusion have been prominent there have also been revisions more recently which allow a much broader scope for the tradition.

The idealised construction of the 'ANZAC' saw a huge revival with the boom of the Australian film industry from the mid 1970s through the 1980s. This revival was further fuelled by the quest for ways to narrate national identity in the build up to the 1988 bicentennial of white colonisation.[4] The importance of the construction of the ANZAC legend to Australian masculinity, and its revival during this period necessitate the examination of this legend and the ramifications for soldier identity in the

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04/08/02. For an examination of the role of Maori units at Gallipoli, and the way in which Maori traditions have formed a part of soldier identity in New Zealand, see John Phillips, *A Man's Country?: The Image of the Pakeha Male- A History*, Penguin, Auckland, 1996 edition; Chris Pugsley, *Te Hokowitu A Tu: The Maori Pioneer Battalion in the First World War*, Reed Books, Auckland, 1995; Chris Pugsley (ed.), *Scars on the Heart: Two Centuries of New Zealand at War*, Bateman & Auckland Museum, Auckland, 1996.

[3] Recent advertising for the commemoration of the Centenary of Australian Federation is an example of this. Although never explicitly mentioning soldiers or the ANZAC tradition, the dominance of the masculine in Australian identity was prominent, with sporting references providing the link to the expression of masculinity.

[4] This is an identity that is based on the white Anglo-Saxon male experience with very little projection of the diversity of the Australian population.

period from the Vietnam War to the present. Significantly this revival has coincided with the attempts to recruit more women to the Australian military, and the shifting of roles for women in the Armed Forces. This section will utilise the concepts of soldier identity set out in Chapter Two in order to interrogate ANZAC mythology - and its representation – and the ramifications of this for conceptualising gender and combat in the Australian context.

The dominant epithet for the Australian soldier, and his 'superiority' as a warrior, has been that of the "tall, bronzed ANZAC". Ken Inglis notes a change in attitude toward the use of this image between the first Australian Imperial Force of the Great War and the second AIF of the Second World War. He establishes the disparities in the ways in which the ANZAC tradition has or has not been able to assimilate the experiences of Australian soldiers in conflicts since 1918.[5] However, the 'bronzed ANZAC' has been enshrined in popular consciousness, and to a certain extent resurrected by the canonisation through film that occurred in Australian cinema throughout the 1980s. Since the First World War the 'digger' has towered over his pale English counterparts in Australian mythology, hardened for fighting by the outback conditions which bred him.

The 'bronzed ANZAC' may be tanned, but one of the other predominant features of the ideal soldier is that he is white (and by implication Anglo-Saxon in origin).[6] The presence of non Anglo-Saxon groups within both Australian Imperial Forces, and in later conflicts has never really influenced the "tall bronzed legend". Aboriginal people participated in formal and informal ways to Australia's war effort in both the First and Second World Wars and yet there is very little acknowledgement of this in historical, or more populist, representations.

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[5] Ken Inglis, "ANZAC and the Australian Military Tradition", in Lack (ed.), *ANZAC Remembered*, [First appeared in *Current Affairs Bulletin*, v.64, no. 11, April 1988], p. 136.
[6] See Chapter Two, especially regarding the 'white flame of sacrifice'.

Despite regulations that attempted to exclude Aboriginal men from enlisting, wartime manpower shortages often led to these regulations being twisted to suit a particular purpose, or being ignored altogether.[7] Aboriginal citizenship rights groups attempted to use the military service of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in order to further their cause – to little avail, despite rhetoric which has traditionally aligned citizenship rights with military/combat duty.[8] The Chinese Legation had similar thoughts regarding rights and citizenship when they approached the government in April 1942 with the proposal of establishing an all-Chinese defence unit. While these proposals initially met with a more favourable response than similar proposals for using Aboriginal people in the military, the attached claims for unrestricted immigration and full citizenship were a threat to the "White Australia Policy" and were thus ultimately denied.[9] Clare Burton, in her report on the role of women in the Australian Defence Forces, uses the example of a possible increase in the number of recruits from Asian backgrounds, resulting from changes in the Australian population, leading to a need to revise ideal body standards and the ways these are tested in the ADF.[10] Ideal body standards have been based on white, Anglo-Saxon men: as a result recruits from different ethnic (as well as gender) backgrounds continue to be indirectly discriminated against. The white male ideal soldier is upheld even at the end of the twentieth century. The fact that the ANZAC is 'bronzed' or tanned, does not lessen the importance of his being white. Richard Dyer notes the importance of sun-darkened skin to certain models of masculinity, particularly those where physical labour and being

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[7] See Robert A. Hall, *The Black Diggers: Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in the Second World War*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 1997, pp. 15-18.

[8] Indigenous people began to be granted the vote in Australia from the 1850s depending on the ways in which individual State Constitutions were framed. The final States to extend voting rights to Aboriginal people were Western Australia (1962) and Queensland (1965). In 1967 a Federal Referendum was held in which Australians voted to enable the Commonwealth Government to make laws specifically relating to Indigenous Australians and meant that Aboriginal people were finally to be included in the national census. This legislation allowed the Federal Government to override discriminatory State legislation. See Department of Reconciliation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, "Voting Rights, Citizenship, and the 1967 Referendum", Indigenous Issues Fact Sheet Series, April 2001, Accessed 02/08/2002.

[9] Hall, *The Black Diggers*, pp. 28-29.

[10] Burton, *Women in the Australian Defence Force Two Studies*, p. ES-25.

outdoors are important. Being tanned implies physical prowess and toughness (attributes possibly borrowed from stereotypes of non-white people), without mitigating the purity of sacrifice and superiority of white men. The ability to tan can also be read as 'admirable' in white men, where circumstances demand that an individual display adaptability – white men can tan or darken to suit the needs imposed upon them by their environment, the reverse is not 'true' for those of "non-white" origins.[11] R.W. Connell has similarly linked the importance of manual labour to some constructions of masculinity,[12] and bronzed skin implies strength from working outside and other 'manly' pursuits. The colour of his skin is an important part of the construction of the ideal Australian soldier.

Crucial to the Australian legend is the Apollo-like body of the ANZAC. Commencing with journalistic and other writings during the Great War the focus on the perfection of the Australian male body contributed to the casting of the soldier into national monument. L. L. Robson makes much of the importance of physical appearance in the formation of the stereotype of the Australian soldier, with particular emphasis on physical beauty – tall, lean and broad shouldered.[13] Similarly Helen Pringle analyses descriptive texts written regarding Australian troops which make classical allusions. Thus the Australian soldier is lent a tradition to which they may not otherwise have had access, given that this was the first major international conflict in which Australian forces had participated. Novelist Compton MacKenzie wrote: "[t]heir beauty, for it really was heroic, should have been celebrated in hexameters not headlines…There was not one of those glorious young men I saw that day who might not himself have been…Hector or Achilles."[14] Pringle also notes the homoeroticism of these literary works which is carried into the later film texts which depict the ANZACs. The homoeroticism, and implied

[11] Dyer, *White*, pp. 49-50.
[12] Connell, *Masculinities*, p. 55.
[13] L. L. Robson, "The Australian Soldier: Formation of a Stereotype", Mckernon & Browne (eds), *Australia: Two Centuries of War and Peace*, pp 323 – 326.
[14] Compton Mackenzie, cited by Pringle, "The Making of an Australian Civic Identity", p. 97.

homosociality of 'mateship' - the cohesive force between soldiers - are an example of the ways in which femininity is excluded from this tradition, but necessarily signified from the outside in order to maintain the heterosexuality of the male soldier.

In spite of huge casualties, which are almost more a part of the Great War legend than the stoicism of those who 'made it' and returned, this bronzed body implies an impenetrability which excluded as many as it included, particularly in later conflicts. The importance of this impenetrability is chiselled clearly upon the representations of the female form positioned in front of military machinery discussed in the previous chapter. In 1921 the word ANZAC was said to be as "pitiless as a hurled spear…It conveys something savagely masculine, ruthless, resolute, clean driven home".[15] These implications have been present since the 1920s and the constant reference to the representational difference between that which is penetrable, and that which is not, enables the continuity of the sexual dimorphism upon which the legend, and the word, depends. The Australian soldier, embodied and embalmed by the word, can be similarly characterised.

The ANZAC as a 'masculine, ruthless, resolute', not to mention beautiful, icon has a shadow which swallows the experiences of those who came home not whole, who had been prisoners of war, or who felt uncertainty or disturbance at their involvement in wars from the First and Second World Wars, Vietnam and beyond. These bodies and minds were not necessarily 'resolute' and 'clean', but were penetrable and therefore

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[15] F.M.Cutlack, *ANZAC Day Sermons and Addresses*, Brisbane, 1921, cited by Inglis, *ANZAC Remembered*, pp. 134-135. This projection is still evident in the late 1990s. In 1999 a television recruiting advertisement for the Duntroon Royal Military College appears to have incorporated different facets of soldiering in the late twentieth century with a focus on technology, and the use of young women. However, the lasting impression gained is from the young male cadet at the end of the advertisement, slouch hat in place, looking boldly into the camera and stating "When you walk onto that parade ground, you're ten foot tall and bullet proof." An extension of the legend, he is an expression of this ideal masculinity which is invulnerable, and physically awe inspiring. He also reiterates the idea that in participating in and completing military training at Duntroon, he has *become* this way. Transformed once 'he' marches onto the parade ground.

feminised, piercing the metallic gleam of the legend.[16] This is particularly poignant when Vietnam narratives are considered. Characterised as having rent the Australian population, the Vietnam War veteran is often portrayed as broken, their return as damaged men more visible in popular memory than their 'ANZAC' heritage.

In his analysis of Australian popular cultural texts regarding this war, Jeff Doyle marks the Vietnam conflict by the predominance of a kind of injury remembered by Australian soldiers. Both memoirs and fiction suggest that many injuries were mine related and that "the most recalled wounds are those to soldierly masculinity…Among the numerous clusters of images which can be seen to develop from the diversity of memories, injuries to genitals is one of the most dominant."[17] It is the returned soldier who dominates the memory of the Vietnam War as opposed to the unassailable 'fallen' of the conflicts earlier in the century, and this returned soldier is proof that men are not impenetrable. Rather, the danger of emasculation looms large both from 'real' wounds, and symbolic ones, adding to the 'feminisation' of the returned soldier. In many ways those who returned at all from all of these conflicts, but from the First World War in particular, are marginalised by 'the fallen' during public commemoration. ANZAC Day Dawn Services are very much about those who died, sacrificing themselves for their country, rather than those who returned having sacrificed parts of their bodies, or their relationships with

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[16] It is interesting to note that in 2001, the year of the centenary of Australian Federation, which commenced with a documentary series on the ABC, *Australians at War*, there also screened a mini-series on the same channel at the end of the year which dealt with experiences from the Second World War which until now have been largely absent from popular re-visionings of Australia's wartime experience. John Doyle, *Changi*, ABC, 2001, explored the experiences of Australian soldiers imprisoned in Singapore's Changi jail by the Japanese following the fall of Singapore, many of them having never seen combat experience. The bravery, "mateship", and larrikinism so much a part of the ANZAC legend were all present in this production, but so were portrayals of fear and weakness. This production was also interesting in its use of memory and the ways in which soldiers live their lives after they stop being soldiers. The ongoing camaraderie evident though, implies that soldiers are always soldiers.

[17] Jeff Doyle, "Dismembering the ANZAC Legend", in Jeff Doyle and Jeffrey Grey (eds.), *Australia R & R: Representations and Reinterpretations of Australia's war in Vietnam*, Vietnam Generation Inc & Burning Cities Press, v.3, No2, 1991, pp. 109 – 125, p. 115.

their families, or their sanity.[18] This occurs in relation all the conflicts of the twentieth century, and is not just pertinent to the original ANZACs. Those who died did not have to seek to redefine themselves in civilian society. As the last veterans of the Great War have disappeared, it has been the events at the beginning of the twentieth century which have constructed their lives in spite of the eighty years in between. The fragment of their lives which defined them as a part of a legend overshadows the many other facets of their personalities and peacetime interactions. Cast in bronze, there was no possibility of moving towards other defining moments.[19]

Where the comradeship or 'mateship' which is so celebrated in the ANZAC tradition is still valued, other characteristics of the 'digger' are anathema to the ideal military identity. Lack of respect for authority, individuality and no regard for the tight discipline required in a modern military is very much a part of the legendary Australian soldier. Indeed it could almost be said that the individual initiative through which a hero is often separated from his unit in war stories, was used to colour the narrative of all Australian soldiers from the Great War. The men most prominent in Australia's myth of nation were thus all made heroes, despite the campaign for which they are most remembered, Gallipoli, being a defeat. Yet much has been done in practical terms to distance the Australian military since

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[18] This hit home for me when I visited the Kings Park War Memorial in Western Australia and searched for my great-grandfather's name (he had been in the Tenth Light Horse), until I remembered that of course he wouldn't be there – he came home. At the Melbourne War Memorial it is interesting to note that the names of all those who participated in the Gallipoli campaign are recorded and on display, not just those who died. However, ANZAC Day services do not focus on the living, they are about simultaneously mourning and celebrating the dead, whom 'age shall not weary'.

[19] In many ways Alec Campbell who died in 2002 both exemplifies and is the exception to this pattern. He has been celebrated as the last ANZAC, he joined up at the age of 16 and landed at Gallipoli in late November 1915. He was given a State Funeral when he died on May 17 2002 at the age of 103. Campbell was also remembered for his sporting achievements – he sailed in six Sydney to Hobart yacht races. However, what was absent from many of the tributes, including that of the Prime Minister John Howard, was that Campbell was also a republican and a pacifist in his later life. For articles on Campbell the ANZAC Day before his death see Peter Bowers, "At 103, Alec is the Last Man Standing", *The West Australian*, 25/04/2002, p.1 & 8; Bernard Lane, "A Salute to the Survivors", *The Australian*, 25/04/2002, p. 4. For an article that looks at the way dissenting voices of returned soldiers are often glossed over, including Alec Campbell's pacifism, see "Gallipoli's Shadows", *The Age*, 25 April 2003, http://www.theage.com.au/cgi-bin/common/popupPrintarticle.pl?path=/articles/2003/04/, Accessed 27/04/2003.

the end of the First World War from the 'larrikin' streak. There is no equivalent colloquialism for high spirited women – the larrikin is always masculine, and is regarded with fond tolerance and even admiration. The same lack of respect for authority has not historically been viewed as benign when it is embodied by women who instead would be regarded as unstable or deviant. It is interesting to note that the myth of the 'digger' accords individuality as an attribute of the collective, a contradiction which has not been discussed by commentators. This is a mechanism through which differences in the narration of the soldier may be glossed over, reinforcing the homogeneity necessary for the conflation of the individual with the group, and the production of a unified identity. The emphasis on individuality is also extremely important to the functioning of the soldier as a form of masculine identity. Where the military demands obedience and discipline – Foucauldian 'docile bodies'[20] – and the acknowledgement of a hierarchy in which subordinates know they are, and function as, just that, subordinate, constructions of heterosexual masculinity in a patriarchal society demand autonomy of the individual that is in complete opposition to the needs of military functioning. The bestowal of individuality as a *collective* attribute within Australian soldier mythology masks the tensions between the actual functioning of the military as a hierarchical institution, and the representation of soldiering as an expression of quintessential masculinity.

One of the keys to the 'Digger' legend which emerged from the First World War and which set Australia apart from other participants in the conflict was the purely voluntary composition of the AIF. The issue of conscription was a contentious one, and attempts to introduce the draft during this conflict were defeated by referendum twice during the course of the war. While the issues debated were complex, as were the motivations of the Australian Electorate for voting 'yes' or 'no', one of the outcomes was that this fed into the legend of the rough-and-ready Australian soldier, able

[20] See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1991 (First Published 1975), p. 138.

to go straight from the bush to the trenches. This adaptability was also a part of the mythology that was not able to encompass the experiences of soldiers in other conflicts, and which resulted in a certain amount of derision directed at conscripts during the Second World War and up to Australia's involvement in Vietnam. Ken Inglis states that when in the Second World War the decision was made to send conscripts overseas, the 'most distinctive element of the ANZAC tradition disappeared'.[21] These conscripts were known as 'chockos' (chocolate soldiers) and were somehow lesser than their volunteer counterparts, despite the lack of visible distinction and the glossing over of the conscription issue relating to World War II in popular memory.

Following the Vietnam War, the Australian armed forces, like those of the United States, moved to secure a more professional image. Soldiers were to be highly trained professionals, as a part of a standing force, not raw and eager volunteers to fill the gaps in response to a crisis. Has this diminished the echoes of the ANZAC legend? Arguably not. Returning Vietnam veterans confronted the difficulty of having been involved in an unpopular war, many having been drafted, and receiving no recognition upon arriving home. They did not, at first, appear to fit 'the legend', which was potent enough to exacerbate feelings of alienation.

While a significant number of soldiers in Vietnam had been regular army, much more attention has been paid to the conscripts.[22] Thus the contribution of those soldiers who at first glance are much more compatible with 'the legend' through their volunteer status has been obscured, and instead the ignominy, and tragedy, of the conscript has coloured all participants. The homogeneity of soldier identity is ruptured here with surprising results. If a part of the potency of masculinity is visibility, then the status of the draftee in the Vietnam War, who in many ways has been

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[21] Ken Inglis, "ANZAC and the Australian Military Tradition", in Lack (ed.) *ANZAC Remembered*, p. 136.
[22] Inglis, "ANZAC and the Australian Military Tradition", pp. 140 – 142.

characterised as feminised in contrast to the volunteer, complicates the struggle for solidity so crucial to soldier identity. In the post-Vietnam era the Australian Defence Forces have become entirely voluntary and professional. While the voluntary nature of the Armed Forces does not contradict the legacy of the Great War, the increased professionalism of soldiering does not sit easily with the rough and ever-ready recruit. However, the resonance of professional rather than larrikin behaviour in the Vietnam War actually provides the necessary bridge to allow the continuity of the tradition. Despite the focus on conscription and conscripts in the popular press and imagination, the professionalism - meaning the way they conducted themselves - of Australian troops in the Vietnam War, both regular and conscripted (in Australian war stories at least), is what has set them apart from American troops. The attribution of 'professionalism' to both regular army, and those conscripts with no prior military experience, helped both to smooth some of the fissures the Vietnam experience caused in ANZAC soldier identity and to overcome the stumbling block that conscription and having a standing army were to the all-volunteer emphasis of the ANZAC legend. If those with no prior experience could acquit themselves well, regardless of whether or not they volunteered, then the 'ready at a moment's notice' and adaptability aspects of Australian soldier identity could be preserved. Moreover, the professional way in which troops of all backgrounds, conscript or regular Army, are remembered to have conducted themselves, paved the way for the all-professional military.[23] (Apart from this, being ready at a moment's notice and

[23] Jeffrey Grey, "Memory and Public Myth", in Jeffrey Grey & Jeff Doyle (eds), *Vietnam: War, Myth and Memory*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1992, pp. 137-153, p. 141 – 144. Grey makes it clear that whatever is meant when the epithet "professionalism" is applied to Australian troops in Vietnam is not uniform. Early forces sent to Vietnam were poorly equipped with "unsuitable boots and uniforms, with unreliable communications equipment and personal gear", and some members of the Australian forces were highly critical of the "unprepraredness of their officers and NCOs". This could be turned around to the 'ordinary' soldier's advantage when re-membering their experiences. They performed well *in spite* of their lack of preparation and leadership - which only enhances their 'professional' conduct. And this fed into the way the word "professionalism" came into wide usage after the war's end and is meant to convey an overall sense of achievement and deportment, despite often great differences between units in their effectiveness – and behaviour. As Grey has stated "Because the Task Force was a token force, in the sense that it could have no real impact on the outcome of the wider war, Australian soldiers were

adaptability are a part of any model military outfit, so the leap is not actually that big.) Once the anomalies of the Vietnam experience had been assimilated, some of the consequences for changes to the way in which members of the Australian military were recruited were also able to be absorbed in the ANZAC tradition, traversing the distance between 1915 and the late 1960s and early 1970s. It was only the consequences for the masculine soldier identity, however, which were a part of the bridge – while the potentially feminizing aspects of being a conscript were overcome, femininity remains a stumbling block for Australian soldier identity.

The professional soldier facilitates overcoming the rifts over conscription in public opinion, and the rents in soldier identity caused by the draftee. The active use of the term 'diggers' by Prime Minister John Howard in 1999, when discussing the Australian contingent in the East Timor peace-keeping mission, demonstrates how effective the bridging function of the ANZAC tradition has been. As do the ways in which professionalism has been assimilated into a tradition founded on a non-standing, all-volunteer defence force made up of 'natural born' soldiers bred in the harsh conditions of the outback.[24] The predominant media image of the ANZAC during and immediately after the First World War was of a courageous, adaptable man, but someone who in spite of his fighting prowess (or perhaps as a result of it) was crude and

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able to face the political failure of Australian involvement much more easily, if they had a mind to do so. It could be blamed on the Americans and the South Vietnamese while the message also conveyed by an emphasis on professionalism was that the army had functioned well within the narrow confines of its tasks." p. 143. This is in contrast to the situation for the soldiers from United States, who not only had to hold themselves responsible for the outcomes – or lack of outcomes – of the war, but had to deal with a potential crisis in national identity, so closely intertwined are the constructs of the soldier, the patriot, and U.S. masculinity.

[24] For empirically based criticism of the myth of the 'natural born' ANZAC see Dale Blair, "Challenging the ANZAC Legend". The Sixteenth Roger Joyce Memorial Lecture, History Institute of Victoria, http://home.vicnet.net.au/~histinst/ANZAC_legend.htm, accessed 02/08/02. See also Blair's PhD thesis, *War Experience and Social Identity: A History of the 1st Battalion A.I.F.* PhD, Victoria University of Technology, 1998.

unsophisticated.[25] The professionalism of the Australian armed forces is often overshadowed by this reputation and as Kathryn Spurling has asserted in her study of media responses to Australian military women, little has changed since the early twentieth century: "[t]raditionally the Australian media stereotype of a member of the defence force has been soldier-centric: the same physical, rough, crude, ill-mannered, poorly educated and unsophisticated male described earlier".[26] Media portrayals of soldiers leaving their families to go to East Timor, and the return of the commander of the operation, can be viewed as a means of reinstating the 'whole' warrior into popular consciousness after the Vietnam War. Where it has often been said that the Gulf War was the means by which the United States attempted to 'win' what they lost in Vietnam, a similar process can be seen in the way in which the campaign in East Timor has been dealt with by the Australian media and politicians. Indeed the very leader of the Australian Forces sent to East Timor, Major-General Peter Cosgrove, was himself a part of the task force sent to Vietnam and embodies the transition of soldier identity through one conflict to the next, and it is partly his 'professionalism' that has allowed this transition. As Peter Toohey stated in an article on Cosgrove in *The Australian* in February 2000, "Cosgrove does not dwell on the righteousness or otherwise of Vietnam, claiming the professional soldier's right to be an unquestioning instrument of his government…He says he is a product of Vietnam and his experiences there directly connect him to Vietnam".[27] The lack of engagement with the "rights and wrongs" of one conflict, do not affect the conviction conveyed

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[25] See Stephen Garton, *The Cost of War: Australians Return*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1996, p. 193, cited by Kathryn Spurling, , "From Chief of Defence Force to Xena: Media Response and Responsibility", in Kathryn Spurling & Elizabeth Greenhalgh (eds), *Women in Uniform: Perceptions and Pathways*, School of History, University College, University of New South Wales, Australian Defence Force Academy, 2000, p. 83.

[26] Spurling, "From Chief of Defence Force to Xena", p. 89.

[27] See Paul Toohey, "Major-General Achiever", *The Australian*, 05/02/2000, http://www.theaustralian.com.au/extras/toohey/s4s1.html, Accessed 04/02/02. See also transcript of an interview with Major General Cosgove, *The Seven-Thirty Report*, ABC TV, 25/01/01, http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/s238065.htm, Accessed 04/08/02. For commentary on the way Australia has been able to see itself as heroic despite its involvement in the events that led to the political turmoil, and bloodshed, in East Timor see John Pilger, "A Moral Outrage", *The Guardian*, 02/11/1999, http://www.guardian.co.uk/Print/0,3858,3923896,00.html, Accessed 04/08/02.

in the remaining part of this article that the freedom of East Timor was something worth fighting for. An article on Australian Army photographer Darren Hilder, which appeared in *The West Australian* in July 2000, makes an explicit connection between the portrayal of Australian soldiers in East Timor and the conflict in Vietnam.[28] The article's title "The Odd Angry Shot" is also the title of one of the few, and best known, film texts from Australia which deal explicitly with the Vietnam War. The use of this catch phrase in an article about military photography is also an overt representation of the way in which the visual media construct, and reconstruct, the soldier and war narratives.

In spite of changes in the ways in which 'real' soldiers are presented and utilised, the Digger myth with all its resonances of insubordination and rough edges is still prevalent, receiving a revival with films of the 1980s like *Gallipoli* (1981) and *The Lighthorsemen* (1987). The resurrection of the ANZAC through cinema and television from the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s can be analysed as an answer to the shortcomings of the existing legend in providing a construction to which Vietnam veterans could relate and have access. Australia has produced very few film texts dealing directly with the Vietnam War and the experience of Australian troops during this conflict. It is possible to read texts which reconstructed and reinterpreted conflicts from the turn of the century as allegories for the Vietnam War. In contrast to the experience of the United States, there was more in the existing tradition in Australia upon which to pin the narratives of the Vietnam War than appears at first glance. Elements of commonality between Australia's involvement in Vietnam and previous wars have assisted in the assimilation of Vietnam veterans' experience into the ANZAC tradition through the 1980s and 1990s.

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[28] Rod Moran, "The Odd Angry Shot", *The West Australian*, *Big Weekend* section, Saturday July 29 2000, p. 5. There is an explicit link made between the act of photography and the firing of weaponry in this article. It is interestingly juxtaposed to an article on a collection of weaponry held by a civilian in a country town in Western Australia titled "Arms and the Man". Rod Moran, "Arms and the Man", *The West Australian*, *Big Weekend* section, Saturday July 29 2000, p. 5.

Australian soldiers were sent to Vietnam as a part of a larger force and dominated by the demands of that force, just as in the Great War. There were feelings of betrayal at the way in which the war was being conducted and protests over conscription in both conflicts. The differences between the conduct of Australian soldiers and American soldiers have actually been made much of, with Australian soldiers being credited at home with a much more professional approach, in spite of the draftees, and few of the behavioural problems of United States' troops.[29] These comparisons of the worth of the soldier mirror those that elevated the 'tall bronzed ANZAC' above his English counterparts in the First World War. Such parallels are not as obvious in the United States.

The reassembling of the warrior in the post-Vietnam era in the American context has been quite different to that in Australia, despite a tendency to view similarities in the Vietnam experience between the two countries. Representations of the Vietnam War from America have had broad audiences in Australia which accounts for some of the misconceptions regarding the Australian experience. Film and television texts, such as *Platoon*, *Full Metal Jacket*, *China Beach* and *Tour of Duty*, which deal directly with the Vietnam War are far more common in the American context, unlike those produced in Australia. Livio and Pat Dobrez's article "Old Myths and New Delusions: Peter Weir's Australia", touches on the allegorical reconstruction of the ANZAC through Peter Weir's film *Gallipoli*, without actually making direct reference to the continuity of the ANZAC tradition and the incorporation of the Vietnam experience. They posit that the film operates by employing the constant opposition of 'Innocence and Experience', stating that this opposition, focused on the transformation from innocence, is a myth worthy of

[29] See Jeffrey Grey, "Memory and Public Myth", in Grey & Doyle (eds), *Vienam: War, Myth and Memory.* pp. 137 – 153. See in the same volume Jeff Doyle, "Short-timers' Endless Monuments: Comparative Readings of the Australian Vietnam Veterans' National Memorial and The American Vietnam Veterans' Memorial", pp. 108 – 137.

interrogation.[30] They examine the differences between the two main characters, Archie and Frank, in order to question why Australian mythmaking privileges innocence and sacrifice, over experience, knowledge and survival. The emphasis on innocence allows the continuance of belief that Australians were not aware of their role in maintaining the empire, and colonial bigotry, of which the battles in the Middle East in 1915 were a part. The Dobrez's argument hinges on Weir's film providing small insights into ways Australians and Australia's participation in the Great War were *not* innocent, but then minimizes the impact of these insights by reabsorbing them into pre-existing mythology. Weir, and script writer John Williamson, have contributed to ANZAC mythology, rather than interrogating Australian history. The Dobrezes conclude,

> Thousands will see Peter Weir's film. They will walk away just a little more confused than they went in. The question arises: why are Australians so loathe to see themselves as they are? If after all these years they cannot focus on 1915, when will they focus on the present?[31]

The aspersions cast by the Dobrezes are accurate and worthy of closer examination. *Gallipoli* does not question the racist nature of Australian society or the injustices constantly wreaked on the Aboriginal population. Nor does the film interrogate the roots of 'bushman' tradition so crucial to the revered ANZAC legend, which depended in part on the decimation of the Aboriginal population. Similarly absent is any recognition of the political reasons for which Australian troops were in Turkey in the first place. Being a part of the British Empire meant that Australian forces were fighting in Turkey to maintain the imperial strongholds of Europe (not only Britain, but in the case of the Middle-East, Imperial Russia). It is not possible that all of the soldiers were completely unaware of these causes for their landing at ANZAC cove.

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[30] Livio and Pat Dobrez, "Old Myths and New Delusions: Peter Weir's Australia", in Rutherford and Wieland (eds), *WAR: Australia's Creative Response*, pp. 215 – 226.
[31] Livio & Pat Dobrez, "Old Myths and New Delusions", p. 227.

However, the Dobrez' have actually identified why this text cannot be undermined by its lack of historical acuity: it is part of the reinvention of a myth. *Gallipoli* is meant to reinvent, not interrogate, the mythology of 1915 for a 1980s audience. This reinvention firmly replanted the myth of ANZAC in popular consciousness, and provided a means of re-viewing the Vietnam experience through the framework of the ANZAC legend. In not recognising the allegorical quality of this text the authors also fail to recognise that the oppositional device they critique is one which facilitates the reconstruction of the ANZAC legend. The 'innocence and experience' opposition works well in the Vietnam context, where innocents were Australian conscripts who were sacrificed for a cause for which many felt no allegiance. To a certain extent the whole Australian contingent, conscripts and regulars alike, can be cast in this way, sacrificed by government, the need to maintain an international profile, and reassure the United States of Australian loyalty. The transition from innocence to experience, and the contrast between the two, is vital not only for the maintenance and reinvention of the ANZAC tradition, it is also important when applied to the transformational model of soldier identity, in the transformation from boys to men through the experience of war. The film text *Gallipoli* extrapolates this transformation of individuals and the group identity of the Australian Imperial Force from a disparate group of volunteers to the fathers of a legend, while operating on the assumption that Australian audiences will be familiar with the role of the defeat in the symbolic transformation of the Australian nation.

The ANZAC legend focuses not on individuals, although it glorifies individuality. The digger, while being quintessentially masculine, is also the foot soldier – although he is able to ride anything that moves! High-ranking officers are not a part of the general mythology, although lack of respect for authority and loss of life due to high-ranking incompetence are. In accounts of General Monash during the First World War, he is eulogised

for his rising through the ranks. He had been a 'common soldier' and therefore had an affinity with his troops.[32] He was one of them, rather than being above them. Of all the soldiers who have fought in the Australian armed forces, it is interesting to note that the narration of another hero whose story is still retold time and again in the final decade of the twentieth century, was not a warrior but actually occupied what can be classified as a feminised role. Private Simpson and his donkey carried wounded men from the cliffs of Gallipoli to medical stations. Ken Inglis writes of two heroes from the Great War, one who was decorated, the other was not. The first was Albert Jacka who took risks and killed Turks and was celebrated for this ability. The second was Simpson and his Donkey. Inglis asserts that due to doubts about Australia's involvement in the War which emerged during the 1930s, Simpson was able to be present in school texts as

> [S]impson and his Donkey; saver of lives; our teachers could commend him to us whatever their sentiments about the war and whatever their general outlook. We never met the killer Albert Jacka.[33]

Jacka was awarded the Victoria Cross. Simpson was never decorated as he was 'just doing his job.'[34] However, it is Simpson whose story persists in modern memory, and a statue of him and his donkey was recently erected at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. This statue, though, is not the towering edifice of other 'digger' memorials. It is quite diminutive in comparison to other material representations and is not placed centrally.[35]

Although a 'hero', Simpson appears to be peripheral to the legend. His celebrity, and popular status as the embodiment of the spirit of

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[32] This pattern is repeated in the way Major-General Peter Cosgrove has been presented to the Australian public both during, and in the wake of, the crisis in East Timor in the late twentieth century. He rose through the ranks and therefore appreciates the ordinary soldier, having been one himself. See Toohey, "Major General Achievement".
[33] Inglis, *ANZAC and the Australian Military Tradition*, p. 131.
[34] See Tom Curran, "The True Heroism of Simpson", *Quadrant*, v.41, no. 4, April 1997, pp. 66 – 70.
[35] There is a smaller version again of this memorial outside the War Memorial in Melbourne.

ANZAC, springs from saving lives rather than taking them, from caring and compassion rather than being as "pitiless as a hurled spear." However, in many ways Simpson embodies the ways in which the ANZAC legend has been interpreted as transcendent of war. A part of the rhetoric of ANZAC Day is that, in the same way that what is commemorated is a defeat rather than a victory, remembering the fallen is about preserving the peace they fought so hard for, rather than the fighting itself. The story of Simpson and his donkey works to resolve the difficulties posed by the difference between individual and group identity. A debate which took place following the final enshrining of the statue of Simpson and his donkey at the Australian War Memorial in 1988, illustrates the ways in which the individual can be 'every man'. Peter Cochrane's book *Simpson and the Donkey: The Making of a Legend* discusses the folkloric importance of the Simpson story and its crucial role in the waxing and waning of the importance of the ANZAC legacy in Australia throughout the twentieth century. Cochrane acutely perceives the way in which the narration of heroes works:

> Simpson's courage and compassion are unquestionable; his stoic persistence, brave deeds and tragic end are beyond dispute. Yet it is nourished by other sources, for while heroism is an individual act, heroes are a social creation. They are made by a configuration of circumstances and needs that lie outside the heroic monument.[36]

Cochrane's analysis, like that of Dawson,[37] recognises the importance of narrative in both the separation of the hero from the rank and file, and the integration of the hero into popular consciousness. The necessary bridge over the separation between the military collective and the rest of the population is thus forged through the body and actions of the hero, in this case Private Simpson.

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[36] Cochrane, *Simpson and his Donkey*.
[37] See Dawson, *Soldier Heroes*, p. 21.

As previously stated there has been a constant struggle to centralise masculinity in Australian culture and to marginalise femininity.[38] The refraction of this struggle through the body of the ANZAC is visible and ongoing. The enshrining of a hero like Private Simpson assists the continuity of the ANZAC legend through times when war is not popular. Much of the rhetoric surrounding ANZAC Day is that it is about fighting for peace, not about war. In some ways the participation of Australian soldiers in conflicts fought overseas, and in conjunction with forces from other countries assists this rhetorical continuity. If the traditional binary associating women with peace and men with war is applied to this situation, then it should facilitate the emergence of a feminine soldier identity as a peace-keeper in the Australian context with possibly more ease than in other countries. However, when examined in the light of the marginalisation of femininity in Australian culture and the separation of women from ANZAC identity, the invisibility of women continues. Peter Cochrane has pointed out that Simpson's importance is partially due to his nurturing 'feminine' role, but that his status as a national hero depends upon his being a man and a soldier. A female nurse, whose immediate value to the wounded would have been at least equal to that of the man and his donkey, could never have been accorded the same place in the iconography of the Australian nation.[39] The need to centralise masculinity and the need to appropriate 'feminine'

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[38] See Marilyn Lake and Annabel Cooper as quoted in Chapter Two. David Coad posits that while women are not a part of 'Australianness', there is a strong tradition of tough women in the outback who perform a kind of 'female masculinity'. 'Bushwomen' are tanned, wiry, leathery and capable and pass on an iron will to their daughters. But the transgression of gender binaries, and boundaries, is lessened by the lack of sexuality with which these women are imbued. These women do not disrupt the centrality of masculinity to Australian national identity and the main example of a representation of 'female masculinity' that Coad cites is not even defined in her own terms. Henry Lawson's "The Drover's Wife", does not have an individual identity, or occupation. She is capable and supports her family as the *wife* of the absent drover. Coad, while providing an interesting alternative possibility in the gendering of Australian identity, ultimately reinforces the marginality of femininity, and women. Much of his analysis is an attempt to "queer" Australian mythologies and identities. While this is in opposition to dominant heterosexual constructions, it does not displace the centrality of forms of masculinity, even if they are not straight, nor the misogyny inherent in Australian culture and identity – whether queer or straight. See David Coad, *Gender Trouble Down Under: Australian Masculinities*, Presses Universitaires de Valenciennes, Le Mont-Houy, 2002. See especially Chapter Four, "Bushwomen and Female Masculinity".

[39] Cochrane, *Simpson and the Donkey*.

attributes and disengage them from women/femininity in the Australian context is once again illustrated. This is partially why the rhetoric associating the commemoration of the ANZAC legend with peace does not actually allow for a female soldier identity, in spite of traditional binary oppositions which underpin polarised gender characterisations.

The story of Vivian Bullwinkel and the way in which it has been alluded to in the 1997 Bruce Beresford film *Paradise Road* is an example of the way in which femininity and female sacrifice are separated from the representation of ANZAC tradition. Vivian Bullwinkel was an Australian Army Nurse during the Second World War. Following the evacuation of Singapore, the ship she and other nurses, civilians and soldiers were on was bombed. Bullwinkel and some others were taken prisoner on Banka Island. The Japanese made 23 women walk into the ocean and then fired up and down the line with a machine gun. She was the only woman to survive. She later joined up with a group of other nurses from whom she had been separated, who were sent by the Japanese to join the coolie lines with other prisoners and refugees.[40]

Bullwinkel and her fellow nurses did all they could to maintain the health and morale of other inmates of the camp, yet she has been accorded little of the acclaim of Private Simpson, and none of the inter-generational impact so important to ANZAC mythology.[41] Indeed, upon her death in August 2000 there was little mention of 'the ANZAC Spirit' in obituaries

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[40] Hank Nelson, "A Map to Paradise Road: A Guide for Historians", *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, Issue 32, March 2000, http. //www.awm.gov.au/journal/j32/nelson.mm, Accessed 20/06/2000.

[41] The emphasis upon a 'spirit' which could be passed from one generation to the next has become particularly important by the early twenty-first century when most of the original ANZACs have died. This was apparent in the media coverage of ANZAC Day in 2000. Another way in which this mythology has become a cultural signifier of particular pull is the way in which an advertising campaign for Qantas capitalised on the generational rhetoric of 2000 in a poster campaign. The catch slogan for Qantas advertising has for many years been "The Spirit of Australia". In 2000 this slogan captioned a photograph of an old man handing on his medals to a young boy wearing a slouch hat, which presumably also belonged to the old man. Grandfather to grandson, the 'spirit' of ANZAC, i.e., the spirit of Australia, is handed from one generation, of Australian men, to the next.

and media bulletins.[42] Perhaps the massacre of Australian nurses was too difficult to assimilate on an ongoing basis. The idea that women cannot be protected, so important to the separation of home and battle fronts and the cultural amnesia regarding the presence of women in combat, deepens the chasms in popular consciousness regarding such incidents. Similarly the reproductive associations so important to the wider population, as previously discussed in reference to the absence of a specifically feminine experience in the holocaust narrative Shoah,[43] are explicit in what remains left out of the national narrative handed on from one generation to the next. Perhaps too the difference lies in the fact that Bullwinkel and the other nurses were involved in nursing 'inmates' of a prisoner-of-war camp, men whose warrior status has been compromised by their capture and internment. The bodies of these men were often broken, not only through wounding in action, but through disease and malnutrition and the ignominy of being imprisoned. In some respects these soldiers can be seen to have been feminised as a result of their capture, treatment and the fact that they were kept from fighting. The nurses were also separated from the men early in their experiences and interned with other women prisoners for whom they cared.[44] This makes the way Bullwinkel's experience can be framed different to the way we view Private Simpson, who was a free man trying to save other *fighting* men – not a prison camp inmate trying to save imprisoned men and women. And therefore another means of excluding Bullwinkel from the ANZAC tradition is revealed. The absence of the label 'ANZAC' has occurred in spite of the conscious efforts, particularly with the 'Australia Remembers' 1995 commemoration of the war in the Pacific, to raise consciousness and extend the ANZAC legend to Australians who

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[42] In an internet search conducted on 20 August 2001, only one out of seven articles found mentions Bullwinkel directly in relation to the 'ANZAC' spirit – Damien Nowicki, "Farewell to No-Nonsense ANZAC Legend [Vivien Bullwinkel], *The Australian*, July 11 2000, p. 4. Others mention selflessness, and good humour, both traits commonly found in ANZAC mythology, but do not bring the nurse's experiences under the ANZAC banner. This includes the national press release from the Treasurer's office. "National Press Release", *Treasurer*, No 072, www.treasurer.gov.au/treasurer/pressreleases/2000/072.asp, Accessed 20/08/2001.

[43]Hirsch & Spitzer, "Gendered Translations: Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah*", p. 13.

[44] For a description of Australian Army Nursing Service members' experiences at the hands of the Japanese see Bassett, *Guns and Brooches*, Chapter Seven.

suffered at the hands of the Japanese.[45] The continuities in the ANZAC legend have little room for the experiences of those whose roles blur the gendered boundaries so important to the continuities of war narratives.

Hank Nelson claims the incident where the nurses were gunned down was omitted from the opening of the film *Paradise Road,* as it would have distorted the impact of the remainder of the text. He also makes a valid connection to other films which have had defining impact as Australian war stories:

> by not making mention of the killings on the beach, *Paradise Road* cannot make any connection with Australians who know about the massacre; the central evocative moment has been left out. This is *Breaker Morant* without the firing squad at the end, or *Gallipoli* without the charge at the Nek. Without the killing on the beach a major factor explaining post-war anger of Australians against Japanese has been omitted.[46]

Nelson contextualises this argument with the debates that raged when the film was released over the potentially 'racist' portrayal of the Japanese. What Nelson fails to do is make an explicitly gendered appraisal of this text within Australian soldier mythology.

Paradise Road is one of the only recent cinematic portrayals of Australian women in a war zone.[47] Beresford's production depicts a group of Australian nurses at a prisoner of war camp and utilised stories which

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[45] See Matthew Allen, "Forgetting and Remembering: The Contradictions of Australia Remembers 1945 – 1995", in Gregory (ed.), *On the Homefront*, pp. 281 – 291.
[46] Hank Nelson, "A Map to Paradise Road".
[47] For a broader examination of the lack of Australian representation of women and war see Sara Buttsworth, "Antipodean Iconography: A Search for Australian Representations of Women and War", *Outskirts*, August 2000, http://www.chloe.uwa.edu.au/outskirts/archive/VOL6/article1.html.
There have been film and television versions of *A Town Like Alice* which depicts the experiences of women in POW camps under the Japanese during the Second World War, but these have not been focussed on Australian women specifically, although the main male protagonist (and romantic lead) was Australian. Similarly a miniseries on the experiences of female POWs was screened on the ABC in the early 1980's – *Tenko* (BBC, 1981-1984). *Tenko* had an Australian nurse character as well as British and Dutch inmates. However, these productions have not attracted the same attention as *Paradise Road*.

came from those who survived this experience as background for the film. While Cate Blanchett's character Susan can be described as plucky and on occasion irreverent, borrowing from ANZAC constructions, there is little which links her to a specifically Australian wartime experience, or the soldier tradition which defines the experiences of male participants. To a certain extent the difficulty of assimilating prisoners of war into the ANZAC tradition accounts for this, but more importantly ANZAC mythology continues to be gendered as masculine. Thus, in spite of parallels forged through the use of Private Simpson as an heroic icon in his non-warrior role, gender remains the defining and exclusionary characteristic of the Australian identity in war, whether or not the identity is that of a soldier. Where in depictions of masculinity and war class appears to have little role and is something to be ridiculed, the class distinctions apparent in *Paradise Road* (which appear also to be closely aligned to nationality) inflect depictions of the women and how they cope with their wartime experiences. The Australian nurses, while brave and capable, are depicted as naïve and not as well educated as their English or European counterparts. This contrasts distinctly with the cultured and cultivated Jean Pargiter (Glenn Close) who conducted the vocal orchestra, or the arrogance of some of the British wives which crumbles or leads to them not surviving. The lack of reference to the horrific shootings on the beach, in contrast to the climactic denouement in *Breaker Morant* and *Gallipoli*, when viewed from the perspective of the reconstruction through film of Australian soldier identity sharply clarifies the ways in which gender continues to define the ANZAC tradition as masculine. The horror of this event breaks down the imaginary lines between the experiences of men and women and renders farcical the notion of women being protected in war. The absence of this link to the horrific experiences of male soldiers compounds the invisibility of women in ANZAC mythology as poignantly demonstrated by remembrances of Vivian Bullwinkel.

The association of the ANZAC tradition with peace and remembering, rather than being an overt celebration of military prowess, has meant that the transition towards missions which have been defined as peace-keeping rather than war has been relatively smooth. In defiance of the traditional binary which associates men with war, the paradoxical construction of peace-keeping does not threaten the masculinity of Australian soldier identity. It must also be noted that peace-keeping is active, while being peaceful or living in peace has the passive associations normally related to femininity. Peace-keeping is a form of active vigilance and enforcement, keeping a fine balance which at any given moment could erupt into war. Peace-keeping can also arguably be said to fit into traditional patriarchal structure of male (fatherly) authority, justifiable interventions into situations where order has broken down and the exertion or return of patriarchal authority is necessary so that stability can be re-established. In so viewing 'peace-keeping' it is no longer such a paradox for masculine warrior identity, but it does complicate the possibility of recognizing a female warrior identity. Whether or not this shift will enable a re-gendering of this identity remains to be seen.

ANZAC mythology defines and eulogises aspects of Australian manhood. However, the Australian military from the rough and ready recruit of the Great War to the professional soldier at the end of the twentieth-century, is still to a large extent separate from the lives of the civilian population. The paramilitary institutions of the United States do not exist in Australia, nor is the 'right to bear arms' a central tenet of the Australian constitution – despite the gun lobby's protestations to the contrary.[48] This separation, along with the geographical separation of Australia from the conflicts in which the Australian military has participated, assists the impression of a separation between home and battle

[48] The influence of the United States' media was once more apparent when pro-gun ownership lobbyists cited the 'right' to bear arms in Australia as one of the arguments against the tightening up of gun restriction laws in the late 1990s.

fronts, and it is this separation which in turn maintains the notion that women are absent from war and soldiering.

The roles women have undertaken in the Australian Defence Force in the latter part of the twentieth century have received not nearly as much attention as those of military women in the United States.[49] Nor has there been the same flurry of publications by military women about their experiences in the Defence Forces, as in the United States. Whenever the subject of women being allowed in the infantry is mooted a wave of media attention ensues, but this is sporadic and usually short-lived.[50] The same attention has not been accorded women in the Navy or Air Force, except where sexual harassment has occurred. This attention is perhaps due to the iconic value of the foot soldier to Australian mythology. The reasons women should not be allowed into combat positions have not been posited as threats to masculinity in the same direct way as in the United States. This lack of attention to female members of the ADF can be seen as another form of gender camouflage, although it also relates to different role of the military in Australian society and its greater separation from the civilian world and less integrated role in Australian national identity, than in the United States. While Australian military women 'get on with the job', they are not visibly disrupting the masculinity of soldier identity. The threat female soldiers pose to this coherent identity is minimised if they remain camouflaged in the uniforms they wear. While silently integrated their gender remains, paradoxically, one of the things that separates them from the body of Australian soldier mythology.

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[49] Hancock, "Women, Combat and the Military", p. 88. Hancock makes the point that when women were accepted at the Royal Military College Duntroon in 1986, there was little public or media attention paid to related issues.

[50] In January 1999 the flurry of activity that resulted from the commissioning of a government report into whether or not women should be allowed into combat. For example, Karen Milliner, "Women at War", *The Courier-Mail*, Jan 5 1999, Features Section, p. 9. The same flurry of media-activity, and letters to the editor and talkback radio calls, occurred again in May 2001 when the findings of the report were given to the Government and the public. A final decision on this issue has still not been reached - the Prime Minister John Howard saying he would leave the matter open to 'public opinion', essentially deferring the issue indefinitely.

These separations, in part, explain the lack of development of an Australian female warrior-hero, and the need to adopt tags from United States' popular culture to introduce topics dealing with Australian women in the military.[51] Kathryn Spurling in her article on media responses to the women in the Australian Defence Forces makes the point that reference to "Xena – Warrior Princess", in a piece designed to present arguments why Australian women should be allowed into combat, belittles the efforts of 'real' women in the Australian military. Xena is after all a cartoon-like super hero, and satirizes aspects of warrior culture.[52] However, the lack of a 'seamless' tradition that acknowledges real and mythic female warriors is not taken into account in Spurling's argument. Masculine warrior tradition is not demeaned by the inclusion of cartoon heroes or speculative warriors – indeed parts of it rest upon these 'fictional' constructions. Since there is no openly acknowledged tradition of martial femininity, when well-known 'cartoon' tags are used it appears as if 'real' military women and their experiences are demeaned. A lack of recognition of the differences and silences in these traditions however, reinforces the sanctity of one tradition and the amnesia swathing the other. The iconic vacuum relating to Australian female heroes makes this popular-cultural tag necessary to catch the eye and the imagination of the reading public. It is also necessary to acknowledge that the ANZAC is a speculative body, as well as a sacred one. The construction of the ANZAC can be viewed from some angles as no more, or less, real than that of the warrior princess, and is certainly not immune to revision. While the bodies of ANZACs are bronzed, a metal in which their memorials are set, Australian masculine soldier identity is by no means as solid, or crack resistant. Rather, the bronze is cast and recast, implying the transforming fluidity, simultaneously crucial and anathema to coherent models of masculinity.

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[51] Buttsworth, "Antipodean Iconography".
[52] Spurling, "From Chief of Defence Force to Xena", p. 88.

4.

Femininity - The Final Frontier. Soldier Identity in the United States

At every juncture in United States history there appears to have been a frontier, or allusions to a frontier, used to inspire disparate groups of people to go further, cultivate more land, discover new territories, and battle those who threaten the expansion and lifestyles of the 'American people'. This chapter argues that femininity can be read as 'the final frontier' which needs to be conquered, and contained, in order to guarantee the dominance of masculine warrior identity in the United States. Following a loosely chronological structure, "Forging Identities" explores the conceptualisation of soldier identity in the early days of the United States from the Revolutionary War through to about 1900. "The American Century" covers the period from the First World War to the Vietnam War, in which the 'just war' and therefore the righteous warrior were prominent, particularly in the wake of World War II. "Masculinity Under Siege" examines the reconstruction of soldier identity in the wake of the Vietnam War. In the post-Vietnam era elements of warrior identity from previous time periods has recurred and been adapted in order to maintain the integrity of masculine soldier identity despite the need for the increased recruitment of women to the armed forces.

Introduction

In the late nineteenth century, Frederick Jackson Turner positioned the West and the concept of the frontier as crucial to the understanding of America when he presented a paper entitled "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" to the American Historical Association's annual meeting in July 1893. Turner believed that the frontier was on the verge of being closed, and that this posed a dramatic turning point in American history. Turner's arguments also hinged on the notion that the

experiences and battles on and with the frontier were what shaped a peculiarly American culture and character with emphasis on 'natural' equality, democracy and the importance of the individual.[1] Implicitly of course, these naturally equal individuals who were forged in the struggles of the frontier were white and male.[2] Anything beyond the frontier, the forces against which these white men struggled, whether land or people, was implicitly represented as wild, unruly, unpredictable, dangerous – and feminine.

Turner's theory constructed the frontier as a process rather than a specific geographical location.[3] The initial enemies on the American frontier were, as in Australia, portrayed as the land itself and the indigenous population. Then there were the British, who wanted to maintain and extend their rule over the colonies, and the French who allied themselves to some groups in the Native American population. More land was settled and the economy boomed, but there was a need to cultivate

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[1] James B. LaGrand & Bradley J. Young, "The American West", *Organization of American Historians Magazine of History*, v.9, Fall 1994, http://www.oah.org/pubs/magazine/west/lagrand.html, Accessed 10/11/02.

[2]For a critique of the absence of women in Turner's thesis see Glenda Riley, "Frederick Jackson Turner Overlooked the Ladies", in Richard Etulain (ed.), *Does the Frontier Experience Make America Exceptional?*, St Martin's Press, Boston, 1999, pp. 59-71.

[3]Turner's construction of the frontier as a process rather than a specific place has not been uncontested in the 100 or so years since he first posited this thesis. There are ongoing debates around this issue that within the discipline of western and frontier history there has been a split between 'old' and 'new' western historians, with the 'new' western historians favouring a much more geographically specific approach that deals with more than just white men and their guns conquering the land and non-white peoples. For an overview of current Western and Frontier historiography see Walter Nugent, "Western History, New and Not So New", *Organization of American Historians Magazine of History*, v. 9, Fall 1994, http://www.oah.org.pubs/magazine/west/nugent.html, Accessed 28/11/02. Nugent outlines four characteristics that define the "New Western History" the first mentioned above, and that the language of western history is one of invasion and conquest, rather than development or expansion. The second point is that the events involved diverse groups of people including women, Native Americans, Latin Americans, Asians and African Americans, not just the actions of white men. The third point is that 'the frontier' as an interaction is still happening and did not end in 1890 as Turner claimed, and the fourth point is that the western story is full of moral ambiguity - it was not a story of cultivating and populating an empty land, but depended on the decimation of indigenous peoples and desecration of the environment, nor were the people involved in this endeavour any more or less scrupulous that any other group in history. For an overview of these issues see also Roger L. Nichols (ed.), *American Frontier and Western Issues: A Historiographical Review*, Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut, 1986.

markets for trade, and so the 'frontier' became a necessary device within U.S. foreign policy. The way in which this construct has been used to galvanize the American population, and fire the popular imagination throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, well after Turner's initial conception that the frontiers of the West had supposedly closed, lends great credence to the idea of the frontier as a process: a process which forged national character and hardened expressions of hegemonic masculinity. The potency of the frontier myth infused many different facets of American culture and commentary on that culture. For example, expansion into foreign markets, and the colonisation (or attempted colonisation) of those markets, such as in the U.S. annexation of Hawaii, was a way of expanding the Western frontier beyond the West Coast during the nineteenth century. This expansion has been described by twentieth-century commentators such as Walter LaFeber, who has written about the expansionist tendencies present in nineteenth century U.S. foreign policy in exactly those terms: expansion beyond the Western seaboard was considered the construction of a new frontier to be settled and exploited in the name of U.S. economic interests.[4] Beyond (and a part of) the obvious economic implications of reinventing the frontier has been the need to reforge each generation's masculinity, and thus the robust masculinity of national identity, through acts and experiences of war.[5]

The construction of a coherent masculinity, as established in Chapter Two, depends on the externalising of 'the feminine', but is also simultaneously threatened by this external 'other'. The purported fluid liminality of feminine identity is a potential threat to the impenetrable and clearly delineated masculine soldier - just as the skirmish tactics and

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[4]See LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion 1860-1898*.
[5]See Richard Slotkin *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860*, Wesleyan University Press, Middletown, Connecticut, 1973, see also Kristin L. Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine American Wars*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1998, p. 9, and for a twenty-first century example see Matt Hannah, "Manhood and the 'War on Terrorism'", 2002, http://www.peoplesgeography.org/Manhood%20and%20War%20on%Terrorism.htm, Accessed 28/10/2002.

camouflage abilities of the Native Americans were a threat to the westward expansion of the American frontier. Nearly a century after Turner had posited the closure of the frontier, femininity at home and abroad, and an enemy who were difficult to clearly identify, were once again what simultaneously defined and undermined the impenetrability of the masculine warrior. In the late twentieth century the rise of second wave feminism and the devastating effects of the Vietnam War on the ways in which soldiering and masculinity were perceived have both contributed to discourses of masculinity under siege. In the United States, the issues of embattled masculinity have had visible effects in the military, and in wider society. 'The Frontier' has always been gendered, and the final frontier for masculine soldier identity, in terms of exclusion and containment, must be femininity.

Soldier identity is no more fixed in the United States than in Australia. Whereas in Australia the overarching soldier mythology is the ANZAC legend, mythologies of and from the frontier inform the construction of the American warrior. As frontier historian Richard Slotkin has argued in examining the ideologies which inform martial mythologies in the United States,

> [W]e resort to our myths not merely to evade the discontents of our historical moment, but to find something - a precedent, a bit of wisdom, a new perspective - that will allow us to imagine a way of coping with and even transforming the present crisis. Mythic space is a metaphor of history, and the heroes in a functioning mythological system represent models of possible historical action.[6]

Just as Australian cinematic and televisual texts utilised existing ANZAC mythology to assimilate and allegorise the Vietnam experience, the American warrior hero is a mosaic of past mythologies and mythological - and 'real' - men. The continuing reconfiguring of the warrior and the frontier are a part of the way a great deal of American history is written

[6] Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation*, p. 88.

and conceptualised, and are constantly active in the tandem acts of remembering and forgetting so important to soldier identity and war narrative.

Mythologies that stem from early conflicts emphasise the rough and ready aspects of the 'citizen-soldier'. The citizen-soldier is drawn from the population in times of need, is characterised as a volunteer (although many were in fact drafted), and has been viewed in opposition to the mercenary armies of Old Europe, hence the tag 'citizen'. This construct is complicated when considering issues like conscription and the number of people who were a part of nineteenth-century armies who were not citizens in the same way that landholding white men were. Many women had dressed as men and fought in the militias, and later fought on both sides in the Civil War.[7] The militiaman, according to legend, utilised skills gained in struggling to survive in an often hostile and unknown environment, or protecting 'his' family against hostile 'natives'. This adaptation of skills from battling the environment, to battling a military enemy, is very similar to the ways in which the mythology of 'the bushman' was assimilated into the volunteer force of the First AIF in Australia. Again as Slotkin has claimed,

> [i]n American mythogenesis the founding fathers were not those eighteenth-century gentlemen who composed a nation at Philadelphia. Rather, they were those who . . . tore violently a nation from the implacable and opulent wilderness - the rogues, adventurers, and landboomers; the Indian fighters, traders, missionaries, explorers, and hunters who killed and were killed until they had mastered the wilderness. . .[8]

In myths, America was presented as a land of opportunity which offered the possibility of new beginnings and the infusion of new life into old

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[7] See Linda Grant De Pauw, "Women in Combat – The Revolutionary War Experience", *Armed Forces and Society*, v.7, no. 2, Winter 1981, pp. 209-226. See also L. Cook & D. Blanton, *They Fought Like Demons: Women Soldiers in the American Civil War*, Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge Louisiana, 2002.

[8] Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence*, p. 4.

institutions. The means to these new beginnings, however, was through violence. Slotkin has interpreted the course and narrative of American history as a constant 'regeneration through violence'. This 'regeneration' has not led to a purification implied by cathartic fire razing the old so the new can be born. Rather it has led to a mythic justification of the use of violence to continue to extend frontiers and to 'defend' the American way of life against real and imagined threats.[9] This mythology has been justified through its alignment with ideas of 'goodness' and moral rectitude.

One of the most important factors for the 'regeneration through violence' is that good is seen to triumph over bad, and civilization over barbarity. This mythology depends upon the clear construction of right and wrong, white hats for the heroes and black hats for the villains as in the Westerns of the mid-twentieth century. If those lines are not clearly demarcated, then the cycle the mythology upholds must become fractured.

Slotkin cannot be easily placed within the 'old' Turnerian discourse on the frontier or as sitting purely within the field of 'New Western History'. While Slotkin does see the frontier as a 'process' rather than a series of specific geographic and temporal locations, he neither treats the frontier as if it were sacred and immune from criticism, nor does he fail to acknowledge the groups marginalised by traditional western histories. If in his early work, *Regeneration Through Violence* (1973), he analyses the works that have made famous such characters as Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett, he also sets out to deconstruct the myths surrounding these men. Slotkin reads the works of James Fenimore Cooper and his contemporaries in the light of the roles that genesis and captivity narratives play in the canon of American cultural mythology, rather than simply to adding to their prominence. While many have criticised Turner's abilities as an historian or as an accurate purveyor of fact, Slotkin treats him as a

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[9] Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence*, p. 5.

mythmaker and analyses his treatises on the importance of the frontier accordingly.[10] Turner was a founding father of the 'regeneration through violence' mythology which Slotkin uses and then expands on in his later work *Gunfighter Nation* (1992), linking the nineteenth century frontier and its legends through to the Vietnam War. Where Turner glories in the conquest inherent in frontier history while glossing over the violence inherent in any form of conquest, Slotkin reframes the frontier as the site of violent wars against land, indigenous peoples and other colonial powers. Slotkin actively critiques the justifications for the constant use of violence throughout U.S. history, and the ways in which wars, cowboys and soldiers have been mythologised and sanctified in popular memory right up to the Gulf War in 1991.

James William Gibson has questioned the sustainability of Slotkin's 'regeneration through violence' in the aftermath of the Vietnam War where the morality of American involvement and conduct was publicly and widely contested, leading to a disjuncture in American culture.[11] Good and bad were no longer clear cut and easily distinguishable, and the blurring of those lines within the figure who represented American masculinity – the American soldier – was evident for all to see on television.

Gibson argues that prior to the Vietnam War there existed a certainty of purpose, accompanied by a certainty in a stable, strong and good masculinity that justified the means used to defeat enemies - both internally and externally. In the aftermath of the Vietnam War, American interests and the violent means used to protect them have been publicly remembered as more routinely denounced than during previous wars. A

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[10] Steffen Hantke, "'There's No Place Like Home': Geoff Ryman's *Was* and Turner's Myth of National Childhood", *49th Parallel: An Interdisciplinary Journal of North American Studies*, Issue 4, Winter 2000, http://artsweb.bham.ac.uk/49thparallel/backisssues/issue4/hankte.htm, Accessed 7/11/2002.

[11] Gibson, *Warrior Dreams*, p. 10.

similar interrogation has occurred regarding the relationship between these interests and the primacy of American masculinity. Despite this questioning of the 'real' possibilities of regeneration through violence, this transformation has occurred representationally in popular film and television throughout the 1980s and 1990s, as Gibson and Slotkin have both argued. The Gulf War in 1990-91, is an example of the way in which a 'real' war was enacted as a representation of this paradigm. Indeed, manifestations of the 'regeneration through violence' reinvention of cowboy myths and the posturing of robust masculinity have continued. All of these elements of masculinity and frontier mythology have been present in media coverage, and political statements on the part of the Bush government in the wake of terrorist attacks on the U.S. in September 2001, as has been amply demonstrated by geography professor Matthew Hannah in his article "Manhood and the 'War on Terrorism'".[12] The emergence of the muscle-bound, technologically super-equipped warrior, in cinema in particular, began in the arena of speculative representation what would later occur in broader national culture. Following the Gulf War, and the way in which this was presented as a victory that countered the damage done to soldier identity and the nation by the Vietnam War, it is possible that the potential for regeneration by violence has re-emerged as justifiable - so long as the conflict is short, containable, and winnable.

The frontiersman and later the cowboy are both crucial to the American warrior hero. When examining these two figures, and their successor, the twentieth-century soldier/warrior, the role of the cinema in the United States is different from that in Australia. Where Australian cinematic portrayals have reconstructed soldier identity and contributed to ANZAC mythologies, there is a much more direct cross-over between the

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[12] James William Gibson, "The Return of Rambo War and Culture in the Post-Vietnam Era", in A. Wolfe (ed.), *America at Century's End*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles & Oxford, 1991, pp. 376-395. Matt Hannah, "Manhood and the 'War on Terrorism'", 2002, http://www.peoplesgeography.org/Manhood%20War%20on%20Terrorism.htm, Accessed 28/10/2002.

construction of the warrior in film and television and perspectives on 'him' in popular consciousness in the United States. There have been a number of examples where celebrities have come to embody the experiences they represent on screen as if they had really been a part of the conflicts they portray. An example of such cross-over is the direct references to John Wayne as a persona in Vietnam narratives[13] and the awarding of a medal to Wayne during the Second World War for being the embodiment of the perfect soldier, despite his never having seen actual service.[14] John Wayne's portrayal of stoicism and bravery in the face of a clearly defined enemy, who played by the rules, and against whom he was inevitably victorious whether in westerns or war movies, inspired many of the young men who went off to Vietnam where they found the reality of their war vastly different and incomprehensible by comparison. Audie Murphy is also an example of the links between 'real' and cinematic soldiering, and has also been someone cited in Vietnam narratives. Ron Kovic recalled Murphy's influence vividly in his famous Vietnam memoir, *Born on the Fourth of July*.

> I'll never forget Audie Murphy in *To Hell and Back*. At the end…he jumps on top of a flaming tank that's just about to explode and grabs the machine gun blasting it into the German lines. He was so brave I had chills running up and down my back wishing it were me up there. There were gasoline flames roaring around his legs, but he just kept firing that machine gun. It was the greatest movie I ever saw in my life.[15]

Murphy served in the infantry in Europe during the Second World War and received many medals including a number of decorations for valour. Upon returning to the United States he went to Hollywood and starred in more than 40 B-grade Westerns. In 1955 he made an astonishing decision and played himself in the film *To Hell and Back* which has been listed in

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[13] Baker, *NAM: The Vietnam War in the Words of the Men and Women who Fought There*, p. 33.
[14] Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation*, p. 243.
[15] Ron Kovic, *Born on the Fourth of July*, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1976, p. 43.

the top ten best World War II movies.[16] And it was this movie to which Kovic made such reverent reference, and which helped to define post World War II constructions of soldier identity.

Other film and television personas have also blurred the lines between the spectacle of war and the spectacle of cinema and television. Loretta Swit who starred in the successful series *M*A*S*H* (1972-1983) as the sexy but straight-laced head Army Nurse Major Margaret "Hotlips" Hoolahan, was the 'face' of a fundraising drive to help with the construction of the Women's Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery in Washington D.C. In the post-Vietnam era, speculative responses to the Vietnam War, like the *Rambo* movies, effectively marginalized the voices and bodies of 'real' veterans (men who had actually served in Vietnam), and rendered them invisible behind the bulk of Sylvester Stallone's body. The suffering of Vietnam veterans, and the social and cultural significance of the Vietnam War were simplified in this series of films and others like it (like the Chuck Norris vehicle *MIA* which was released in 1984), through portrayals of the righteous rage of an individual pitted against a government who had forsaken him (Rambo) and the sadistic Vietnamese. In Boston in 1985, following the release of *Rambo: First Blood Part II*, veterans gathered to protest at a venue where Stallone was due to receive a "Man of the Year Award". The veterans were accosted and their protests dismissed by a group of teenagers who screamed that Stallone was the 'real veteran'.[17]

Whereas in Australia the medium of film has been utilised as a vehicle for reinterpreting and re-membering the ANZAC legend, in the

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[16] This was listed by Michael Evans, "Close Combat: Lessons from the cases of Albert Jacka and Audie Murphy", in Evans and Ryan (eds), *The Human Face of Warfare*, p. 46. As can be seen from the title of this article, Evans draws a direct comparison between Albert Jacka (Australian World War I hero) and Audie Murphy. They were both foot soldiers, and were both known for their valour - and violence - and elevated to hero status.
[17] Kevin Bowen, ""Strange Hells": Hollywood in Search of America's Lost War", in Linda Dittmar and Gene Michaud (eds), *From Hanoi to Hollywood. The Vietnam War in American Film*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick & London, 1990, p. 229.

United States the relationship between filmic constructions as a vehicle for mythologies, and as a part of the mythologies themselves, is much more difficult to tease apart, just as the military and soldiering as a way of life are much more easily separable in the Australian than in the United States context. Because these interconnections between popular media and soldier identity are extremely important in as highly a militarized society as the United States, the analysis of film and television forms a significant part of this chapter. The first sections deal with the gendering of war and national identity prior to the twentieth century. Cinematic representations are still important to these sections, as they convey how these identities have been re-imagined for late twentieth century audiences. However, these early sections are used mainly to provide the useful background and continuities that provide the basis for late twentieth century martial mythologies.

Forging Identities – The Revolutionary War to 1900

The experiences of war, the forging of new frontiers, and the transformation of 'the colonies' into the nation of the United States can be read through the lens of gender politics. The dominance of masculinity requires the appearance of constant action, and it also requires ongoing containment or exclusion of threats to that dominance. The centrality of the frontier to the mythologies of the United States has elements of both these requirements. The unknown of the New World has often been represented as simultaneously threatening and enticing and, some argue, as gendered feminine. As Anne McClintock has asserted,

> Knowledge of the unknown world was mapped as a metaphysics of gender violence - not as the expanded recognition of cultural difference - and was validated by the new Enlightenment logic of private property and possessive individualism. In these fantasies, the world is feminized and spatially spread for male exploration, then reassembled and employed in the interests of massive imperial power.[18]

[18] McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, p. 23.

A part of the process of reassembling and employing the 'virgin' territories in the interests of imperial power was expansion and reinforcement of masculine boundaries through military might. The assertion of masculine dominance had to be constantly tested in order to maintain its integrity and right to rule which also meant it was constantly threatened:

> [t]he feminizing of terra incognita was, from the outset, a strategy of violent containment - belonging in the realm of both psychoanalysis and political economy. If, at first glance, the feminizing of the land appears to be no more than a familiar symptom of male megalomania, it also betrays acute paranoia and a profound, if not pathological, sense of male anxiety and boundary loss.[19]

There has been a constant tension between the need to push boundaries and maintain their impermeability. The unknown was both a challenge and a threat. The need for continuous reassertion of dominance required an unremitting construction and reconstruction of boundaries or frontiers in both the quest for expansion, and the struggle to maintain the integrity of masculinity and the masculine body politic.

The American Revolution, the Declaration of Independence, and the War of 1812 with Britain have been written about and portrayed as the 'seminal' events in the construction of the United States as a nation with a unified national identity. Late twentieth-century film texts such as *The Patriot* (2000) have cast these events in such a light, glibly ignoring the politics of race and gender at the time in order to glorify the American patriots, who were white and male.[20] Certainly the link between

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[19] McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, p. 24.

[20] *The Patriot*, Roland Emmerich (Dir), Colombia Pictures, 2000. Emmerich has directed another late twentieth-century flag waving block buster, *Independence Day* (1996), which also links military experience with masculinity, and masculinity with uniting and rescuing the world. While there is a black soldier present in *The Patriot*, Occam, in Benjamin Martin's militia unit his status as a slave is barely given lip-service. Sent to fight in the stead of his owner, he learns of George Washington's rhetoric about freeing the slaves who fight and takes up arms with patriotic fervour. This movie ignored the fact that the real Benjamin Martin was a slave owner, and that the fledgling democracy was partially dependent upon a slave economy.

citizenship and a role in the military was cemented during the American Revolution, and the prowess of the 'minuteman', or member of the militia with skills honed in surviving on the frontier, was enshrined in American mythology. The term 'minuteman' came about as these were militia units made up of local farmers and townspeople who could be ready 'at a minute's notice'. In the Australian context, the tough and adaptable bushman lent his characteristics the ANZAC who according to legend was able to respond to the tough conditions of war without any training other than years spent coping with the Australian outback. Similarly in North America the rough and ready 'minuteman' came to symbolise the ideal soldier in the formative years of the United States. The most famous battles with which the 'minutemen' are associated took place at Lexington and Concord Massachusetts in April 1775, where they routed the professional British army who suffered approximately three times the casualties as their 'untrained' opponents.[21] Following the success of these Massachusetts units, Maryland, Connecticut and New Hampshire organized their own 'minutemen' regiments to drive back the British. The importance of the militia was underscored by an underlying fear of what having a standing army would mean. Professional standing armies were associated with, and were the tools of, the Old European totalitarian regimes that settlers in the New World were trying to escape.[22] The impact of these beliefs and the lack of a standing army meant that the militia were bound to their own specific states and locations, causing a much more individualistic tendency in their martial identity.

What is often overlooked in order to emphasise the 'natural' skill of the minutemen, and to distance them from their European counterparts, is that many of them had had what would now probably be called

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[21] See "Minutemen", http://www.continentallocating.com/World.Literature/links2/minutemen.htm, Accessed 4/11/2002.

[22] John M. Carroll & Colin F. Baxter (eds), *The American Military Tradition: From Colonial Times to the Present*, Scholarly Resources Inc, Wilimington Delaware, 1993, p. ix.

paramilitary experience. According to historian John Galvin, many of the first 'patriots' may have had military training and participated in drills, just as many of them had been engaged in battle not only with Native Americans but with the French as well.[23] While frontier experience is crucial to the functioning of this myth, the spontaneous effectiveness of bands of local men is just as important to the mythology of American soldier identity. This spontaneity has allowed a clear delineation between the American forces and their British counterparts. The skill, abilities, and perhaps most importantly the autonomy of the American militia are emphasized in this comparison, and these facets are crucial to the functioning of martial masculinity in the United States. The constant struggle between the subordination that being a part of a military unit necessarily entails, and the need for an appearance of independence in order to maintain the dominance of masculinity, was present here in this early conflict and has continued to the present day and is discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

What is also little discussed is the active role many women played during the formative period of the American Revolution.[24] Women followed armies doing cooking, cleaning and laundry - all essential services the army was not often able to provide. Women defended their homes when their men-folk were away, and there have been documented cases of women, some cross-dressed to appear as if they were male soldiers, in combat and what would now be called combat support roles. These women rarely receive any recognition, although a few individual examples of female heroism which have parallels to the heroism of the cowboy and the soldier have entered American folklore like Molly Pitcher, Calamity Jane and Annie Oakley. Unlike the Australian tradition which has had no room for allusions to named female heroism, the fact that early American conflicts took place at home may very well be a contributing

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[23] John R. Galvin, *The Minute Men: The First Fight: Myths and Realities of the American Revolution*, Brasseys, Portland Oregon, 1967, reprinted 1989.
[24] See Chapter One.

factor in the visibility, if not the acceptance, of some of these gun-toting women. However, in the cases of the story of Molly Pitcher, and the exploits of women like Deborah Sampson who disguised herself as a man and fought in a revolutionary regiment until she was wounded and her sex discovered, these stories are overshadowed by the legend of Paul Revere's midnight ride to warn of the arrival of the British and other examples of male heroism.[25] Women's stories are singled out as aberrant curiosities, coupled as they are with the transgression of gender roles and the blurring of visible gender identification through cross-dressing. This construction of female soldiers as singular examples, separated from other 'real' women and other soldiers, contrasts with the way in which men's stories are a part of the canon. There is a continuous, and apparently seamless, construction of masculine heroism in which heroism is/was a part of, rather than apart from, constructions of masculinity.

Despite the importance of these early events, it is the Civil War of 1861-1865 that is conventionally viewed as having brought the United States together as a nation, and it was the experiences and mythologies of the Civil War that are the precursors to American soldier identity and American nationalism in the twentieth century. Cecilia O'Leary asserts that the 'national' project or quest for one national identity did not win mass support until after the Union won the Civil War; until that point the United States could very well have fractured into many smaller nation-states.[26] Even during the War of Independence the uniting factor among many disparate groups had been the hatred of the British, rather than common experiences and love of similar values. O'Leary strengthens her argument about the comparative importance of the Civil War to the formulation of national identity, through her descriptions of the way in

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[25] Paul Revere's legend is such that as a child growing up in Australia I first learned of him from the American sit-com *The Brady Bunch*, and later in comparison to the fictional West Australian bushranger Captain Midnite in a musical production of *Midnite*. I knew nothing of the female heroes of the American Revolution until beginning this research.

[26] Cecilia O'Leary, *To Die For: The Paradox of American Patriotism*, Princeton University Press, Princeton New Jersey, 1999, p. 10.

which during the Civil War people of the North actively "hammered out the meaning of patriotism", while the constant demand for soldiers and supplies kept the entire population on an equal footing.[27] The common cause of preserving the Union diluted the strength of local allegiances that had previously governed the way in which the disparate groups of men and women in the North had defined themselves. However, this forging of a national cause was not simple, with race and the abolition of slavery posing major stumbling blocks to the maintenance of wholehearted support of Lincoln - despite the fact that dismantling the slave economy was the key to bringing the Confederates to submission. And even now, in the twenty-first century, the artificiality and fragility of the notion of national unity is revealed from time to time, as for example in the recent controversy surrounding the Oath of Allegiance. The phrase "one nation under God" was not in the original "Oath of Allegiance to the Flag" which was penned in 1892 by a Boston journalist. This reference to God was added during the McCarthy era in 1954, when the United States was facing off against its communist, and 'godless' Cold War adversaries. That this insertion was so recent and its advent so quickly forgotten is a contemporary example of the ways in which collective memory - and forgetting - operate in the construction and interpretation of culture and identity.[28] The imposition of unity is always a fraught endeavour, and from the Civil War to the present the expression of patriotism has not remained unchanged, or undisputed. The North found a common cause that united people from different religious, ethnic and class backgrounds in trying (and then succeeding) to preserve the Union. After the War, the relationship between soldiering, patriotism and masculinity was once more cemented, even to the point that white soldiers from the losing Confederate

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[27] O'Leary, *To Die For*, p. 25.

[28] For details of this controversy see, "The Avenues for Greed had Grown - Letter from America", *BBC News*, 22 July 2002, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/letter_from_america/2143992.stm, Accessed 04/08/02, see also Tom Fanner, "Backing off. Embattled judge puts Pledge of Allegiance ruling on hold", *Boston Herald*, 28/06/02, http://www2.bostonherald.com./news/national/pledO6282002.htm, Accessed 04/08/02.

side were able to revel in, and be commemorated through, their manhood proven in battle.

In terms of public life, some white women were able to move into a much more visibly active role through women's organizations that were formed in the wake of the Civil War, such as the conservative Daughters of the American Revolution and the Women's Relief Corps. The Women's Relief Corps had been formed during the war as a means of providing support such as food, clothing, medical support and accommodation for northern troops who were often lacking in similar support from the Army. The Corps continued to crusade after the war for appropriate forms of remembrance and the support of war veterans. While excluded from the practical side of governing the nation, the Women's Relief Corps focussed its attention on the nurturing of the 'national spirit'.[29] This focus on the spiritual side of national identity reinforced the gender ideology that kept women separate from the apparatus of government and power, and recast the mobilization of women during the war in such a way that their activities were no threat to the gender order of the time. The many roles women from both sides had played during the war, from women's relief organizations, to women who had been spies for both armies, women who had donned uniforms and fought like men and those who had helped slaves escape via the underground railroad, to those who continued to try to run farms and plantations in the South in the absence of their menfolk, were either ignored or treated as auxiliaries to the men.[30]

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[29] O'Leary, *To Die For*, p. 71.

[30] For an estimate of 400 women who took up arms during the Civil War - and participated on both sides - see Lauren Cook & DeAnne Blanton, *They Fought Like Demons: Women Soldiers in the American Civil War*, Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge Louisiana, 2002. The sidelining of women and denial of women's experiences are such that the inspiration for this work was when one Lauren Cook attempted to take part in a battle re-enactment dressed as a male soldier in 1989. This caused controversy when she used the women's bathroom facilities, was discovered and informed that the rules did not allow women to participate in re-enactments. "Their attitude was that the women of that era must have been oddballs, eccentrics and crazy, and didn't merit any kind of recognition or respect." Cook brought a lawsuit against the Department of the Interior which led to the rules being changed. Rollers F. Howe, "Covert Force: Hundreds of Women Fought in the Civil War Disguised as Men", *Smithsonian Magazine*, October 2002, p. 131. The rendering of these women as "mad"

The 1865 Grand Review of Union Army veterans provided a spatial and symbolic representation of the way in which the gender lines that the Civil War had blurred were reinstated in popular memory, both at the time and for future generations. Union Army Veterans marched through the streets of Washington D.C. while women and schoolchildren lined the streets. The adoration from the sidelined women helped in the "ritualization of male warrior heroism on a national scale" - for the first time.[31] And also for the first time the idea that soldiers would just slip back into their civilian lives after the need for their services was over - just as they had in previous conflicts - was no longer applicable. Parades, Memorial Day and other acts of public remembrance made the soldier constantly visible, and constantly linked to public life. The fact that the Confederate and Union Armies had fought bitterly, and that the Confederates were fighting for a way of life dependent upon a slave economy were skimmed over in later years. The splinters in soldier-identity were fused under codes of honour that ignored the enslavement of African-American people on one side, and the terrorizing of black and white Southern women on the other. Chivalry was something that was reinstated as a code of behaviour after Sherman's "March to the Sea" was receding as a memory.[32]

The importance of war in general, and the Civil War specifically, to the forging of the nation and the fusion of the nation with a robust martial masculinity added impetus to the need to reinvent the

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because they transgressed "proper" feminine behaviour is one of the ways in which they have been effectively written out of history, despite evidence that they joined up for very similar reasons as male soldiers, for reasons ranging from economic need to patriotic fervour.

[31] Cecilia O'Leary, *To Die For*, p. 32.

[32] Jane E. SchuIz, "Mute Fury: Southern Women's Diaries of Sherman's March to the Sea 1864 -1865", in Helen M. Cooper, Adrienne Auslander Munich & Susan Merrill Squier (eds), *Arms and the Woman: War, Gender and Literary Representation*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1989, pp. 59-79.

frontier.[33] Once the Civil War began to recede from direct experience into popular memory and the numbers of Civil War veterans dwindled, new experiences were required in order to prove and re-prove the mettle of the United States and its men. The sacrifices made by previous generations were not to be forgotten or lost to the complacency of a well-off society. Once again the shadow of the dead soldier was cast over the living population through Memorial Day rituals, and the sacrifices of the dead soldier were cast in the context of regeneration. While youth was constant to the dead soldier, and veterans who marched in parades needed the spectatorship of young girls in order to maintain their appearance of virility and being one of the 'boys', the rite of passage of combat became of vital importance to the continuity of manhood and nation. "In this snug, over-safe corner of the world we need [war] ... so we may realize that our comfortable routine is no external necessity of things", said Union veteran and future Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. in 1886. "Through our great good fortune our hearts were touched by fire". While commemorating the sacrifices made by 'the fallen', Holmes expressed a common sentiment that the trial of combat had been a privilege and a necessity in making the United States strong.[34]

Time and the fading of Civil War experiences from immediate memory had had an effect on Holmes and others who proclaimed combat as necessary, and 'a privilege', to maintain the strength of American manhood and nation. Memorials like that cited above are vastly different to responses to the shocking visual material made available to civilian populations for the first time through emerging photographic technologies. Significantly, only three years earlier following an exhibition of battlefield photographs taken during the Civil War, Holmes expressed

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[33] See Cecilia O'Leary, *To Die For*; Kristin L. Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood*.

[34] Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr, "Soldier's Faith", in Mark De Wolfe Howe (ed.), *The Occasional Speeches Of Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr*, Cambridge, Mass, 1962, p. 81, cited by John Pettegrew, "'The Soldier's Faith': Turn-of-the-century Memory of the Civil War and the Emergence of Modern American Nationalism", *Journal of Contemporary History*, v.31, 1996, p. 51.

shock at images of "wrecks of manhood thrown in careless heaps or ranged in ghastly rows for burial were alive but yesterday".[35] H. Bruce Franklin makes the important point that photography, a new medium during the Civil War, had similar impact on public perception to the war as television did during the Vietnam War. Following both conflicts - as the Wendell Holmes comments exemplify - there was a reconstruction of the war experience, and a reconstitution of a masculinity that required violence for regeneration.[36] In many ways the advent of photography made the damage to the masculine body both more real, and somehow less substantial. Tom Gunning in his exploration of modernity and the early cinema has pointed to this contradiction:

> The body itself appeared to be abolished, rendered immaterial, through the phantasmagoria of both still and motion photography. This transformation of the physical did not occur through the sublimation of an ethereal idealism. The body, rather, became a transportable image fully adaptable to the systems of circulation and mobility that modernity demanded.[37]

Just as the development of railways assisted in the transportation of soldiers from one physical location to another, the development of photography allowed images of war and soldiers to be separated from their referent and transferred to different contexts. The impact of these early images, and the damage done to the masculine body that they portrayed, had to be minimized in popular memory in order for mythologies of the impenetrable soldier to continue. The increased portability of the camera throughout the twentieth century, meant that photographs of 'other' broken bodies helped to reinforce the dominance of masculine soldier identity. In contrast to the need to gloss over the damage done to one's own soldiers, Joanna Bourke has noted the macabre glee

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[35] Dr Oliver Wendell Holmes, "Doings of the Sunbeam", *Atlantic Monthly*, 12 July 1863, pp. 11- 12, cited by H. Bruce Franklin, "From Realism to Virtual Reality: Images of America's Wars", in Jeffords & Rabinovitz (eds), *Seeing Through the Media*, p. 27.
[36] Franklin, "From Realism to Virtual Reality: Images of America's Wars", p. 28.
[37] Tom Gunning, "Tracing the Individual Body: Photography, Detectives and Early Cinema", in L. Charney & V.R. Schwarz (eds), *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles & London, 1995, pp. 15-45, p. 18.

with which from the Second World War onwards American, British, and Australian troops took photographs of their slain enemies as souvenirs. These souvenirs serve to reinforce the inadequacy of the enemy, and therefore indirectly bolster the myth of the corporeal impenetrability of the victorious soldier, and render ridiculous the atrocious acts of violence that would be and were, otherwise traumatic.[38] The regeneration of masculinity requires the same aspects of forgetting as marginalizing the contributions of women in war, and is in itself a process of externalizing the broken bodies of soldiers that have been implicitly feminized through their wounding or penetration.

While in Australia the ANZAC legend became a legacy to be passed from father to son with respect and mourning for the past, the memory of soldiers and sacrifice in the United States became regenerative, building on the violent legacy of the American Revolution and renewed through the experiences of the Civil War. The former tradition looks backwards, while the latter looks forward to a future forged in the flames of conflict. ANZAC Day observance and ceremonies focus on mourning and the recognition of sacrifice on a day when the whole country shuts down. Similar recognition of the sacrifices of those who have died to 'keep America free' occurs on Memorial Day, but the atmosphere is in parts celebratory - while 'the fallen' are mourned, the regenerative spirit is celebrated to the sound of big bands and the spectacle of marching girls.[39] An extension of this difference in the way collective memory and memorializing is embodied, is through the differences in war memorials in the two countries. In Australia many memorials which include soldier

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[38] Bourke, *An Intimate History of Killing*, pp. 37-42.

[39] I found this difference quite marked I when was in the United States in 2000. The ceremonies were celebrations, unlike the sombre and sanctified air that ANZAC Day carries. While there are people who lament the connection of commercialism to Memorial Day, this does not stop 'Memorial Day Sales' or a movie marathon on a cable television network that included the science fiction series *Alien* with direct reference to the martial origins of the public holiday. It is interesting to note the connection here between speculative warriors, and the sanctified soldier. Such a connection has never been made in Australian public culture, and indeed should an attempt be made in the context of ANZAC Day this would provoke huge outcry.

statuary are of the 'digger' in repose, they are not often active or in battle, and their weaponry often faces downward with the soldier resting his hands on the upturned handle of his rifle. In the United States, however, memorials often depict combative - if not conquering - activity, and Civil War memorials often depict the single soldier at ease but still alert, rifle pointing up. [40] In fact, the figure of the active soldier in memorials is so important to American soldier identity, that when the Vietnam War Memorial Wall [Figures 7 & 8] was first established in Washington D.C., there was outcry from the Vietnam Veterans' community who wanted to establish their continuity with previous generations of revered soldiers, not their difference. This resulted in an additional memorial in exactly that vein being established at one end of the wall, giving the soldiers who served in Vietnam a preserved embodiment that matched that of their predecessors in patriotic, masculine identity [Figure 9].[41] A further memorial to American women who served in Vietnam was also added [Figure 10]. This memorial consists of the bronzed figures of American nurses awaiting an evacuation helicopter, one of them cradling the body of a wounded soldier. This public depiction is important in the way it makes visible the presence and contributions of servicewomen in the Vietnam conflict. However, it also very obviously separates them from the men who participated. The Memorial Wall, designed by a young woman of Asian descent, did not separate the lives and deaths of men and women. The later addition of the statues of both soldiers and nurses enhanced the masculinity of the soldiers who lost their lives and reinforced the gender difference and separation of the nurses through the obvious femininity of their statues.

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[40]For a discussion of war memorials in the United States see Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1997. See also James Mayo, *War Memorials as Political Landscape: The American Experience and Beyond*, Praeger, New York, 1988.

[41]See Doyle, "Short-Timers' Endless Monuments: Comparative Readings of the Australian Vietnam Veterans' National Memorial and the American Vietnam Veterans' Memorial", p. 129.

Figure 7 – The Vietnam War Memorial Wall in Washington D.C.
[Photograph in Possession of Author]

Figure 8 – The Vietnam Memorial Wall in Washington
D. C. [Photograph in Possession of Author]

Figure 9 – Soldier Statuary memorializing the Vietnam War. [Photograph in Possession of Author.]

Figure 10 – The Memorial to Army Nurses who served during the Vietnam War. [Photograph in Possession of Author.]

The possibility of the regeneration of the American spirit following the quashing of Native American resistance, and the taming of the 'wild west' became a subject for much conjecture at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, both marked by millennial introspection and cultural anxieties. Since politics and nationalism had been so closely aligned with martial masculinity, it was feared that with long periods of peace the nation would 'go soft' just as the United States started to become prominent on the international stage. The rise of the women's suffrage movement and the increasing visibility of the 'new woman', and the acts of white terrorism against African-Americans that followed the failure of reconstruction in the South, meant that the superiority of white masculinity was under threat. It is in this context that cultural studies commentators such as Kristin Hoganson, have viewed the conflicts, like the Spanish-American War, that occurred between the Civil War and the First World War, as a means of defending, renewing and reconstituting American masculinity, and therefore the masculine character of the American nation.[42] The linking of a robust masculinity and national identity have continued throughout the twentieth century such that when one is threatened so too is the other. Ideals of manhood appear to be inseparable from national identity in the United States, and these ideals are in turn inseparable from military might and soldier identity, whether we are discussing the nineteenth, twentieth or twenty first centuries.[43] In the twentieth century context, Susan Jeffords has placed the Vietnam War and the re-construction of the Vietnam soldier and veteran in the context of the gender politics of the late twentieth century, and the need to 'remasculinize' America following a conflict that publicly destroyed the virtue of war and publicly undermined support for soldiers who saw themselves as intrinsically linked to the well-being and character of the nation.[44]

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[42] Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood*.
[43] Hannah, "Manhood and the 'War on Terrorism'".
[44] Jeffords, *The Remasculinization of America*.

Both at the end of the nineteenth century and during and after the Vietnam War, social upheavals occurred in terms of what constituted appropriate gender roles. The campaigns for women's suffrage in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the campaigns for equal rights and women's liberation in the 1960s and 1970s have both threatened the dominance of masculinity and the masculine model of politics and nation. During the lead up to the Spanish-American War there was open discussion of the need for a 'new frontier' to forge the next generation of American men. La Feber's analysis of America's imperial desires in the nineteenth century places most weight on the economic imperatives of expanding markets for American produce, particularly following the depression of the 1890s.[45] Hoganson adds a complicating factor to this picture in the gendering of new frontiers, and the regeneration of American manhood:

> In addition to promising material gains, expanding markets and colonial holdings seemed attractive as a means of preventing American men from falling into idleness and dissipation and enabling them to meet the basic male obligation of providing for their families, something that many men found themselves unable to do during the depression of 1893 - 1897. Economic and annexationist arguments reflected convictions about what it meant to be manly; their persuasiveness relied on a commitment to fostering manhood in the United States. Some advocates of assertive politics undoubtedly regarded Cuba primarily as an opportunity for markets or as a choice piece of real estate, but those who held that a war - any war - would be good for American men also saw it as an opportunity to build manhood.[46]

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[45] La Feber, *The New Empire*.

[46] Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood*, p. 9. Others who have commented on the ongoing linkage of the concept of 'manhood' to American national identity and patriotism - which includes active participation in war are: Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*, New York, Free Press, 1996, and Dana Nelson, *National Manhood: Capitalist Citizenship and the Imagined Fraternity of White Men*, Duke University Press, Durham North Carolina, 1998. These scholars construct manhood as something that must be constantly proven.

So according to Hoganson, the war against Spain in 1898, and the subsequent annexation of Cuba in 1899, meant that American manhood, and therefore national identity, could be proven on the international stage while correcting the domestic imbalances the depression had wrought at home. Similar to the way in which the "New World" had been represented as feminized territory, Cuba and then the Philippines were also gendered in the U.S. cultural imaginary in order to bolster the myth of American manhood. Initially a chivalric impulse guided U.S. actions in Cuba, which was then replaced by the quest for domination. The duality of enticement and threat that had characterized the 'virgin' territory of the Americas characterized the Philippines, and in similar ways characterized Vietnam in the latter part of the twentieth century.

Debates about the merits of the professional versus the citizen-soldier had been ongoing since the Revolution and throughout the nineteenth century. The *Uniform Militia Act* of 1792 remained in place until the twentieth century, but the serious organizational deficiencies that were revealed during the 'short, splendid' Spanish-American War, led to major revisions in thought regarding the American military's dependence upon the citizen-soldier.[47] In fact, even during the American Revolution the value, and ability, of the citizen soldier had at times been in dispute. George Washington himself had lamented the lack of a fully trained, dedicated, professional Army whose allegiance was to Washington's cause, rather than to the locality from which the militia units were pulled. The 'rough and ready' troops were prone to desertion and some commentators have asserted that Washington won the war as much through avoiding conflict as participating in it. As a result of the potential unreliability of militia units, a small standing force was established in the wake of the Revolution, as was the officer training college at West Point.[48] The Civil War had seen 80 percent of the Southern forces, and 50 percent of the Northern forces comprised of volunteers. The armies of both sides

[47] Carroll & Baxter (eds), *The American Military Tradition*, p. xii.
[48] Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves*, p. 168.

had used people from diverse racial and gender backgrounds including African Americans, Native Americans and women.[49] However, these groups of people lacked full citizenship rights, and were marginalised in public memory.

There have been other problems with the maintenance of the myth of the citizen-soldier. Some hinge upon the constant tension that is present between collective identity and the importance of individuality to masculinity as discussed in Chapter Two. Others are dependent upon the imperative to maintain a mythology of autonomous, impenetrable bodies. Kirk Savage, in his discussion of the adoption of the single standing soldier as a memorial in many places across the United States, recognizes some of these problems and the way they have been resolved through acts of public remembering. These tensions in the construction of masculinity were compounded by the politics and ideologies of race in a country that had not resolved the issues, and representation, of slavery, and the similarities between soldiering, and slavery, which had to be effaced.

> Central to the founding mythology of the American nation, the citizen-soldier could not and did not survive the trauma of the Civil War in-tact. The new realities of mass warfare - not the least of which was the introduction of nearly 200,000 black men into the Union army - forced a profound reappraisal of what it meant to be a soldier and a man. On the one hand, to be a soldier was to test one's manhood, which is why so many men volunteered for the war and then stayed to die. On the other hand, to be a soldier was to become a virtual slave, to forfeit the very sense of responsibility and agency supposed to define manhood. The war memorials of the late nineteenth century negotiated this paradox of masculinity and in the process created a new model of the citizen-soldier for the nation. . . . The figure of the black soldier, inextricably linked to the memory of slavery became unrepresentable. The whole idea of a "new world" created by the war lapsed in favour of the advancement in civic space of a normative white soldier and citizen.[50]

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[49] Carroll & Baxter (eds), *The American Military Tradition*, p. 63.
[50] Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves*, p. 167.

The maintenance of a mythology of the citizen-soldier, despite the necessity and desirability of a standing army, overcame the complex duality of soldier/slave.[51] The opportunity to emphasize the impromptu heroics of the 'minuteman' over the discipline, subordinate status, and necessary 'docility' of regular soldiers that heightened their likeness to slaves, rendered the image of the citizen soldier extremely attractive even after the difficult realities of the Civil War. According to Savage it was through the construction of a certain type of memorial that the citizen soldier was redeemed, and reconstructed, as whole, autonomous, and white in the post-war period. This kind of memorial depicted a single soldier posed in 'parade rest', which

> emphasized preparedness rather than militance, crucial for myth of the citizen-soldier, which was a myth of self-defense rather than conquest. . . . the pose offered an appropriate compromise between regimentation and independence. It was a standard military posture prescribed by army regulations, but one that allowed the soldier freedom to relax, to shift his weight onto one leg and lean slightly onto his gun. The pose therefore retains something of the classically sculptural... while at the same time it signifies conformity to modem army routine. The deadliness of that routine is, of course, deliberately obscured: even the gun is relaxed. We get no sense whatsoever that the soldier has surrendered his body to a military system that disciplines him to destroy other bodies and to face destruction himself Instead, the body at parade rest suggests a body shaped by discipline but not confined or damaged by it, a body obedient to command but still also master of itself.[52]

The 'docile bodies' which Foucault recognized as so important to the functioning of modern institutions must be coded in ways such that this

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[51] Peter Karsten also provides evidence of the link between soldiering and slavery in his article "The U.S. Citizen-Soldier's Past, Present and Likely Future", *Parameters*, Summer 2001, pp. 61-73, http://carlisle.www.army.mil/usawc/parameters/01summer/karsten.htm, Accessed 04/09/02. Karsten details the history of the citizen-soldier and the reluctance to maintain a standing army, as well as the disdain with which regular soldiers were regarded right up until the Second World War, which was partially due to the socio-economic reasons for which men would join the regular army as enlistees.

[52] Kirk Savage, Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves, p. 177.

'docility' does not threaten the autonomy of white masculinity. [53] One of the ways this has been made possible is the continuing importance of the myth of the citizen-soldier in the United States. The myth of the impenetrability of the masculine-warrior body is reinforced through the obfuscation of the 'potential destruction' that is the soldier's raison d'être. Another advantage to this particular kind of memorial is that it could be used to commemorate Northern or Southern (white) soldiers with few differences, and could reinforce the ways in which the Civil War was about reuniting white brothers rather than the emancipation of black slaves. In similar ways the 'larrikinism' and individuality that is accorded the collective Australian soldier identity can be seen to function as a counter to the threat to masculinity that the docility and discipline of the realities of military life imply.

[53] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 138.

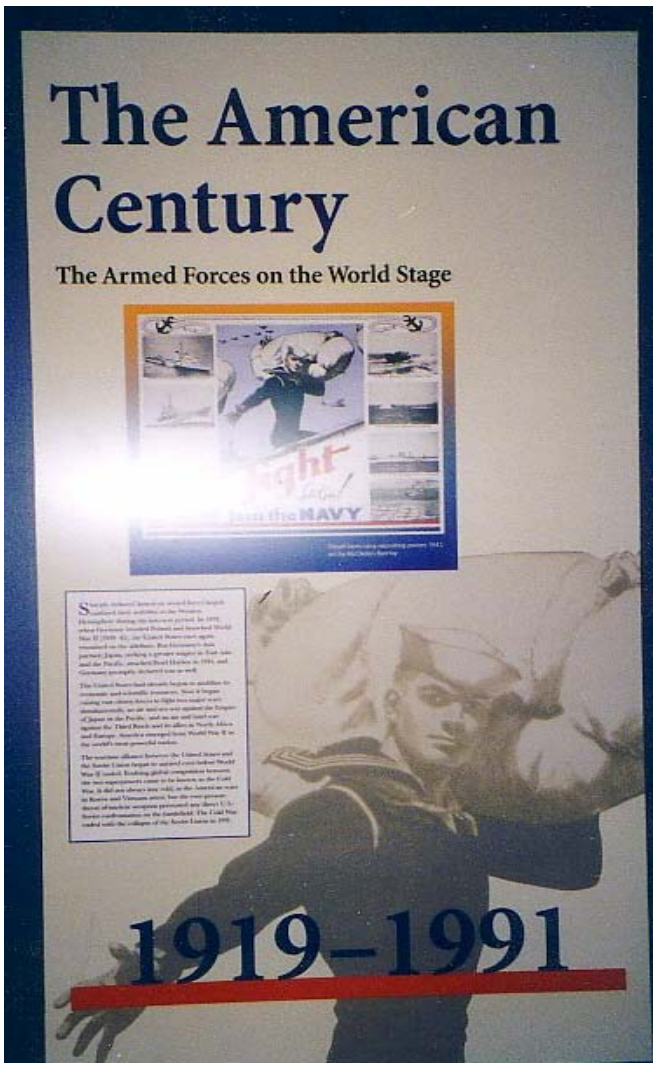

Figure 11 "The American Century" – this poster is at the front of the exhibit on war and the military in the Smithsonian Museum. [Photograph in Possession of Author]

The American Century – Twentieth Century Soldier Identity from the Great War to the Vietnam War

The phrase "The American Century" was coined by Henry Luce, *Time* and *Life* Magazines' founder, in an essay published in1941. I have used it here to cover the twentieth century from the First World War, despite Luce's original intent that this essay be seen as a call to end America's policies of isolationism during the Second World War. In Luce's mind, the war was a struggle for the survival of democratic principles and this meant that if the United States really held such principles dear, they were already involved, and obligated to take the struggle further as the dominant civilization in the world.[54] He saw

> America as the dynamic center of ever widening spheres of enterprise, America as the training center of skillful servants of mankind, America as the Good Samaritan, really believing again that it is more blessed to give than to receive, and America as the powerhouse of the ideals of Freedom and Justice - out of these elements surely can be fashioned a vision of the 20th century to which we can and will devote ourselves in joy and gladness and vigor and enthusiasm. ...
>
> It is in this spirit that all of us are called, each to his own measure of capacity, and each in the widest horizon of his vision, to create the first great American Century.[55]

While the outcome of the First World War had been a disappointment to Luce, I have applied his phrase to this conflict as well, as the perception of the United States, and its military, as a 'rescuer', able to come in at the final hour and save the day for the civilized world, does have some of its roots there. It is also a phrase that was used at the entrance to the displays relating to "Armed Forces of America" in the twentieth century at the

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[54] See William Pfaff, "Another 'American Century'? The Challenge is to do Good", *International Herald Tribute*, 03/01/00, http://taiwansecurity.org/IHT/IHT-010300-American-Century.htm, Accessed 26/11/02.
[55] Pfaff, "Another 'American Century'?".

Smithsonian Museum of American History in 2000, demonstrating the importance of the military to the self-image of the United States as *the* dominant global power [Figure 11]. It also links ideas of ordinary American men performing extraordinary deeds that make the nation great. Women in the military have never been 'ordinary' soldiers, sailors or airmen, so that whatever their deeds, they cannot be seen as extraordinary, operating as they do outside the parameters by which martial valour is recognized. Instead, they were nurses or auxiliaries, their place near battlefields justified by emergency, but never normalized, never ordinary.

The American Armed Forces remained small even throughout the First World War, and the emphasis placed by President Woodrow Wilson on the importance of America's neutrality, and of the need for the dominance of civil (and therefore civilian) society over the military contributed to a much smaller standing force than those in existence in Europe at the outbreak of the hostilities. The late entry of the United States into this war, the domestic controversy over entry into the conflict, and the relatively small number of soldiers sent to Europe have contributed to a lesser importance being accorded the First World War in American warrior tradition.[56] Popular military historian Stephen Ambrose does not even have a chapter on the Great War in his *Americans at War*[57]. Instead, he skips straight from the Civil War to the Second World War. Through these omissions Ambrose reinforces the idea that it is these two conflicts that have provided the foundation for soldier identity into the twenty-first century, even when the interpretations of these foundations are constantly under revision. In the "Armed Forces of America" exhibit at the Smithsonian Institute in 2000, the First World War section displayed more content about women's activities during the period, than men's, including the experiences of soldiers.

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[56] Meirion & Susan Harries, *The Last Days of Innocence: America at War 1917-1918*, Random House, New York, 1997, p. 5.
[57]Ambrose, *Americans At War*. The Harries comment on the lack of attention paid to the First World War in American culture.

In large displays dedicated to the Second World War, only one female figure wearing a WAC uniform was in evidence, despite the very active role played by women in the military and on the homefront. In contrast, the First World War display was dominated by women, and 'feminine' activities, with reference to the greater political power gained by women in the granting of female suffrage in 1920. The Second World War display which opened with a poster subtitled *The American Century 1919 - 1991* was titled *G.I. World War II - The American Soldier*. This public cultural emphasis on the importance of the Second World War to American soldier and national identities, re-iterates the links between nation and martial masculinity. Even the museum's display on the World War II home-front did not centralize women, despite this being the traditionally 'feminized' part of the battle-front/home-front binary. Instead, a letterman jacket, suitcase, and lunchbox formed the most visible part of the display. This was juxtaposed with a display on 'homecoming' in which there was the famous poster of Betty Grable in a bathing suit and high-heels looking coyly over one shoulder. The Smithsonian exhibit illustrates the many contradictions that arise in the polarisation of the battlefront as the masculine sphere, and the 'home front' as feminine. However, it also illustrates the need to gloss over potential conflict in many public exhibitions. In downplaying the activities of civilian women in the workforce, this exhibit glosses over the difficulties that were faced in recruiting women to essential industries, the relatively small numbers who answered 'the call' to industry and the military, and the hostility with which many working women were treated.[58] Instead, with Betty Grable, once again an overtly feminine, idealised sexual image, was portrayed, external to the representations of the masculine military, but in no way threatening to the dominant position of men and masculinity in the workforce at home. And the experiences and identities of the masculine G.I. are centralized in public display - and imagination.

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[58] For an in-depth look at women's conflicting responses to the Second World War, and their 'duty' see DeAnne Campbell, *Women at War With America*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge Mass. & London, 1984.

There were 200,000 African-American soldiers at the Western Front during the First World War but their contribution has scarcely been recognized. None of these soldiers had received the Congressional Medal of Honor until 1991 when President George Bush awarded the medal posthumously to Cpl. Freddie Stowers, who was mortally wounded while assaulting a German machine-gun position on 28 September 1918.[59] The image of the American citizen-soldier has remained predominantly white - and male. In her article "The Warrior Ethic" Judith Youngman sees America's citizen-soldier myth, where full citizenship is the right and the privilege of the soldier who risks life and limb for his country (as long as he is white and male), as having been seriously challenged during the Second World War by the recruitment of over one million African Americans, and the enlistment of 400,000 women into the auxiliary forces.[60] While this perspective is valid, it ignores the previous contributions of women and others from ethnic minorities to previous conflicts, from the American Revolution, through the nineteenth century and the First World War. The acknowledgement of the challenge, and the changes that occurred in the post Second World War period, is important; but in her failure to recognize the previous activities of those others excluded from the white-male citizen-soldier myth, Youngman contributes to the perpetuation of the myth, and the selective remembering and forgetting that underpins it.

Youngman also asserts that until the Vietnam War, Americans were citizens first and soldiers only in times of need.[61] Although she does link 'manhood', citizenship, and soldiering in times of national crisis and views this as particularly important in the light of the contribution of African Americans during the Second World War, she sees the

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[59] Carroll & Baxter (eds), *The American Military Tradition*, p. 132.

[60] Judith Youngman, "The Warrior Ethic", in Spurling & Greenhalgh (eds), *Women in Uniform: Perceptions and Pathways*, p. 27.

[61] Youngman, "The Warrior Ethic", p. 27.

post-Vietnam era as a time in which the model of the 'citizen-soldier' is in decline, replaced by the 'warrior' whose very identity is bound up not with ideals of service, but with combat. However, the citizen-soldier and the warrior are both models of identity that are inextricably linked with masculinity and national identity. The ideals of duty imbued in the citizen-soldier are not separable from the professional warrior of the late twentieth century and while not every man has been - or is - a soldier, the masculinity of the nation is still very much bound to these constructions. Theodore Roosevelt became president in 1901, partly relying on his military experience, and his place in popular consciousness as one of the 'Rough Riders' who had helped America to victory in the Spanish-American War. Almost a century later, Bill Clinton's status as a 'draft-dodger' during the Vietnam War was used by his Republican opponents in an attempt to damage his 1992 Presidential campaign, and later caused controversy when Clinton as Commander-in-Chief ordered U.S. troops into Kosovo. How could a draft-dodger command the U.S. military?[62] The forging of masculinity on the frontier and in battle has carried martial mythologies through the different status of the soldier, from militiaman to draftee to professional soldier, and is refracted through the figure of the President himself.

The Second World War is held up as the defining moment for America on the international stage and the epitome of virtuous conduct and heroism for the American serviceman. The elevation of the American soldier, and the heightened sense of America as a just rescuer of the world from tyranny, depends partially upon the myth of the citizen-soldier and

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[62] William Boyles Jr., "Campaign Issues – Draft", *Colombia Journalism Review*, Nov/Dec 1992, http://www.cjr.org/year/92/6/draft.asp, Accessed 05/08/02. Boyles notes in this article how interesting it is that the Republicans could focus on George Bush's military service, but ignore the fact that his son, George W. Bush entered the National Guard in order to avoid the draft during the Vietnam War. It is interesting in turn to note that when America once again prepared to go to war in February 2003, no mention was made of the military service (or lack of military service) of President George W. Bush or any of his advisors except Colin Powell. It was interesting to note the alacrity with which the President donned military garb for publicity photographs with the troops in the Iraq War of 2003.

upon the selective remembering and forgetting that is so much a part of the way any mythology is maintained. So necessary is it to maintain the image of the just cause, and moral right associated with World War II, that controversy arises whenever the motivations or outcomes of this military conflict become questionable. This is exemplified by the uproar that occurred when the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C., sought to make the Enola Gay, the aircraft from which the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima in 1945, a part of an exhibition to commemorate the 50th anniversary of victory in the Pacific. The full exhibition was never mounted, instead a much smaller exhibition was staged opening on 28 June 1995. The exhibition featured the forward fuselage and propeller of the plane and descriptions of the plane's mission and restoration. What was absent from the exhibition was any real discussion of the historical and political context of the bombing of Hiroshima or the impact it had on Japan and the politics of the Cold War. Michael Neufeld, the curator of the exhibition, summed up the controversy and its subsequent undermining of a critically or historiographically aware exhibition, in terms of U.S. self-image and the ways in which World War II has been constructed as both a legitimate and a just war:

> A lot of people in this country don't want the decision to drop the bomb debated .... They feel you must obviously be an anti-American evil person even to debate the legitimacy of dropping the bomb.... As far as they were concerned, there was a gospel truth: Dropping the bomb prevented the invasion of Japan and ended the war. End of discussion.[63]

While there were some visitor comments that lamented the lack of contextual material surrounding the exhibition that was finally staged, others linked the public representation directly with the support of the memory of soldiers. "This is history ... History is history no matter what

[63] Michael Neufeld, interviewed by Julia M. Klein in "Tremors from the Enola Gay Controversy: An Argument for the Postmodern Museum", *APF Reporter*, v. 20, No 3, http://www.aliciapatterson.org/APF2003/Klein/Klein.html, Accessed 13/11/2002.

we feel. We love our servicemen".[64] The reluctance to publicly acknowledge debates on motivations, casualties, or the devastation wreaked upon civilian populations and the environment when the bomb was dropped indicates an ongoing desire to uphold the heroism of U.S. servicemen - and foreign policy - and the need therefore to obfuscate 'the enemy' as the enemy, rather than thinking in terms of other human beings. The racial prejudices inherent in the frontier mythology which led to the domination of the 'savage' native American population bled easily into the conflict between America and Japan, where the Japanese were vilified as savage and unhuman.[65] These prejudices continue in the ways versions of public history are presented to the public and this is evident in the oversimplifications that were necessary in order to get the Enola Gay exhibition into the public eye. In his review of Gerald F. Linderman's *The World Within War: America's Combat Experience in World War II*, Michael Neiburg applies Lindeman's reasoning for the persistence of the 'good war' myth to the Enola Gay controversy. While 16,000,000 Americans served in the armed forces during the Second World War, only 800,000 participated in extended combat. This distance in experience between combat soldiers and other members of the services and in turn between members of the services and civilians has assisted in the perpetuation of the good war mythology of the Second World War. If the mistakes, atrocities, and violence of experience can be mitigated by distance in geography and time, it is easier to focus on a picture of one nation rescuing the world from immoral monsters. This means that any evidence and events that complicate this world view are bound to result in controversy.[66]

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[64] Jeanne Newbery of Memphis Tennessee who filled out a comment card for the Smithsonian, cited by Julia Klein, "Tremors from the Enola Gay Controversy".
[65] Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation*, p. 318.
[66] Michael Neiberg, Review of Gerald F.Linderman, *The World Within War: America's Combat Experience in World War II*, Free Press, New York, 1997, reviewed in *Journal of Social History*, Summer 1999, http://wwwlfindarticles.com/cf_0/m2005/4_32/55084030/print.jhtml, Accessed 13/11/2002.

The convictions and abilities of American servicemen during the Second World War appear not to have been questioned in the immediate aftermath of the conflict, despite the unease that the dropping of the atomic bomb may have caused. In both literature and film, the G.I. was constructed as an ordinary, decent inherently nice man who may not have been pro-war but waged it effectively and was heroic because, rather than in spite, of his very ordinariness. In the aftermath of the Vietnam War the stature of the World War II G.I. came under revision, as did the morality of soldiering in general. Even conservative military historians like Martin Van Crefeld questioned the efficacy of the American soldier, particularly when compared with the discipline and aggression shown by their German counterparts.[67] The arguments of Van Crefeld and his contemporaries suggest that America won the war not because its soldiers were outstanding, but rather because the United States was able to pour unparalleled resources, both material and human, into its efforts and because it possessed superior air power. These interpretations are telling if regarded in the context in which they were written - the wake of the Vietnam War, which was a war that could not be won despite the continuing superiority of the United States in terms of resources and weaponry. The extraordinariness of the ordinary American soldier is a construction that has been resurrected in the late 1990s with films like Steven Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan* (1998). This resurrection is particularly interesting when viewed as a part of the 'remasculinizing' of America and the attempt to construct further 'just', and limited, wars during the 1990s and early 2000s.[68] This resurrection has not been limited to popular culture. While these ordinarily heroic men were fighting the good fight, recent historical studies like John McManus's *The Deadly*

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[67]Martin Van Crefeld, *Fighting Power: German and US Army Performance 1939-1945*, Greenwood Publishing, Westport Conn., 1982. For a brief discussion of this trend see Alan Cate, "*The Deadly Brotherhood* and Other Looks Back at Our World War II GIs", *Parameters*, Autumn 1999, http://carlislewww.army.mil/usawc/Parameters/99autumn/auesay.htm, Accessed 18/11/2002.

[68] Cate, "*The Deadly Brotherhood* and Other Looks Back at Our World War II GIs".

Brotherhood: The American Combat Soldier in World War II[69] interpret combat soldiers fighting for one another above any kind of ideological fervour or bloodlust. The emphasis on the heroism of the ordinary soldier, and the connections inherent in the collective identity of 'brotherhood', are crucial to the functioning of masculinity. This must subsume the inferiority of the (particularly lower-ranking) soldier, and provide a connection between those who become faceless behind their rank and serial numbers, and those whose deeds stand out as uncommon.

The individuality intrinsic to United States soldier identity and the American character in general that had been forged in the previous two centuries was undermined by the modern military and modern warfare of the Second World War. In 1941 the United States introduced its first peace-time draft which disrupted the construction of citizen-soldiers called up in times of immediate need. The use of military might, and the place of that military within a democracy caused a certain amount of cultural anxiety in the build up to the Second World War. These anxieties have been buried under the weight of United States victory in the conflict.[70] Notions of personal autonomy and democracy are closely linked, and the need to uphold the appearance of these ideals was extremely important in the face of evidence that the military is a distinctly undemocratic institution and that the use of the military to invade another nation compromises notions of self-determination. One way to ensure that these values were paid lip service, and were visible to the public was the elevation of individual soldiers in film culture at the time. For example, in the 1941 film *Sergeant York*, the eponymous World War I soldier overcomes his pacifist leanings in the face of a cause that was worth fighting for.[71]

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[69] John McManus, The Deadly Brotherhood: The American Combat Soldier in World War II, Presidio Press, Novato Ca, 1998.
[70] Benjamin J. Alpers, "This is the Army: Imagining a Democratic Military in World War II", *The Journal of American History*, v.85, no. 1, June 1998, pp. 129-163.
[71] For a description of this film and a closer analysis of its role in overcoming the conflict between the 'American way of life' and military life see Alpers, "This is the Army".

In an ironic turn of events, memorializing the Second World War in the twenty-first century has also aroused controversy around notions of democracy. There is no memorial specific to the Second World War as a whole in Washington D.C., despite there being numerous memorials to different battles and different branches of the services such as the famous Marine Corps memorial, more commonly known as the Iwo Jima memorial. In May 2001 Congress voted to override any resistance and authorised the placement of a Second World War memorial on the Mall, the open stretch of grass leading up the Lincoln Monument traditionally used to hold political rallies and famous for the speech given by Martin Luther King in 1963. The proposed memorial to the conflict that has been used as a symbol of democracy triumphant and the definition of American character will dominate and divide a space associated with freedom of speech. This memorial has caused controversy within the general public and has divided veterans. Speaking on behalf of the memorial planners, Michael Conley drew heavily on the role the Second World War, and its service*men* played, stating: "It is almost unforgivable that we have no place in Washington that honors those who fought in a war that gave us our modern identity as a nation". Veterans like George Peabody, in recognition of the huge contradiction inherent in placing the memorial on the Mall said, "We could have memorialized World War II in a place that would not have defaced the National Mall, which is a historic symbol of our nation's democracy ... I will never feel good about this".[72] The difference between this proposed memorial, which is to consist of large concrete triumphal arches and a wall of gleaming stars, and the Vietnam War Memorial Wall which invites quiet reflection rather than celebration, is poignant. This contrast is another indicator that the resurrection of mythologies of the Second World War has been used in the post-Vietnam

[72] Christopher Newton, "A Historic Vista Now Will Make Room for World War II Memorial", *The Boston Globe*, May 27 2001, http://www.savethemall.org/media/vista.html, accessed 121/10/2002.

era to validate America's role in 'just' wars and to restore the soldier as victorious and virtuous.

The contradictions involved in a racist army dependent on rigid hierarchies attempting to destroy racist and totalitarian regimes affected white and African American soldiers alike. There were particular ironies regarding the experiences of African American servicemen. These servicemen were placed in segregated units, an incongruity that should not be underestimated when thinking about the regimes the United States was pitted against in Europe.[73] White soldiers also felt the sharp disjuncture between the values they believed they were defending, and the lives they had to lead in the military where those values were not upheld. John Glenn Gray in his famous musings on war and soldiering, *The Warriors: Reflections on Men in Battle*,[74] pondered the problems he faced maintaining his autonomy and performing his duties as a soldier:

> My friend wrote once late in the war that he often thought of me as *the soldier* [original emphasis]. To him I had come to stand for the qualities that he associated with universal man at war . . . . "Perhaps the worst that can be said is that I am *becoming* [original emphasis] a soldier. To be a soldier! This is at best something less than a man. To say nothing of a philosopher". Since then I have frequently wondered what

[73] It is interesting to note that in late twentieth century block buster productions about the Second World War, African American servicemen are almost completely absent. There were no African Americans in Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan* nor were there any in his television mini-series *Band of Brothers*. While admittedly these texts were based upon the experiences of specific units – 'Easy Company' in the case of *Band of Brothers* – they still contribute to the absence of 'color' in the World War II narrative. Perhaps it is not possible to celebrate the soldier of World War II, and acknowledge the racial divisions within the military at the same time. Nor is it palateable to depict segregated units in a conflict which is celebrated as defeating fascism. When U.S. units were stationed in Australia the segregation continued, and the presence of black soldiers worried local authorities who were engaged in a policy of segregation themselves against Aboriginal people. Separate recreation facilities had to be provided, and authorities worried about protecting the local female population from the mythical rampant sexuality of black men. See Darian-Smith, *On the Homefront*, and Kay Saunders, *War on the Homefront: State Intervention in Queensland 1938-1948*, St Lucia Queensland, 1993.

[74] John Glenn Gray, *The Warriors. Reflections on Men in Battle*, Harper and Row, New York, 1959.

> it meant to be a "soldier" and why I regarded myself then, insofar as I was a soldier, as less than a man.[75]

Glenn Gray goes on to detail how all the small things that he had built up to make himself different from others were slowly chipped away until he was a fighter, rather than a man. Despite soldiering being an expression of 'quintessential masculinity', the individual autonomy essential to masculine dominance, and the need to subsume individual beliefs and ideals to the order required in military life are always in direct contradiction. In Glenn's case this was heightened by the disjuncture between self-definition as a 'civilised' man and the uncivilised acts of killing required in war. Paul Fussell details a similar alteration, in which past lives and values became incongruous with the experiences of being a soldier despite the fact that it was to preserve these ways of life that men became soldiers.[76] Autonomy was eroded and individuality had to be subsumed in order for the hierarchical nature of military life to function. And while a great deal of this was necessary for the war effort, a lot more of the subordination occurred in what both Fussell and Linderman[77] call 'chickenshit', the endless often unnecessary tasks and sadistic disciplines enacted by officers upon enlisted men in a constant struggle for the maintenance of superiority and the persecution of the weak that made the strong men stand out. All of these features were completely incongruous with the American lifestyle which lauded the individual above all else, and supposedly deplored tyranny, whether on a grand or petty scale. A number of responses to an American army questionnaire conducted in 1942 on how men were coping with military life resulted in answers illustrating just how antithetical being in the armed services was to civilian American ideals: "One soldier said: 'We are entitled to the respect we have worked

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[75] Glenn Gray, *The Warriors*, pp. 25-26.
[76] Paul Fussell, *Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War*, Oxford University Press, New York & Oxford, 1989.
[77] Linderman, *The World Within War*.

for and earned in civilian life'. Another observed: 'I thought the caste system was restricted to India'".[78]

One element of the war in Europe that helped to overcome the lack of autonomy experienced by American soldiers was the differences between European society in ruin compared to their own whole, if not wholesome, 'back home'. The enemy in the Pacific was visibly alien, their aggression acting in tandem with their racial otherness and 'savagery'. These aspects of reinforced ideologies which dictated it was the moral right and duty of the 'civilized world' to quell, thus tying in with the earlier frontier mythologies of conquering American Indians. The destruction in Europe for the second time in half a century also had the potential to hearken back to frontier times, blending in with the notions of American independence from Europe so important since the earliest days of the colonies. Historian Peter Schrijvers, in his book *The Crash of Ruin: American Combat Soldiers in Europe During World War II*, argues that feelings of superiority in American G.I.s were encouraged by a world view that saw European history and politics as having led to the destruction they were witnessing. Europe was thus not capable of governing itself, leaving the high ground for the young American nation to take on the role of world leader.[79] These attitudes did not appear in a vacuum and fit very well with the rhetoric of the land of the free, whose armies of citizen-soldiers were supposed to be a contrast to the standing armies of despotic European nations. They also contribute to the notion that the Second World War was what made the United States a twentieth-century leader, views trumpeted by historian Stephen Ambrose who claims that the "American spirit" and role as defender of democracy was born in World War II .[80]

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[78] Cited by Fussell, *Wartime* p. 83.
[79] Peter Schrijvers, *The Crash of Ruin: American Combat Soldiers in Europe During World War II*, New York University Press, New York, 1998.
[80] Stephen Ambrose, interviewed by Betsy Querna, "World War II Gave Birth to "American Spirit" Says Historian Stephen Ambrose", *National Geographic Today*, May 24, 2001. http://nationalgeographic.com/news/2001/05/0524_AmbroseQA.html, Accessed 27/08/2002.

The many women who joined the armed forces during the Second World War and who took over vital work on the home Front are not automatically included as having forged or inherited the "American spirit". The cinema has assisted in bridging the gap between the real experiences of military life, and the importance of individuality to the masculine warrior has been the construction and celebration of individual heroes. Examples range from *Sergeant York*, John Wayne's starring role in *The Sands of Iwo Jima*, Audie Murphy in *To Hell and Back* and to more contemporary texts like *Saving Private Ryan*. In all of these stories servicewomen are usually reserved as a backdrop or as romantic interest, rather than having their stories explored cinematically in their own right, for example the nurses in the 2001 production, *Pearl Harbor*. Women's services were auxiliary, and their stories are often treated as such.[81]

Arguments persist to the present day surrounding the issue of military women being taken prisoner, and the spectre of this possibility pervades arguments against allowing women into combat roles. During World War II, sixty-seven Army and sixteen Navy nurses were taken prisoner when Corregidor fell in 1942. These women were to remain interned until the end of the war, and yet their stories are certainly not a part of mainstream histories of the Second World War.[82] They are also excluded from the body of cinematic representations dealing with this

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[81] An example in which women were both called to do their duty, and reminded of their 'auxiliary' contribution appears in a recruitment poster for the Women's Army Corps which appeared in 1944. This poster depicts a young woman in uniform looking upward and into the distance, while in the background are depicted the shadowy figures of men on the battlefield. It is captioned "Mine Eyes Have Seen The Glory". In utilizing this caption, a line from the "Battle Hymn of the Republic", this poster not only attempts to reinforce the importance of supporting men in battle, but in recalling the Civil War it simultaneously calls for the remembering of the involvement of the whole population in that war, and reinforces the necessary marginalization of women's activities, despite the centrality of the young woman in the picture. This image also uses the formula of the necessary externalisation of the feminine in order to reinforce the heterosexual masculinity of the soldiers in the background, much like other images discussed in Chapter Two. For more detail on women's experiences during World War II see Chapter One.

[82] "American Women Prisoners of War", http://userpages.aug.com/captbarb/prisoners.html, Accessed 21/11/2002.

conflict. While there have been films dealing with the uncomfortable subject of men as prisoners of war during World War II, they mainly deal with the European theatre, not the Pacific. As Charles Young has asserted, Hollywood prisoner-of-war camps are depicted as places to celebrate masculinity, and largely take on the formula of an adventure narrative involving escape and the subversion of the authority of their fascist captors.[83] It is not possible to turn such a narrative to the death camps or marches of the Pacific, highlighting as they do the fragility of men's bodies, and the indignities of death and disease.[84] There are no well known films dealing with the experiences of American women in prisoner-of-war camps in the Pacific. After extensive searching the only film I did come across was *Paradise Road*, which featured American civilian women, but no discernibly military American female prisoners of war. Perhaps, given the importance of the appearance of active heroism to the World War II mythologies, the experience of American military prisoners of war in the Pacific is not representable within American World War II narratives regardless of the gender of the inmates. Attempts to work outside the paradigm of the adventure narrative are present in the few films made about the Korean War POW experience, but these were not numerous or widely viewed, and again these films dealt with masculine experience.[85] The proximity of women to conflict and combat, and the dangers women face whether or not they are officially in battle cannot be openly

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[83] Charles S. Young, "Missing in Action: POW Films, Brainwashing and the Korean War 1954-1968", *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, March 1998, www.findarticles.com/cf_0/m2584/n1_v18/20576701/print.jhtml, Accessed 12/10/2002.

[84] This is one of the reasons why the Australian television series *Changi* (2001) caused such controversy. It sought to adopt a *Hogan's Heroes* kind of approach to the setting and scenario of the Singapore prison camp which did not fit other narrative patterns Australian POW experiences have taken, and in some ways was seen as trivialising the experiences of the men who were imprisoned there. Stephen Garton, plenary paper "*Changi*: Narratives of Imprisonment and Identity", given at the *Frontlines: Gender, Identity and War* Conference, Monash University, Melbourne July 2002.

[85] Charles S. Young, "Missing in Action". According to Young there were only 6 Korean War POW films made, and all six of these were forced to acknowledge facets not normally present in war narratives – they were forced to deal with the frailty and weakness of the soldier in a POW setting, partly as a result of a widespread "misperception of whole-scale collaboration in Korean prison camps." The issue of POW's, brainwashing and defection and the resultant questioning of the strength of American masculinity and patriotism is one of the few focussed on from this 'forgotten war'.

acknowledged, because otherwise the myth of men successfully defending women is blown apart.

Thus masculine warrior identity in the United States, may have important roots on the frontier, although other interrelated constructions emerge from the wars which had a defining role for both American soldiers and the United States as a nation. As Gibson contends, "[T]he long history of US victories from the Indian wars through World War II reinforced the centrality of wars and warriors as symbols of masculine virility and American virtue."[86] Just as the centrality of masculinity in Australian mythology began with the dominance of the landscape and was refined through events signifying the 'birth of a nation' in war, so too the best of American manhood has been distilled through battle. However, where Australian soldier traditions emerged from defeat and sacrifice, allowing a much easier transition to the peace-keeping roles of the 1990s, 'masculine virility and American manhood' depend much more upon victory and moral (closely aligned to martial) right.

[86] James William Gibson, "Paramilitary Fantasy Culture and the Cosmogonic Mythology of Primeval Chaos and Order", *Vietnam Generation*, v.1, Summer-Fall 1989, no's. 3 - 4, p. 13.

Masculinity Under Siege: Soldier Identity in the Late Twentieth Century

The Vietnam War and post-war periods in the United States are dominated by images of besieged masculinity. Soldiers in the Vietnam War were not only let down by their government, but by the lack of support at home and a protest movement that has become associated with the rise of second-wave feminism. The threat second-wave feminism and the civil rights movement posed to patriarchal dominance during the 1960s and 1970s led to a process of what Susan Jeffords calls 'remasculization'. 'Remasculinization' was the process through which patriarchy was renegotiated through a series of representations which reassessed and reconstructed normative American masculinity, of which military masculinity is a crucial facet.[87] The association of feminism with the protest movement meant that the enemy of the soldier at home was women. Furthermore, the enemy in Vietnam was also coded as feminized, through the frontier ideologies that dictated an association of femininity with the wild and untamed other. This feminization of the enemy was heightened by the Vietnamese women who blurred the boundaries between soldier and civilian, and thus rendered the enemy invisible. This dual signification of femininity with the enemy meant that, as Jeffords has argued (and others such as James William Gibson have concurred), not only was the male soldier defending his own masculinity but that of the whole United States as a nation.[88] Just as Hoganson has pointed out that the changing economic and technological circumstances in the late nineteenth century encouraged a revival of the popularity of robust masculinity forged in battle, specifically through the Spanish-American War, Gibson makes a very similar point about the late twentieth century.

> Extraordinary economic changes also marked the 1970s and 1980s…. The post-World War II American Dream – which promised a combination of technological progress

[87] Jeffords, *The Remasculinization of America*, p. xii.
[88] Gibson, *Warrior Dreams*, p. 11.

> and social reforms, together with high employment rates, rising wages, widespread home ownership, and ever-increasing consumer options – no longer seemed a likely prospect for the great majority. At the same time the rise in crime rates, particularly because of drug abuse and its accompanying violence, made people feel more powerless than ever.
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> While the public world dominated by men seemed to come apart, the private world of family life also felt the shocks. The feminist movement challenged formerly exclusive male domains…Customary male behavior was no longer acceptable in either private relationships or public policy. Feminism was widely experienced by men as a profound threat to their identity. Men had to change, but to what? No one knew for sure what a 'good man' was anymore.[89]

The economic instability of the 1970s and 1980s occurred in conjunction with the apparent failure of the 'regeneration through violence', which required an appearance of 'good' men prevailing over bad and compounded the crisis in masculinity. Once again this was not confined to the military, but entailed an association of everyman with the embattled G.I.[90] Soldiering as a model for broader masculinity meant that the access of women to the armed forces has been treated as a direct threat to the masculinity of the nation, in tandem with the broader access of women to public life and public policy.

The increased emphasis on recruiting women to the armed forces in the post-Vietnam War period and the lobbying for the opening of combat

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[89] Gibson, *Warrior Dreams*, p. 11.

[90] Gibson notes that in the paramilitary culture that arose in the 1970s and 1980s, the 'new warrior' in popular culture was often depicted as having military training but operating outside military boundaries and settings. As in *Rambo: First Blood* where the former Green Beret John Rambo destroys a small town and its police authorities, single handed, partly as a result of the flashbacks from the Vietnam War he experiences. As Gibson states, "[T]he new warrior hero was only occasionally portrayed as a member of a conventional military or law enforcement unit; typically, he fought alone or with a small, elite group of fellow warriors. Moreover, by separating the warrior from his traditional state-sanctioned occupations – policeman or soldier – the New War culture presented the warrior role as the ideal identity for *all* men. Bankers, professors, factory workers, and postal clerks could all transcend their regular stations in life and prepare for heroic battle against the enemies of society." Gibson, *Warrior Dreams*, p. 9.

support and combat roles for women have intensified constructions of masculinity under siege, promoting fears of a 'feminized' military. Ignoring the diversity of feminist politics, some conservative commentators have implied that by placing women in more prominent military roles, feminists who conservatives describe as 'radical' are actively trying to disable the military. The implication is that women in the military weaken the institution to the extent that it is unable to function.[91] Letters to the editors of various newspapers and opinion pieces have voiced similar concerns and highlight the ways in which masculinity is under assault. These missives all contend that the enemy is femininity.[92] Attempts to combat this 'neutering' have occurred in a number of ways. The male warrior hero was resurrected in Vietnam and other settings throughout the 1970s and 1980s, and Vietnam experiences were recouped within the traditions of American military history. Four overlapping strategies have supported this resurrection: women have been either completely excluded from these representations (for example in *Rambo: First Blood* the world of small town America seems totally devoid of women); women have been sexualised and domesticated; women have been portrayed as aberrant in representations resulting from 'real' wars like the Gulf War, or popular cultural texts; or, once they are present in combat, or near combat roles, they have been made invisible so as not to disrupt the seamlessly masculine lines of military identity. These strategies are evident in the construction of the gendered soldier in the post-Vietnam era and are explored in this section.

It is the prominence of the Second World War soldier in popular consciousness and cinematic narratives, combined with re-visioned

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[91] David Horowitz, "Ms America Goes to Battle: The Feminist Assault on the Military", *National Review*, 5/10/1992, pp. 46-49.

[92] For examples of this see, James Collins, "Women are not a Warrior Class", Letter, *Wall Street Journal*, 9/10/1997, p. 9; William C. Moore, "The Military Must Revive Its Warrior Spirit", *Wall Street Journal*, 27/10/1998, p. 22; Wesley Pruden, "Clinton's Sexy Legacy of a Neutered Army", *The Washington Times*, 9/7/1999, p. A4; Suzanne Fields, "Nothing Like a [Military] Dame: Is Losing a War a Small Price to Pay for Equality?", *The Washington Times*, 15/5/2000, p. A19.

accounts of 'how the West was won' through the popular genre of the Western through to the 1960s, that contributed to much of the disillusionment of the soldiers who were sent to Vietnam. The combination of the collective celebration of having won a 'just war', and the reinforcement of the United States status as a superpower, and an international rescuer inflected models of post-Second World War masculinity.[93] The experiences of the Vietnam War were initially interpreted as completely at odds with these mythologies, even though elements of previous narratives of the frontier and past soldier identities were still present. There were no heroes in the Vietnam War: rather there were images of 'baby-killers'. Soldiers were not fighting the good fight in a just war, they were out on a limb with no clear justification for their involvement in fighting. The population at home was just as unsure of the motivations for this war and was publicly divided in its support of its fighting men.

During the Cold War the frontier was an ideological rather than a physical one. Despite this frontier being one of the mind rather than the landscape, it was nonetheless one for which both material and symbolic bodies were sacrificed. The language of previous conflicts on the Frontier was still present even if the cowboy images of John Wayne were considered deceptive. References to Vietnam as 'Indian Country', and the way in which the North Vietnamese were regarded and treated - including the genocidal attempts to wipe them out with search and destroy missions - carry disturbing resonances of Manifest Destiny,[94] and the decimation of

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[93] While there were obviously more complicated political and economic reasons for the United States to go to war throughout the twentieth century, much of the rhetoric surrounding military intervention has been that of 'rescuing', including rescuing the world from Communism during the Korean and Vietnam Wars.

[94] "Manifest Destiny" is a phrase that was used by U.S. leaders in the 1840s to describe and justify the westwards expansion across the continent. This expansion was put in terms of a mission to bring civilization, democracy and development to previously unsettled areas and people capable of self-government, rather than as imperialism. Excluded from those who might benefit from this 'mission' were Native Americans, African-Americans, and others of non-European origin – these people were not seen to be capable of self-government and therefore the exploitation of their labour and theft of their resources was fully justified in terms of "Manifest Destiny" ideology. See "Manifest Destiny –

America's indigenous people.[95] Frontier mythologies inflected post-Vietnam cinematic constructions of the war, for example in *The Deer Hunter* (1978), whose title is a reference to James Fenimore Cooper's *The Deerslayer*.[96] Similarly in *Apocalypse Now* (1979), the First Cavalry Division (Airborne) obliterates a village from helicopters while wearing cavalry hats. While such films established the difference between soldiers who fought in Vietnam from those who fought in previous conflicts, references to the frontier also assist in assimilating the Vietnam conflict into the previous canon of soldier mythology in the United States. This integration, and reinvention, of symbolism from earlier wars has occurred to such an extent that Vietnam War films have themselves become a part of the military mythologies of the actual conflict. The refraction of the frontier through the cavalry charge in *Apocalypse Now* has echoes in the 2002 film about the conflict in Somalia - *Black Hawk Down*. This film, too, extends the legacies of the mythology of the Vietnam War with more than just the helicopter minuet that occurs at the beginning of the movie.[97] It also portrays a military separate to and subjugated by, the wishes of a government that does not understand the intricacies of the situation on the ground. The emphasis on importance of the special forces, the sacrifice of young and 'innocent' soldiers in a conflict they do not understand, and the literal and symbolic rescue of the individual all carry the resonances of

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Introduction",
http://www.pbs.org/kera/usmexicanwar/dialogues/prelude/manifest/d2aeng.html, Accessed 16/07/2003.

[95] Sumiko Higashi, "Night of the Living Dead. A Horror Film about the Horrors of the Vietnam Era", in Dittmar & Michaud (eds), *From Hanoi to Hollywood*, p. 183.

[96] *The Deerslayer* was first published in 1841. References to the frontier and Fenimore Cooper's classic are present in the forbidding landscape that is the setting for the television series *M*A*S*H*, and in the main character's name: Captain "Hawke-eye" Pearce.

[97] Another recent film that directly pillages these images from *Apocalypse Now* is the 1998 production *Small Soldiers*. Here toy soldiers who look like mercenaries, and have resonances Rambo's special forces, who attack other toys - peaceful space creatures called Gorgons – are depicted flying toy helicopters to the background music of Wagner's "Ride of the Valkyries", just as in the original film text. Just as in *Apocalypse Now*, these toys have no understanding of the culture of those they attack, and appear to fight purely for the joy of fighting. Interestingly both sets of toys have been implanted with microchips supposedly developed for the use of robots by the military and then sent into the civilian world without thought for the impact of military technology on civilian societies, and seemingly through the benign devices of children's toys. *Small Soldiers*, Joe Dante (Dir), Dreamworks, 1998.

Vietnam, and the way Vietnam was cinematically reconstructed throughout the 1970s and 1980s.[98] *Black Hawk Down* continues the cinematic reconstruction and elevation of masculine soldier identity through to the twenty-first century. The film ignores the political ramifications of the actions of the military, and separates the military from the government, which in turn distances the individual soldier from civilian life at home and absolves him of any responsibility for the events in which 'he' participates.

The reinvention of the American soldier in Vietnam War films, during the late 1970s and early 1980s adds a further facet to the importance of representations of individuals and individual heroism. Leo Cawley has noted that, with the exception of *Platoon*, "[p]ortrayals of military units of men at war ... at which Hollywood has a very respectable tradition, seemed to stop with the Vietnam War film". As he explains, the cult of the individual is actually anathema to the efficient and effective functioning of 'real' military operations. Cawley makes the point that, "[l]ike the bayonet, personal courage has little relevance in modern battle….it is one of the archaisms whose cult is preserved by militarist culture so that potential recruits will see war as psychologically satisfying".[99] Cawley is partially correct in this assumption regarding the importance of the individual. However, his analysis has not incorporated the dynamics of masculinity which are so intimately tied to soldier identity. The relationship between individual identity and military collectivity is a complicated one that existed for a very long time, as is indicated by the Civil War example described above. Neither have representations of spectacular individual heroism been absent from popular culture prior to the Vietnam War. Ironically it was these portrayals, like

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[98]For analyses of filmic construction see Dittmar & Michaud (eds), *From Hanoi to Hollywood*; see also Michael Selig, "Genre, Gender, and the Discourse of War: the A/Historical and Vietnam Films", *Screen*, v. 34, no. 1, Spring 1993, pp. 1- 18; Steve Neal, "Aspects of Ideology and Narrative Form in the American War Film", *Screen*, v.32, no. 1, Spring 1991, pp. 35-57.

[99] Leo Cawley "The War About the War: Vietnam Films and American Myth" in Dittmar & Michaud (eds), *From Hanoi to Hollywood*, p. 72.

those of John Wayne and Audie Murphy, that heightened the feelings of alienation experienced by soldiers who did tours in Vietnam. The slippage between 'real' and 'representation' in the Vietnam era are partly what led to a revival in the hypermuscular individual male warrior hero in the late twentieth century. This revival was accompanied by an attempt to reclaim and reinvent the Vietnam war so that it could be more easily assimilated into a tradition dominated by the 'good' and 'moral' World War II.

One of the devices that has been perceived to help protect and then resurrect military identity in the wake of events like the My Lai massacre of 1968 was the focus on individuals as key perpetrators, thus absolving the collective from responsibility. The singling out for trial and punishment of Lieutenant William Calley who led the company that perpetrated the My Lai massacre has operated as a means of absolving all those who 'just followed orders'.[100] The research of psychiatrist Roger Lifton into the guilt felt by Vietnam veterans urged the encouragement of a contextualization of soldiers' experiences. From Lifton's point of view these soldiers were fighting in a war which encouraged the perpetration of 'atrocities', due to its guerrilla nature where 'the enemy' was hidden among, and often was, the civilian population. This confusion was complicated by the 'lies' perpetrated by the military, like the claims that razed villages were military targets that had been successfully destroyed. Lifton's research further obviated the moral responsibility of the rank and file as a collective, by pinning the responsibility upon officers, military leaders, and the military as an institution.[101] The spate of Vietnam War films that occurred during the 1980s operated simultaneously to perpetuate this myth and to regenerate the individual. This occurred through the construction of characters, from Chris in *Platoon* who maintains his moral centre despite questioning what is good and what is evil to the comic-book Rambo who embodies the re-muscularization of the individual masculine

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[100] Grossman, *On Killing*, p. 161.
[101] Robert Lifton, *Home from the War*, New York, Simon & Shuster, 1973, cited in Gibson, "The Return of Rambo", p. 384.

warrior-hero who battles for 'right', in both conservative and moral terms, against the rest of the world. Thus, the singling out of the individual from a collective and purely military context also allows the integration of warrior identity into the masculinity of *every*man, not just those who have been in combat.[102]

If ideological forces were the engine that resulted in the Vietnam War, then economics were also a part of that drive. During the Cold War freedom was interpreted as the freedom to consume, and the rescue of the downtrodden meant opening markets around the world (including potentially 'invading' communist countries). The expansion of the 'Free World', often with the assistance of the new the medium of television, was the 'New Frontier'.[103] Television had a role to play in the exploration of space, expressed as a version of Manifest Destiny, through the televising of the moon landing. However, television was also famous for bringing war into the living room. Television provided endless casualty figures, body counts, and beamed images of atrocities into domestic space. Therefore television, as the New Frontier, has contributed both to the hostility toward the soldiers who went to Vietnam and the reconstruction of the masculine warrior hero in the post-Vietnam era. The medium of television, like photography before it, blurred the distinction between home and battlefronts, and the lines between masculinized frontiers and frontlines, and feminized domesticity.

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[102] This separation also helps to integrate military personnel who are *not* combat personnel. Cooks, administrators and coffee makers can thus all have access to the ideals of muscular masculinity, despite the possibility that they will never be in battle. Unlike women who have combat support roles who cannot be warriors due to their gender, despite their proximity to the fighting. An interesting example of this was portrayed in *Black Hawke Down*, where an administrator who was very good at making coffee, but was valuable because he could type, was sent into combat. His initial noises about having wanted to really be a combat soldier, but being relegated to administration because of his other talents, were somewhat hollow, but despite his lack of experience he still acquitted himself perfectly adequately. There were no arguments about his lack of experience or ability when he was integrated into the combat unit as a fighter rather than a secretary.

[103] Lynn Spigel & Michael Curtin (eds), *The Revolution Wasn't Televised: Sixties Television and Social Conflict*, Routledge, London and New York, 1997, p. 3.

The cinematic reconstruction of the Vietnam experience and the Vietnam veteran during the 1970s and 1980s did not extend to female veterans. At least 7,500 female veterans returned from Vietnam, but it is the male veteran who is the towering figure within popular consciousness. And it is the betrayed male veteran who was avenged by the fighting and winning of the 1991 Gulf War and who was brought back into the fold by the attention paid and support given to troops in the Gulf, despite questionable government motives and the dubious nature of 'victory' in that conflict.[104] There has been no *Platoon* equivalent for the nurses and other female military personnel who were in Vietnam, as the big screen has been devoted to the (re)imagination of the white male veteran. It has been the more domestic medium of television where representations of (American) women in Vietnam has occurred, through series like *M*A*S*H* (which although set in the Korean War was an allegory for the Vietnam War) and *China Beach* (1988-1991).[105]

In *M*A*S*H*, the nurses were portrayed as competent but peripheral; when they were visible it was largely as sex objects. *China Beach* differed in being presented from the women's perspective, but the aspects of melodrama that dominate the series feminize and thus domesticate these war experiences, once again relegating them to the

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[104] Cynthia Enloe, "The Gendered Gulf", in Jeffords & Rabinovitz (eds), *Seeing Through The Media*, p. 221.

[105] It is interesting to note that while many commentators have agreed that Hollywood cinema was slow to take up the project of representing the Vietnam War, and reconstructing the soldier, partly as a result of the mixed emotions the war and its participants evoked, it was the domestic medium of television that attempted to convey the turmoil and chaos of the war just as it was ending through the series *M*A*S*H* which first aired in 1972. While slow to attract a consistent audience the show attracted critical acclaim with a number of Emmy nominations in its first season. Perhaps, just as Peter Weir used the celebrated events of Gallipoli to allegorise the Australian Vietnam experience, *M*A*S*H*, in using the 'forgotten war' - the Korean War – as an allegory for Vietnam, was able to present the mixed feelings and contentions surrounding the conflict in a deferred way. That this series also dealt mainly with medical staff, rather than combat soldiers who were being constructed as out of control in an uncontrollable situation, is also worth noting. The controversy over whether they should have been fighting, and the means by which Vietnam War was conducted, were thus avoided. While ostensibly an anti-war text, *M*A*S*H* is still a part of the body of work that does not politicise American military presence in Asia, or foreign policy decisions.

sidelines of war.[106] The combination of the living room medium in domestic space and the format that *China Beach* took had an impact on the construction of the female Vietnam veteran in the post-war period. Susan Jeffords, in her analysis of texts that deal with male soldiers and veterans, has asserted that the gender portrayals in most cinematic representations of the Vietnam War have reaffirmed the importance of war to patriarchy, and vice versa.[107] Leah R. Vande Berg extends Jeffords' analysis to the apparently female-centred *China Beach* and concurs with Jeffords regarding the relationship of patriarchal dominance and representations of war. Vande Berg sees *China Beach* as "simultaneously absorbing and containing feminism while reaffirming patriarchal masculinity and militarism".[108] This series appeared at a time not only when there was an increased interest in women's military history in the United States but also when military women were becoming increasingly visible as the Grenada and Panama incidents described in previous chapters illustrate. While on the surface *China Beach* was a part of this pattern of increased visibility, it still complied with many of the traditional patriarchal approaches to portraying women and thus undermined or marginalized their experiences despite their centrality to the series. The female characters were all portrayed as objects of male desire, and their sexualization heightened their difference from the men. Texts which seek to redress the balance of representation must always be wary of this tendency, as was demonstrated in the discussion of the cover, title and photographs of Siobhan McHugh's *Minefields and Miniskirts* in the Australian context.[109]

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[106] For analyses of *China Beach* and the ways this series portrayed women, gender, and its revisionist approach to history see, Deborah Ballard-Reisch, "*China Beach and Tour Of Duty:* American Television and Revisionist History of the Vietnam War." *Journal of Popular Culture* , Winter 1991; Cynthia A Hanson, "The Women of China Beach", *Journal of Popular Film & Television*, Winter 1990; Karen Rasmussen, "*China Beach* and American Mythology of War", *Women's Studies In Communication*, Fall 1992.

[107]Jeffords, *The Remasculinization of America*, p. 5.

[108] Leah R. Vande Berg, "*China Beach*, Prime Time War in the Postfeminist Age: An Example of Patriarchy in a Different Voice", *Western Journal of Communication*, v.57, Summer 1993, p. 350.

[109] See Chapter Two.

The women of *China Beach* also followed their predecessors in *M*A*S*H* in their portrayal as universally subordinate to doctors, and not equal to the soldiers. Vande Berg insightfully comments upon the way in which these women, having volunteered for the military, have also volunteered for their "subordinate and stereotypically traditional roles in Vietnam", unlike the men, from doctors down to 'grunts' who were drafted.[110] What this series and many other representations of this war ignores are the number of men who were regular army or volunteers: the conscript is the main figure in the Vietnam War narrative. The singling out of women in this conflict as volunteers, and the ways in which the tasks they performed have been subordinated and inconsistently recognized, assist in overcoming the potential disruption to autonomous masculinity that the figure of the male draftee poses.

After the Vietnam War and the advent of the all-volunteer forces in the United States, the emphasis on being 'professional' is what has partially achieved the negation of the 'docility' so crucial to the functioning of the military, particularly to a conscript army. Just as 'professional' conduct assisted the assimilation of the experiences of Australian Vietnam War veterans into the ANZAC legend, professionalism has operated to restore integrity to the post-Vietnam United States military, as well as circumventing the potential threat to masculinity that military discipline poses. "Be all that you can be" is one of the best known recruiting slogans ever devised by the American Army and it emphasises individual achievement and fulfilment which overcome the disciplinary restrictions of military life. The Army took this focus one step further in 2001 with the slogan "An Army of One", which caused a certain amount of controversy for its particular emphasis on the autonomy of the

[110] Vande Berg, "*China Beach*, Prime Time War In the Postfeminist Age", p. 254.

individual rather than the hierarchical system of command and cooperation that at is the core of a military unit.[111]

Paradoxically, the representational device of professionalism that has assisted in maintaining the integrity of masculine warrior identity has also operated in the transformation of the modern military and its accommodation of female soldiers. Cynthia Enloe has asserted that the veneer of 'professionalism' has assisted in making the sight of women in active military roles more acceptable to the general public in the wake of the Gulf War. Sacrifice of one's life for the state and first-class citizenship are concepts that are not only linked to one another, but have also been linked to the primacy of masculinity in a patriarchal state. In the context of a military and political culture in which "violent sacrifice under state discipline" is the "essential criteria for 'first class citizenship'", then the answer to maintaining the gender order in the face of women making incursions into the masculine domain of violent sacrifice may be the professionalization of soldier-identity.

> If American citizen-soldiering became professionalized – if it can be liberated from its traditional need to be associated with Minute Man amateurism – *and* if professionalization could bestow on American notions of femininity a new coat of protective respectability, then perhaps women could gain access to 'first class citizenship' without jeopardizing the still-gendered political culture.[112]

The construction of 'professionalism', according to Enloe, can assist military women to avoid the dual trap of appearing either 'morally loose' or 'suspiciously manly', as they act in roles designated as masculine.[113] However, if being 'professional' is in itself a 'masculine' attribute and femininity needs a coat of respectability the gender order has neither been

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[111] See Karsten, "The U.S. Citizen-Soldier", see also James Dao, "Ads Now Seek Recruits for 'An Army of One'", *New York Times*, 10 January 2001; Lucien K. Truscott, "Marketing An Army of Individuals", *New York Times*, 12 January 2001.
[112] Enloe, "The Politics of Constructing the American Woman Soldier", p. 82.
[113] Enloe, "The Politics of Constructing the American Woman Soldier", p. 100.

interrogated nor transformed; it has merely been further camouflaged. Professionalism is increasingly judged in terms of the acquisition of skills and qualifications which makes it appear to be a clear, transparent way of judging and promoting personnel. It is the emphasis on specialised skills, rather than on groups or 'types' of people that make it appear to be an equitable way of defining and judging performance and aptitude, whether in the military or the corporate arena. The problem with treating professionalism as the key to promotion or access to an area, is that in the military, particularly, what makes a person professional is determined internally. The special skills and attributes required by the ideal soldier have been defined in terms of masculine norms so that viewing the professionalism of a soldier is not so transparent as it first appears. Masculinity is still viewed as the key attribute, and the means of defining the most valued skills in the military.[114]

While the foot-soldier or infantryman was being re-generated in popular culture and popular memory, the link between martial masculinity and technology (armour by any other name) was being reaffirmed through films like *Top Gun* and *An Officer and a Gentleman* and through the extremely visible role of the fighter pilot during the Gulf War who dominated television screens, fuelling perceptions that this conflict was indeed a techno-war.[115] The forces on the ground were overshadowed by their brothers in the skies, and the 'smart bombs' and 'patriot' missiles they wielded. Both *Top Gun* and *An Officer and a Gentleman* sought to put the spectre of the Vietnam War in the past, with the lurking shadows of missing fathers and strange never-clearly defined misdeeds and accusations that had to be avenged. *An Officer and A Gentleman* sparked a mixed reaction from the military. While it presented a code of honour and

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[114] See Hancock, "Women as killers and killing women".

[115] Despite the active roles of the Australian Navy and Air Force throughout the twentieth century, the ANZAC tradition largely revolves around the foot soldier – not the pilot or the sailor. While American tradition is similarly dominated by the infantry, their larger military presence and more militarized society mean the profiles of the other branches of the military are much more prominent, and these different forms of military identity are sometimes a unifying force, and sometimes a fragmentary one.

the glamour of flying, it also opened up the issues of militarized prostitution and the ungentlemanly practices that upheld and underpinned the elite masculinity of the pilots. However, despite this journalists have attributed the film with encouraging a 20 percent increase in recruitment to the Navy.[116] The Navy took a much more active role in the production of *Top Gun*, realising the recruiting potential of links to Hollywood. The film was shot on location at the Naval Air Station Miramar, and the Navy provided pilots and planes for footage of actual Tomcats being flown – at a rate of $7600 per hour. The film grossed more than $176 million making it one of the most popular films of 1986.[117]

While the speed and glamour of the fighter pilot in *Top Gun* was hugely popular, the role of Charlotte 'Charlie' Blackwood (played by Kellie McGillis) is usually recognized only for her accessory value to 'Maverick' (Tom Cruise). This film never discusses the fact that women were able to be instructors but until 1993 were banned from flying as combat pilots. Charlie is smart, confident and well qualified. She is in a position of authority, and yet she ends up being reduced to a signifier of Maverick's heterosexuality. She risks her career due to the irresistible pull of going to bed with a pilot. Rather than being a disruptive feminine presence in the all-male enclave of the fighter-pilot community, Charlie ends up being the external feminine signifier that guarantees the heterosexuality of the masculine warrior. That this character was also a civilian rather than military personnel further assists the externalization of femininity from the flying community in this cinematic text.

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[116] Jean Zimmerman, *Tailspin: Women at War in the Wake of Tailhook*, Doubleday, New York, 1995, pp. 31-32. Zimmerman discusses the culture of macho masculinity among the Navy fliers and how this contributed to the sexual assault scandal at the Tailhook convention in 1991.

[117] See Zimmerman, *Tailspin*, p. 33. See also Akin Ojumu, "Gunning For Hollywood", *The Observer*, 12/9/1999, displayed on *Guardian Unlimited Film*, http://film.guardian.co.uk/Feature_Story/feature_story/0,4120,81442,00.html, Accessed 7/10/2002.

The surge to prominence of the fighter-pilot during the Gulf War can be seen as a way of establishing masculine dominance over the war story, despite the very visible presence of servicewomen during the conflict. This aspect of the 'techno-war', combined with the censorship of the media during the Gulf War, had interesting ramifications for the construction of the body and the links between the warrior and the body. Television and other news media were also the means by which the American public were alerted to the very active role women played in the military during the Gulf War. The military had learned from the Vietnam War that uncontrolled reporting could damage their image and therefore coverage of the Gulf War was tightly controlled.[118] Military censorship was not only related to troop movements and battle outcomes, but also resulted in fewer 'enemy' casualties being seen in the media. Censorship disembodied the Gulf War, an experience that depended on bodies and their destruction. Seeking to avoid the kind of media coverage that emanated from the Vietnam War, the military attempted to avoid letting the public see both U.S. and enemy casualties. This lack of carnage in the media coverage of the Gulf War lent an aura of 'unreality' to the whole war experience. One of the ways to disguise the penetrability of the material body is to "metaphorize the soldierly body" as a machine, or part of a machine: when extended to the pilot, the man and the machine become indistinguishable.[119] If corporeality, and therefore femininity, is symbolically removed from the dead as well as the living, then this becomes a way of reinforcing the masculinity of the soldier. This reinforcement occurs despite the ways in which previously the penetration of the material masculine body, leading to death, symbolically feminized

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[118] For a description of the perceived difference access to the war, by the media, can make and the differences in media coverage between Vietnam and later conflicts in Grenada, Panama and the Gulf, see Franklin, "From Realism to Virtual Reality". The media was even more tightly controlled in the Gulf War of 2003 with journalists appearing to have frontline access through being embedded with military units. The embedding of these journalists must lead to a questioning of journalistic integrity, and that they still only had access to what the military wanted them to broadcast. In the thrill of on the spot, in the middle of the battle, reporting the quality of content becomes less important than the immediacy of images beamed to the news networks.

[119] Margot Norris, "Only the Guns Have Eyes: Military Censorship and the Body Count", in Jeffords & Rabinovitz (eds), *Seeing Through the Media*, p. 292.

the soldier.[120] The prominence of the fighter pilot and the portrayal of the Gulf War through a Nintendo game-like screen, which arose partially as a result of representations taken from the pilot's perspective rather than from the ground, all enhanced the disembodiment of the experience and helped to minimize the impact of the visible servicewomen on the ground.

Whether as a result of the restrictions placed on media access to the action of the war, or due to the genuine perception of the novelty of seeing military women in a war zone, U.S. military women received a great deal of media attention during the Gulf War. This heightened media focus on women in the military has brought these women into the public eye, but has also raised the ire of their male counterparts.[121] If military women in the Gulf were the 'human interest' aspect of the war because journalists were unable to gain access to other information on tactics and manoeuvres, then it is possible that while the media coverage made the women's presence visible, it simultaneously reinforced conceptions of women as 'support' or 'auxiliary' to the 'real' soldiers who were men. Jean Baudrillard's controversial and widely misunderstood assertion that "the Gulf War did not take place",[122] that the war was fought in the realm of the representational rather than the 'real' and therefore that its outcome was predetermined, is particularly relevant when viewed in the light of the gender politics being played out during this conflict. Tightly controlled television coverage dominated perceptions of the war. Many of the essays contained in the collection *Seeing Through The Media: The Persian Gulf War* make reference to the way in which the Gulf War was 'domesticated' by framing it in terms of the feminine textual medium of the soap opera or

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[120] See Chapter Two.

[121] Ilene Rose Feinman asserts that this media coverage was a wake up call for the feminist community, who up until that point had paid only cursory attention to women in the military, and largely placed these women in the category of being economically victimized in civilian society, and therefore being manipulated into military service. The 'professional' image that Enloe discusses is partly what forced a widening of the debate about women's roles in the military within the feminist community. Feinman, *Citizenship Rites*, p. 17. For male resentment of the media attention paid to military women see Francke, *Ground Zero*.

[122] Jean Baudrillard, *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place*, trans. Paul Patton, Indiana University Pres, Bloomington, 1995.

melodrama.[123] Through devices like depicting (male) soldiers shaving, and seeing families both saying good bye and being reunited, the war was placed into a narrative of the national family. This narrative partially defused the impact of visual material on female soldiers in the Gulf as they too were placed into the crucial roles of supporting men. The narrative of the 'national family' was reinforced by rhetoric which not only saw the Gulf War redeeming the experiences of Vietnam, but also recalled the 'good' Second World War. President George Bush Senior's reference to Saddam Hussein as another Hitler not only demonized the Iraqi leader and population, but cast the United States forces as the 'ordinary' men and women fighting for good over evil. This was reminiscent of the ways the G.I. was constructed during and after the Second World War.[124] Recalling the Second World War also reinforced the support roles of women, who were 'auxiliaries' to the services in the 1940s, rather than the full service-members they had in fact become in the late twentieth century.

Ultimately it was the visibility of those women in the 1991 Gulf War that assisted in breaking down the combat barriers for women in the air in the mid 1990s. the visibility of the pilot as masculine god of the sky has diminished in the wake of the scandals that have dogged the flying communities in the U.S. Navy and the Air Force, and the integration of women into combat roles in both of these branches of the military. Instead, ranks now instead appear to be tightening around one of the only branches still closed to women, the infantry. While this has happened, the tropes of armoured masculinity still exist in popular culture, and the legacies of the Vietnam War are still present. The 1997 film *Independence Day*, in which the world faces destruction by an alien power is an example of this, as Ilene Rose Feinman points out:

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[123] See Robin Wiegman, "Missiles and Melodrama (Masculinity and the Televisual War)", pp. 171-188; Lauren Rabinovitz, "Soap Opera Woes: Genre, Gender and the Persian Gulf War", pp. 189-204, in Jeffords & Rabinvitz (eds), *Seeing Through the Media*.
[124] Gibson, *Warrior Dreams*, p. 292. See also the above section on World War II.

> Although women in the 'real history' have been incorporated as combat flyers, not a single woman in the film is presented as a flyer. When they desperately need combat pilots to complete the mission, instead of drawing on the historically permissible resource of women pilots, they use a drunken Vietnam veteran pilot who becomes a heroic martyr.[125]

Feinman's point is valid. The absence from this film of women who are not wives or girlfriends reinforces the masculine exclusivity not only of military identity but also that of the role of rescuer. However, this absence also makes much more sense if put in the context of the regeneration of military identity in the post-Vietnam era. The juxtapositioning of the drunken Vietnam veteran pilot with the Gulf War veteran pilot, who just happens to be the President of the United States, infers continuity of warrior tradition and fits into Slotkin's framework of a regeneration through violence. The Vietnam veteran sacrifices himself to save the world, and the Gulf War veteran picks up his legacy and presides over an 'independent' world now safe from the alien threat. Despite risking his life, the elite black fighter pilot is ultimately only a transport driver who ferries the civilian brains of the mission to a site where the most damage can be inflicted on the aliens. The Vietnam veteran who makes the ultimate sacrifice may have been down and out, but he was still white and male. There is no room for efficient and capable femininity in the salvation of this heterosexual, masculine, frontier.

The foot-soldier, having been reconstructed and regenerated in the wake of the Vietnam War, is being re-elevated in the wake of the inroads made by military women in the post-Gulf War era. An example of this is the blockbuster success of *Saving Private Ryan*. Here, the foot-soldier is not the grunt or the innocent to be sacrificed as in the Vietnam War, but rather the morally upright soldier of the Second World War who loved his country, missed his family and fought for an undeniably just cause. This film elevates not only the foot-soldier but the individual foot-soldier. Once

[125] Feinman, *Citizenship Rites*, p. 208.

again the ordinariness of the soldier allows a connection between miltary masculinity, and the masculinist ideals of broader civilian society. John Bodnar sees this film as a reinstatement of the individual at the expense of democratic ideals or "citizen participation in political life". According to Bodnar, Spielberg's film does not place the individual within the context of community, unlike earlier representations of the war.[126] What Bodnar does not consider is the revisioning of soldier identity in terms of gender and the importance of the white masculine individual to this. As Jay Winter points out in his response to Bodnar's article, the racism faced by segregated African-American troops is absent from Spielberg's resurrection of the virtuous American foot-soldier. Once again, their role and the contradictions they faced fighting fascism for a nation that implicitly condoned lynching and explicitly segregated people on the basis of race was absent again from popular re-imaginings of the 'just' war.[127]

The importance of the infantry to masculine definitions of the military has increased in the wake of the "War on Terror" and the conservative presidency of George W. Bush. There have been moves to roll back the progress made by military women, and the elevation of the infantry physical training standard as an ideal has assisted in this. There were women flying combat planes over Afghanistan in the wake of the September 11, 2001, attacks on the United States, but their presence was not made much of and their comparative invisibility can be read in a number of ways. Lt Colonel Claudia Kennedy has stated that the press dealing with female soldiers as routine stories is a positive step in the gender integration of the U.S. military.[128] However, since the "war on terror" was partially framed in terms of 'rescuing' the women of Afghanistan from the barbarism and oppression of the Taliban, perhaps

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[126] John Bodnar, "*Saving Private Ryan* and Postwar Memory in America", *American Historical Review*, v.106, no. 3, 2001, p. 817.
[127] Jay Winter, "Film and the Matrix of Memory", *American Historical Review*, v.106, no. 3, 2001, p. 860.
[128] "Babes in Battle", *On the Media*, June 28, 2002, http://www.wync.org/onthemedia/transcripts_062802_babes.html, Accessed 4.07/02.

this invisibility was necessary in order to maintain the gender order implicit in such actions of chivalry. While the plight of women living under the Taliban regime had been the concern of human rights groups and feminist organizations for a decade, it has received little official attention from Western governments. Following the destruction of the World Trade Centre, the rhetoric of rescuing the women and children of Afghanistan was widely touted to justify bombing an already poverty-stricken nation. Laura Bush, the First Lady, delivered a radio address in November, 2001, in which she claimed that "[t]he brutal oppression of women is a central goal of the terrorists" and cited the wearing of the burka as a symbol of this oppression.[129] In order for the paradigms of rescue and chivalry to operate, the rescuer must be coded as masculine, the rescuee as feminine. During the Gulf War, American Servicewomen were often used in the Western press as a means of highlighting western liberal civilized behaviour in contrast to Saudi and Kuwaiti women. The 'rescuing' of Afghani women must be framed differently, and the invisibility of women actually in combat contributes to the maintenance of the gender order.

If a frontier is a line that must be defended, a line which defines identity in terms of inclusion and those excluded who are to be conquered and/or assimilated, then femininity is the final frontier. There are a number of theorists who contribute to the discourse of the figure of the male warrior under siege in a callous and misunderstanding civilian world.

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[129] Laura Bush, cited by Emily S. Rosenberg, "Rescuing Women and Children", *The Journal of American History*, v.89, no. 2, September 2002, p. 456. The use of the 'burka' as a symbol of oppression is particularly poignant in the light of the recent controversy over whether or not American servicewomen in Saudi Arabia should be required to wear the abaya (a similarly shrouding garment). Colonel Martha McSally contested the US military requirements that servicewomen be forced to wear such a garment, despite the fact that this regulation did not apply to the wives of American military officers, or U.S. embassy personnel. See "Fighting for the Rights of Women", *The Age*, 20/9/2002, http://www.theage.com.au/opinion/2002/01/20/FFXA8F7AMWC.html, Accessed 6/10/2002. This regulation was repealed in December 2002. See "No Veils Required", *Washington Times*, 13/12/2002, http://www.washtimes.com/national/20021213-19923040.htm, Accessed 16/12/2002. "The defense authorization act signed into law by President Bush contains a provision that bans the military from requiring female soldiers deployed in Saudi Arabia to wear abayas, the head-to-toe garment Saudi women are required to wear in public".

This figure emerged in the post-Vietnam era and continues to be 'assaulted' at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The most dangerous threat to the masculine identity of the warrior hero must be gender. And since women have been characterised as the sole possessors and embodiment of gender, femininity is the final frontier. If femininity cannot be excised completely, then women are required to become 'one of the boys', simultaneously transforming and consciously adopting a form of gender camouflage. In devaluing the overt signification of femininity, and undermining the value of military women and their abilities, masculine institutions are actually making overt the performative (rather than 'natural') aspects of gender. While gender camouflage implies the devaluing of femininity, it also undermines the necessary visible stability of masculinity. The solid lines of gender differentiation are breached by this performance and the frontier upon which coherent masculinity depends for its identity, and its mythologies is open to assault and to change.

5
Speculative Bodies: Popular Culture and the Female Warrior Hero

Introduction

Does changing the sex of the warrior change the politics of representing the gendered body in combat? The end of the Vietnam War saw an apparent reconstruction of martial identity in both Australia and the United States. Increasing numbers of women were recruited to the militaries of both nations and have gradually had more and more military occupations opened up to them, including closer proximity to official combat roles. Masculine soldier identity was reconstructed in the press and in popular film and television; and the female warrior hero burst onto large and small screens. This chapter applies the concepts of transformation, gender camouflage, and the importance of individual and collective identities outlined in previous chapters to female warrior heroes in popular culture, in order to assess if and how representations of gender and the gendered body have been altered.

The texts I examine in this chapter emanate from the United States. Although Australia has a strong cinematic tradition that deals with the ANZAC legend and the experiences of war, there has been almost no examination of the roles of women on the battlefield. The emphasis on the 'real' experience of historical conflicts has also meant that there have been few mainstream Australian texts that construct 'speculative' warriors through whom a re-visioning of gendered soldier identity may be possible.[1]

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[1] There have been some exceptions to this in children's culture. The series *Thunderstone* (the first season of which screened on Channel 10 in 1998) is notable for the character Arushka, played by Mereoni Vuki, who leads a gang of children, the Nomads, against a tyrant and rival gangs of adolescents who control the mining of the valuable mineral Thunderstone. She is, however, secondary to the scientific wiz kid Noah, played by Jeffrey Walker, who arrives from a different time and helps to free the Nomads. A fascinating example in children's literature is the main character Ellie in John Marsden's young adult series of novels *Tomorrow when the War Began*, the first of which was published in 1993. In this scenario Australia is invaded by an undisclosed enemy, and Ellie and a group of her friends wage a form of guerrilla warfare against the invaders. Ellie is undeniably a (if not

In this light however, it is important to consider the possibility from the outset that *all* soldier-bodies are actually speculative: the symbolism of the impenetrable body that has formed such an important part of my discussion of soldier identity in previous chapters is just one example of the ways in which the mythical cloaks the material body. The aspects of the social construction of femininity that are utilized to exclude all women from combat regardless of individual capacity and hypothetically to include all men, is another example of the ways in which an ideal has been constructed – a speculative soldier body.

Most of the texts I deal with here are what could be termed 'speculative', even those that are somewhat 'realistic'. The more fantastic texts in which the female warrior hero has gained prominence, such as the *Alien* movies and *Mulan* in the cinema, and *Xena Warrior Princess* and *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* on television, often open up broader possibilities for examining the politics of gender than more realistic texts. Karen Hall makes an important observation to this effect in her examination of the relationship between Hollywood and history. Her argument is supported by her comparison of seemingly dissimilar texts like *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), Steven Spielberg's epic World War II story, and *Small Soldiers* (1998) a film ostensibly about children's action figures implanted with intelligence chips originally designed to be used by the military, who come to life and wage war on one another and the humans who just happen to get in the way. Hall uses *Small Soldiers* to discuss post-Vietnam anxieties about undefinable enemies, the 'domestication' of war through the media of television and toys, and the perceived threats of globalization. She argues that speculative constructions of militarized masculinity, such as those depicted in *Small Soldiers*, can often be more effective than those in more 'historically' based texts like *Saving Private Ryan*:

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the) leader of this group of teen-terrorists, and she is also the scribe appointed to record their experiences.

> As I have interpreted it, *Small Soldiers* is a film about masculine anxiety and the changing face of the workplace and the military. This masculine anxiety has been projected into the realm of a feminized filmic genre – an animated children's film.[2]

Speculative televisual and cinematic texts then, often lay bare the gender constructions that are not so easily discerned in 'serious' or 'realistic' drama. Indeed the historical film, with all its appeals to telling the 'true' story, attempts to mask the performative aspects of gender construction. While texts that can be categorized as fantastic, or as children's stories, are more easily dismissed as being 'not important', it is in these texts that spaces are opened up for a more in-depth analysis of gender constructions.

The female warrior-heroes who appear in Western popular culture in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries must all be viewed as speculative regardless of whether they appear in the realms of the fantastic such as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, or portray a more realistic military character such as Karen Walden in *Courage Under Fire* (1995) and Jordan O'Neil in *G.I. Jane* (1997), since in the 'real' world women in the United States and many other western countries are never 'officially' in combat.[3] While women have played prominent roles in the U.S. Navy, and there has been controversy over the capacity of women to fly combat planes, and controversy too over whether or not women should be permitted on ships that are officially in combat zones. There has never been a woman allowed

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[2] Karen J Hall, "*Small Soldiers*: History or Hollywood?", lecture given at Syracuse University, 11 March 1999, http://web.syr.edu/~kjhall/texts/mpn.htm, accessed 19 May 2001.

[3] The representation of the deaths of military women has shifted in the recent conflict in Iraq. The death of Pfc Lori Piestewa has been described as a 'combat death' by the military and in the media, despite the fact that she was not in a combat role. This is a huge shift from the way women and combat were represented in Panama and the Gulf War in 1990/91. Piestewa has also received much attention for being the first Native American servicewoman killed in combat. See for example, Mary Mitchell, "Brave Women Soldiers Proved They Belong", *Chicago Sun-Times*, 15/04/03, http:www.suntimes.com/output/Mitchell/cst-news-mitch15.html, Accessed 16/04/03; "Key Developments: Day 18. Tanks Roll Through Baghdad; Officials Name First U.S. Servicewoman Killed in Combat", *Chicago Tribune* (online edition), 06/04/03, http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/iraq/chi-0304060266apr06,0,6606488 Accessed 10/04/03.

to enter the elite combat arm of the U.S. Navy, the Navy SEALS, nor is there likely to be in the immediate future. This makes the premise and outcomes of the 1998 Ridley Scott film *G.I. Jane* speculative, despite the film appearing to be more realistic than the Disney animated feature film *Mulan* (1998) which was released a short time after *G.I. Jane*. Similarly there has never been a woman awarded a Congressional Medal of Honor for combat,[4] and women were not 'officially' in combat during operation Desert Storm which therefore renders the 1995 film *Courage Under Fire* more speculative than not.[5] It is important to realize that if films like those in the *Rambo* series can be read as belonging to the body of work that relates to the Vietnam War, and the post-Vietnam reconstruction of military (and militarized) masculinity, then despite the placement of texts like *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* in genres which deal with the fantastic, they can and must be read alongside more 'realistic' texts which construct soldier identities. John Rambo's (Sylvester Stallone's) body is no more or less 'real' than that of Jordan O'Neil's (Demi Moore's) in *G.I. Jane* or that of the diminutive Sarah Michelle Gellar (Buffy) in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. They are all speculative bodies.

Therefore, a number of cinematic and televisual texts are examined in this chapter. The cinematic texts range from the fantastic and futuristic worlds of the *Alien* and *Terminator* films, to the Disney animated fantasy of *Mulan*, to the more 'real' representations of *Courage Under Fire* and *G.I. Jane*. Both of the latter two films are important as they attempt to deal in direct and indirect ways with the problems of access, equity and

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[4] In fact throughout U.S. history there has only been one woman awarded a Congressional Medal of Honor and that was Dr Mary Walker during the Civil War – this medal was not awarded for combat. In fact her having received the honour has not been uncontested. While Dr Walker wore the medal on her lapel throughout the rest of her lifetime, the War Department reported in 1917 to have no record of the award and removed her name from the rolls. Dr Walker was also very well known for having adopted masculine dress and for having founded "The Mutual Dress Reform and Equal Rights Association" during the middle of the nineteenth century. Marjorie Garber notes that Walker's adoption of the masculine mode of attire hindered her progress as a reform worker and often led to her being held up for ridicule. See Marjorie Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety*, Routledge, 1992, pp.54-55.

[5] More details on both these films will be discussed below.

prejudice faced by women in the military. They also reveal the issues raised in representing these women in the news-media, and they both continue many of the problems that recur in attempting to tell the stories of women-soldiers.

In many ways television, rather than cinema, has been a medium better suited to the reinterpretation of gender constructions that the female warrior-hero stimulates. The episodic nature of the television series also allows for much more in-depth character and plot development, and therefore a fuller exploration of the gender issues that changing the sex of the warrior-hero entails. Where cinematic heroes like Ripley and Sarah Connor burst onto the large screen and make an immediate impact, the deeper cultural implications of the female warrior-hero are often either diluted or ignored in the cinema in part as a result of the time constraints of the feature film as a medium.

It is for this reason that a number of important films are anlysed here, the main focus in the second section of this chapter is a case study of one television programme which had its seventh and final season in 2003 – *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (*BTVS*). *BTVS* is important for a number of reasons, one being it's seven season duration on television, and others relate to the ways in which the creators and writers of the show have overtly toyed with the construction of masculine strength and militarized heroism. A detailed discussion of this programme, including a close textual analysis, makes up the second section of this chapter. Much of the detail is included for readers who may not be familiar with the text, but most detail relates to the ways in which *BTVS* works as a text which seeks to create alternative gendered representations within the boundaries of mainstream television. If, as Hall established, a 'feminized filmic genre' like children's fantasy has enabled the clear expression of anxieties about (military) masculinity, then the domestic medium of television further blurs the

gender binaries that have upheld the dominance of masculine soldier identity.

Television and many television formats are considered to be 'feminized', as the examples in the previous chapter of the incorporation of melodrama into the Gulf War narrative indicate. The position of the television as apparatus within the domestic realm means that the medium is spatially feminized as well, and this is often replicated on the sets where the female warrior is depicted. Much of the action of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* centres around Buffy's home – her bedroom, living room and kitchen - and her unsuccessful attempts at keeping her home separate from her life as the Slayer. It is just as impossible to demarcate domestic space as private, safe, and hence feminized on television as it is in the 'real' space that a television set might occupy. It is in and through the feminized space of television, and the places television is viewed, that the female warrior hero has entered the pop-culture vernacular, and if not blown apart then at least seriously toyed with the conventions that govern the gendered warrior.

Is the strength of the female warrior hero lessened because she appears in a feminized medium? Or is this ultimately the space of subversion and therefore a potential place where the power of gendered representations can be turned upside down and inside out? The strict demarcation between home front and battle front is also disrupted by television and the way in which war enters the domestic space through this medium. Television coverage of the Vietnam War altered public perceptions of foreign policy and enabled the questioning of the concept of the 'just war' upon which American national identity is dependent through a process of 'regeneration through violence'.[6] Television coverage helped to create the perception of the Gulf War as a clean war, and brought to prominence the activities of military women. In the process, television has also encouraged women as consumers of war. War has become a

[6] See discussion of Richard Slotkin's thesis in Chapter Four.

commodity, a programme to be viewed in the private spaces of the home. Increased numbers of women viewers and the greater visual prominence of military women have affected the demand for a re-envisioning of the gendered warrior hero, and the numbers of female warriors who have been depicted on the small screen since the middle of the 1990s.

Mothers, Monsters and the Military – Film and the Female Warrior Hero

The ascendancy of the male action hero during the 1970s and 1980s coincided with the increased emphasis on recruiting women into the military in the United States, the influence of second wave feminism politically and culturally, and an increased demand for stronger female characters in film and on television.[7] However, cultural commentators such as Susan Jeffords and James William Gibson have both questioned the extent to which arming the women has changed the power dynamic represented by military masculinity and the hypermasculinity of the militarized action hero like Rambo. Susan Jeffords has stated that despite the great potential war stories have for the deconstruction of gender representations, the cinematic female warrior who emerged in the guise of Ripley in the *Alien* films and Sarah Connor in *Terminator 2* does not disrupt the potency of masculine warrior identity but rather merely mimics it.[8] James William Gibson concurs, seeing these characters as a part of the post-Vietnam paramilitary movement and the soldier fighting the 'New War'. A number of features distinguish the soldiers in the 'New War' from pre-Vietnam warriors and these are what enabled the new warrior to strike a chord with the broader male population:

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[7] Yvonne Tasker, *Spectacular Bodies: Gender, Genre and the Action Cinema*, Routledge, London & New York, 1993, p.15. It is often difficult to separate the demand for stronger female characters that resulted partly from second wave feminism, and the devices used to minimse their impact in response to the potential threat second wave feminism posed to hegemonic gender relations. Tasker discusses this in relation to action heroes in *Spectacular Bodies* and in *Working Girls: Gender and Sexuality in Popular Cinema*, Routledge, London & New York, 1998. Sherry Inness makes a similar examination in *Tough Girls: Women Warriors and Wonder Women in Popular Culture*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1999 particularly in relation to the 'sex appeal' of characters like *Charlies Angels* which appeared on American television during the 1970s.
[8] Susan Jeffords, "Telling the War Story", in Stiehm (ed.), *It's Our Military Too*, p.229.

> The New War culture was not so much military as paramilitary. The new warrior hero was only occasionally portrayed as a member of a conventional military or law enforcement unit; typically, he fought alone or with a small, elite group of fellow warriors. Moreover, by separating the warrior from his traditional state-sanctioned occupations – policeman or soldier – the New War culture presented the warrior role as the ideal identity for *all* men. Bankers, professors, factory workers, and postal clerks could all transcend their regular stations in life and prepare for heroic battle against the enemies of society.[9]

Gibson stresses the isolation of the warrior in the 'New War', but simultaneously emphasises his connection to the broader male population. Similarly Gibson sees the female warrior-hero who emerged in the same time frame as being a part of this paramilitary culture, and closely resembling rather than undermining, masculine warrior identity. After interviewing a number of editors, writers and directors of war narratives which form a part of the construction of the 'New Warrior', Gibson came to the following conclusion on the rarity of the heroic woman warrior in the New War:

> Only three have appeared in recent years: the Sigourney Weaver character who battles space monsters in *Alien* (1979) and *Aliens* (1986); the Jodie Foster character … in *Silence of the Lambs* (1991); and, in *Terminator 2* (1991), Linda Hamilton's character...One well known novel editor simply said, "I think women want to have men as heroes, and men want to have men as heroes."
>
> And that's exactly what they get. The women in the three films mentioned are strikingly similar to male New War heroes. If anything, they are hypermasculine. Women warriors avoid romantic or erotic relationships with men, even more than male warriors avoid serious relationships with women. Linda Hamilton in *Terminator 2* is so obsessed with fighting the enemy that she is even distracted from caring for her son. A New Warrior, regardless of genitalia, is obviously incapable of sustaining serious relationships outside the war zone. Thus, although these films portray women as powerful,

[9] Gibson, *Warrior Dreams*, p. 9.

> they maintain a strict gender dichotomy between those who fight the enemy and those who nurture, love, or have a distinct erotic presence. These warrior women are as one-dimensional as the men they replace. The difference is only superficial: their presence does not significantly change the basic mythology. After all, they fight the same villains, the same insatiable exit.[10]

What Gibson does not take into account is the ways in which these women are constructed as aberrant. Ripley is rarely seen in the company of other women, and her 'take charge', no nonsense attitudes and her professionalism, in the first film *Alien* (1979) makes her initially appear unfeeling, and hence unfeminine. Her responses are different to those of her only other female colleague Lambert who in contrast is shown to be weaker and more prone to hysteria. While there are female marines present in the second film *Aliens* (1986), Ripley is separated from them, initially by virtue of her position as a civilian advisor, but also by class and racial differentiation. The most visible of the female marines, Vasquez, is Hispanic and butch in comparison to the more feminine and heterosexual Ripley (who Vasquez initially denigrates by calling her 'Snow White'). Vasquez is always 'one of the boys', while Ripley remains alone despite her heterosexual coupling with the only surviving male marine. Sarah Connor in *Terminator 2*, is similarly isolated. She hones her fighting abilities in an insane asylum, separated from her son and from the rest of the population.[11] In the narrative between the first and second films, Sarah Connor has been sanctioned for her difference and her refusal to comply

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[10] James William Gibson, *Warrior Dreams*, pp.63-64.

[11] That Sarah Connor ends up in an insane asylum for not complying with the norms of mainstream femininity can be seen as representing a long tradition of isolating women who cannot be 'good' and constructing them instead as 'mad'. The storyline of this film vindicates Sarah Connor's actions, thereby appearing to veer away from this tradition, but ultimately she is still depicted as unstable. She is unable to kill the scientist who is responsible for the post-apocalyptic future her son was born to save instead breaking down in tears, and ultimately she is rescued by a machine who is identical to the terminator sent from the future to kill her in the first film. For works that examine the dynamic of representing non-conformist women as insane, and the ways in which this perpetuates patriarchal gender-order see Jill Julius Matthews, *Good and Mad Women: The Historical Construction of Femininity in Twentieth-Century Australia*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1984; Phyllis Chesler, *Women and Madness*, Allen Lane, London, 1974.

with norms of a passive, and peaceful, femininity.[12] She is 'punished' for not being like other women by the head psychiatrist's refusal to allow her to see her son, and in a sexual assault inflicted on her by an orderly after she has been put in restraints following a violent outburst. Sarah Connor's subversion of models of the maternal and sexualised feminine bodies are both punished corporeally: she is isolated, restrained and sexually violated in a reminder of the place her body should occupy in the patriarchal power structures of the asylum, and the world, in which she lives.

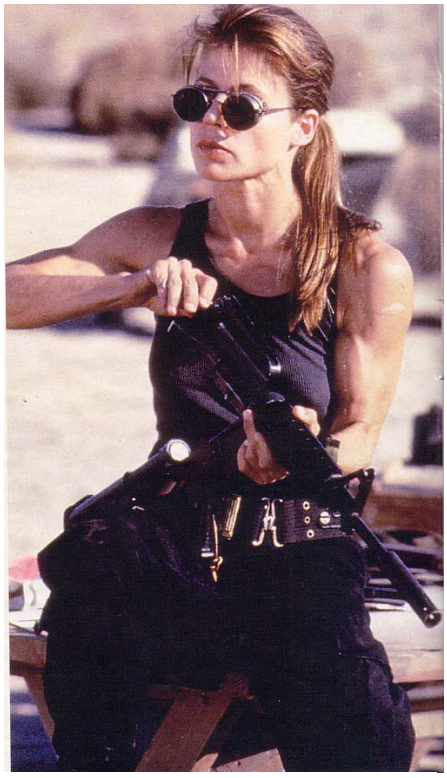

Figure 12 Sarah Connor checking her weapons. Her muscular physique in the film distances her from her soft appearance in the first film. [James Cameron (Dir),*Terminator 2*, 1991.]

There has been no attempt to connect these women to the broader female population, unlike the ways in which masculine warrior identity is presented as open to *all* men. Every man in the military, regardless of his actual occupational specialty, has access to the culture of the warrior partly as a result of the concurrence between constructions of masculinity and professionalism. Martial identity forges a connection between the warrior and *all* men, which means that even if the warrior is operating outside institutional boundaries – like Rambo - he may still be seen as professional. The female warrior is always constructed as existing in isolation from institutions and other women. The mantle of professionalism that may slowly assist in the assimilation and ascendancy of military women is not one that easily coexists with constructions of

[12] A new *Terminator* film has been released in July 2003 in which the terminator itself is female. It is going to be interesting to see how the character of the killing machine is different through this change in sex.

femininity.[13] The female warrior hero in popular culture is more likely to be constructed as *un*professional as a means of differentiating her from military men. While this is not true for Ripley, it has been utilised in the construction of Sarah Connor and of Karen Walden in *Courage Under Fire*.[14] The isolation of the female warrior hero is a major difference that should not be discounted.

While there are similarities between characters such as Ripley and Rambo, they are not interchangeable, and their impacts must be seen to be different partly as a result of the different relationships constructions of masculinity and femininity have to individual and collective identities.[15] The characterization of Ripley in the first *Alien* film, complicates these relationships and appears, at first glance, to add weight to the arguments of Jeffords and Gibson. Ripley's character was initially intended to be male, and the script is unique in having constructed the character such that it could be played by either a man or a woman.[16] James H. Kavanagh reads *Alien* as a feminist text, from the perspective of the equality with which all the characters are treated regardless of their sex, but acknowledges the problem the film has with representations of race, and class.

> … *Alien* operates as a feminist statement on a symbolic level that avoids both the trivializing, empiricist condemnation of men … and the puritanical condemnation of sexuality and sexual attraction.…There are strong and weak women and men on the ship, but the woman's right to assume authority is not even an issue; authority and power are ceded to persons irrespective of sex, solely in regard to their position and function. The way the film takes for granted Ripley's assumption of command, her right to order and even shove men around, registers strongly as the absence of an unexpected problematic.…*Alien*

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[13] See Chapters Two and Four.
[14] See below.
[15] See Chapter Two.
[16] Danny Peary interview with Sigourney Weaver, "Playing Ripley in *Alien*' in Danny Peary (ed.), *OMNI's Screen Flights/Screen Fantasies: The Future According to Science Fiction Cinema*, Doubleday, New York, 1984, p.162.

> presents an image of an autonomous woman who has perfectly reasonable relations with men at all levels and who finds her most effective ally in a black male worker (with whom she is not sexually involved), even while she increasingly assumes the necessity of making her own stand…[17]

The acknowledgement of Ripley as a feminist hero emphasizes her difference from her hyper-muscular male contemporaries and separates her from the hypersexualised heroines who dominated small and large screen alike at the time. Readings that emphasise the feminism inherent in Ripley's heroism in this first film also illustrate that, despite a role having been written to be played by either a man or a woman, if a woman plays the part, the character – and the text as a whole – must be read differently. The visible construction of a female warrior hero on screen must inflect the asexual scripting with the politics of representing the gendered body, and affect how s/he is interpreted.

Kavanagh also argues that the much criticized scene in which Ripley appears in her underwear toward the climax of the film, does not in fact undermine the feminist ideologies that seem to underpin the rest of the text. In his opinion, the near-nudity is not gratuitous, nor is it explicit in relation to the ways in which other cinematic texts deal with women's bodies and sexuality. In considering this issue, the question must be considered, whether the impact or interpretation of this scene would differ had Ripley actually been cast as a man? It should also be noted that on a purely visual level, Ripley wears very functional underwear. She does not wear a g-string, or lacy underpants with matching bra, rather she appears in what looks like cotton briefs and a matching singlet top.[18] If in the final scenes a male version of Ripley had disrobed, believing himself finally to

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[17] James H. Kavanagh, "Feminism, Humanism and Science in *Alien*", in Annette Kuhn, (ed), *Alien Zone: Cultural Theory and Contemporary Science Fiction Cinema*, Verso, London & New York, 1990, p.77.

[18] The 'sex appeal' of functional underwear should not be summarily dismissed, however. This is exemplified through the promotion of cotton underwear following Nicole Kidman's performance in the Stanley Kubrick film *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999). Perhaps the important thing to consider here, is that regardless of the genre, women's underwear acts as a veil fetishizing the female body.

be safe, would there have been any question as to the impact of his heroism throughout the film? Displays of a half naked John Rambo, emphasizing his biceps and chest, do not arguably detract from his hyper-masculinity, or his capacity as a warrior. Gibson acknowledges the connection between the ferocity of a wild animal and the half-nakedness of the action hero, an explicit construction of connections between the 'natural' warrior and masculinity.[19] Yvonne Tasker makes a similar point in discussing the action heroes of the 1980s like John Rambo, but further elaborates this in terms of constructions of race and the penetrability of the masculine body. The display of the coloured body is associated with wild animals as Gibson asserts, and with the hypersexualization that is so crucial to white constructions of black masculinity, and the way in which this masculinity can be trivialized. The display of the naked white male body (even if it is not completely white, like the characterization of Rambo as part Apache Indian), and the ways in which it has been scarred can be associated with Christian traditions of 'martyrdom and sacrifice'.[20]

However, the display of the near-naked female body is not used to enhance the abilities of the female warrior-hero. As Sherrie Inness has pointed out in her analysis of the 'toughness' of women in popular culture (with particular reference to Ripley in *Alien*) the display of the partially naked male body is a device to emphasize the power of the masculine warrior, representations of the unclothed female body emphasize sexuality – and vulnerability.[21] The depictions of Ripley in her underwear do just these things, moving her away from the strength and discipline of the actions that have led to her being the sole survivor of the crew of the *Nostromo* and shift her character back within the margins of traditional on-screen heterosexual femininity.

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[19] Gibson, *Warrior Dreams*, p.107.
[20] Tasker, *Spectacular Bodies*, p.39. For other associations between the white male body and Christianity as opposed to the sexual physicality of the non-white male body see Dyer, *White*.
[21] Inness, *Tough Girls*, p. 107.

Gibson is also in error when he claims that the female warrior hero avoids erotic or romantic contact with other characters and in his assumptions concerning the lack of emotion they display. As Inness has pointed out, one of the differences between Ripley and Rambo is that Ripley,

> lacks the expressionless immobile quality that characterizes Rambo, the Terminator and many other tough guys. Her face registers fear, anxiety and horror. Because she is a woman, she is depicted as showing a great range of emotion, affirming her femininity.[22]

So here we see that yet another means of inscribing womanhood onto the female warrior hero is expression and emotion, both traditional aspects of feminine behaviour, and yet another indicator that changing the sex of the warrior does affect the politics of representing gender. Other absences from the arguments of Gibson concern his failure to consider the position of the audience and the gendered gaze when discussing the lack of erotic potential of the female warrior hero (and the male warrior-hero for that matter),[23] and his lack of attention paid to the transitions and transformations both Ripley and Sarah Connor underwent within each film, and between each film and its sequels.

The feminist potential of the character Ripley, then, has often been seen as having been undermined through the display of her near-naked and vulnerable body in final scenes of the first film *Alien* (1979). The female warrior hero in many ways defies Laura Mulvey's thesis about the passivity of portrayals of femininity and the ways in which women in classic Hollywood cinema are constructed as objects of the male gaze.[24] *Alien* in its portrayal of equality aboard the *Nostromo* and in the lone survival of Ripley certainly appears to rehearse this defiance. However, this does not

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[22] Sherrie A. Inness, *Tough Girls*, p.111.
[23] For discussions of the potential eroticism of the male action hero see Tasker, *Spectacular Bodies*, p. 115; Steve Neale, "Masculinity as Spectacle", *Screen* v.24, no. 6, pp. 2-16.
[24] Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema".

mean cinematic texts do not employ devices that rein in the subversive potential of the female warrior hero. The eroticism of the half naked Ripley is one example of how her potential to undermine heterosexual patriarchal gender orders is minimized.[25] That Ripley can appear naked and vulnerable and still triumph over her alien adversary, despite the appeal to traditional modes of looking at the eroticised female body must, however, complicate any attempt to code this character as conventionally feminine. Elizabeth Hills has argued that characters like Ripley, Sarah Connor, and Rebecca from *Tank Girl* cannot be "appreciated via habitual readings or conventional theoretical modes which claim to know in advance what female bodies are capable of doing".[26] Hills, while acknowledging the importance of feminist psychoanalytic frameworks in paving the way to understanding representations of gender in mainstream film, utilises the female cinematic warrior to attempt to move away from underlying gender binaries that define such paradigms. These characters are both female and heroic; to argue that they can only "be read as phallic and therefore figuratively male, or as eroticized"[27] ignores the transformative potential of constructions of femininity, and denies the possibility of real, or speculative, female heroism.

These representational strategies and tensions within gender constructions should not be considered only within the context of cinema. As I have pointed out in previous chapters, the sexualisation of the female soldier has been both necessary to the maintenance of the appearance of heterosexual masculine dominance in the military and a means of trivializing the contributions of female military personnel. That women who join the armed forces may be 'masculinized' or no longer be seen to be

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[25] Interestingly the eroticising of the female body in combat potentially undermines the potency of these representations, where according to Tasker and Neale combat can be seen as a way of displacing the eroticism of the male body thus mitigating the penetrative potential of the homoerotic gaze. See Tasker, *Spectacular Bodies*, p. 115; Neale, "Masculinity as Spectacle".

[26] Elizabeth Hills, "From 'Figurative Males' to Action Heroines: Further Thoughts on Active Women in the Cinema", *Screen*, v.40, No 1, Spring 1999, p.39.

[27] Hills, "From 'Figurative Males' to Action Heroines", p.42.

'real women' has historically been used to threaten those women who have made the decision to serve in the military, and simultaneously threatened the heterosexual masculine hierarchy that is so dependent upon immediate visual recognition of gender difference. Women must be recognizable as women, whether or not they carry guns, both in mainstream cinema and in the military and this causes much of the contradiction and tension inherent in models of female warrior identity.

The second and third *Alien* films depict great changes in the way Ripley's gender identity is portrayed, just as there is a great transformation in Sarah Connor between the first and second *Terminator* films. The gender equality enacted in the first *Alien* film, and the cold reserve with which Ripley comports herself, and upon which Gibson bases his analysis, are diluted in the sequels. Ripley's femininity is heightened through two devices in *Aliens* – her obvious heterosexual attraction and budding relationship with Corporal Hicks, and the construction of Ripley as a mother: both to a little girl she expresses regret at having left behind when she undertook the first mission in the first film (as we are told in the second film) and who has become an old woman in the between time due to Ripley being in suspended animation and her ship being lost for 54 years; and to Newt, a little girl who manages to survive the decimation of her home and family when a remote space colony is attacked and destroyed by monstrous aliens. The use of maternal feelings to justify violent behaviour is a common one in the construction of feminine aggression – there is no-one so violent as a mother protecting her young. Ripley is also made to resemble the monster through the use of this trope – a monstrous mother protecting her offspring.[28]

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[28] The Alien is undeniably coded as female, and there has been much written about the ways in which these films illustrate Barbara Creed's principle of the 'monstrous feminine'. See Barbara Creed, "*Alien* and the Monstrous Feminine", in Annette Kuhn (ed), *Alien Zone*, pp.129-141. When I saw *Aliens* for the first time as a teenager, I remember being shocked and admiring that Ripley had used language that directly referred to the monster as female. In the final fight scene, Ripley has donned a hydraulic exoskeleton of sorts, normally used for lifting heavy cargo. The monster threatens Newt and Ripley fights it saying "Get away from her you bitch!". By the fourth film *Alien Resurrection*, in a

In the film *Terminator 2* the trope of motherhood is also used to explain Sarah Connor's violent behaviour and her inability to play the passive woman the doctors at the insane asylum want her to be. Sarah Connor has trained in guerrilla warfare and terrorist tactics, and trains her body even in hospital, in order to protect her son from the machines from the future sent to destroy him.[29] As Yvonne Tasker points out, while the female action hero may be as 'placeless' as male action hero, ultimately she is marginalized and sacrificed to (and by) the norms of society.[30] Tasker sees a conflict between Sarah Connor's status as an action hero and her role as a mother, and this conflict is partly the reason Connor ends up in an insane asylum. Connor has taken her role as mother to extremes, resulting in behaviour that is not acceptably 'feminine'. Thus, while motherhood is used to minimize her transgressive appearance, her maternal behaviour is well outside the bounds usually associated with the trope of motherhood.

Depictions of female soldiers are often articulated through traditional constructions of motherhood. The arguments that have kept women out of the armed forces and arguments used by pacifist feminists such as Sara Ruddick,[31] often hinge on these constructions: how can someone who has given birth to a child, go out and kill other women's children? Or, if we look back at some of the arguments posed during the Second World War, how can we train future mothers to use guns and to kill? The number of women who left young families behind during the Gulf War in 1991, partly as a result of the unprecedented numbers of reserves called up to serve, was used by both the media and the armed forces to

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fascinating twist, Ripley has become "the monster's mother" as scientists have mixed her DNA with that of the alien and cloned them both in various combinations, in the effort to produce the ultimate military weapon/soldier.

[29] It is interesting that both *Aliens* and the *Terminator* movies were directed by James Cameron, and in both the motherhood trope has been pervasive, firmly placing the female warrior within the realms of constructions of femininity and undermining the transgressive potential the female warrior hero embodies.

[30] Yvonne Tasker, *Spectacular Bodies*, p.27.

[31] See Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking*. See also Sara Ruddick, "Towards a Feminist Peace Politics", in Cooke & Woolacott (eds), *Gendering War Talk*, pp. 109-127.

affirm the heterosexuality and 'normalcy' of the female soldier. It was also used by the media and conservative opponents of women in the military to criticize women being called to arms – how could these women leave their children behind? Carol Stabile discusses these patterns of representation that surrounded the "Mom's War" (the Gulf War) and which stem from the traditional Western notion that women are a part of the must-be-protected group that makes chivalric protection narratives possible – unless they are alone and their children must be protected.[32] Stabile opens her chapter on the Gulf War recognizing the coincidence present in the high profile of military women during the Gulf War, and debates around women and violence that were enflamed by *Terminator 2* and *Thelma and Louise*, films which were both released in the summer of 1990 during the escalation of the Gulf War. However, while making this connection, she does not explicitly analyse these film within the same parameters as the later news-media representations of servicewomen. While acknowledging the questions that were raised that inferred that Sarah Connor was behaving 'just like a man', Stabile's analysis does not extend to the ways in which the character reveals the tensions inherent in paradigms of the gendered warrior (some of which are discussed above). It is an interesting coincidence that the film, which was a huge box office hit as the Gulf War was commencing, relied so heavily upon tropes of motherhood in order to 'normalize' the transgressive warrior behaviour of Sarah Connor.

Tropes of motherhood and maternal sacrifice were also used in one of the only cinematic texts which dealt with the Gulf War, *Courage Under Fire* (1996).[33] The war that was so dominated by images of military women but which also supposedly rectified the problem of the Vietnam War for American culture and people, is represented cinematically in a film that deals with two of the messier issues the military has had to face: women in combat and friendly fire (i.e., American personnel being killed

[32] See Stabile, *Feminism and the Technological Fix*, pp. 107-115.
[33] *Courage Under Fire*, and *The Three Kings*, are the only two Hollywood films that depict the Gulf War. Just like the cinematic reconstruction of the Vietnam conflict, there is no comment on the political situations that led to the war.

accidentally, by their own troops). *Courage Under Fire* depicts the investigation undertaken in order to verify whether or not Captain Karen Walden (Meg Ryan) deserves to be posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for combat after she is killed during Operation Desert Storm. If this occurs, she will be the first woman ever to be honoured in this way. As previously discussed, no woman has ever been awarded this medal for combat. This basic plot premise raises an extremely important issue surrounding women in the military: such women blur the boundaries between what is and what is not considered to be combat. Captain Walden is a medivac pilot, flying helicopters to bring medical aid to troops in the field. Officially, during the Gulf War, this was not a combat role but rather was classified as combat support.[34] Therefore to award this medal to a woman for bravery in combat would be to officially acknowledge how arbitrary the distinction between combat and combat support roles often is and to have to acknowledge the ways in which this distinction has been used to maintain gender demarcation within the military.

The investigation of Captain Walden's fitness to be awarded the medal is undertaken by Lieutenant Colonel Nat Sterling (Denzel Washington). The Pentagon and its public relations team essentially appear to want a rubber stamp on this investigation, sensing the positive publicity it would generate. It is at this point, also, that the speculative nature of the film is reiterated, as the debates regarding combat and combat support would have continued to rage if this decision had been undertaken at the time. None of this is even alluded to in the course of the film. Instead the emphasis lies with the photo opportunity provided by Captain Walden's young daughter accepting the medal on her mother's behalf. Lt. Colonel Sterling is fighting his own demons regarding an incident that occurred whereby he ordered his tank to fire on what he thought was the enemy and

[34] The blurred lines between combat and combat support have been discussed in detail in Chapters One and Two. Nurses have always represented the ways in which the battlefield cannot be seen to be free of women, and medivac pilots can be seen as an extension of this selective blindness in terms of women *not* being in combat.

instead hits one of the other tanks under his command, killing all the men inside. He feels the incident is being whitewashed by his superiors at the Pentagon, complicating the guilt he feels for being responsible for the deaths of his own men. His own feelings of responsibility led him to undertake an investigation of unsanctioned close scrutiny into Captain Walden. This investigation leads Sterling to interview the surviving men from Walden's command, each of whom provides a different version of the story of Walden's actions – and her death. The final outcome of Sterling's detective work reveals a brave woman who died as a result of the insubordination of her crew and the threats she makes to have at least one of them court-martialled for mutiny when they refuse to obey her orders during a fire-fight. When the helicopter crew are rescued they leave the wounded Captain Walden behind and do not tell their rescuers she is still alive. The rescue team then napalm the area, effectively murdering Walden and silencing her damaging testimony.

Throughout the course of this film, we see flashbacks of Walden playing with her daughter and training and graduating as an officer. We do not see her in the company of other military women, or indeed any other women – apart from her daughter who appears to be six or seven years old. While being the first woman to be awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for Combat, Walden is singled out from the rest of the women in the U.S. armed forces. Her depictions in isolation do not indicate that perhaps she will be the first of many but serve rather to reinforce the singular way in which representations of women in combat have been constructed. While the trope of motherhood acts to connect Karen Walden to traditional constructions of femininity, her command of an all-male unit, the lack of any other depictions of women in her rank or occupation, and the alternate depictions of Lt. Col. Sterling's civilian wife (doing laundry, cooking and looking after children), and female, military, administrative support (whom we see serving coffee and inquiring as to Sterling's well-being), serve to separate Walden from other women – and other soldiers.

The narrative structure of *Courage Under Fire* consists of a number of re-tellings of the series of events that led to Captain Walden's death from the viewpoints of the surviving men who were under her command. All of these reconstructions of Walden's story take place after we see Sterling's disastrous tank mission in the Middle East and are punctuated by his re-examination of the events in his own story. This has the effect of making Captain Walden's story a secondary narrative. This is particularly interesting when considered in light of the ways in which U.S. servicewomen were used as human interest stories to divert attention from materials to which the press did not have ready access during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.[35] The public relations potential of Walden's medal can be interpreted as a tactic to divert attention from the issue of friendly fire – despite the fact that she too, was the victim of one of her own men's bullets. *Courage Under Fire* mimics the ways in which the media functioned during the Gulf War and the ways in which the Gulf War has been characterised as a product of media interpellation. Walden's story is layered, as is the treatment of the events that haunt Sterling, but both stories are overshadowed by what is deemed good public relations for the Pentagon and the United States.

Another aspect of the ways these stories are told is that Sterling's story is recounted as his own where the events surrounding Walden's life and death are all told from the perspective of others. A range of people discuss and dissect Karen Walden's character and her actions, from her parents to the men in her command, who seek to cover up the circumstances of her death and their responsibility for her demise. Walden never has a voice of her own, her story is always mediated, always a construction for the consumption of others right down to the President hanging the ribbon around her daughter's neck when the medal is finally

[35] As discussed in the previous chapter.

awarded. Phyllis Lassner posted a response to the film to the H-Minverva discussion list to this effect, and saliently added:

> Since much of the case on the female hero is conducted through flashbacks…it would have been all too easy to also show flashbacks of her speaking intelligently to other adults, to other professionals.[36]

The isolation of the female warrior does not permit this, and the mediation of Walden's story contributes to the 'unreality' of narratives of women and combat.

Despite the apparent attention to issues surrounding women in combat, Ilene Rose Feinman also comments on the centrality of the narrative surrounding Sterling. Feinman's analysis points to the ways in which the heroes of both narratives in *Courage Under Fire* can be seen as flawed, and the way in which these flaws are marked through their marginal status: Sterling is black, and Walden is a woman.[37] An extension of Feinman's insight into the ways in which non-white soldier-identities are portrayed as flawed would be the examination of Sgt. Monfriez played by Lou Diamond Phillips. The soldier who initially depicts Walden as weak, a cry-baby, a hopeless commander under pressure, and is later revealed to have been insubordinate and responsible for accidentally shooting Walden, is Hispanic. It is Monfriez who tells the rescue team there are no more survivors on the ground leading to the napalm bombing of the area.

Depictions of non-white servicemen as being those most threatened by women in combat are also present in the 1997 film *G. I. Jane*. In this film the potential SEAL recruit who gives Jordan O'Neil the most trouble is also a Latino male, Sergeant Cortez. Feinman analyses *G.I. Jane* as a film that, while challenging some of the masculinism inherent in military

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[36] Phyllis Lassner of the Women's Studies Department at Northwestern University posting to H-Minerva Discussion List on the subject of *Courage Under Fire*, 31/07/1996, http://www2.h-net.msu.edu/~minerva/archives/threads/courage.html, Accessed 15/01/03.
[37] Feinman, *Citizenship Rites*, pp. 208-209.

tradition, fails to address issues of race treating them as if they have been solved. She questions: "The women in this story are all white. All the blacks are men. Where are the brave?"[38] In both films "unreconstructed machismo"[39] is presented as a part of the character of men from Hispanic backgrounds. Perhaps the inference here is that white women are not a threat to white men: they are more socially 'evolved' than men from non-white backgrounds and this means they can accept the achievements of women for what they are. Or perhaps they are so exalted that the achievements of white women can never put a dent in the armour of the white male warrior?

The nuances of race and gender are further evident in the display of Sergeant Monfriez's half naked body. Monfriez is the only soldier we see training or honing his body in the gym, both using weights and in the boxing ring. Just as the display of unclothed men's and women's bodies must be read differently, as established above, the display of a black or Hispanic male body must also be read differently to the display of a white male body. Tasker's example of the display of Sylvester Stallone's body in the *Rambo* movies and its relationship to narratives of suffering and Christian martyrdom is an important one when considering the sexualization of female bodies.[40] However, it is more complicated than Tasker implies, as the character John Rambo was not unequivocally coded as white. Rambo was part Native American which has been used representationally to heighten the notion that Rambo was a *natural* warrior, different to the white men he eludes in the first film, and able to defeat the more 'bestial' Vietnamese in later films since he can fight on their own terms. Rambo has been colour-coded so that he exists outside the rules of combat that govern the construction of white warrior. Notions of sacrifice and martyrdom do still apply, but they are complicated by the removal of the character from the constraints of 'civilized' behaviour and the hyper-

[38] Feinman, *Citizenship Rites*, p. 210.
[39] Feinman, *Citizenship Rites*, p.210. Feinman uses this phrase with regards to *G.I. Jane* not *Courage Under Fire*.
[40] Tasker, *Spectacular Bodies*, p. 39.

sexualising of the non-white male. Similarly, Monfriez poses the most threat to the white, female, Karen Walden. His insubordination stems from his belief that she is weak and incompetent because she is female. He mocks her tears of tension, constructing them as a signifier of weak femininity, undermines her commands, and shoots her. In his first re-telling of the events surrounding Walden's death, he is working out in the gym, and later he is shown in the boxing ring. The depiction of Monfriez using his fists separates him from the other soldiers in the film, despite the fact that boxing is placed within the training regimen for him as a combat soldier. He is the only soldier we see utilizing violence outside the sanctioned area of the battle zone, and this in a manner that puts his body on display with all the implications of 'uncivilized' behaviour that accompany the depiction of the non-white male body in Western traditions of representation.[41]

The problems inherent in conflating issues of gender and race are never acknowledged in *G.I. Jane* despite lip-service to past racial discriminations within the military, and are invisible in *Courage Under Fire*. While Feinman addresses many of the discrimination issues faced by non-white women in the armed forces she does not broaden the issues of racial representation in film out to investigate the ongoing problems the special-forces have in recruiting men from non-white backgrounds, which is particularly pertinent to *G.I. Jane*. In 1997, the same year this film was released, the Navy SEALS undertook a recruiting programme targeted specifically at minorities. One of the biggest hurdles acknowledged by this elite branch of the forces was its place as "historically one of the military's whitest segments".[42] The special-forces depend so much upon their

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[41] For an overview of these traditions in the construction of race see Paul Hoch, *White Hero Black Beast: Racism, Sexism and the Mask of Masculinity*, Pluto Press, London, 1979.

[42] Seth Hettena, "Navy SEALS Recruiting more minorities", *Monterey Herald*, 04/08/02, http://www.montereyherald.com/mld/montereyherald/news/politics/3798878.htm, Accessed 28/08/02. See Also Rand Corporation Report, "Barriers to Minority Participation in Special Occupations Forces", http://www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR1042/MF1042.sum.pdf, Accessed 28/08/02.

construction as elite, which can be read as white, that perception in non-white communities is that non-white applicants either would not get in, or would not make it through the training. This perception carries over to fictional texts, where non-white recruits might make it through the intensive training, but their hard work is overshadowed by the achievement of a white woman. O'Neil receives supportive comments from the black American McCool, who in an attempt to reassure O'Neil that the obstacles of race, and thereby gender, can be overcome, says to her "Don't let them get you down, O'Neil. You're just the next Negro to them." Many black men in the segregated forces prior to 1948, and even in the post-1948 period had to face reasons for their separation that sound remarkably like many of the reasons women have been excluded from the armed services, and from combat.[43] However, the fact that increasing numbers of white women have been recruited in an attempt to curb the increasing numbers of non-white Americans joining up ruptures the seamlessness of this analogy. The increasing visibility and popularity of the *white* female warrior hero may disrupt some of the politics of representing gender but by no means all, as her ascendancy is still marked by the overshadowing of men and women from different racial and ethnic backgrounds.

The films *G.I. Jane* (1997) and *Mulan* (1998) were both produced under the Disney umbrella and were released within a year of one another. *G.I. Jane* depicts Lt. Jordan O'Neil being selected as a political experiment to be the first woman to join the elite Navy SEALS. The film attempts to explore many of the problems inherent in the masculinist attitudes of elite branches of the military, and even goes so far as to admit that the problems women pose for these institutions are more about the men than the women. *Mulan* pillages an ancient Chinese myth of a female warrior in an attempt by Disney to tap into the large and lucrative Chinese cinematic market. *Mulan* is the story of a young girl who takes her father's place in the

[43] See Chapter Two.

Chinese Imperial Army since he is too sick and frail to fulfil his duty to the Emperor in the fight against the Hun.

Once more these film texts create female warriors who operate singly, and who are separated from other women by their combative behaviours.[44] In *G.I. Jane*, O'Neil's only communications and attempts at community with other women are what lead to her being investigated for homosexuality which would mean the end of her military career. Following her survival of the toughest test of the SEAL training and finally gaining acceptance as a member of her unit, O'Neil meets some other servicewomen for a picnic on the beach, finally allowing herself some comfort in the company of other women. She is photographed embracing one of them, and this is then used to call her sexuality into question. In the era of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Pursue" during the 1990s, any overt display that could be construed as homosexual could still be used to bring about dismissal from the U.S. military. The fine line that military women tread in terms of their sexuality has meant that many women (regardless of their actual sexual preferences) have been investigated and had their careers destroyed.[45] It is the female Senator Lillian DeHaven (Anne Bancroft) who

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[44] There are almost no portrayals of units or corps of women in combat in mainstream film culture. An exception to this is Paul Verhoeven's adaptation of Robert Heinlein's 1959 novel *Starship Troopers*, which was released in 1997. In this film men and women serve together in the Mobile Infantry. While we do see women in action in this film, it became notorious for its co-ed shower scene. While to all intents and purposes the women have an equal right to fight, and to die, they are still hyper-sexualised. Private Dizzy Flores is an excellent soldier but is almost more keen to have sex with Johnny Rico than to kill bugs (the enemy), and she succeeds – just before she is killed. Pilot Carmen Ibanez (played by Denise Richards who has also been, among other things, a Bond Girl) is depicted in tighter than tight uniforms amply displaying her breasts, being fought over by Rico and his rival Pilot Zander Barkalow, and ultimately being rescued by Rico. Another example is *Small Soldiers* in which barbie dolls are mutilated by the Commandoes and transformed into a battalion of monstrous soldiers, far more horrifying than the Commandoes themselves. An historical example is the British film *Enemy at the Gates* (2001) which depicts Russian women taking up arms in the siege of Stalingrad during the Second World War. These women are depicted as competent soldiers, but the scenes in which they appear depict female snipers having sex with their comrades in foxholes and getting killed, and the abilities of the main female character , Tania Chernova, are secondary to her role as the love interest of the two main male characters. She too is never depicted in the companionship of other women in combat.

[45] There were great purges of homosexual personnel from the late 1970s through to the early 1990s. Women were much more likely to be accused of, and investigated for, homosexuality than men. In 1979 six times as many female Army personnel as male Army

is responsible for O'Neil being selected and placed into the SEALS programme in the first place, and it is the machinations of this woman in power that compromise O'Neil's success. Senator DeHaven chooses O'Neil for her looks, her athleticism and possibly for the fact that, being an 'intel' (intelligence) servicewoman rather than a part of a more active 'field' unit, O'Neil would perform admirably to a certain point and then drop out, ultimately proving the experiment a failure. DeHaven actually admits to O'Neil that she was never supposed to get as far as she did. Under pressure when the closure of Navy installations in her constituency is being threatened due to lack of funding,[46] DeHaven colludes with male members of the Navy brass and is portrayed as the force behind O'Neil's lack of support and potential expulsion from the SEAL programme. While initially O'Neil is a threat to, and is threatened physically and emotionally by, the other men in the programme, ultimately her betrayal rests with other women. Once the initial prejudices of the men are overcome, it is from other women that O'Neil is isolated. She cannot enjoy the company of other women without aspersions being cast upon her sexuality, and the woman in power who placed O'Neil in the programme schemes for her removal when her presence becomes to difficult to justify and to manage. While Jordan O'Neil may never quite be one of the boys, she can never be like other women and the ways in which her enjoyment of femininity and female company are used against her show just how dangerous non-conformity can be.[47]

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personnel were discharged for homosexuality. In 1989 in the Navy and the Marines ten women to every one man were discharged. Francke, *Ground Zero*, p. 180. The advent of the supposedly more friendly "Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Pursue" policy has not necessarily made things any easier for women in the services. For details of breaches, and 'creative' interpretations, of the policy see Laurie Weinstein & Francine D'Amico with Lynn Meolo (pseudonym), "Lesbian Exclusion", in D'Amico & Weinstein (eds), *Gender Camouflage*, pp. 103-109.

[46] This is only one of the reasons. The others are never really made clear, and the turncoat behaviour of Dehaven is never completely explained and actually adds little to the narrative.

[47] It is interesting that it was felt necessary to introduce the issue of lesbianism in the attempt to get rid of O'Neil, when she could have been court-martialled for fraternization. She was in a relationship with an officer in her direct line of command. Perhaps it was because the issues of sexuality are such a big problem for military women. Or perhaps it is very difficult in mainstream representations to present a woman succeeding in a brutal

When O'Neil is first asked about taking up the opportunity of being the first female Navy SEAL as a test case for other recruits, she says to Senator DeHaven that she does not want this to be treated as a 'feminist' issue. Nor is O'Neil really interested in the opportunities for other women. She is portrayed as having been passed over for promotion due to her lack of combat experience in the Gulf War. This is a common problem women in the armed forces have faced, their career tracks coming to a grinding halt when promotion is dependent upon field experience from which they have been barred. Director Ridley Scott has made it abundantly clear that this film is about the career of the individual – despite the fact that the bar on women in combat is based upon notions of collective femininity and despite the fact that a 'test case' obviously has ramifications for other women.

> [o]f course it's feminist by definition in that it's a female central character, but we tried to stay off that as the tone because she talks more about her career, like a man. Saying [that] for me to move up, I have to have this and that experience. At the moment she's just being turned down right, left and centre, not just because she's female but because financially it's more expensive…I wanted to make it really about a female wanting to do a guy's job. For reasons of career. It's a career – a choice.[48]

The obvious connections between liberal feminist drives for equality of access to career choices seems to have eluded Scott in whatever his definition of feminist issues are. In this interview, and in the film, concern with career is made to appear a masculinist trait, and the physical transformation O'Neil undergoes is a visible reminder that overt signs of femininity must be erased in order for her to have access to warrior identity. Another example of this erasure of femininity in the pursuit of

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environment without at least mentioning the possibility that she is a lesbian, and therefore not a 'real' woman.

[48] Matthew Hays, "In the Navy: Ridley Scott talks about *G.I. Jane*", *Film This Week*, 14/08/1997, http://www.montrealmirror.com/ARCHIVES/1997/081497/film1.html, Accessed 27/02/03.

career is Senator DeHaven who is successful in politics because she plays the game 'like a man'.[49] Scott makes it clear that his definitions of femininity and concern with professional success are somehow incompatible, further undermining any subversive potential this film might have. That O'Neil is not interested in anything beyond her own career is a further means by which she can be seen as aberrant. As the test case, O'Neil's success should open up the field for other women with the right physical and professional capabilities. Instead, the emphasis on O'Neil as an individual – a trait that is not accorded women collectively – means she can be seen as exceptional and reinforces the notion that combat specialties should in fact *not* be opened up to others.

Mulan is similarly isolated from other women throughout most of the film. She does not 'bring honour' to her family in her encounter with the matchmaker; she is defined by her actions as not being 'a girl worth fighting for', unlike the fantasies the other soldiers conjure of women who are meek, dutiful, sexy, good cooks and all waiting elsewhere, being fought for rather than fighting. One of the final comments made by the Emperor to Li Shang, who is hesitant about declaring his love for Mulan, is that "a girl like that comes along once in a dynasty." Mulan has also been through a process which, accompanied by a very tongue-in-cheek musical number, "made a man" out of her. An obvious pun on military rhetoric, the complications of having "made a man" of a young woman are skimmed over through the humour utilised in this film. But the inference is obvious. Mulan cannot be a woman who can be "made a man" and still be a "girl worth fighting for", just as Jordan O'Neil in *G.I. Jane* cannot have a successful heterosexual relationship with her partner who is a higher

[49] When first reviewing candidates for the SEALS experiment, DeHaven is portrayed as viewing each candidate almost with a masculine eye. When she sees a photograph of O'Neil, with her long hair and pearl earrings, she comments that O'Neil is "top drawer, with silk stockings". She is appraising each woman with a sexualised and proprietory gaze not usually associated with women. The use of Anne Bancroft with her low gravely voice for this role is another way through which the 'unfeminine' side of the senator is emphasized.

ranking officer once she begins to be successful in the SEAL programme. O'Neil, like Mulan, is no longer feminine. She too has been 'made a man'.

It is only at the end of *Mulan* when the traditional Disney ending of heterosexual romance comes about, that Mulan in any way resembles other girls and acceptably feminine behaviour. Mulan returns home, turning down the option of being on the Imperial Council and therefore making a difference for other women, to be a dutiful daughter. In accepting that her place is at home, Mulan once more becomes a 'girl worth fighting for' and is therefore an appropriate object of Li Shang's affections. Many reviewers have praised *Mulan* for its unconventional heroine who acts out of concepts of honour and duty rather than in pursuit of her man; they also praise the film because it does not end with a wedding.[50] That we do not actually see the wedding, does not mean it is not implied when Shang arrives to speak to Mulan's father. The traditional Disney ending has not disappeared, it has merely been deferred until after the curtain closes.[51]

G.I. Jane and *Mulan* reveal much more explicitly the performativity of military gender roles than the texts previously discussed. Both *G.I. Jane* and *Mulan* play with use of uniform as a form of cross-dressing and therefore allow a discussion of the ways in which, when anyone becomes a soldier (or sailor if we are to be precise about the Navy SEALS), transformation and gender camouflage are both crucial and potentially threatening to the formation of warrior identity. Jordan O'Neil is initially chosen for the Navy SEALS experiment because her appearance is more feminine than other candidates [Figure 13]. She has long dark hair, is slim

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[50] Jenn Shreve, "Honor Thy Daughter", *Salon*, June 1998, http://www.salon.com/ent/movies/reviews/1998/06/19reviewb.html, Accessed 14/02/02. See also Mimi Nguyen, "Role Models: Mulan – A Feminist *Fantasia* – Almost", www.theory.org.uk/ctr-rol2.htm, Accessed 14/02/02.

[51] The merchandise that emanated from the film was much more focused on the traditionally feminine role played by Mulan at the beginning and end of the film, rather than on the sword wielding, shield wearing warrior Mulan. Only one doll out of the four produced has shorn hair and wears warrior garb. Disney, despite its recognition of the burgeoning popularity of the female warrior, still emphasizes the material pleasures of participating in heterosexual romance through its dolls aimed at little girls. See Mimi Nguyen, "Role Models: Mulan – A Feminist *Fantasia* – Almost".

and athletic (unlike one of her competitors who is overtly muscular and who, according to Senator DeHaven, resembles a member of an Eastern European Olympic team and therefore by inference could be mistaken for a man), and wears pearl drops in her ears with her dress uniform. The emphasis on a visible display of femininity is initially important in her selection so the spectre of homosexuality can be kept at bay. The promotion of a particular kind of femininity echoes campaigns for recruitment to the WACS in the Second World War, and other recruiting campaigns for women, where an emphasis was placed upon glamour as a part of professionalism, and was seen to ensure that the femininity of military women was not publicly compromised.[52] When the first female cadets entered West Point in 1976 there was a constant struggle to balance the need for the women to blend in and for them not to be mistaken for men. This resulted in classes where cadets were taught how to use make up and initial differences in dress-uniform which were ostensibly designed so as not to draw attention to the female physique (the tails the men wore were absent, instead the women wore dress coats that were short to the waist), but really worked to emphasize difference.[53]

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[52] See Meyer, *Creating G.I. Jane*, Chapter 3. See also Page Dougherty Delano, "Making Up For War: Sexuality and Citizenship in Wartime Culture", *Feminist Studies*, Spring 2000, http://www.findarticles.com/cf_0/m0300/1_26/63295338/print.jhtml, Accessed 23/07/02. Both of these stress the difficulties that emphasizing femininity posed for military women as this could also mean that they were seen as promiscuous. For an examination of more recent representations of 'feminine' military women see Enloe, *Does Khaki Become You?*, Chapter Five, "Some of the Best Soldiers Wear Lipstick". Recruitment campaigns in Australia during the Second World War similarly often stressed glamour and retaining one's femininity, but a fine line was trod and many Australian servicewomen confronted a public who saw them as either lesbians or promiscuous. See Chapter One.

[53] Garber, *Vested Interests*, p. 24. See also Barkalow, *In the Men's House*. Barkalow was one of the first female cadets at West Point and describes many incidents that parallel this one. See particularly chapter one "Plebe Year".

Figure 13 O'Neil on her first day of SEAL training, dealing with hostility from other trainees and officers alike. Her long dark hair a visible signifier of her difference. [Ridley Scott (Dir), *G.I. Jane*, 1997]

Figure 14 A training sequence which shows of the muscularity of Demi Moore's body. [Ridley Scott (Dir), *G.I. Jane*, 1997]

Figure 15 O'Neil shaves her own head in an attempt to minimize the difference between herself and her fellow trainees. [Ridley Scott (Dir), *G.I. Jane*, 1997]

As O'Neil progresses through her training she attempts to erase visible differences between herself and her male comrades. She shaves her own head [Figure 15], her long hair having been a hindrance despite being tied back, and she moves from separated quarters into the barracks with the other men. We also see her embarking on her own fitness programme aside from what she is expected to perform as a part of the SEAL training in her attempts to hone her strength and keep up with the men [Figure 14].

Both the shaving of hair and the visible honing of upper body strength have been used in earlier texts in which the female warrior has appeared. Ripley has her head shaved in *Alien III* (1992), and we see Sarah Connor doing pull-ups in her room at the asylum, maintaining her strength for the coming Armageddon. Femininity has, in Western culture, often been signified through the wearing of long hair, to the extent that shaving a woman's head has often been used as a device to humiliate her.[54] Lesbianism has also often been signified by very short haircuts that accompany the 'butch' demeanour, with which heterosexual culture has stereotyped lesbianism.[55] However, reading a woman shaving her head is not always so simple. Sherrie Inness points out that when Ripley "shaves her head to avoid lice, this act makes her more feminine rather than less, because she is shown standing naked in the shower afterward": shorn of her hair, Ripley appears to be more vulnerable.[56] This heightened vulnerability was in accordance with the wishes of Fox studios who stressed that Weaver could only shave her head if the character Ripley's attractiveness was not compromised, that is the male audience still had to find her sexually

[54] For example, French women who collaborated with the Nazis during the Second World War had their heads shaved and were paraded through the streets after the defeat of the Germans.
[55] The flip-side to this, as with any representation of femininity that has overstepped the boundaries of contemporary morals is that of the 'fast' girls in the 1920s who also wore short hair. The bob-haircut in the post-World War I era was often seen as an indicator of loose sexual morals.
[56] Inness, *Tough Girls*, p.112.

appealing.[57] O'Neil, similarly, is depicted working out in very little clothing, and at one point we see her showering in front of Master Chief Urgayle. While her shaved head is a pragmatic gesture, and is a visible shedding of the trappings of femininity so she can be treated as a Naval officer rather than a woman, it can also be read as heightening her femininity.

The open display of her body in various states of undress serves to sexualise O'Neil and links her to other representations of women in mainstream cinema. The use of Demi Moore, known for her status as a sex symbol and well-publicised for the work she put in to transform her body for this film and *Striptease* (1996), must also influence the ways in which this display of her body are read. One reviewer went so far as to state that Demi Moore's movie efforts in the mid to late 1990s were

> all about women who are pawns until they wise up and strip naked for a glistening bath or shower. In your typical Demi Moore movie, nakedness is power…*G.I. Jane* is one "feminist movie" made so men will like it. Its makers have turned the subject of women in the military into the cinematic equivalent of mud-wrestling.[58]

The sexualization of women in uniform that is used to trivialize their achievements, and reinforce their threat to masculine cohesion, is glaringly obvious in the way Demi Moore plays Jordan O'Neil. While this film may purport to undermine this paradigm, and present the perspective that women can be treated just like men and not just as sexual objects or sexual threats, the visual footage of O'Neil/Moore exercising and in the shower reveal its failure to do so.

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[57] Inness, *Tough Girls*, p.112.
[58] Joe Baltake, "It's the same drill for Demi Moore in *G.I. Jane*", *Movie Club*, 22/08/1997, http://www.movieclub.com/reviews/archives/97jane/jane.html Accessed 27/02/03.

Sherrie Inness interprets the initial footage of Sarah Connor doing pull-ups on her bed-frame in the asylum as unusual in mainstream cinema, as it emphasises her muscularity and strength rather than providing the audience with a sexual spectacle. The camera pans over Sarah Connor's back, shoulders and upper arms, rather than her breasts.[59] With Jordan O'Neil, on the other hand, there appears to be an emphasis on displaying her body as much as possible. She wears crop tops to exercise in, and the audience is as often given a view of her cleavage as of her upper arms. The scenes in which we see her exercise often look like an advertisement for Nike, rather than the regimen of a soldier. What these scenes in both films also touch on is the fact that one of the biggest obstacles for women in the military is the difference (perceived and real) in physical strength between men and women, particularly upper body strength.[60] The extra training that O'Neil embarks upon is illustrative of the premise that given the right training women improve their strength and stamina considerably. What this display does not deal with is the fact that many of the physical tests men and women are forced to endure do not have anything to do with the jobs they are required to perform. Physical tests like the pull-up have been used as a means of exclusion and a competitive display of masculine strengths. The tests are all based upon the strengths and abilities of men, none are based on the particular strengths and abilities of women.[61]

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[59] Inness, *Tough Girls*, p.125. Elyce Rae Helford holds a divergent view from this seeing Sarah Connor's display as enlisting the male gaze despite its "unconventional feminine sexualization". See Elyce Rae Helford, "Postfeminism and the Female Action-Adventure Hero", in Marleen S. Barr (ed), *Future Females, The Next Generation. New Voices & Velocities in Feminist Science Fiction Criticism*, Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham Maryland, 2000, p. 295.

[60] Linda Bird Francke describes an incident that crystallizes the problems of perceived and 'real' differences in strength between men and women. In 1991 members of DACOWITS went to visit the Marine Corps Combat Development in Command. "Over at the "Tarzan" obstacle course, a drill inspector…watched impassively as a young female trainee struggled and failed to climb the thick rope. Though he could have taught her the technique of belaying the rope around one foot and using the slack as a 'step', thereby reducing the strain on her arms,…[he] used her frustration to illustrate the lack of women's upper-body strength to the members of DACOWITS. 'Women always wash out on the rope', he said..." Francke, *Ground Zero*, p.34. For a well laid out description of the issues of integration which hinge on physical strength see Rosemary Skaine, *Women at War: Gender Issues of Americans in Combat*, McFarland & Company, Jefferson, North Carolina & London, 1999, Chapter Ten "Ability".

[61] Hancock, "Women as killers and killing women", p. 168.

One of the first gestures Mulan makes in her transformation from failed marriage candidate to soldier, is to cut her hair – and she cuts it with a sword, no less! Unlike O'Neil, this is an act overtly designed as disguise. While O'Neil's attempts at blending are really acts of gender camouflage, she dispenses with any appearance or actions that could be construed as feminine, everybody remains aware (sometimes painfully) that she is a woman. This becomes particularly clear during the simulated exercise in which O'Neal and her company are captured, partly as a result of the insubordination of one of the members of her unit. O'Neal is singled out for torture and beating at the hands of Master Chief Urgayle and his assistants in the attempt to prove that the reactions of the men are the reason women should not be allowed into combat. The violence is loaded with sexual tension and the threat of rape is omnipresent throughout the incident. It is at the culmination of this scene that the interface between symbolic masculinity and the fragility of all material bodies is revealed when, bruised, bloody and humiliated she is asked if she has had enough and she retorts to her abuser "Suck my dick!" This response is what finally wins O'Neil the respect of her peers who have watched in disgust and dismay the treatment she has suffered.

Is this the appropriation of a symbolic penis, as a symbol of masculine toughness, the ultimate rejection of femininity? Does it mean that O'Neil merely plays a woman who becomes a man and does nothing to disrupt the politics of representing the gendered warrior? Or is it a play revealing the impenetrable masculine warrior to be nothing but mythology held onto by an institution determined to maintain its masculine exclusivity? Reviewer Charles Taylor, critical of Ridley Scott's lip-service to feminism, claims this is just one more example of the equation of equality between the sexes with allowing women to participate in the basest, as well as the most idealised, masculine behaviours.

> In *G.I. Jane* as in *Thelma and Louise*, the moments held up as feminist triumphs are when women imitate the worst of male behaviour. In *G.I. Jane* the moment comes (and the audience cheers) when Moore tells Master Chief, "Suck my Dick!" The line suggests that women will be successful in the military when they think of themselves as men.[62]

Taylor's insight goes to the core of many problems of identity that military women face – and the responses military women incite from some feminist, and non-feminist, critics alike. The need for these women to subsume their feminine identities and camouflage themselves as soldiers is often critical to their endurance of military institutions.[63] This commentary also pinpoints criticisms of the military as an imperialist patriarchal institution that seeks to foster the most violent and normally repressed behaviours that are abhorred in civilian society. Why would women want to be a part of such an institutions? O'Neil's "Suck my dick" exclamation cannot merely be read as an appropriation of masculine behaviour, however. She has been constructed in such a way that she can never be mistaken for a man, and this is partly what her outrageous statement reveals. It goes to the heart of the maintenance of an all-male combat force and the mythologies that underpin it. The subversive potential of this outburst is undermined though, as this is what wins her final acceptance by her male comrades. Her success following her appropriation of the symbolism of the penis is what Taylor has quite rightly pin-pointed even if the complexities of the situation in terms of gender politics are skimmed over. O'Neil's character has not been constructed in the same way as the male characters, and the emphasis on Moore's body, and the need to point out her 'difference' – she has no 'dick' – ensure that she can never be read in the same way either.

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[62] Charles Taylor, "No Pain, No Jane", *Salon*, August 1997, http://ww.salon.com/aug97/entertainment/jane970822.html, Accessed, 14/02/02.

[63] As sociologist Melissa Herbert poignantly asks in the preface to her study on the techniques military women use to survive the masculinist military: "Can one truly be a soldier and a woman and not be viewed as deviating either from what it means to be a soldier or from what it means to be a woman?" Herbert, *Camouflage Isn't Only For Combat*, p. 10.

Where Jordan O'Neil sought to blend in, Mulan on the other hand, seeks not to blend but to hide. When she joins the Imperial Army, she is masquerading as a man. The interesting part about Mulan's masquerade is that very early in the film we see her attempting to project herself as the perfect bride when presented to the local match maker. She is portrayed being poked and prodded and made up, and dressed up until she barely resembles herself in the over-enunciated parody of femininity she has become. This scene has parallels to the earlier Disney classic *Cinderella* (1950), where we see anthropomorphized mice and birds putting together and dressing Cinderella in a gown to wear to the ball where she is to meet the Prince. However, where in the earlier film this kind of dressing up appears natural, the garbing of Mulan is made to appear slightly ridiculous and emphasizes the artificiality of constructions of idealized beauty. As Mimi Nguyen points out:

> What's amazing is the sly acknowledgement that gender norms are socially constructed – both masculinity and femininity are exposed as elaborate performances - while concurring that these same gender norms prove to be a source of injustice. Never mind feudal China, it's a critique that resonates in contemporary U.S. society.[64]

While Nguyen is correct in her assertion that this is "critique that resonates in U.S. society", she underestimates the film's capacity for projecting the injustices of the gender order as taking place outside contemporary North America. The film is set in ancient China, a realm separated from the present through time and location. The emphasis on the ways in which beauty is manufactured contributes to the ridicule and parody of 'other' cultures. Despite Mulan's ultimate return to home and marriage, her inability to fit into a set of traditions that do not allow her to define her own individuality can be read as a further example of Disney's imperialism. *Mulan* attempts to project the virtues of U.S. consumer culture with its

[64] Nguyen, "Role Models: Mulan – A Feminist *Fantasia* – Almost".

emphasis on self-determination through consumption into its new market, late twentieth century China.[65]

The setting of *Mulan* in Imperial China is another of the ways in which a female warrior can be assimilated into the tradition of the animated Disney 'classic'. The three most recent and most different Disney heroines, Mulan, Pocahontas, and Esmerelda from *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, are all placed outside the white mainstream representations that have dominated the Disney canon. There have been few warriors in Disney animation, but the dominant males in these texts can all be coded as white. Simba in *The Lion King* (1994), is the heir to the African kingdom, and is very much a white teenager, just as *Aladdin* depicts the eponymous hero as an all-American boy in contrast to the evil characters who caused furore in Middle Eastern communities for their negative portrayals of Arabs.[66] The only warrior-hero is Hercules (*Hercules* 1997). He is white and represents the western tradition of heroic masculinity, unlike Mulan who is separated through time and ethnicity from contemporary America and separated from other women. Mulan represents an aberration *not* a tradition.

Mulan's masquerade adds to the humour of the training we see accompanied by the song "Mister, I'll Make A Man Out Of You" and has its parallel when her three male companions dress up as concubines in order to save the Emperor from the Hun who have taken over the Imperial Palace. The three main soldier characters we see, other than Li Shang, are not fit or competent – they too have to be *made* into men. Chien Po is an effeminate, large, fat gentle man, Yao is aggressive and suspicious attempting to make up for his small stature through bullying, and Ling fancies himself a ladies man but is really socially inept. All three of them fail at the physical tasks set to the new recruits. The weaknesses of Chien

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[65] For critiques of the imperialism embedded in *Mulan* see, Henry A. Giroux, *The Mouse That Roared: Disney and the End of Innocence*, Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, Boulder, New York & Oxford, 1999; see also Eleanor Byrne & Martin McQuillan, *Deconstructing Disney*, Pluto Press, London & Sterling Virginia, 1999, pp. 143-145.
[66] See Giroux, *The Mouse that Roared*, p. 86 & 104.

Po, Yao and Ling initially complement Mulan's inability to fit it and her potential to disgrace the name of her father. The incompetence of these three would-be warriors later serves to highlight Mulan's ingenuity and her capacity to approach problems differently. Mulan's abilities as a warrior are particularly noticeable given the company that she keeps. Once more Mulan is made to appear different, not just from other women but from her comrades in the army. Her abilities overtly appear to be a positive representation of femininity, but the fact that competent femininity appears only in the company of failed or misfit masculinity undermines the positive potential of this character, just as much as her return to her traditional role at the end of the film. That her three comrades are not the strapping professional looking soldiers that Li Shang is, is partly what allows their portrayal in drag in the final fight scenes. For Shang to have appeared as a concubine would have undermined his authority as a professional soldier, and as a heterosexual love interest for Mulan. Chien Po, Ling, and Yao exist on the margins of upstanding and upright masculinity, they were not born to the role of soldiering but had to be 'made men' just as much as Mulan did. Their misfit status allows them to cross the boundaries of gender binarism that separates the 'real men' from the women and utilize the masquerade of femininity to breach the Hun's defences.

All of the characters discussed above are a part of similar frameworks that appear to present women in transgressive roles, donning uniforms, toting guns (or swords in the case of Mulan), and giving as good as they get. However, they are also all subject to gender paradigms that seek to minimize the impact of their transgressions, once the initial shock has been felt at seeing women kill, maim and destroy. These women are isolated not only from their fellow soldiers, but almost more importantly, from other women. It has been extremely important to portray each woman as heterosexual, and if not as a mother, then with the potential to be a mother through their heterosexuality. The structures that have confined and constrained representations of 'real' military women are operate in

similar ways in their speculative sisters. One big difference is that the speculative female warrior hero is very visibly and undeniably in combat, where military women face the constant semantic and mythological differences that have been utilised to convince the public – and the military – that there are no women in combat. Changing the sex of the speculative warrior in cinema *must* and does change the gender politics of different representations through the different devices used to undermine the subversive potential of characters that appear to blow apart myths of soft and passive femininities, and through the different traditions of portraying women in cinema that have preceded the examples explored above.

One Girl In All The World? Slayage on Television

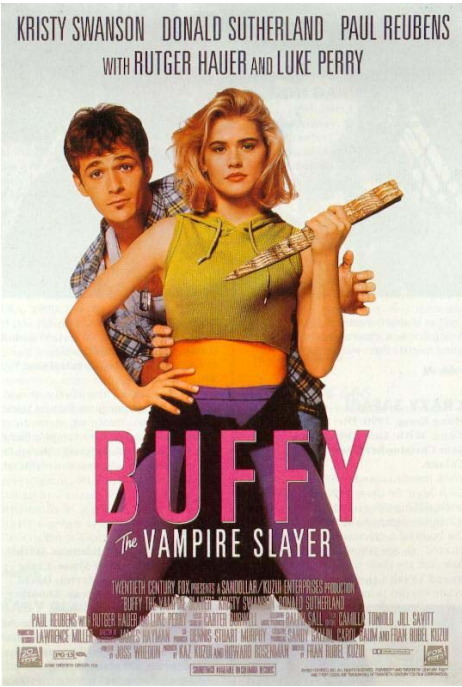

Figure 16 The original Buffy the Vampire Slayer was a smart-mouthed valley girl. [Fran Rubel Kuizui (Dir), *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*, 1992.]

> In every generation there is a chosen one. She alone will stand against the vampires, demons and the forces of darkness. She is the Slayer.[67]

Buffy The Vampire Slayer [BTVS] has been both a film and a long-running television programme. The film, the end of which is used as a springboard to the television programme, appeared in cinemas in 1992. The television series of the same name first aired mid-season in 1997 and the above statement was used as its opening premise in early seasons, when it was spoken before the opening theme music of the show. The initial premise upon which both film and television texts were based is

[67] Opening statement used to introduce *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*, from the middle of Season I in 1997.

the now much cited attempt, by creator Joss Whedon, to reverse the gender politics of the traditional horror film.

> I'd seen a lot of horror movies which I'd loved very much, with blonde girls getting themselves killed in dark alleys and I just germinated this idea about how much I'd like to see a blonde girl go into a dark alley, get attacked by a big monster and then kill it![68]

However, *BTVS* as a television text has become much more than the initial retribution for slain blondes that the film was about. Buffy is no longer merely a smart-mouthed cheerleader who happens to be very handy with a stake.[69] Buffy has become active, rather than reactive, and a front line warrior in the battle against the horrors of teenage life and the forces of darkness.

The statement that is spoken at the beginning of early *BTVS* episodes appears, at first, to separate Buffy from other women but it also lays claim to a tradition with the words "[I]n every generation". This is another way that the television text has incorporated sentiments the film espouses and moved beyond them. In the film Buffy's boyfriend Pike says to her "Buffy you're not like other girls", to which Buffy responds "Yes I am". Buffy is effectively separated from all the other girls we see in the

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[68] Interview with Joss Whedon, transcript from a live broadcast from *Sci-Fi Talk*, March 1997, www.scifitalk.com/page5.htm, Accessed May 2001. In another play on this reversal, in the very first episode of *BTVS*, "Welcome to the Hell Mouth" we see a petite nervous looking blonde girl being led into a deserted school in the middle of the night by a boy. The twist on this is when after appearing to be startled by unexplained noises, the blonde is revealed to be the vampire rather than the victim and kills the boy who wanted to lead her astray. In an interesting intertextual twist Sarah Michelle Gellar who plays Buffy, has actually been the blonde girl who gets it in two teen-slasher pictures, *Scream 2* and *I Know What You Did Last Summer*, both released in the United States in 1997 the same year that *BTVS* made its television debut. The slain has quite literally become the Slayer.

[69] In fact Buffy was actually kicked off the cheerleading team in Season II ("Witch"), possibly an active distancing between one text and another, and a comment upon the social priorities forced upon teenage girls. Buffy always has the potential to be a part of the popular set, but her 'mission' sets her apart, and reveals the vacuousness of many highschool preoccupations. For a close discussion on the differences between the film and the television series see Gabrielle Moss, "From the Valley to the Hellmouth: "Buffy"'s Transition from Film to Television", *Slayage*, v.2, March 2001, http://www.middleenglish.or/slayage/essays/slayage2/moss/htm, Accessed March 2001.

film as once she starts slaying she no longer fits in with her friends and her previous, deeply-shallow, world view. She does not convince Pike, or herself, that she is really 'like other girls', despite her adamant statement that "I'm the chosen one and I choose to be shopping". While previous Slayers are acknowledged, it is Buffy's difference from them that saves her life and leads to her surviving high-school. So, in the film not only is Buffy not like other girls, but she is not like other Slayers either. The cinematic tradition of isolating the female warrior is present even when there is a tradition of heroism built into the narrative.

The television series certainly began operating with a similar approach to the film, but the long running episodic nature of the text has allowed an exploration of the contradiction between being "one girl in all the world", with a tradition of a Slayer in every generation. Buffy is simultaneously like and not like other girls. Similarities to these contradictions are present in the narratives of war and the military that treat women as the temporary solutions to particular crises and never allow for a historical tradition of women in war. The experiences of women in the military during war and peace time have long been treated as if they ruptured pre-existing patterns of gendered behaviour. A seamless tradition of women's participation has never been a part of mainstream history.[70] *BTVS* on television makes connections between its characters and those female warriors of the past, like Joan of Arc, who have been treated as exceptions, as well as connections between Buffy and other speculative screen warriors like Xena. The show also plays with the ways in which military women have been constructed in, or omitted from, the narration of war stories.[71] It is this duality and play with western traditions of martial

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[70] See Chapters One and Two.

[71] Explored below. See also Sara Buttsworth, "Bite Me: *Buffy* and the Penetration of the Gendered Warrior Hero", *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies*, v.16, No 2, 2002, pp. 185-199. See also Frances Early, "Staking her Claim: Buffy the Vampire Slayer as Transgressive Woman Warrior", *The Journal Of Popular Culture*, v.35, no. 3, Winter 2001, pp. 11-27. Early notes the lack of a female warrior tradition in Western narratives and the sometimes uneasy relationship the powerful television warriors have with feminism.

identity that I explore in this section, with particular reference to Season IV of *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*.[72]

BTVS does not only challenge the misogynist underpinnings of the horror genre. From the beginning of the television series Buffy has challenged the gendered construction of the warrior and war narratives and the mythologies of violence that underpin so much of western culture. Joss Whedon was a student of Richard Slotkin's at university, and he has admitted to utilising Slotkin's theories on the ways in which mythologies operate to justify cultural directions, and Slotkin's analysis of the flaws inherent in a national culture dependent upon mythologies of "regeneration through violence".[73] Soldiering has been directly present in *BTVS* since season II, and by season IV Buffy is pitted against an all-male military commando unit and an institution trying to create the ultimate warrior out of a mixture of human and demon parts. Season IV is particularly important for the way it deconstructs the masculinism of U.S. military institutions and the myths of impenetrable masculinity so important to warrior identity. Within this season all the cross references of the history of American militarism are present, from vengeful Indian spirits to the depiction of Riley (Buffy's love interest and one of the commandoes) as a cowboy [Figure 18].

Other television series that feature female warriors also differ from cinematic texts in the ways in which the female warrior is not always isolated. *Xena: Warrior Princess*, [*X:WP*] does fight alone a lot of the time,

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[72] In Season IV the Slayer is pitted against the Soldier. In her first year at college, Buffy discovers a government funded military operation called The Initiative, that initially looks like it operates in similar ways that Buffy does, attempting to rid Sunnydale of its demon scourge. What Buffy and her friends (known as the Scooby Gang in reference to the popular television cartoon of the 1970s *Scooby Doo*) eventually find out, is that The Initiative is also trying to create the ultimate warrior, by combining demons with humans – in very literal ways, sewing them together.

[73] See David Lavery, " "A Religion in Narrative": Joss Whedon and Television Creativity", *Slayage*, v.7, 2002. http://www.slayage.tv/religioninnarrative.htm, Accessed 21/11/2002. See also Paul F. McDonald, "The Mythology and Magic of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*", *All Things Philosophical on* Buffy the Vampire Slayer *and* Angel: *the Series*, August 4 2001. http://www.ivyweb.net/btvs/fictionary/essays/010804A_DED.htm, Accessed 21/11/2002.

but her sidekick Gabrielle also learns to defend herself as the series moves from one season to another. In *X:WP* we also see tribes of Amazon warriors, and other women who fight on all sides of the moral spectrum. Xena is the hero of her stories, and her fighting abilities and constant wrestling with her conscience do make her unique. However, even if others do not share her prowess, she is not depicted as the only woman who can fight. Elyce Rae Helford considers Xena to be much like her cinematic counterparts, in that she is "individualistic, a loner. But even when working with others, she acts to right wrongs without insisting on greater cultural change."[74] In Helford's view Xena is a postfeminist heroine, as she is an individual hero who never poses a real threat to the overarching patriarchal structure of the world she inhabits. However, Xena does change the lives of other women in the show, like that of Gabrielle, and she does work with other women. Her struggles are not for personal gain, she does not strive for masculine approval, and while she has had relationships with a number of men (and possibly with a number of women as well, including speculation that her long term relationship with Gabrielle is a lesbian love-affair) she is never represented as if this were detrimental to her or her reputation. Never once does she appear to be portrayed as a whore.[75]

Many of the fantastic events and the merging of historical periods that occur in *X:WP* have also been explained with reference to the narrative inclusions and absences that occur in classical Western mythology.

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[74] Helford, "Postfeminism and the Female Action-Adventure Hero", p. 294.

[75] For an overview of the ways in which *X:WP* attempts to disrupt patriarchal ideologies of the warrior see Kathleen Kennedy, "Love is the Battlefield: The Making and Unmaking of the Just Warrior in *Xena: Warrior Princess*", in Frances Early & Kathleen Kennedy (eds), *Athena's Daughters: Television's New Women Warriors*, Syracuse University Press, Syracuse, 2003, Chapter Four. Kennedy argues that *X:WP* ruptures ideologies of the western warrior by looking eastwards in terms of philosophy and combat techniques, but that ultimately this amounts to an appropriation rather than an appreciation of the 'other'. The hybridity and appreciation of difference present in the show's depictions of love and war, mean that while it is subversive of western warrior traditions of violence, it has maintained elements of colonialism in its pillaging of non-western mythologies and its presentation of these mythologies in ways that uphold Western stereotypes of Orientalism.

> Here's the way we rationalize it. First Xena is a dark character, and few people want to write about a dark character, so her participation in certain events would have been omitted [by the Ancients]. Second, the "authorities" on mythology disagree among themselves. [The Roman poet] Ovid disagrees with Plato who disagrees with [compilers of Greek tales] Robert Graves and Edith Hamilton. Also, Xena was a woman. Most of the histories were written by men.[76]

It is tales about men written by men that have dominated western history, and western history of war particularly. *X:WP* plays with the cultural amnesia that has accompanied the activities of women, and has created a fantastic female warrior who can be, or do, anything anywhere precisely because she has been so completely absent from the 'official' world.

X:WP has also attracted a lot of attention as a result of the speculation surrounding the show's lesbian subtext. The polysemic nature of this text has allowed a steadily increasing intimacy between Xena and Gabrielle without ever openly acknowledging that they are in fact in a homosexual relationship. Helford has again seen the dangers of a text wherein the lines of mainstream media are blurred rather than blown apart, and while there is great scope for the portrayal of an ongoing intimate relationship between two women, the heteronormativity of prime time television is never openly negated. Helford sees this as directly correlative with the Clinton administration's "Don't ask, Don't tell, Don't pursue" policy regarding homosexuality in the military.[77] Where ABC's series *Ellen*[78] depicted Ellen coming out and was subsequently cancelled in 1998, *X:WP* was successful by operating much more ambiguously through the use of camp theatrics and subtextual references rather than an open acknowledgement of the characters' sexuality, and maintained its

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[76] Steve Sears, writer, *X:WP* quoted in Robert Weisbrot, *Xena: Warrior Princess. The Official Guide to the Xenaverse*, Doubleday, New York, 1998, p. 38.
[77] Elyce Rae Helford, "Feminism, Queer Studies, and the Sexual Politics of *Xena: Warrior Princess*", in Elyce Rae Helford, *Fantasy Girls: Gender in the New Universe of Science Fiction and Fantasy Television*, Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, Maryland, 2000, pp.135-162.
[78] Produced by and starring lesbian actor Ellen Degeneres.

heterosexual and homosexual following until it came to an end in 2001. While lauded for the possibility of its homosexual readings, *X:WP* managed, for the most part, to maintain the appearance of staying within the boundaries of mainstream viewing.[79]

Helford's analysis does not extend to examining the ways in which the homosexual subtext of the show relates to the construction of military women. While homosexuality transgresses the boundaries of mainstream television viewing, even whilst operating on many different levels in the effort to slide under the heterosexist hegemonic radar, for a female warrior in western tradition to be coded as lesbian is not subversive. While *not* coding Xena as a promiscuous woman who uses her sexuality as her main weapon puts her outside the paradigms traditionally used to control female behaviour, coding her as a lesbian is in accord with a culture that has simultaneously: denied the importance of women to the military and the active roles they have played; denigrated military women as either promiscuous or lesbian or both; denied the existence of homosexual military personnel of both sexes, and tried to purge them from its ranks.[80] The importance audiences and critics have attached to the homosexual subtext of *X:WP* overshadows many of the other aspects of the programme, and has even become the point of reference to the female warrior in other television series. In *BTVS*, in "Halloween"(Season 2), everyone becomes what their costumes are and Buffy becomes a helpless 18th century lady: Willow laments " she couldn't have dressed up like Xena?" Willow's reference here is to Xena's skill and strength as a warrior.[81] But in the

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[79] Helford, "Feminism, Queer Studies and the Sexual Politics of *Xena: Warrior Princess*", p.141.
[80] See Chapters One & Two.
[81] Although it is possible to read this differently in the light of season four's story arc in which Willow comes out as a lesbian. Paula Graham reads the construction of Buffy as heterosexual as a means whereby the mainstream heterosexual audience can be maintained/not threatened. She does not discuss, however, the polysemic compromises made in *X:WP* despite having cited the lesbian relationship between Xena and Gabrielle as one of the main reasons for critical and fan attention. Paula Graham, "Buffy Wars: The Next Generation", *Rhizomes*, Issue 4, Spring 2002. http://www.rhizomes.net/issue4/graham.html, Accessed 21/11/2002.

series *Dark Angel*[82] which depicted a young woman who was the genetically engineered perfect soldier, her lesbian room-mate "Original Cyndi" pins a poster of Xena to her bedroom wall. Xena's identity as a lesbian icon has become inextricable from, and possibly more important than, her construction as a warrior.

As previously stated, Slayer mythology dictates that there is one girl in each generation who can "kill the vampires". Nothing visibly distinguishes Buffy from other girls, and the secret of her identity is supposed to assist in her efforts to banish evil. Buffy's gender is the key to her camouflage, and early on she is reminded she is supposed to pretend to be "just a girlie girl like the rest of us" ("Phases", Season II, 1997).[83] Sherrie Inness has argued that in early television depictions of 'tough' heroines, the potency of their toughness was mitigated by the disguises they were required to adopt when going into 'action'. In her discussion of the 1970s series *Charlie's Angels* and *The Bionic Woman* she states that "masquerade is often used to reveal a woman's attitude is only skin-deep".[84] According to Inness, the use of disguise allows a revelation of 'true femininity' under a tough exterior. This defuses the threat these women pose to a gender order which associates strength with masculinity – not femininity. Inness argues that *Xena: Warrior Princess* breaks with this

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[82] Directed by James Cameron this series first aired in the U.S. in 2000. This series was based upon the premise that the ideal warrior could be genetically engineered and spliced with all kinds of non-human DNA which could make these warriors super human. Their 'unit' X-5 was a mixed gender unit, some of whom sought to escape their military confines and lead 'normal' lives in the outside world. Max, the lead character, is a young and beautiful woman – her beauty is something she was apparently engineered for, as advantageous in the field. Max operates largely alone, despite having been a part of a unit. She continues the tradition of the isolated female – and in many literal ways she isn't a real woman, and she isn't anything like 'other' girls.

[83] In the film one of the differences between Buffy and her predecessors is the fact that she has had the 'mark of the covenant' removed from her body – for cosmetic reasons. This visible signifier inscribed on the Slayer's body, is absent from the television series as well assisting the seamless integration of Buffy into her high-school and then college population. Distinguishing marks or insignia are dangerous breaches of camouflage – and should never be underestimated. This was explored in "The Dark Age", Season II 1997, when parts of Giles' (Buffy's Watcher) past come to light. He was a part of a demon-worshipping cult as a young man and was tattooed to indicate his membership. This tattoo acted as a beacon to the spirit of the demon, and an invitation to possession.

[84] Inness, *Tough Girls*, p.36.

convention as Xena is strong, does not hide, and is self-assured in her identity. However, the distance in time alters Xena's impact as a warrior-hero in much the same way that masquerade watered down the potency of her predecessors, or elements of the fantastic dilute Buffy's potency. Cloaked in fictional antiquity, the exoticism of Xena opens up space for her violent lifestyle, in much the same way women of "other cultures"[85] are constructed as being outside civilized conventions of femininity.[86]

The constant tensions evident in televisual depictions of powerful women in non-conventional roles, and the problems in reconciling these depictions with more conservative gender ideologies present in the wider community, have been present since television (and second wave feminism) was a nascent force in the 1960s.[87] These tensions between exploring new character constructions and societal norms continue – even, or perhaps especially, in the figure of the female warrior hero. *Wonder Woman* who made the transition from comic book to television in the 1970s, is another example of these tensions and her presence first within the military and then within a government intelligence agency make her an interesting predecessor to Buffy. By day Linda Carter played demure but capable Diana Prince who hid behind a desk and enormous pair of spectacles. In times of need she was Wonder Woman who "in her satin

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[85] See discussions of terrorist and guerrilla figures, and particularly women who were active in the Viet Cong, in Chapter Two.

[86] An earlier female warrior figure who was constructed as well and truly outside the "constraints" of civilized behavior, was Leela who appeared in the British television series *Dr Who* between January 1977 and March 1978. Leela was a part of a "warrior tribe" and was set up as a counterpoint to the Doctor's rational (if eccentric) ways of solving problems, and getting out of life threatening situations. On more than one occasion Leela had to be prevented from simply drawing a knife to solve problems. Leela was constructed as sexy and rather simple, and she came from a "tribe" implying a primitive lifestyle. Whether from another planet, or another time, these television warriors are distanced and thus defused by their placement on the boundaries of 'civilized' (and 'real') time and space.

[87] Julie D'Acci discusses ways in which the subversive and the conventional were combined in the transition between book heroine, and television heroine, for the character Honey West – a female "dick" (detective). Honey West's ability to solve cases on her own, and her intellectual superiority over her "boyfriend", were countered by her "sexy" appearance. In turn her "sex appeal" was toned down for 1960s audiences by the presence of said boyfriend and a live-in middle aged female chaperone. Julie D'Acci, "Nobody's Woman? *Honey West* and the New Sexuality", in Spigel & Curtin (eds), *The Revolution Wasn't Televised*, pp. 73-93.

tights" fought for the "red white and blue". As Diana Prince she deferred to the judgement of the men/commanding officers around her, as Wonder Woman she fought for their causes. Helpless femininity is a part of Diana Prince, and this is traded for overt sex-appeal when she dons her skimpy star spangled costume as Wonder Woman. The trading of helplessness, for sex appeal, in many ways reflects the contradictions inherent in the construction of the female soldier during the twentieth century, with recruitment placing emphasis on glamour and heterosexual feminine appeal to counter the transgressive potential of women in military uniform. Buffy has a much more complicated relationship both with authority and with her sexuality. She regularly disobeyed both Giles, her Watcher, and the Watcher's Council (until she quit the Council in Season III) and was never the "regimental soldier" that would have allowed her to fit into, and be manipulated by, The Initiative. Unlike many of her predecessors (or contemporaries) Buffy although "sexy" does not use her sexuality as an artifice or a weapon, nor does it detract from her ability as a warrior.

Figure 17 Buffy is slight and always stylish – even when wielding a hammer and sickle in Hell. ["Anne", Season III, *BTVS*, 1998]

While Buffy's camouflage is her gender, she is never actually 'in disguise' – unlike her predecessors she doesn't pretend to be someone she's not, and her mainstream femininity (and the colour of her hair) mean she is not constructed as "other" in the same way as, for example, Xena [Figure 17]. Even when Buffy is flexing her Slayer-muscle and has to be reminded not to be too obvious, being 'girlie' is as much a part of her character as being the Slayer is, thus undermining the conflation of culturally constructed attributes of femininity and 'innate' capabilities.

From depictions of Cane, the werewolf killer, who claims there is 'no-one man enough' to do the job ("Phases", Season II, 1997), to the incredulity of Riley at her physical strength, humans of both sexes are constantly shocked by Buffy's abilities. This incredulity (which appears to be largely absent in the demon population of Sunnydale) might be mirrored in the audience itself. "Buffy's body is a site of considerable struggle in the narrative. She is recognizably coded as slim, youthful, fit, and stylish", while still capable of kicking serious demon-butt.[88] Susan Owen's claim that Buffy's body is the site of struggle, extends to the increasingly visual fragility of Buffy's body from the film to Season I, and then in transition from one season to the next. Buffy's strength, by Seasons IV and V is palpably much more supernatural than corpo*real*. Where the bodies of male warriors are visibly strong (and often bulky), exemplified in the use of actors like Sylvester Stallone in the *Rambo* movies and even the 'hunk' factor of Riley within *BTVS* itself, Buffy complies with the visible constraints of conventional femininity. Unlike Sarah Connor in *Terminator 2*, whose obvious muscularity was a visible distancing between herself and her helpless femininity in *Terminator*,[89] or *Xena: Warrior Princess* who is six feet tall and muscular, Buffy is visibly coded with the vulnerability implicit in the conventions of femininity as a consumer item.[90] The factor which assists her invisibility, and therefore her 'unconventional' mission as the Slayer, is also what makes her acceptable on an ongoing basis to a mainstream television audience. The conventions of femininity are necessary to the survival of the show as a consumer product, as much as they are to the survival of the Slayer within the show itself.

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[88] Susan Owen, "Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Vampires, Postmodernity, and Postfeminism", http://daringivens.home.mindspring.com/susanowen1.html, originally published in *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, Summer 1999. Accessed 11/03/ 2001.

[89] As previously discussed, James William Gibson has argued that Sarah Connor and Ripley in the *Alien* movies actually do not disrupt what he calls the culture of the "New Warrior" despite their gender. Their bodies are not coded as overtly feminine, and they are separated from 'other' women who are eroticised, or more closely connected to the domestic sphere. Despite Buffy's separation from 'other girls', she is very attached to other spheres in her life. Her separation is not total, like that of Sarah Connor or Ripley, further blurring the lines demarcating gendered roles and identities, just as television blurs the lines between the public and the private. Gibson, *Warrior Dreams*, pp. 63-64.

[90] See Bordo, *Unbearable Weight*.

While there has always been emphasis on Buffy's difference from other Slayers, her increasingly supernatural abilities reinforce a much more traditionally gendered model for heroism. There are common elements between the construction of Buffy as a warrior and other historical and mythic female heroes, like Joan of Arc who has also been prominent on television and in cinema in the 1990s.[91] Buffy's strength does not stem purely from her own physicality. Just as Joan of Arc mythology draws on ideas of spiritual strength, her gifts in war being bestowed by God, Buffy's position as a "chick with attitude" endowed with special, magical powers recasts and represents this "supernatural", especially feminine, strength. During the first three seasons in particular, the sacrifices Buffy makes in order to be 'the Slayer' lend more than an aura of martyrdom to her stormy adolescent demeanour. Buffy's adolescent understanding of the world she is trying to save is another element of commonality between the two narratives, as are her prophetic dreams or visions. In "Gingerbread" (Season III, 1998), a group of adults led by her own mother attempted to burn Buffy at the stake, an outcome resulting from their inability to understand her role or the nature of the 'hellmouth' upon which they live.[92]

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[91] The importance of Joan of Arc to traditions of female heroism has been reasserted in the late 1990s – and illustrates the ways in which conventions of the female warrior operate both within and between different texts. In 1999 there were 2 films and 1 television miniseries, all of which add to body of visual material dealing with the 'Maid of Orlean': Luc Besson (Dir.), *The Messenger: the Story of Joan of Arc*, 1999; Christian Duguay (Dir.), *Joan of Arc*, CBS Television, 1999; Ronald F. Maxwell (Dir.), *Joan of Arc: the Virgin Warrior*, 1999. In the two cinematic texts there are connections with other films about war and warriors through their directors. Luc Besson directed *The Fifth Element* (1997), a science fiction story in which the ultimate weapon – and chosen one – was a woman; and Ronald Maxell directed *Gettysburg* (1993), a Civil War epic.

[92] The connections to Joan of Arc reappear in Season IV, in "Fear Itself", when Willow (an aspiring witch) dresses as Joan of Arc for Halloween – she too was burned at the stake in "Gingerbread" in the previous season. In Season VI, in "Tabula Rasa" where as a result of a botched spell Buffy and all her friends lose their memories Buffy lacking any identification calls herself Joan. She then proceeds to take charge once she realizes she must be a "super-hero or something".

Buffy's status as 'the chosen one', apart and hidden from the majority of the populace she protects, is not far distant from western traditions which isolate female heroism and classify it as aberrant. Figures like Joan of Arc and Molly Pitcher[93] have been separated from mainstream constructions of feminine collectivity. Joan of Arc stands out as a heroine chosen by God, and Molly Pitcher is a figure whose origins lie in the activities of *a group* of women during the American War of Independence distilled by narrative tradition into one individual.[94] In the twentieth century groups of women have participated in myriad wars but it was not until after the Vietnam War that the roles of women in western militaries ceased to be characterised by the idea that their participation is temporary due to states of emergency – abnormal actions for abnormal times. In debates surrounding the entry of women into the military of western countries such as the United States and Australia, women as a group have either been designated as physically incapable, *or* individuals have been singled out as exceptions. Buffy is not as isolated as either her predecessors, or Kendra, the character who arrives in Sunnydale to take her place as the Slayer after Buffy 'died' (but only for a minute!) at the hands of the Master ("What's My Line", Season II, 1997).[95] This difference between Buffy and other Slayers is actually commented on by Spike, a vampire, who has killed two Slayers in the past. When Buffy makes a narrow escape due to the assistance of her friends, for example her mother hitting Spike over the head with an axe, he whines "A Slayer with family and friends. That wasn't in the brochure" ("School Hard" Season II, 1997). In spite of her "gang", Buffy nonetheless remains a largely hidden entity, although there have been moments when her activities have been

[93] See Chapter One.
[94] The appearance of other Slayers throughout *BTVS* indicates a further playing with this tradition of isolating women's activities through narratives of aberrance. This has become particularly poignant in the final Season, Season VII, where there is evidence of other Slayer activity worldwide.
[95] Kendra was taken from her parents as a baby and raised by her Watcher. She has no ties to the world that exists outside slaying, and no real concept of how those she seeks to protect live.

recognised – albeit not by adults.[96] While this camouflage releases Buffy from some of the constraints which conventionally operate for the gendered warrior, it also reflects part of a broader western tradition of the exclusion, and invisibility, of female heroism.[97]

Despite the ways in which Buffy appears to operate within this tradition of exclusion, it cannot be said that Buffy is a post-feminist hero in the same way Helford believes Xena to be. Despite Buffy's mother's argument that all the Slayer does is 'react' to evil, whilst never being able to eradicate it ("Gingerbread" Season III), Buffy never sees the problem of evil as being black and white enough to be able to stamp it out completely. Reacting to the specificity of each situation in context is what sets her apart from the black and white moralities that underpin the masculine heroes of westerns and war stories, and those who believe that violence is regenerative. While the Watchers' Council promotes the Slayer as "one girl in all the world", throughout seasons I – IV we have evidence of at least two other Slayers operating at the same time, even if they are not supposed to be operating in the same place.[98] Kendra appears in Season II after Buffy's momentary demise at the hands of the Master at the end of Season I, and Faith arrives in Sunnydale in Season III following Kendra's demise. Both Kendra and Faith serve as useful foils to Buffy in their own way, Kendra as someone who obeys the rules, where Giles had felt the Slayers' Handbook to be of no use for Buffy; and Faith who obeys none of the rules

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[96] In "Prom" (Season III), Buffy is named "class protector", without whom the senior class would not have come through their school careers with the lowest mortality rate in Sunnydale history.

[97] One factor that negates this invisibility is the television audience – the audience *sees* Buffy in all her guises for what she is, while in order for the plot lines to operate other characters within the show may not. The popularity of *BTVS* means that while the narrative constraints operating *within* the text swathe Buffy in the traditional invisibility cloak of femininity, the medium of television renders the cloak, rather than the girl, transparent.

[98] Throughout Season VII, the 'one girl in all the world' mythology is thoroughly discredited, culminating with Buffy 'activating' *all* the 'potential' Slayers all around the world. This activation means that the fight of the Slayer does not continue in isolation, and breaks with the tradition of seeing female heroism as aberrant.

and was utilised as a means of presenting the much darker and overtly hyper-sexualized, self Buffy cannot allow her to be. Faith represents the idea that just-warriors are above the law and that their continuous fight for right allows them to be freed of responsibility where Buffy, on the other hand, always feels that being the Slayer is a responsibility and is always aware of its weight.

Susan Hopkins also places Buffy in the category of the post-feminist individual but she ignores a number of elements that contradict this position.[99] In associating Buffy with the "Girl Power" movement and its implication in consumer culture, and reinforcing this through the illustration of Buffy star Sarah Michelle Gellar's role as a model for the cosmetics company Maybelline, Hopkins places Buffy firmly as an individual(istic) post-feminist icon. While this position does have some merit, it is all too simplistic an analysis of *BTVS* both from within and outside the textual boundaries of the show. It also ignores the importance of being able to construct a character who is evaluated and succeeds according to her abilities, rather than being judged by collective attributes assigned to her sex in the context of military or warrior identity. Outside the show, *BTVS* is very much about community, and not a homogeneous one based on the consumption of cosmetics. Rather, there is a diverse range of communit*ies* which have grown up around the programme. There are online discussion lists, fan clubs, fan fiction websites, conventions, and academic journals. The input and importance of these communities is often acknowledged within the text itself, with fan suggestions, and critics' complaints built into certain episodes.[100]

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[99] Susan Hopkins, *Girl Heroes: The New Force in Popular Culture*, Hazard Press, Christchurch, 2002, pp.111 - 118.

[100] Anti Buffy criticism from Christian groups who opposed the depiction of witchcraft and the occult are what led to the episode "Gingerbread" which satirized the small-mindedness and tunnel vision that leads to an exclusion and attempts at the eradication of difference.

Within the programme Buffy operates very much within her own community.[101] She has her Watcher Giles who has grown in ability and empathy over the seasons and she has the Scooby Gang which comprises her best friends Willow and Xander, as well as others depending upon which season is being examined. Buffy, although the one girl in all the world, is very much dependent upon being a part of her team. So much so that in Season IV she and the gang nearly fail to stop Adam because as a result of trouble stirred up by the vampire Spike. Spike plants the seeds of doubt among the Scoobies about the loyalty of each member of the group that he calls "The Yoko Factor" (Season IV, 2000).[102] At the culmination of a horrendous argument Buffy retorts "I'm starting to understand why there's no ancient prophecy about a chosen one…and her friends". Yet it is the pulling together of her friends that enables the 'big bad' of the season to be defeated. In "Primeval", the penultimate episode of the season, the abilities of Giles, Xander, and Willow join to inhabit Buffy's body whilst calling on the power that has existed since the first Slayer. They literally merge their separate talents to form a 'combo' Buffy. While Buffy functions as an autonomous individual, she is also very much a part of a team, and a part of a community that has slowly extended between seasons.[103]

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[101] Buffy's 'community' is not rigidly defined, however. There is a fluidity to the way 'community' is defined and this is illustrated through a number of characters. Most poignantly this is illustrated through Spike who cooperates with Buffy to bring about the downfall of Angelus in Season II. In Season IV, as a result of a microchip implanted in his head, he is rendered unable to hurt human beings. He then, reluctantly and inconsistently, in Season IV helps the Scoobies, and is almost 'one of the gang' in Seasons V and VI. He is even more closely assimilated in Season VII. Spike moves between the demon community and the human community. He is in fact reviled by certain sections of the demon community in Season IV and V because as a result of the chip he is only able to kill the 'non-human', and since he is by nature a killer he undertakes this with relish. Anya, Xander's girlfriend, is another example of the fluidity of communities in *BTVS* –she is an ex vengeance demon who falls in love with Xander. The failings of the human community are very much in evidence in Season VI at Xander and Anya's wedding.

[102] In fact that is what the episode is called.

[103] In opposition to Hopkins' very individualistic approach to the text, many of the essays in Rhonda Wilcox & David Lavery (eds), *Fighting the Forces: What's at Stake in Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham Maryland, 2002, deal at length with the themes of community inherent in *BTVS*. See particularly Rhonda V. Wilcox, "'Who Died and Made Her the Boss?': Patterns of Mortality in Buffy", pp. 3-17.

The episode "The Yoko Factor" is particularly significant when viewed in the context of the military conflicts and constructions throughout Season IV. Buffy discovers she cannot fit into the military organization, "The Initiative". She operates too much outside the necessary sublimation of autonomy required by any military institution in an episode called "The I in Team". While Buffy's body may be considered 'docile' in the context of mainstream conventions of femininity as a consumer product, her character is disruptive of the norms of military masculinity. While Buffy does operate as a part of a group, it is by each member of the group's individual skills that they are recognised, and Buffy does tend to take the leading role in most of their operations. However, there is no evidence that the group functions upon the premise of power being asserted upon subordinates, unlike in military outfits. The title of this episode is a blatant reference to military and athletic training that asserts 'there is no I in team' despite recent advertising that seems to deny this in its attempt to reach and recruit contemporary young people. In the U.S. there was some controversy over a new campaign for the U.S Army with the slogan "An Army of One" which appeared during *BTVS* during Season V early in 2001. An appeal to increasingly individualistic youth culture does not appear to be congruous with emphasis on cohesion and team work.[104] However, "An Army of One" does appear to stress the importance of individual skills and abilities within a team, and this may indeed be important to the recruitment of women to the Armed Forces. This is of particular significance in a culture where there is still a strong tendency to assess the abilities of women based upon assumptions about women as a group, rather than upon the abilities of women as individuals. The placement of some of this advertising during *BTVS* rather than more exclusively during programs with a more heavily male dominant audience, implies a greater emphasis on recruiting women than in previous campaigns.[105] The slogan, "An Army of One" is

[104] Truscott, "Marketing an Army of Individuals";Dao, "Ads Now Seek Recruits for 'An Army of One'.

[105] Truscott, "Marketing an Army of Individuals". It is interesting that in the U.S. and Australia the Defence Forces place advertising during *BTVS*, but in Australia at least advertising for Maybelline that features Sarah Michelle Gellar does not appear during the

particularly fitting for an audience tuned into a chosen one fighting to save the world. Buffy does not fight in isolation and neither do army recruits, but this should never undermine the benefits of individual capability.

As previously stated, constructions of the soldier were directly introduced to *BTVS* during Season II. As a result of a spell cast by the evil chaos-worshipping sorcerer, Ethan Rayne, people became what their Halloween costumes were – they literally became what they wore. Xander, one of Buffy's male sidekicks, became a seasoned warrior by dressing up as a soldier. Xander is a sometimes bumbling, often witty character who in previous episodes often needed to be rescued. His 'transformation' through donning a uniform is not unlike rhetoric associated with the ways in which the military claims to 'make men out of boys'. This sartorial metamorphosis is a playful juxtaposition to Buffy's 'camouflage', parts of which are her trappings of conventional femininity.[106] Play with post-Vietnam cinematic constructions of the warrior, and soldier-narratives, continues throughout the series until direct reference is made to *Apocalypse Now* at the end of Season IV (1999), concluding the season's main narrative of conflict between the Slayer and the military unit named "the Initiative".

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programme. The personas of Buffy the warrior, and Sarah Michelle Gellar the cosmetics pin-up are not conflated intertextually through the interspersion of advertising in the *BTVS* time slot. There are, however, references to Sarah Michelle Gellar's other pursuits within the show, for example in Season V, Spike's apparent disdain for Buffy's "shampoo commercial hair".

[106] As an interesting counterpoint, Buffy is transformed into an Eighteenth-Century lady – the very epitome of helpless femininity and dependent upon the 'musket' of her male companion Xander, rather than on her own initiative and fighting prowess. It is possible to interpret this juxtaposition as exemplifying the ways in which martial masculinity cannot function in the presence of women who are not in need of protection. In transforming the Slayer, Xander's soldier-guy identity is able to come to the fore. But once the spell is broken and Buffy is back to her normal self, one of the first shots we see is of Xander raising his gun, only to find it has been transformed back into a toy. For a discussion of the ways in which masculinity in *BTVS* is often dependent upon weaponry, particularly the gun and the way this functions to articulate the overcompensation evident in the phallic nature of guns and the difference between the Slayer and the Soldier, see Stevie Simkin, " "You Hold Your Gun like a Sissy Girl: Firearms and Anxious Masculinity in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*", conference paper given at the Blood, Text and Fears: Reading Around *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* conference, University of East Anglia, Norwich, 19-20 October 2002.

Xander's 'soldier-guy' experience, and references to *Apocalypse Now*, connect the body of post-Vietnam cinematic texts, and the fundamental flaws of a masculinist construction of war, depicted through "the Initiative". This depiction includes many of the fissures that became visible as a result of the Vietnam War, like the abrogation of blame for My Lai and other similar events when soldiers and officers were 'just obeying orders'.[107] The fear of an enemy who is difficult to identify is also present, particularly in vampires who "pass for" human. The eventual separation of military from government is evident in both the Initiative and post-war analyses of the "loss" of the Vietnam War. Indeed, the Government is blamed for the (ab)use of project 314 – the project headed by Professor Maggie Walsh which attempted to create the ultimate soldier by harnessing demon energies and attributes and literally grafting them onto the bodies of men - which cost so many soldiers their lives, just as the high-brass and US Government are often blamed for "losing" the Vietnam War.[108] When Buffy enlists Xander's aid in gaining access to the Initiative bunker, his girlfriend Anya complains that "It's not like he was in the Nam, he was GI Joe for one night". This statement is Anya's way of expressing her concern for Xander's safety, and reminds the audience that Xander is by no means always a warrior ("Goodbye Iowa", Season IV, 1999).[109] It is also a way of

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[107] My Lai was a village in Vietnam where a massacre of men, women, and children took place in 1968. The name My Lai has become synonymous with unspeakable atrocities, and has become even more infamous for the way in which punishment for the perpetrators was never really occurred. They were "following orders", and even Lt. Calley (the officer in charge of the company who "took" My Lai), was not imprisoned for very long, he too used this defence.

[108] Jeffords discusses this separation as another means of reconstituting the integrity of the warrior in post Vietnam society. The betrayal of troops on the ground meant a shifting of responsibility for their actions and added to the grievances of returning veterans. In Season V Riley intensely distrusts 'the Government' but rejoins a crack military unit upon assurances that it was not a government operation being embarked upon, but a military one.

[109] Anya's complaint is also a potential signifier for the difference between *BTVS* with its butt-kicking blonde hero, and the previously mentioned texts which form the post-Vietnam representational tradition. It is also important here that Xander's experience does not render him a 'warrior' for all time – unlike the ways in which mythologies of the soldier work, extending the capacity for being a warrior to everyman, particularly those with military experience, regardless of whether they had been on the battlefield, or in the laundryroom. It also negates the tendency to see soldiering as the main defining

overtly connecting representations of the Vietnam War and Buffy's ongoing quest to wrest the world from the grasp of apocalyptic demons – the Hellmouth is a constant reminder of how apocalypse *can* be now. Xander's soldier identity is temporary, but is not threatened by a woman giving orders, or slaying, and there do not appear to be any negative side effects from his experience. However, the "real" soldiers, the Initiative commandoes, are threatened by the feminine identity of the Slayer. She disrupts the cohesion and integrity of their identities which hinge upon the dominance of heterosexual masculinity.[110]

The connections between frontier mythologies and war did not disappear with the Vietnam War, despite its not having been a 'just' war.[111] The connections between cowboys, soldiers and the moral righteousness upon which 'regeneration through violence' is dependent, are all present in Season IV when Slayer is pitted against Soldier. Just prior to Buffy's discovery that Riley is a commando, she is herself pitted against the vengeful spirit of the Native American people who inhabited the region prior to white settlement, and were wiped out during the colonisation of the West Coast ("Pangs", Season IV, 1999). This conflict centres on Thanksgiving celebrations which, as Willow points out, ignore the decimation of Indian peoples and cultures that were a part of the pilgrims' domination of the New World.[112] This episode makes explicit the moral ambiguities that Buffy, as the Slayer, must confront and accommodate. The research and quest for understanding of the evil that they face, and the Scoobies' recognition that there is no such thing as an 'unambiguous' evil

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characteristic of all those who have served for the rest of their lives, even when it may only have been for a very short period of time.

[110] Initiative chief Professor Maggie Walsh is the exception here within *BTVS*, and her betrayal of her 'boys' is the ultimate one, making the break with post Vietnam constructions in which women are allied with those who would ultimately betray the soldiers on the ground much more complex, and by no means clean. That Professor Walsh is an intellectual – not a soldier – herself, reinforces the gendered boundaries of the masculine warrior, but also establishes a conservative pattern, despite the subversive potential of *BTVS* as a whole.

[111] See Chapter Four.

[112] Much as Australia Day celebrations ignore the war waged upon Aboriginal people following white settlement.

is in direct opposition to the black and white attitudes with which Riley and his commandoes face the world. As heirs to a martial tradition dependent upon the sporadic amnesia which allows the regeneration of masculinity through violence, the commandos shoot to kill, and do not ask questions until their world begins to fragment. In the final episode of Season IV, "Restless", Riley is actually depicted as "cowboy guy" in Willow's dreamscape. A caricature, rather than a character, 'cowboy guy' stands in for the all-American boy from Iowa whose traditions stretch from the frontier to the present, ignoring the rights of indigenous people to their own land and the massacres that ensued, ignoring the participation of women on the frontier and in all the wars that have occurred up to the present, and presenting a world view that sees only two categories - good versus evil.[113] And as an extension of this there must always be a strict delineation between protector and protected, masculine and feminine.

[113] This 'cowboy' culture is what cannot cope with the threat of terrorism which does not recognize 'rules' of the game which the U.S. plays. Hannah, "Manhood and the 'War on Terrorism'". Previous seasons have made oblique references to the Western and cowboy culture – particularly the association of white hats with good guys and black hats with bad guys. In "Lie to Me" (Season II), Buffy asks Giles to lie to her, tell her reassuring things that will make her job easier despite the fact that evil is never black and white. Giles then says "the good guys are always stalward and true, the bad guys easily distinguished by their pointy horns or black hats." In Season III, in "The Wish" and "Doppelgangland" when an alternative reality is formed as a result of a wish made that Buffy had never come to Sunnydale, the vampires have taken over. Giles and a small band of students fight them largely unsuccessfully, but are dubbed "the white-hats" by an evil version of Willow.

Figure 18 Riley as 'Cowboy Guy' in Willow's dreamscape.

["Restless", *BTVS*, Season IV, 2000]

Figure 19 Buffy visibly disrupts the masculine uniformity of the Initiative through her brightly coloured, and feminine attire. [“The I In Team”, *BTVS*, Season IV, 2000].

One of the ways Buffy rends the seamlessness of masculine warrior identity is through her visible difference, and her refusal to operate completely outside the Initiative's boundaries. Military uniforms are crucial as signifiers of military masculinity, turning men into soldiers and separating them from civilian society. Women in the military have found the wearing of uniforms a mixed blessing, forced to subsume their gender identity in institutions coded by their very clothing as masculine.[114] Buffy's refusal to don a uniform when temporarily inducted into the Initiative ensures her continued separation from the group's identity, and can be construed as a refusal of the gender camouflage so integral to the functioning of late twentieth-century military institutions [Figure 19]. When pursuing a Polgara demon, Initiative chief Maggie Walsh says "…you might want to be suited up for this", to which Buffy replies "Oh you mean the cammo and stuff. I thought about it but on me it's going to look all 'Private Benjamin'. Don't worry I've patrolled in this halter many times" ("The I in Team", Season IV, 2000). Buffy's maintenance of a visible female identity from *within* the masculine warrior group is even more disruptive than the inability to immediately identify women in uniform as women.

Buffy's visible femininity in no way detracts from her performance as the Slayer, mocking the masculine coding of warrior tradition and the military. A "girl" - no matter how powerful - is a threat rather than an asset to this code, and while Riley is initially immune to the threat Buffy poses to his masculinity, other members of his 'team' are not. Forrest, a fellow commando, complains bitterly at his perception of the privileging of Buffy over the rest of the team, despite recurrent proof of her fighting prowess: "It just isn't right…I've always been Riley's second in command instead he picks a girl" ("The I in Team", Season IV, 2000).[115] Where *BTVS*

[114] See Herbert, *Camouflage Isn't Only for Combat*.

[115] Forrest, however, is not the only one uncomfortable with Buffy's strength and her identity as a hero, and a girl. During Season IV Riley is outwardly attracted to Buffy's strength and her capacity to make decisions and deal with the consequences. By Season V

successfully subverts many mainstream traditions for representing gender, its track record in terms of racial coding has not been so outstanding. Forrest resents Buffy's presence the most, and he is also ultimately transformed by Adam into a demonic killing machine [Figure 21]. Forrest also happens to be the only African American character with any significant role in the whole season.

From this perspective *BTVS* has mirrored the racist representations exhibited in *G.I. Jane* and *Courage Under Fire*, where the masculinity most threatened by the presence of a white woman is that of a non-white man. Forrest is the most sexist in his comments about co-ed students on campus, and constantly talks about girls in the context of how "beddable" they are. His singularity also possibly reflects the difficulties the armed forces have had in recruiting and retaining African American and Hispanic recruits into the special-forces.[116] That Forrest is the only soldier we see succumbing to Adam's demonic designs, reflects traditions in western narratives that depict coloured people as corruptible and more prone to the primitive aspects of violence. In this instance Forrest provides the perfect foil to Buffy, the incorruptible white woman, who stops Adam's designs rather than providing the 'neat pile of body parts' he desires. He also provides a useful juxtaposition to Riley, who while he has been 'penetrated' (with a behaviour modification chip embedded in him above his thoracic nerve), is not visibly seamed in the same way Forrest is once Adam has finished reconstructing him. Black masculinity is coded in this way as lesser to white identity of either gender.

Riley has become increasingly uncomfortable with Buffy's independence and super-hero status. Graham, another of his compatriots, points out that Riley still has a sense of belonging with his unit and has the insight to recognise that Riley cannot be content as "the mission's boyfriend". Riley constantly needs to assert and prove his fighting prowess, and his masculinity. Buffy has no such problems with her gender identity. Riley, so much a part of the black/white, good/evil paradigm rejoins the military in Season V, unable to cope with Buffy's need to be brave and independent.

[116] See above.

Riley's body is imbued with all the traditions of U.S. masculine martial identity, from the cowboy through to the veteran of the Vietnam War. In "Primeval" Riley cuts into his own chest with a piece of broken glass in order to remove the behaviour modification chip that Adam has activated. This scene is reminiscent of the scene in *Rambo*, in which John Rambo stitches his own wound. Riley, too, has been betrayed by the institutions he believed in, and like *Rambo* sequels, eventually goes back to a military life albeit covertly (like Rambo in his missions back to Vietnam and then Afghanistan). The symbolic associations between the white male body and Christian martyrdom are present in Riley, but Riley is ultimately flawed, and the one who saves the world (a lot) is the ultimate white girlie girl – Buffy.

Other examples of the ways in which racial identity does not transgress traditional representational structures are directly related to the Slayer. Kendra, the Slayer who arrives in Sunnydale in Season II, is black and has what can be described as a West Indian accent. Kendra, while being technically proficient as a Slayer, is ultimately revealed to be less able than Buffy, and she dies at the end of Season II. Lynne Edwards has analysed Kendra as an extension of the "tragic Mulatta myth", a myth that operates as a part of the stereotypes into which black women have been transformed. The 'mulatta' is a fair skinned young woman who is sexualised by both black and white communities but accepted by neither.[117] The tragedy for the mulatta is that while she is able to 'pass' as white, she is never accepted, although she is treated as a sexual object. Edwards sees the tragedy of Kendra's fate, and her threat to the order of things in the Buffyverse, not in her sexuality, but in the legitimacy of her claim to be *the* Slayer. With Buffy still alive, Kendra threatens Buffy's position as one girl in all the world, and must be marginalized and even trivialized. Buffy makes fun of Kendra's speech and her dedication to her calling. She makes

[117] Lynne Edwards, "Slaying in Black and White: Kendra as Tragic Mulatta in *Buffy*", in Wilcox & Lavery (eds), *Fighting the Forces*, p.88.

no attempt to understand Kendra on Kendra's own terms, but rather seeks to educate her on how to have a life – in Western terms – as well as being the Slayer. Kent A. Ono makes similar assertions regarding race and *BTVS*, and sees Kendra as a threat to the entire fabric of Buffy's world:

> In contrast to blonde Buffy, Kendra's presence seems to pose a threat to the uniqueness of Buffy, to her whiteness, and perhaps to her individuality. The fact that Kendra is a woman of color who ultimately and unexpectedly has her throat slit is just one more instance of a woman (of color) who cannot be a hero.[118]

The construction of warrior identity on television remains white, even if no longer exclusively male. Kendra's situation is echoed in the only vision of Slayers past portrayed in Season V, when Spike reminisces about the two Slayers he has killed. One, during the Boxer Rebellion, is Chinese and the other is in New York during the 1970s - and she is black. Buffy herself has died not once but twice (once at the end of Season 1 and then again at the end of Season 5), but the first time she was resuscitated and the second time she was resurrected. Not only is it possible for a white woman to be a warrior on television, but she too can have access to the iconography of Christianity that is dependent upon the sacrifice of self for the greater good, and mythologies of resurrection. No such potency is allowed for those who are not white.

Another problematic construction of racial identity in Slayer tradition is the depiction of the first Slayer [Figure 20]. The power of the first Slayer is called upon by Buffy and her friends to help defeat Adam. We then see the first Slayer try to kill Buffy, Giles, Willow and Xander in their dreams in the final episode of the Season ("Restless"). The first Slayer

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[118] Kent A. Ono, "To Be a Vampire on *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*: Race and ("Other") Socially Marginalizing Positions on Horror TV", in Elyce Rae Helford (ed), *Fantasy Girls*, pp.163-186, p.174.

is depicted as black and primitive. She has no voice of her own but is instead mediated through Tara, Willow's girlfriend: "I have no speech, no name. I live in the action of death, the blood cry, the gaping wound. I am destruction". This dreamscape presents the impression of evolution between the first Slayer and Buffy, an evolution that embodies the primitive in the black body of the first Slayer, and civilization in the blonde, white Buffy. Buffy is constantly at pains to nuance Slaying so she is not just a killer. She is fighting a war and Slaying is not killing nor is it murder, just as killing on the battlefield in a war needs to be distinguished from murder for soldiers. Buffy's response to the first Slayer's accusations that she has been diverted from her true course is to say: "I walk, I talk, I shop, I sneeze". Buffy constructs herself as an individual with a name and speech, and the capacity to live *in* the world, rather than be relegated to its margins. Buffy as a white woman has broken through the constraints of collective feminine identity and exists through the force of her individuality. Such a course is not open to those whose identities are not only gendered but also racialised as 'other'.

Figure 20 The first Slayer appears primitive in contrast to the white and blonde Buffy.
["Restless", *BTVS*, Season IV, 2000]

Figure 21 Forrest after his demonic 'transformation' at the hands of Adam. ["Primeval", *BTVS*, Season IV, 2000]

Figure 22 Adam – the ultimate soldier made up of human, demon and machine parts. ["Goodbye Iowa", *BTVS*, Season IV, 2000.]

Impenetrability and stability are two elements of masculine warrior identity which are simultaneously crucial to and constantly embattled within this construction.[119] Impenetrability presents the ultimate paradox for the soldier: while he must appear impenetrable, his bodily integrity is constantly under threat when in combat. Military jargon reduces dead soldiers to a 'body count', and weaponry potentially reduces a whole to less than the sum of its parts. The construction of "Adam" by the heads of the Initiative inverts the appearance of bodily integrity for the ultimate soldier [Figure 22]. "Adam" and the reconstructed Forrest are constructed from "parts" – human, demon and machine – each part welded onto the other and visible to viewers and characters alike. In terms of (hetero)sexual symbolism, for masculinity to remain dominant it must appear impenetrable or risk being coded as feminized. This rigidity of masculine identity contrasts directly with ways in which the feminine has been associated with fluidity, and this fluidity is threatening to the solid stability of the masculine warrior.[120] The penetrability of the masculine body implies the "threat" of homosexuality and a passivity that is anathema to heterosexual masculinity.[121] Partly as a result of this fluidity, penetration does not pose the same threat to representations of femininity as it does to the iconography of the male warrior hero. Buffy has herself thrice been bitten by a vampire,[122] and her identity remained intact. She was not transformed into a vampire nor did she die. Buffy also wields weapons which 'penetrate' in order to slay vampires proving that the Slayer, like her prey, is both penetrating and penetrable. Warriors are also both of these things, but the latter factor must constantly be denied in order to maintain male-warrior mythologies. Penetration perverts and violates masculine warrior identity as can be seen in the character of "Adam". The female warrior-hero embodied by the Slayer has not yet been punctured to her

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[119] See Chapter Two.
[120] See Theweleit, *Male Fantasies* (v. 1).
[121] See Chapter Two.
[122] By the Master in Season I, "Prophecy Girl", by Angel her boyfriend "Graduation Day", Pt 1, Season III, 1999, and once by Dracula in the first episode of Season V.

detriment and requires no such fiction to establish and maintain her potency.

Transformation is crucial to soldier identity, and yet it is also a process that undermines the stability of the construct. Soldiering 'makes' men in direct contradiction to claims that warrior identity is a *natural* expression of masculinity.[123] Within Season IV of *BTVS*, although Buffy's strength is *super*natural it is still a part of her, while Riley and his fellow commandos are unsuspectingly fed "meds" to induce super-strength. This chemical tampering with the male body can be viewed as an extension of the ways in which the military transforms men into soldiers. It also resonates with stories that have emerged from the Gulf War of soldiers being "immunised" with experimental drugs.[124] The use of this kind of reference also brings to mind the casting of actors like Sylvestor Stallone in Vietnam War film texts, his steroid-pumped body enhancing the visibility of his heroics.[125] Even after Riley stops taking his meds, he is still shown, torso exposed doing press-ups upon waking.[126] His body *is* his identity as a soldier, and as a man who can keep up with the Slayer. The hyper-muscularity of the Initiative commandoes is an expression of their masculinity but it is *not* natural. The ultimate soldier, "Adam" is visibly coded as masculine, but is unnatural in the extreme and is constructed in a laboratory.[127] Like the vampires they hunt, the Initiative commandoes have

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[123] See Chapter Two.

[124] Neil Miller, "Immunization Theory vs Reality: Expose on Vaccinations", 1996, excerpted in "Experimental Vaccines and Gulf War Syndrome", http://thinktwice.com/gulfwar.htm Accessed April 2001. Diana Washington-Valdez "Military Bans Anti-Nerve Drugs Linked to Gulf-War Syndrome", *El Paso Times*, August 24 1999, http://www.ngwrc.org/Archives/Misc/WedAug25130001 1999.asp, Accessed April 2001.

[125] Tasker, *Spectacular Bodies*, p.78.

[126] Riley is depicted doing these exercises with his body very much on display, much like Jordan O'Neil in *G.I. Jane* or Sarah Connor in *Terminator 2*. Unlike these two women these exercises do not portray a sexual presence that undermines his capacity as a warrior. Riley doing press-ups is used to illustrate ideas of regimented discipline and an incapacity to function without routine and without being given orders.

[127] In the film version of *BTVS* the 'naturalness' of Buffy's femininity is placed in direct opposition to the 'unnaturalness' of vampires. When Buffy is in the proximity of vampires she experiences abdominal cramping to which her direct response is "Great, my secret

been 'transformed', and the ultimate transformation is the creation of a monster.

Buffy the Vampire Slayer has sought to break through many of the conventions governing the construction of warriors and war stories with varying degrees of success. Buffy is a much more effective transgressor of these conventions than many of her cinematic sisters, partly as a result of the way in which television and television programmes work. The medium that allowed war to enter the private domain of the home has also been the one medium which has been most successful at portraying the female warrior hero. This medium, however, comes with its own constraints, such as the need for Buffy and other female warriors to comply with mainstream standards of femininity in terms of looks and body type. No text can ever completely break with the representational traditions from which it emerges, even as it sets out to expose the ways mythologies and narrative traditions work. There will always be contradictions within the way that different identities are constructed, but feminine identity is often more accommodating to contradictions and ambiguities that masculine identity, which is so dependent upon coherence and stability. Buffy fights evil, but her world is far from black and white, and the decisions that she makes are never without consequences. Buffy has not taken orders since she quit the Watcher's Council in Season III (and even before then she never obeyed unquestioningly), and she has never sought to abrogate her responsibility through a hierarchy of command. Where martial masculinity requires a myth of individuality, but a reality of hierarchy and subordination, Buffy

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weapon is PMS". Merrick, her Watcher, responds that this is merely the natural response on the part of the Slayer. That menstruation can be constructed as an asset in the battlefield is in direct conflict with a lot of statements made about women in the battle-field. That menstruation as a phenomenon experienced only by women can be an asset, enhances the subversion of masculine warrior iconography which relies on anything feminine being detrimental to successful participation in combat. This emphasis on biological processes being an asset is missing from the television series and may partly be due to the impossibility of maintaining it as a feature over a long series. However, it may also be due to the program's prime time television slot, where it is still largely unacceptable to make unmasked comments about menstruation.

breaks through mythologies of the collective weakness of women and establishes an individual identity. However, her importance as an individual does not entirely negate the existence of others or their abilities. She may have been ‘one girl in all the world’ but she cannot, and does not, function effectively alone.

Conclusion

Examination of the complexities of the gendered body in combat reveals some important analytical absences, and leads inevitably to consideration of a number of significant themes and issues, to redress those absences, and to reshape the possibilities for conceptualising the gendered warrior. In both Australia and the U.S. women have been marginalised from core narratives of war, and hence from definitions of national identity. The masculine, white, heterosexual soldier dominates these narratives. However, even in examinations that utilise gender as a tool of analysis, the masculinity of soldier identity is often treated as 'natural'. Despite the ways in which the military has been regarded as the last bastion of masculinity, the cultural construction of such martial identities has been under-analysed. It has also rarely been examined in conjunction with histories that seek to rectify the silences surrounding the multiplicity of roles women have played in war and peacetime militaries. This thesis has sought to unravel and demystify the ways in which soldier-identities are gendered, revealing the instabilities and contradictions that simultaneously underpin and threaten the supremacy of military masculinities. My analysis of soldier-identities and mythologies has relied on various intersecting concepts: the tensions that exist between individual and collective identities; the differences between, and contradictions inherent, in the mythic, symbolic and material aspects of soldiers' bodies; the importance of military experience as 'transformative', turning boys into soldiers, soldiers into men, designating heroes, and continuing the idea that when women don a uniform they are still not transformed into warriors; 'gender camouflage', which upholds the perception that the relationship between soldiering and masculinity is a natural one, and necessitates a subsuming of femininity in female military personnel; and the importance of the 'speculative' realm of popular culture in both upholding and subverting the politics of representing gender and combat.

The complex and often uneasy relationship between individual and collective bodies and identities, and the ways they are gendered, has constituted a major focus. Molly Pitcher narratives exemplify the ways in which the collective actions of many women were distilled through a single individual in order to camouflage the active participation of women in America's Revolutionary War. Similarly, large numbers of women enlisted in the militaries of both Australia and the U.S. during the Second World War: however, their contributions have been marginalised through the designation of their actions as a response to an individual crisis, rather than as a part of an ongoing history of military women. Vivien Bullwinkel, and other Australian nurses, underwent the shocking ordeal of being held prisoner by the Japanese during the Second World War bravely, and stoically, but are again, not incorporated into the ANZAC tradition. Contemporary critics have voiced concern about American servicewomen being taken prisoner, or coming home in body bags, ignoring previous wars in which women have survived P.O.W. camps, or been killed. The isolation of women from mainstream war narratives denies the possibility of a tradition for female warriors, and adds to the designation of military women as aberrant, separated from norms of femininity in the wider community and from their male comrades.

Individual physical capabilities have been glossed over, or ignored, in attempts to maintain the demarcation between soldiers and women. Instead, assumptions about feminine weakness have been emphasised within ideologies that align the task of protection with masculinity. Physical fitness standards treat the masculine body as the norm, reinforcing the notion that it is only women who are gendered – an important form of gender camouflage. If the masculine body is the norm, then it is possible to gloss over the instability of constructions of masculinity, and the mythologies overlaying the materiality of the male form. When men join the military they become a part of the collective, transformed from men

into soldiers. When women join the military, they must conform to fitness standards that were not designed with the specificity of their bodies in mind, wearing uniforms and using equipment that has similarly been designed for use by men. The failure of individual women to succeed in such an environment has been used to decry the collective weakness of women. The success of individual women, like that of Linda Bray or Kara Hultgreen, has seen them treated as aberrations, and been undermined by assertions that they have succeeded at the expense of men.

Understanding the interrelated complexities of transformation and gender camouflage is vital in the historical deconstruction of soldier-identities, and the war stories of which they are a part. Gender camouflage is the means by which masculine soldier identity persists as a construct that is not perceived as gendered, enhancing the notion that only women are gendered and therefore that the female soldier is both an oxymoron and an aberration. Gender camouflage is also the means by which military women have sought to blend in with their male comrades by hiding overt signs of femininity. This camouflaging of femininity is necessary in order not to disrupt the seamlessly masculine appearance of the military, and to assist the functioning of women in an institution that defines itself as masculine. The camouflaging process however, has also provoked unease when women have not been easy to identify as women. The power imbued in heterosexual masculinity, which requires all signification of femininity to be externalised, is destabilised when women enter the ranks and are not easily identified as women. It is difficult to discern whether or not it is more threatening for women to appear 'feminine' and yet still as capable as men, or for their femininity to be camouflaged thereby making it difficult to distinguish between men and women. This camouflage potentially breaks down the potency of visible difference that is so important to hegemonic masculinity and reveals the performativity of the gendered body in uniform. The intricacies of transforming an individual into a soldier,

therefore, are dependent upon camouflaging both femininity and the instabilities of masculinity.

Some of the most important insights in this study pertain to the instability of masculinity and the devices used to efface it. Transformation is crucial to masculine soldier identity, but it must be constructed in a coherent way that reinforces the association of strength with masculinity, and decries the penetrability of the material body. Boys are transformed into soldiers, and through soldiering they become men. The mythology of the coherent, impenetrable, masculine soldier body is assisted by the exclusion of the feminine, as well as martial traditions that imbue fallen soldiers with eternal youth. Memorials are erected to keep them, and a particular version of martial masculinity, alive in popular memory. The construction of heroism allows individuality to be maintained as a link between the military and other public expressions of masculinity. Individual heroes are constructed both despite, and because of, the subsumption of individual identity and the strictly demarcated hierarchies that are necessary for effective military functioning. The important difference between male heroes, and female heroes, is that heroism is incorporated into general constructions of masculinity and bridges the gap between servicemen, and men in the broader population. Constructions of masculinity allow for the possibility that all men can be heroes, just as military masculinities facilitate the perspective that all soldiers can be warriors – even if they are supply clerks or cooks. Heroism is not a part of constructions of femininity and sets female heroes apart, just as servicewomen are never allowed to be warriors.

My examination of the historical perspectives on different wars and perceptions of soldiers reinforces the instability of soldier identity, an instability which is in constant tension with those mythologies that operate to emphasize continuity, rather than change. The revelation of the ways in which historical specificities are effaced in the construction of coherent

martial mythologies is crucial to their analysis and understanding. Recurring reference to the ANZAC legend in Australia, for example, reinforces a tradition in which women have not been allowed to take part. Even experiences that had been treated as anomalous to ANZAC mythology have been incorporated, as has been amply demonstrated in the ways cinematic texts have used the First World War as an allegory for the Vietnam War experience. The ongoing prominence of ANZAC mythology that focuses on bravery in the face of defeat and sacrifice for peace, rather than victory, has allowed the Australian services a much easier transition into the role of peacekeeping than has been the case in the U.S. It has also encouraged the continuing invisibility of Australian servicewomen, except when the issues of sexual harassment or women being allowed into the infantry arise in the media. Both of these issues highlight the sexualization of women's bodies, and constructions of collective feminine weakness.

War in the U.S. has been associated with the forging and regeneration of a robust, white, heterosexual, masculinity. While civil war and revolution have facilitated the construction of a few female heroes, such as Molly Pitcher, these figures, and women in the modern military, have been isolated from historical narratives and from their male counterparts. Where women have performed millions of tasks that keep the military moving, from the War of Independence through to the present conflict in Iraq, they have remained largely invisible. Narrative devices such as the association of women's service only with times of national emergency, have contributed to the silences that surround women's contributions and capabilities. The threat that capable military women pose to the seamlessness of military masculinity can be seen in this construction of invisibility. Other illustrations of just how potentially dangerous the female warrior is can be seen in the negative responses written to newspapers that have appeared since the Gulf War of 1990-1991, and the tactics of undermining the success of individual military women. It is also obvious in the recurring reconstruction of war stories in popular cinema

and television that have glorified the foot-soldier and members of the special-forces, emphasizing the connection between ordinary men and heroism and perpetuating the absence of women from stories of war and national identity. The bodies of male soldiers have been re-membered and sanctified through both memorials and cinematic fictions throughout the twentieth century.

The continuities and connections between the 'real' and the 'speculative' warrior illuminate and contribute to the narrative traditions of war and the warrior. My analysis of the female warrior heroes who appear in 'speculative', science fiction, or fantasy texts is important not only for the narrative patterns that they reveal, but also in order to bridge the narrative gaps that occur in the construction of heroism, soldiering, and femininity. If figures from John Wayne to John Rambo can be considered a part of these narrative traditions, then one of the important issues this thesis addresses is whether Ripley, Xena or Buffy can be treated similarly, and what might be the ramifications of the existence of such characters. Film and television popular cultural texts have both upheld and attempted to undermine the conventions that have marginalized the female warrior-hero. Cinematic representations have tended to rely on the shock value of the unconventional female-warrior, whilst simultaneously employing tropes of motherhood and heterosexual romance in order to minimize her potency. These are tactics that have historically been used in the representation of 'real' military women to varying degrees, bolstering the association between women and a corporeality that is always sexual, and always potentially maternal. The similarities in representational strategies between the 'real' and the fictional female warrior are similar in many ways to the close relationship between military masculinities and a tradition that incorporates heroism present in fictional texts. Unlike constructions of martial masculinity, the possibility of incorporating cinematic and televisual female warriors into a tradition of feminine heroism is denied by narratives that marginalize and isolate the contributions of women.

However, what historical changes to the mythic, symbolic, and fictional bodies that compose soldier identities reveal is that *all* soldier's bodies are speculative, especially when they have been sanctified. This revelation is important, as it opens up the possibility of constructing new narratives that are both products of, and attempts to change, the politics of representing the gendered body in combat: it is precisely such speculative reconstruction that the television series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* has attempted.

The *Buffy* series constructs a tradition of female warriors that initially began with "one girl in all the world". By the middle of Season VII, Buffy was looking more and more like a traditional male warrior, at the top of a hierarchical structure that denied individuality to lesser ranks, and saw bodies (admittedly female bodies), as a means to an end. Buffy's stance as 'general' did not last long, and saw her ostracized for a period both by her army of 'potential' slayers, and by her loyal Scoobies. That information and power imbued in one person can only be destructive, however, was the clear and subersive theme within the revelatory final episode. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* ended in 2003, with the sharing of power among many 'potential' slayers, thereby shattering the isolation of the female warrior and connecting her both with other warriors and with other women. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, at one level, blows apart narrative traditions that treat female heroism as an isolated object of curiosity, associate women with collective weakness, and denies individual and collective agency in the representation of the femininity.

Even as women have broken through many of the barriers to their participation in the military, representational strategies that minimize, ridicule, or undermine their contributions continue. Strategies that reinforce the association between strength, stability and masculinity are also ongoing, and require ongoing interrogation in order to reveal the power relationships they seek to uphold. Home front and battle front have never been as separate as military and many social histories would hold, nor have

women in the domestic sphere never been exposed to violence. The disappearance of the front line renders the distinction between combat and combat support more and more arbitrary, and rhetoric of protected femininity merely puts women at greater risk both from within and outside their own militaries. The appreciation of individual skills and capabilities, the breaking of perceptions that link femininity and helplessness, and the acknowledgement that there has always been more than "one girl in all the world" capable of strength and heroism, are all vital to the appreciation of the politics of representing the gendered body in combat.

Epilogue
Media(ted) Bodies: Who's Afraid Of Pfc Jessica Lynch?

Ideologies of gender and representation continue to mediate narratives of war in the twenty-first century. On March 23, 2003, in the middle of the second Gulf War, a U.S. military supply convoy was ambushed just outside the city of Nasiriya in Iraq. Following a battle which killed Private Lori Piestewa, the only female U.S. military casualty of the war thus far, the surviving members of the Army's 507th Maintenance Company were taken prisoner. One of these soldiers became 'the face of the Iraq war': Private First Class Jessica Lynch.[1] Lynch was rescued from a hospital in Nasiriya in a joint Special Forces rescue operation on April 1, 2003. The stories that have circulated around these events reveal the ongoing contestation of the gendered body in combat, which have been examined throughout this thesis.

While in the speculative body of Buffy the Vampire Slayer there is an attempt to shatter mythologies that marginalize the potency of femininity, the injured body of the rescued Pfc Jessica Lynch is being mediated through much more traditional narrative 'news' devices. Although legislators in both Australia and the U.S. have removed some of the boundaries that stop the career progress of many military women, the realm of myth, icon and representation demonstrates that speculating on the capacity of the female warrior, remains just that – speculation. The media and military treatment of the story of Jessica Lynch, whose dramatic rescue has overshadowed the continuing contributions of thousands of female military personnel in Iraq, is exemplary of the ongoing drive to resist, recoup and refeminise the female warrior within discourses that lionize masculine heroism, and which camouflage the instability of the gendered body in combat.

[1] Lynch's photograph appeared on the cover of *Newsweek* 14/04/2003;the cover of *People Magazine* 21/04/2003. This photograph and others of Lynch have also been reprinted in large numbers of other publications such as *Time* magazine, daily newspapers and television network news programmes.

Figure 24. Pfc Jessica Lynch, the 'face of the Iraq War', on the cover of *Newsweek*, 14/04/2003.

When news of the capture of the 507th reached the public, Jessica Lynch began her journey from Army supply clerk to icon. The photograph of Lynch in her uniform standing in front of the American flag has become one of the most widely recognised images of the Iraq conflict.[2] Even before Lynch's rescue, her photograph dominated commentary on those missing in action, taking precedence over video footage depicting Army Spec Shoshana Johnson and other POWs captured at the same time. While Shoshana Johnson's story has ignited criticisms of single mothers being allowed into the military, Lynch's saga has undergone a number of different permutations, each playing themselves out through pictures of the smiling white girl-next-door, and descriptions of her broken body. Media characterizations of Lynch have transformed from missing little-girl-lost, to female warrior, to rescued damsel in distress. Each narrative strand has shifted as different information has risen and receded in prominence in a maelstrom of media and military attention.

Lynch's body has overwhelmingly been characterized as fragile. The media have emphasized Lynch's diminutive stature in order to make the most of their depictions of Lynch as 'plucky' yet still feminine. This kind of portrayal was particularly important in early stories that depicted Lynch as the female warrior who, despite the injuries she sustained, shot at Iraqi soldiers until she ran out of ammunition.[3] Once it was revealed that Lynch was not, in fact, involved in shooting at the enemy, her portrayal as slight, blonde and girlish further enhanced the heroism of her rescue, and hence the masculine strength and prowess of the Army Rangers and Navy Seals who were involved in the operation. Proponents of the recognition and expansion of women's military roles have argued that Lynch's

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[2] The photograph of the rescued all-American heroine, contrasts with images of Iraqi men toppling the statue of Saddam Hussein which also dominated media coverage of the war. News media reported the widespread rejoicing on the streets, but failed to illuminate why the only people portrayed in these images were male. Collective political action and response was represented very visibly, and unquestioningly, as masculine.

[3] See Walter Kirn, "When All the Lines Disappear Before A War Starts, the Boundaries Seem Clear. Then Things Get Complicated", *Time*, v. 161, no. 15, 14/04/2003, p.110.

predicament illustrates why all women should be properly trained for combat, and that her ordeal indicates the futility of designating 'combat support', or any position in a war, as being out of harm's way. According to this discourse Lynch survived despite the supposed weakness of the feminine body, and proved that people possess different kinds of strength – regardless of gender.[4] Opponents of women in the military, however, cite Lynch as the reason women should be kept out of harm's way, citing arguments that revolve around notions of chivalry and play on the supposed barbarism of the Enemy. That Lynch came so close to death, and worse still that she was exposed to the potential threat of sexual assault, are used by conservative commentators as arguments to have the Clinton administration's policies that opened up key positions to military women in 1994, revised and repealed.[5]

Within days of her rescue, *The Washington Post* had reported that Jessica Lynch had fought valiantly, and painted her as a warrior and a hero. Much of the speculation surrounding her injuries at the time centred on whether or not she had actually been shot and/or stabbed.[6] The tone of some of this speculation, and the subsequent information that Lynch's injuries had actually been sustained when the vehicle she was travelling in rolled over, implied that her heroism would be (and was) somehow lessened if her body had not been penetrated by an enemy bullet or knife. The focus on the kind of wounds sustained by Lynch and what had caused them emphasized the question no-one was asking, especially as tales of torture began to circulate: had she been sexually assaulted following her

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[4] See Joan Lowy, "Conflict With Iraq: Heroics of Female POW Raise Combat Debate", *Naples Daily News*, 04/04/2003, http://www.cfnapps.naplesnews.com/sendlink/printthis.cfm, Accessed 10/04/2003.

[5] See Robert Knight, "Turning Women into Cannon Fodder", *World Net Daily*, 11/04/2003, http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=31980 Accessed 13/04/2003; R. Cort. Kirkwood Jr., "What Kind of Nation Sends Women into Combat?", 16/04/2003, http://www.visionforumministries.org/sections/hotcon/ht/womeninmilitary/what_kind_of, Accessed 21/05/2003; Elaine Donnelly, "First Female Captives Held At Greater Risk", *Center for Military Readiness*, 02/04/2003, http://www.cmrlink.org/WomenInCombat.asp?DocID=184, Accessed 21/05/2003.

[6] Discussions on the H-Minerva list for women and war centred on this issue for some time during April and early May 2003.

capture? Conservative commentators have always emphasized the risk to women of rape in the hands of the enemy as the reason why women should not be allowed in combat. However, this question does not appear to have been posed directly or loudly in most of the mainstream coverage concerning Jessica Lynch.[7] The 'girl next door' has remained unviolated and inviolate. Her normative heterosexual status was reinforced by those news stories which, on Lynch's return home in July 2003, emphasized that she was wearing a ring given to her by her boyfriend who also served in the U.S. Army.[8] The story of the rescued damsel in distress has followed a traditional pattern in this allusion to a heterosexual union. Similarly, the potential disruption that the female warrior poses to masculine rescue narratives, has been completely effaced through Lynch's transition from female warrior hero to fragile, feminine and somewhat hapless heroine.

As previously mentioned, while Jessica Lynch's photograph and story have become common currency, the two other women involved in the incident have remained largely marginalized. Pfc Lori Piestewa was killed in the same firefight with reference to which Lynch's persona as warrior was originally constructed. Piestewa has been cited as having been the one who fired her weapon until it ran out of ammunition, once it was clarified that Lynch's weapon had jammed and she had not fired at all. The coverage on Piestewa has been minimal in comparison to the attention paid to Lynch. Indeed Piestewa's story was a 'sidebar' when *People* ran a feature on Lynch's rescue.[9] Where there has been media attention to Piestewa it has

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[7] This in contrast to the case of Major Rhonda Cornum who was taken prisoner during the first Gulf War of 1991. Cornum faced these questions and stalwartly denied being sexually assaulted, until quite some time after she was released fearing, quite rightly, that this one incident would be used as an argument against the future involvement of women in the military. See Rhonda Cornum, "Soldiering: The Enemy Doesn't Care if You're Female" in J. Hicks Stiehm (ed.), *It's Our Military Too! Women in the U.S. Military*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1996, pp. 3-23.

[8] See Bob Franken & Patty Davis, "Jessica Lynch: 'It's Great To Be Home", *CNN.Com/U.S.*, 23/07/2003, http://edition.cnn.com/2003/US/07/22/lynch.homecoming/index.html, Accessed 28/07/2003.

[9] Patrick Rogers, "Saved From Danger: Brave Young Jessica Lynch Survives Captivity – and Torture – to Become a Hero of the Iraqi War", Side bar article "In the Line of Fire:

been to mention in passing that she was the first U. S. servicewoman to die in the conflict, and that she was "the first Native American servicewoman ever to die in combat".[10] Such commentary reinforces some of the historical amnesia surrounding the construction of U. S. soldier identity. Native American women who fought, and were killed, to protect their land against colonists and later forces of the U.S. military are ignored in such statements, and the token nature of attention paid to non-white minorities is thus continued.

Shoshana Johnson was taken captive and paraded in front of video cameras along with six of her male comrades from the 507th Company. Like Piestewa, Johnson is a single mother, and had enlisted in the Army in order to train as a cook and for the steady income the Army provided. She and her fellow POWs were rescued on the April 13, 2003, twelve days after the dramatic, could-have-been-made-for Hollywood, rescue of Jessica Lynch.[11] There were no headlines for Shoshana Johnson however, nor any photographs of her adorning the covers of glossy magazines.[12] As Amy Alexander has pointed out, the Jessica Lynch story fits a narrative paradigm in which "this Plucky Young White Woman Narrowly escaped death at the hands of Saddam's Godless Minions".[13] Johnson's story cannot fit this narrative: she is not white, she isn't a teenager, and she didn't win a Miss

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Lori Piestewa Becomes the First U.S. Servicewoman Killed in Iraq", *People*, v.59, no. 15, 21/04/2003, p. 54.

[10] Rogers, "In the Line of Fire".

[11] There has been a great deal of speculation regarding the authenticity of Lynch's rescue. There is no doubt that Lynch suffered, but the drama that accompanied her rescue could have been made for television and it has been suggested that perhaps it was designed specifically for this purpose. See Mitch Potter, "The Real 'Saving Pte. Lynch'", *The Toronto Star*, 05/05/2003, http://www.torontostar.com/NASApp/cs/ContentServer?pagename=thestar, Accessed 21/05/2003. See also "War Spin", Reported by John Kampfner, Produced by Sandy Smith for BBC TV, first screened on BBC 2 18 May 2003. Screened in Australia on *Four Corners*, ABC TV, 9 June 2003.

[12] For an example of the minority coverage of the absence of Johnson from the media see Lorenzo E. Martin, "How About Saving Shoshana Johnson?", *The Sacramento Observer*, 15/04/2003, http://www.sacobserver.com/news/commentary/041503/shoshana_johnson.shtml, Accessed 24/05/2003.

[13] Amy Alexander, "Reading Between the Lines: Saving Private Johnson", *Africana*, 21/04/2003, http://www.africana.com/columns/alexander/bw20030421pows.asp, Accessed 24/05/2003.

Congeniality Contest at her local county fair.[14] The rescue of a young white woman reinforces representations of the barbarism of the U.S.'s enemies. The rescue of Shoshana Johnson disrupts not only the idealized seamless masculinity of the military, but its whiteness as well.

A great deal of the attention paid to these women has not been for the ordeals they have suffered, or their bravery, which was the case for Lynch. Instead emphasis has been placed on their status as single mothers. Implicit in this commentary has been criticism of women who join the military and leave their children in the care of others.[15] Rather than praise for women who will do whatever it takes to maintain a decent standard of living for their children, conservative commentators such as Donnelly maintain that the best place for any woman is at home, regardless of their economic difficulties. These commentators similarly assert that women should not be exposed to violence, an argument which ignores domestic violence statistics and reinforces a binary which associates defence of home and homeland exclusively with masculinity, and defencelessness with femininity.

The one thing these three women did all have in common were their reasons for enlisting, which were largely economic. This does not mean that Lynch, Piestewa and Johnson did not have other motivations such as patriotism, or family tradition.[16] However, enlisting in the armed services provided these working class women from small-town U.S. with opportunities to which they would otherwise have not had access. Lynch

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[14] Articles in *Time* stressed this fact about Lynch while also describing her as "doe-eyed" in depictions of her being airlifted to Germany for medical treatment. See Jodie Morse, "Saving Private Jessica", *Time*, v.161, no. 15, 14/04/2003, p.66.

[15] See Sue Hutchison, "Under Fire Both in Combat and Back on the Homefront", *The Mercury News*, 25/04/2003, http://www.bayarea.com/mld/mercurynews/2003/04/25/living/5713910.htm, Accessed 21/05/2003. Hutchison also raises the very valid point that while the issue of single parents in the military dominates discussions over military women, statistically the number of single parents on active duty is only 6 percent. While women are overrepresented in this group, they are still outnumbered by the number of single fathers by about three to one.

[16] Johnson was an 'army brat', her father and uncle and her sister all having been part of the services.
See Martin, "How About Saving Shoshana Johnson?".

was hoping to be able to pay for college tuition to become a kindergarten teacher, her family otherwise unable to afford expensive educational fees. Both Johnson and Piestewa sought to support their families, Johnson using the military as the means to train as a chef. Media coverage has at times rejoiced in the sexual and racial diversity that these women seem to represent in the modern military. However, the economic circumstances leading to disproportionate numbers of African Americans and Hispanic Americans enlisting in the military, and remaining in the lower ranks, have been ignored in the glorification of a picture of racial diversity and harmony.[17]

Women soldiers are distanced from the main, masculinized, body of the military when representations of socio-economic factors and gender are taken into account. The emphasis on economic motives as the reason for the enlistments of Lynch, Piestewa and Johnson, is a means of separating them from their male counterparts who are not described in these terms, despite the probability of similar mixed motives. Reports on male soldiers, their actions and their deaths generally do not highlight their post-service aspirations, economic motivations, or involvement with family and community. Women can never be 'real' soldiers if they continue to be reported as admitting that reasons other than a love of country and the services motivate their enlistment.[18]

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[17] In 1973 23 percent of new recruits were minorities; by the year 2000 this had grown to 37 percent. See Michael Croland, "Don't Let Media Hype Obscure POW Plight", *The Tartan*, v.97, no. 25, 28/04/2003, http://www.thetartan.org/97/25/forum/3668.asp, Accessed 03/05/2003.

[18] This does not mean there are no stories that connect male soldiers with their home towns, that there is no interest in the socio-economic reasons men enlist, or that there is never commentary on the ways service*men* are not supposed to be in danger whilst doing there specialised jobs. For example, Nancy Gibbs with Mark Thompson, "A Soldier's Life", *Time*, v.162, no. 3, 21/07/2003, p.28. However, the differences in motivations and missing one's family do not detract from status of the male soldier in the same way that they are seen by conservative critics detract from women's place in the military. Brian Mitchell has made much of the supposed differences in enlistment motivation between men and women, ignoring similarities present in the statements he himself has used claiming that men often feel too embarrassed to express their pride in protecting their country, so will cite other reasons – including economic ones – to cover this up. Women, however, are not accorded the same complexity of motivation. See Brian Mitchell, *Women*

Narrative patterns which have isolated the contributions of military women for centuries and separated them from both their male military comrades and other women, have continued in representations of Private Jessica Lynch. Linda Grant De Pauw has questioned whether or not in the lionizing of Lynch we are seeing the re-emergence of the 'Molly Pitcher' syndrome, whereby the actions of one individual are conflated with, and used to cover up, the contributions of many women.[19] Women currently make up 15 percent of the U.S. armed forces. During the 2003 conflict in Iraq women have been used to frisk suspected female guerrillas, served on combat ships and flown combat aircraft.[20] These women have been largely absent from media coverage, which can be seen as an extension of the gender camouflage that is so important to the functioning of a masculinized military. Instead, it is Lynch, the rescued damsel in distress, who has dominated military briefings and media coverage: Lynch, who didn't really want to be a soldier, but was just trying to find a way to become a kindergarten teacher; Lynch, who shouldn't have been in danger as she was a supply clerk with a maintenance crew, not a combat soldier.[21]

The many narrative strands of the Jessica Lynch story reveal the gendered body as an ongoing site of conflict. As the welcome-home parades end, and the yellow ribbons are taken down, there appears to be closure on this young woman's ordeal, echoed by the attempts of television

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in the Military: Flirting With Disaster, Regenery Publishing Inc, Washington D.C., 2001, pp. 169-170.

[19] See Linda Grant De Pauw, posting to the H-Minerva list, 23/07/2003. H-Minerva@H-NET.MSU.EDU.

[20] See Ann Scott Tyson, "The Expanding Role of GI Jane", *The Christian Science Monitor*, 03/04/2003, http://www.csmonitor.com/2003/0403/p01s04-woiq.htm, Accessed 06/04/2003.

[21] Lynch's rescue has also overshadowed the 'accidental' killing of Iraqi women at a checkpoint at about the same time, the damage done to civilians during the war, and the failure to find the 'weapons of mass-destruction' that were the reason used by the U.S., the U.K., and Australian governments for going to war with Iraq. The same commentators who have questioned the authenticity of Lynch's rescue, have posited that a possible reason for the spectacular rescue with all guns blazing was to boost morale in a war that looked like it was not going to be as fast or as clean as government and military leaders had assured their troops and the public.

networks to screen neatly packaged television movies on "Saving Private Lynch". However, for Lynch and other military women the struggle to be recognized equally continues, competing with the perception that the term 'woman soldier' is still an oxymoron. While Jessica Lynch's much photographed face and body have overshadowed the presence in Iraq other servicewomen, her voice has been largely unheard. Whether on the instruction of her superiors, or advice of doctors or friends and family, Jessica Lynch has not told her own story. At this stage, Lynch maintains that she has little or no memory of the events that took place between her capture and her rescue. Jessica Lynch has been utilized as a silent *tabula rasa*, upon which the politics that define the separation between women and war have been writ large. Had Lynch been the female-warrior depicted in early news reports, her rescue and the continuing emphasis on her fragility, beauty and heterosexuality would still have mitigated and mediated her experiences, minimizing the threat the female warrior poses to military masculinity.[22] The revelation that she was not able to fire her weapon, and that she had in fact been injured when her vehicle turned over rather than in direct combat, only assisted in her transformation from capable member of a military team to vulnerable woman in need of protection. The injuries to, and deaths of, male soldiers do not lead to calls for their protection. Instead, the difficulties of rehabilitation and repatriation are ignored, and the symbolic potency of masculine soldier identity is enhanced through their sacrifice. The closure of the Jessica Lynch saga, yet again, relies on the construction of the feminine body as fragile and penetrable, and the female-warrior as either invisible, or isolated and aberrant.

[22] For an example of someone overtly categorizing Lynch as a threat to robust masculinity see Janet Albrechtsen, "Stop Tampering With the Male: Metrosexual Man, Representing the Temporary Triumph of Androgyny Over Biology, is Feminism's Frankenstein", *The Australian*, 06/08/2003, p.11.

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