

Preface



Militaries are traditional institutions. When outsiders ask them to change, for example, by permitting openly gay men and lesbian women to serve in uniform, they are capable of energetic resistance. A phrase frequently used by opponents of change is "Not in my military/Army/Navy/Air Force/Marine Corps!" as though because they are in the military they own it.

In fact, civilians, including the Supreme Court, often do defer to the military. But the military's commander in chief is an elected official, and a majority of voters are women. Thus, it would not be incorrect for women collectively to respond to a traditionalist: "Well, you realize it's actually my military"—or at least, "It's my military, too!" Women have never constituted more than 13 percent of the U.S. armed forces, and even the most non-traditional and the most patriotic seem more wary of than enthusiastic about joining the military. But it is our military, and we have responsibility for what it is and what it does.

The purpose of this book is to encourage civilians, especially women civilians, to accept and exercise that responsibility. The first section provides basic information about the military, such as the rank structure. It also offers narratives by three active-duty women officers, each very successful but each with a different story and set of beliefs. Two of the three have chosen to use pseudonyms. The second section provides perspectives on specific groups of women who have chosen to serve—in particular, nurses and African Americans. This section also discusses issues related to physical differences between women and men, the combat exclusion, and the changing nature of the military's mission. The essays in the last section are written by civilian feminist intellectuals. None has had military experience, but all have worked for an extended period on the subject of war or the military. Their essays are intended as catalysts. So is the book.

Four conferences, acknowledged below, provided a forum for the development of many of these essays. The importance of such gatherings cannot be overestimated. Indeed, some of their organizers too are contributors to this volume: "Women and the Military" was held as a Quail Roost Conference and hosted by Richard Kohn of the Triangle Universities Security Seminar in April 1993. "Gender and War" was held at the Rockefeller Foundation's Bellagio Study and Conference Center and hosted by Miriam Cooke and Alex Roland in August 1993. "Institutional Change and the U.S. Military: The Changing Role of Women" was held at Cornell University and hosted by Mary Katzenstein and Judith Reppy in November 1993. "Peacekeeping: A New Role for Women and Men" was held in Washington, D.C., and hosted by Georgia Sadler for the Women's Education and Research Institute in December 1994.

In addition, Chapter 8, by Lucinda Peach, was developed with the assistance of the Indiana Center on Global Change and World Peace at Indiana University; an earlier version of the essay was published in the *Hamline Journal of Law and Public Policy*.

About the Contributors



Carol Burke is associate professor in the Writing Seminars Department and associate dean for academic affairs at Johns Hopkins University. She is the author of *Vision Narratives of Women in Prison, Back in Those Days, Plain Talk*, and *Close Quarters* and coauthor of *The Creative Process*.

Miriam Cooke is professor of Arabic literature at Duke University. She is author of *The Anatomy of an Egyptian Intellectual: Yahya Haqqi and War's Other Voices: Women Writers on the Lebanese Civil War*. She edited *Opening the Gates: A Century of Arab Feminist Writing* with Margot Badran, *Gendering War Talk* with Angela Woollacott, and *Blood into Ink: South Asian and Middle Eastern Women Write War* with Roshni Rustomji-Kerns.

Rhonda Cornum, whose story is told in detail, is an Army lieutenant colonel currently doing a residency in urology at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas.

M. C. Devilbiss holds an M.A. in religion from the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Gettysburg and an M.S. and Ph.D. in sociology. She was a platoon officer in an Army basic training company during the Vietnam War and served in the enlisted ranks in the Air National Guard. She is the author of *Women and Military Service*.

Susan Jeffords is divisional dean of the social sciences and professor of English and women's studies at the University of Washington. She is author of *The Remasculinization of America: Gender and the Vietnam War*, and *Hard Bodies: Hollywood Masculinity in the Reagan Era* and coeditor of *Seeing Through the Media: The Persian Gulf War*.

Billie Mitchell is a military officer, college professor, and parent. The pseudonym she has used is a tribute to the Army general and pilot who literally exploded the myth of Naval invulnerability to air power; in 1925, over Navy protests, Billy Mitchell bombed and sank several over-age battleships. For this and outspoken criticism of the military, he was court-martialed and found guilty. History vindicated him.

Brenda L. Moore is assistant professor of sociology at the State University of New York at Buffalo. She is the author of *To Serve My Country, to Serve My Race: The Story of the Only African American Wacs Stationed Overseas during World War II*.

Lucinda Joy Peach has a J.D. from New York University and a Ph.D. in religious studies from Indiana University. She is assistant professor in the Legal and Ethical Studies Program at the University of Baltimore.

Connie L. Reeves is a retired Army officer who served as an aviator, a military intelligence officer, and a foreign area officer. She is currently a graduate student at George Washington University working on women's military history.

Nina Richman-Loo is a program analyst in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. She chairs the Department of Defense Cockpit Accommodation Working Group.

Virginia Solms (a pseudonym) is an active-duty officer who made good at a military academy and has enjoyed a highly successful career as a pilot and commander during a period when she (and others) marked a number of "firsts" for women in the U.S. military.

Judith Hicks Stiehm is professor of political science at Florida International University and author of *Nonviolent Power, Bring Me Men and Women: Mandated Change at the U.S. Air Force Academy*, and *Arms and the Enlisted Woman*.

Rachel Weber is a doctoral candidate in the Department of City and Regional Planning at Cornell University. Her interests lie in the area of deindustrialization of the military industrial complex.