7 Gender and Race on the Homefronts in the Second World War

Introduction

Following the Wall Street crash in October 1929, economic distress rippled around the globe, affecting every industrialized nation. Almost no sitting political party or personality survived the crisis; the collapses in consumption, production, and consumer confidence, matched by steep unemployment and extreme stresses on the financial system itself fueling much political distrust with the status quo. In response, over the next decade the new administrations across North America, Asia, and Europe adopted radical economic and political solutions, winning popular support through exploiting public fear, anger, and confusion. Even conventional and long-established social and cultural norms of gender, racial, and sexual identity were altered by the Great Depression. Millions of men across the world lost both their jobs and their traditional role as the primary bread-winner for their families, while women found they were more readily employable, albeit at lower, even exploitive, wages than their male counterparts. In some cases, women took on the role of primary bread-winner, leaving their spouses home with no work, and by extension, no purpose. At the same time, gay men and women continued to exist on the margin of society, devoting great energy to avoid undue attention that might out them as criminal sexual deviants. And of course, non-white families – African American, Asian American, Latino American, and Native American – all continued to live in the shadow of hostile public racism that was accepted as the status quo without question.

In response to this crisis in gender identity and power, several societies embraced a number of regressive and militaristic concepts of masculinity that became more intense nearing the onset of the Second World War. In several cases, an explosion of masculine symbols and opportunities reversed the depression-era tide of aimlessness and joblessness. On some levels, fighting for one's nation became an equalizing statement about manhood, regardless of race or ethnicity. Certainly, they reforged a collective sense of self as warriors as they attained rites of passage and protected their nations and families. For women, however, the conflict required their nations to undertake total war efforts. To live up to these desperate needs, women left their private spheres in their homes and ventured into masculine-typed occupations that they would never have otherwise attained without the Second World War. Even so, women still needed to remain feminine so as to avoid completely upsetting the delicate balance of labor for them and men. Racial and ethnic minorities experienced varying levels

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of maltreatment ranging from discriminatory government policies to death sentences in extermination camps.

Gender Relations between the World Wars

The Great Depression challenged the pre-existing gendered division of labor and power within families in the United States, Britain, and France. Family incomes declined precipitously as millions of men lost their jobs, their farms, their houses, or their savings. Many were forced to accept government assistance through welfare or workfare programs. Bereft of the ability to be protectors and providers, more than 1.5 million American men became hoboes and took to the roads and the rails to seek employment or escape their dismal existences.[1] Men in Europe faced similar tests of their time-honored privileges as heads of households and of their obligations as providers.

Meanwhile during the interwar period, Caucasian American women experienced some gains despite enduring sexist treatment. Where women were employed in the place of men, they did so for less pay; accordingly their families remained under stress due to loss income. In the workplace, underpaid women also faced constant resentment from their male coworkers, who saw them as potential competition in the face of constant downsizing. Likewise female employees possessed no viable safeguards against exploitation and abuse at the hands of their employers. African American and other minority women were at even greater risk; suffering from chronic high unemployment, where work was available it was menial labor for little pay.

As a result of wide-spread poverty and uncertainty across the United States, marriage rates, divorce rates, and birth rates all declined during the 1930s. British women experienced similar problems to those of American women in terms of unemployment and family relations. France, however, differed slightly from Britain and the United States due to the government's obsession with demographics. Having suffered such grievous losses of their male population in World War I, the French government adopted pro-natal policies: discouraging use of contraception and awarding medals to women who gave birth, for example. Motherhood therefore became a patriotic duty that would hopefully reverse the

1 See relevant chapters in Kenneth L. Kusmer, *Down and Out, On the Road: The Homeless in American History* (Oxford University Press, 2002); and Todd Despatino, *Citizen Hobo: How a Century of Homelessness Shaped America* (University of Chicago Press, 2003).

negative trends in France's population. Even with these efforts, however, the birthrate could not replenish the stultifying wartime losses in France.[2]

Among the commonly accepted means to reverse the crippling sense of anomie and irrelevance shared across societies was for men to embrace hyper-masculinity through the Cult of Fascism. In some ways, fascism evolved from the greater desire among men who had participated in the First World War or who were just young enough to miss out of their own opportunity to join in the conflict to recover lost purpose and meaning during peacetime. Or, as cultural historian George L. Mosse observed, "Fascism used manliness both as an ideal and in a practical manner in order to strengthen its political structure, but devotion to a higher cause was at the center of its concept of masculinity."[3] In both its desire to employ violence toward a political end and to subordinate the personal will to the collective goal, fascism served not only as an expression of masculine forbearance, but also reduced masculinity itself into a sad caricature, devoid of nuance and incapable of expressing personal joy. The fascist male was essentially a tool for the most extreme ambitions of the leader, and as such those men remained beautiful yet broken weapons.[4]

And so while many even today dismiss fascism and its most strident version Nazism as being focused exclusively on violence and racial supremacy, such a view is reductionist and ahistorical. Several scholars challenge this view. In identifyinig characteristics of fascism, Stanley Payne notes how the system emphasizes male dominance as a natural social state, to the point of fetishizing the movement as a positive expression of individual and collective "virility."[5] Barbara Spackman clarifies this point on fascism as a gendered discourse, observing that Italian fascism's claims of virility emphasized the idea that such sexualized power was the ideal expression of state identity; hence violence was a natural condition.[6] Thus this ideology is, at its core, a gendered movement expressing itself primarily through violence as means to establish social and political primacy. Klaus Theweleit affirms this interpretation in his multi-volume study of proto-fascist groups within the *Freikorps* and its successors from 1918 through 1930. Inured to violence by the war,

2 For overviews, see Laura Hapke, *Daughters of the Great Depression: Women, Work, and Fiction in the American 1930s* (University of Georgia Press, 1995); and Gisela Bock *Women in European History*, trans. Allison Brown (Blackwell, 2002), 183–87.

3 Mosse, *The Image of Man*, 155.

4 *Ibid*., 178–180.

5 Stanley Payne, *Fascism: Comparison and Definition* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1980), 7, 12–13.

6 Barbara Spackman, *Fascist Virilities: Rhetoric, Identity, and Social Fantasy in Italy* (University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 5, 24.

many men were drawn to right-wing militias through their emphasis on armed resistance against the collective economic and existential threats to the German people. By casting themselves as heroic defenders of the missing umlaut over o, these men established a new gendered role modeled on the popular fiction and memoirs of the war veterans. By making violence central to their political ideology, these early fascists in turn gendered their worldview. Opponents – especially those from the far left – were recast as hostile space, simultaneously feminized and objectified. Only by asserting their own masculine prerogatives as masters of public and private spaces could the new man of the right rescue Germany, and by extension, Europe, from the "red flood" that threatened from the East.[7]

Other historians specializing in the gender and cultural dynamics of the aesthetics and ideals of fascism note that, while the ideology is predicated largely on the exaltation of violence, it also provided a social support network for those who felt a sense of disenfranchisement within society. This actually runs counter to some of our earlier commentators' observations on fascism and its organizations. George Mosse, for example, observes that the Nazi *Sturmabteilung* (SA) rejected social ties that bound its members to any group – even family – over the movement. This was itself representative of how fascism was the "fullest expression of modern masculinity" because it ultimately subordinated family, spouse, and children to the dominant male.[8] Yet such control did not entirely preclude or reject the appeal of family and social charity. Andrew Wackerfuss, for example, identifies the communal aspects of the SA as a significant advantage in the press for new members in the heady streetfighting days of the early Depression. "The SA tried to care for its members, provide social services to its allies, and build networks of support that would enhance its appeal to neighbors while converting its enemies," Mosse writes.[9]

This view of the Nazi stormtroopers as something greater than a homosocial/homoerotic drinking society awash in violence is further elaborated on by Daniel Siemens. Accordingly the SA was central to the ambitions of the Nazi state, and not only during the formative years of struggle before 1933. Portrayed for so many years after 1945 as a criminal racket, ridden with sexual deviants, the SA has largely been dismissed as a legitimate representation of the national will. Yet such an outlook completely overshadows the extent to which the SA both existed as the most primal reminder of the inherent violence of the Nazi state to its citizens

7 Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies. Volume I: Women, Floods, Bodies, History*, trans. Erica Carter, et al. (University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 22–24. 232–34.

8 Mosse *The Image of Man*, 166–67, quote on 166.

9 Andrew Wackerfuss, *Stormtrooper Families: Homosexuality and Community in the Early Nazi Movement* (Columbia University Press, 2015), xii.

and as the vehicle by which interested men could claim local, regional, and even national legitimacy as agents of the new masculine-rooted order. Mob violence – both that actualized against armed and unarmed opponents and that inferred through the mere spectacle of ranks of uniformed brownshirts marching through the street – was the means by which individual men acquired purpose and how the Nazi state compelled submission.[10]

But what of the issue of homosexual ties within Fascist organizations. The fact of the June 30–July 2, 1934 purges – "The Night of the Long Knives" – is undisputed. Even if one successfully argued that much of the rhetoric surrounding homosexual activities among senior members was fabricated in order to further legitimize the violent assaults on one's own power base, the lurid image of same-sex liaisons within the SA has become the prevailing historical narrative. Much of this is myth, built around outrageous accusations levelled against the victims by their murderers, and later inflated into the standard historical interpretation by historians eager to cast the Nazi movement as an aberration outside of the general trends of German history.[11] Perhaps more relevant is the prospect that, as a deeply homosocial organization – one that existed almost exclusively outside of female influence and participation, and thus offered male comradeship as a surrogate for inter-sex relations – the SA was more easily cast as being so infiltrated by homosexuals. Some scholars note how this reflects the extent pre-war gender-based social rituals that were disrupted during the First World War. Denied access to normal bourgeois rituals of courtship and marriage by the war, Juan J. Linz argues, young German men instead embraced the notion of a male-exclusive community: "It is hard to judge to what extent the war experience . . . might have made this male political community attractive. The romanticization of the male community with its homosexual undertones in the German youth movement has not escaped attention, and it might not have been an accident that in the SA such tendencies were not absent."[12] Andrew Wackerfuss appears to agree, noting that as the SA built stronger, more cohesive social ties among its members, it is only natural that the organization would become a venue for homosexual expression. Wackerfuss continues: "While the intense emotions of same-sex camaraderie had long been a powerful political force in European history, by this point modern concepts of homosexuality had reached the public's consciousness. It

10 Daniel Siemens, *Stormtroopers: A New History of Hitler's Brownshirts* (Yale University Press, 2017), xxvii–xxix, xxxii.

11 *Ibid*., 171–173.

12 Juan J. Linz, "Some Notes Toward a Comparative Study of Fascism in Sociological Historical Perspective," in *Fascism, A Reader's Guide: Analyses, Interpretations, Bibliography*, ed., Walter Laqueur (University of California Press, 1976), 3–121, quote on 36.

now seemed that those seeking camaraderie also sought sexual relations – and indeed, a series of public revelations established that open homosexuals existed comfortably within the SA."[13] This should not infer that the SA, or fascist organizations overall, were or are more attractive to gay men on the foundation of its all-male exclusivity. Neither the SA nor any of the other myriad fascist groups in Europe and the United States were rife with homosexuals. In this case, the relatively small number of gay men in the SA should be viewed as an outlier rather than representative of the organization. Nevertheless, it is this image, reinforced by the sensationalist accounts of gay orgies on the Night of the Long Knives, that has come to dominate the public imagination. Take aside the tabloid episodes, and the SA appears as an organization, dedicated to radical political change through extreme violence, that also successfully insinuated itself into German daily life as an agent for community.

In Germany as well as Japan, the ascension of the new authoritarian governments meant not only increased spending that stimulated both nations' economies but also increased conservatism in gender and family relations. The two governments demanded traditional, orderly, and strict divisions of gender roles as part of idealized visions for society. In their patriarchal systems, men were expected to be providers and work outside their homes in jobs that helped empower and glorify their nations. They adopted hyper-masculine, -nationalistic, and -racist traits as pure-blooded warriors who would fight, kill, and die without question or quibble. These cultural and ideological constructions of gender mandated that men and women be completely divergent and separate in their roles and activities in family life and in the state as a whole.[14]

Japanese and German women were expected to remain passively supportive wives and mothers in domestic spheres. Women were expected to conform to their purportedly natural maternal roles; any claim to agency and autonomy was linked directly to Bolshevism and amorality. Responses from strong women to the male-dominated public, political, and ideological spheres represented a direct challenge to the newly established militarist and National Socialist regimes. Each nation required complete stability of gender roles and relations in the ultimate service of the state.[15]

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13 Wackerfuss, *Stormtrooper Families*, xii.

14 Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality.*

15 Gail Lee Bernstein, "Introduction," and Yoshiko Miyake, "Doubling Expectations: Motherhood and Women's Factory Work in State Management in Japan in the 1930s and 1940s," in *Recreating Japanese Women 1600–1945*, ed. Gail Lee Bernstein (University of California Press, 1991), 9–12, 267–81.

Nowhere were feminine roles more clearly delineated than in reproduction. In Germany, for example, the Nazi regime undertook systematic programs to indoctrinate women and control the quality and quantity of female reproduction. Pregnancies and births received public recognition in form of the *Ehrenkreuz der deutschen Mutter* (Cross of Honor of the German Mother), which was awarded in different grades according to the number of children birthed by women. And it goes without saying that racial ideology dictated the terms of sexual and family policy. Racial intermingling – not just with Jews, but other purported "inferior" races as well – was forbidden. Nazi Germany took horrific steps in its quest for racial purity, imposing mandatory abortions and sterilization of so-called "degenerate" women of inferior races; all intended to promote the survival and strength of the Aryan *Volk*.[16]

During the interwar years, the Soviet Union presented unique examples of gender roles and relations. Women served and even fought on both sides of the Bolshevik Revolution and the Civil War, with some serving in organized units. In the early years after the Revolution, women attained greater equality relative to men in terms of marriage and divorce laws, in reproduction and maternity rights, and in education. Many of these new laws and policies could be considered privileges and benefits. However, once Stalin consolidated his control, he reversed gender policies and lifted protections of women's maternity and labor rights perhaps because he believed that true women's equality meant that the Soviet women required no special treatment, or perhaps because he was a traditionalist. Later as the social stresses increased in the 1930s and into World War II, Stalin further tried to strengthen Soviet family cohesion as the foundation for the Soviet state by outlawing abortion and abolishing divorce and coeducation, turning back the clock for gender relations to Tsarist Russia.[17]

The Segal Model for Wartime Gender Integration

A precise figure of civilian and military deaths in World War II remains elusive; the most current estimates place the number at approximately 60 million persons, over half of which were civilians. Apart from battlefield operations and extraordinary casualties, all belligerant nations confronted major obstacles as they sought to leverage their industrial economies to the war effort. Virtually every participant

16 Miyake, "Doubling Expectations," 267–81; Jill Stephenson, *Women in Nazi Germany*, 3rd ed. (Longman, 2001), 6–25, 109–25; and Bock, *Women in European History*, 218–32.
17 Bock, *Women in European History*, 191–97.

mobilized its available human, natural, and materiel resources, coming as close to "total war" – the full mobilization of society in pursuit of military victory – as any conflict to date in history. As more men went off to war, women increasingly were called on to take their place in the labor force, and, in varying degrees, alongside men in the military. The relaxing of gender role workplace and military service restrictions was met with no small amount of resistance. At least superficially, female employment and military service was rejected on the basis of purported physical weakness and emotional frailty among women. Another factor, however, was the challenge posed to traditional masculine identity. As gender historian D'Ann Campbell notes, many "young men saw military service as validation of their own virility and as a certificate of manhood. If women could do it, then it was not very manly."[18] This attitude proved to be universal, as military necessity in industrial war collided directly with long-established cultural precepts about the masculine exclusivity in war and the industrial workplace.

Not surprisingly, women engaged outside of their traditional domestic or subordinate workplace roles were constantly under pressure, facing open discrimination, insubordination, crude sexual innuendo and harassment on an almost daily basis. Many patriotic women in all combatant nations were slandered in the harshest sexualized language and context imaginable, reduced in public discourse to either hyper-sexualized heterosexual women or predatory lesbians. Both constructions were patently ridiculous – and in their own ways, reflected long-standing Western fears of war as a venue in which sexual inversion threatened traditional gender identities – but this did not stop the rumors from accruing a quasi-legitimacy of their own.

Viewed with temporal distance as a historical construct, these wartime challenges to gender roles offer fertile ground for comparative analyses. Particularly illustrative is the classification model introduced by sociologist Mady Wechsler Segal in 1994. A highly respected specialist in race and gender issues in the U.S. Military, she developed a framework with which to explain the differences in historical case studies related to the mobilization of women in wartime. According to her model, three key factors – social structure, culture, and military – combine to dictate the extent to which gender restrictions are either maintained or eliminated in modern industrial societies. Each of these factors contain a more specific set of markers that combine together to determine the status of the larger factor. For example, the larger military factor is comprised of at least five sub-factors that assign the larger category's status with reference to gender integration:

18 D'ann Campbell, "Women in Combat: The World War II Experience in the United States, Great Britain, Germany, and the Soviet Union," *Journal of Military History* 57 (April 1993): 321.

the National Security situation; the state of military technology; the support to combat unit ratio (also known as the "tooth to tail" ratio); the overall force structure; and the military accession policies. A more detailed outline of the three key factors is outlined in Table 7.1:

Table 7.1: Factors that determine extent of female military participation in Segal's model.

Military Factors	Social Structure Factors	Cultural Factors
National Security Situation	Demographic Patterns	Social Construction of Gender and Family
Military Technology	Labor Force Characteristics	Social Values about Gender and Family
Combat Support Ratio	Economic Factors	Public Discourse Regarding Gender
Force Structure	Family Structure	Values Regarding Ascription and Equity
Military Accession Policies		

Source: Segal, "Women's Military Roles Cross-Nationally, 757–75, 759.

In terms of historical case studies, aspects of the target society's situation with reference to the three factors above are placed into context as appropriate. Based upon the overall ranking of each factor in total, it is possible to extrapolate why some societies embraced gender integration in wartime and why others did not. Using Segal's model as a framework with which to assess the extent to which standing gender restrictions on military service were revised, reinforced, or rejected by the major combatant nations, we can more clearly identify and measure how World War II constituted a transformative experience in terms of short- and long-term gender norms in both the public and private spheres.

In many ways the Second World War is the ideal conflict for testing the Segal model. It was a war of extremes, both in terms of brutality and objectives. The Axis Powers doctrines of total conquest and the Allied Powers policies of unconditional surrender together ensured the war would ultimately be a contest of national survival. These extremes were reflected in the varying degrees to which gender norms were either consciously put aside or indirectly subverted by the culture of conflict. Three case studies are presented here to illustrate how the Segal model helps explain the wide range of policy and cultural responses undertaken by the Soviet Union, Nazi Germany, and the United States.[19]

19 See B. Fieseler, et al., "Gendering Combat: Military Women's Status in Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union," *Women's Studies International Forum* 47 (November-December 2014), 115–26.

The Soviet Union

Consider first the Soviet Union, which utilized more women in more wartime activities than any other belligerent nation in World War II. As noted in Chapter Six, the Nazi-Soviet War reached the level of total conflict in every sense of the word, one driven by an annihilative racial ideology that fomented levels of brutality and mutual hatred which in turn rendered the Eastern Front into a charnel house. According to Segal's model, these conditions of ideological brutality and – on the Soviet side, the imperative of national survival – combined with pre-existing policies of social and cultural gender parity to permit the wholesale mobilization of women at all levels of national military service. Millions of women worked in factories, agriculture, or other war-related jobs in order to maintain wartime production, accounting by 1944 for approximately 80 percent of the Soviet labor force. In the best conditions, living standards for women in Soviet war production was difficult, as total mobilization in the Communist state meant that all available resources (save for those claimed by Party *apparatchiks*) were diverted to the war effort. In some areas, however, especially in besieged Leningrad and the battleground city of Stalingrad, where wartime production continued even in the face of immediate combat, male and female workers alike suffered from malnutrition, disease, and other depravations. And amidst it all, the secret police continued to enforce a regime of terror, its actions given greater weight by the war. Even decades after the fall of the Soviet Union, no one really knows how many civilian workers – male and female – died from the fighting, starvation, or from brutal Soviet policies during the war.[20]

In the opening year of the war, the Soviet Red Army was decimated by the Nazi invasion. Often poorly led and generally outclassed by German forces well-schooled in independent tactical operations (*auftragstactik*) and the combined arms tactics generally called *blitzkrieg*, over 5,700,000 Soviet soldiers entered captivity in 1941. An often overlooked immediate effect of this catastrophe was the immediate manpower shortage the Red Army faced as the Soviet High Command (*STAVKA*) sought to make up these losses. As military historian Reina Pennington points out, women were called on in large numbers to fill this gap, and continued to serve through the duration of the war. Soviet women were not simply cast as auxiliary personnel, Pennington notes: "By 1943 Soviet women had been integrated into all services and all military roles, ranging from

20 John Barber and Mark Harrison, *The Soviet Home Front, 1941–1945* (Longman, 1991); and Lisa A. Kirschenbaum, "'The Alienated Body': Gender Identity and the Memory of the Siege of Leningrad," in Nancy M. Wingfield and Maria Bucur, editors, *Gender and War in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe* (Indiana University Press, 2006), 220–34.

traditional roles like medical service, to primarily defensive work in anti-aircraft (AA) defence, to offensive combat roles in the infantry, artillery, and armor, as well as the partisan movement."[21] Women were also a critical addition to shortages in the Soviet Air Force, as female pilots flew over 30,000 combat sorties in both gender-segregated and mixed-gender fighter, dive-bomber, and night-bomber squadrons.[22]

Obviously the Soviet experience was unique because no other nation approached the number – between 800,000 and one million – of women in uniform.[23] Nor did any other nation go so far in eroding the gendered social restrictions that universally distinguished between male-exclusive combat roles and female-accessible support roles. Putting aside the immediate motivations for female participation – government coercion, following spouses, patriotism, revenge, or communist ideology – the Soviet case study does match up almost perfectly against Segal's three-tiered model for female wartime military service. Almost alone of the major combatants in World War II, the Soviet Union practiced and promoted a policy of gender impartiality in the public sphere as a characteristic of Marxist-Leninist ideology. The history of gender organization and access to agency in the pre-war Soviet Union is hardly linear. Immediately following the October Revolution and during the Civil War, Bolshevik programs aimed at expanding the political, economic, and cultural places for women in Soviet society were both complex and frequently contradictory. Earlier when Stalin consolidated power in the late 1920s and early 1930s, the rhetoric of revolutionary gender equality collided with natalist imperatives that sought to restore the hearth and home as the primary venue for the new Soviet woman's organizational and practical skills. Theoretically (and to varying degrees, practically), the Soviet government did not prohibit women from entering what in other societies would be male-specific tasks and roles. As Stalin pushed the Soviet Union in a crash industrialization program in the 1920s and 1930s, women and men alike were employed in heavy labor. Likewise female professionals – doctors, engineers, scientists – took their place alongside men to design the new factories and cities. If in peacetime the Red Army remained a largely male-exclusive

21 Reina Pennington, "Offensive Women: Women in Combat in the Red Army," in *Time to Kill: The Soldier's Experience of War in the West 1939–1945*, eds., Paul Addison and Angus Calder (Pamlico Press, 1997), 252.

22 See also Reina Pennington, *Wings, Women, and War: Soviet Airwomen in World War II Combat* (University Press of Kansas, 2002).

23 According to Anna Krylova, 520,000 women served in the Red Army directly, with another 300,000 serving in anti-aircraft units. Anna Krylova, *Soviet Women in Combat: A History of Violence on the Eastern Front* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 3.

preserve, women did serve in NKVD battalions along the frontier. And as Stalin's vision of a modernizing society coalesced in the 1930s, women were a part of one of the most visible and popular expressions of this new order.

At the same time, popular media created a new role-model, the New Soviet Person. These young men and women were at the vanguard of the revolution at home, working collectively across gender boundaries to create a new wholly integrated society. This was, of course, all taking place in a carefully monitored and guarded environment, in which arbitrary limits could be and were applied to maintain the ratio favoring male gender privilege in peacetime. For Soviet propagandists and leaders, female pilots demonstrated to the world the purported superiority of the new classless workers' paradise, a society in which anything was possible and modernity offered boundless opportunity. In the end, these earlier Potemkin-like exercises at gender balance and fluidity in the public sphere facilitated the conscription of women for full military service with very limited cultural blowback.[24]

The Soviet Union's cultural approach to gender issues and roles also facilitated ready military mobilization for women. At least since the consolidation of power by the Communist Party after the Russian Civil War, the official Soviet stance toward gender separation held the two sexes as equal in political, economic, and social status. This not only applied in the workplace, as described above, but also in university and at home. Women could initiate divorce, and until the mid-1930s, abortions were legal. Unlike the rest of the industrialized world, family planning – including birth control – was taken seriously, while institutional daycare facilities were opened throughout the country. Soviet girls took vocational classes and participated in Komsomol paramilitary training alongside boys, not only learning how to build houses and other more complex structures, but also how to shoot targets, wear a gas mask, first aid, aircraft operation (including piloting), and even parachuting. Though the system often did not work as well as the propaganda portrayed it, the immediate outcome of such policies was a cultural predisposition toward gender parity that facilitated ready wartime mobilization of women.[25]

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24 Krylova, *Soviet Women in Combat*, 15–17; Kazimiera J. Cottam, "Soviet Women in Combat in World War II: The Ground Forces and the Navy," *International Journal of Women's Studies* 3 (July–August 1980): 345–57; and Linda Grant De Pauw, *Battlecries and Lullabies: Women in War from Prehistory to the Present* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 239–44.

25 Barbara Alpern Engel, "Women in Russia and the Soviet Union," *Signs* 12:4 (Summer, 1987), 781–796; and Krylova, *Soviet Women in Combat*, 50–53.

Germany

In comparison with the Soviet Union, Germany stood out as a polar opposite in terms of wartime gender integration. Under Adolf Hitler, Nazi Germany promoted a return to traditional pre-World War I family relations with the twist of distinct gender roles as mainstays in *Volksgemeinschaft*. Meaning "people's community," this term entailed the establishment and maintenance of ideological uniformity, Aryan purity, and cultural homogeneity. Women played a conspicuous role in these racial and cultural undertakings, as evinced in a tract titled "The New German Woman" written by Nazi leader Paula Siber:

> Therefore a woman belongs at the side of a man not just as a person who brings children into this world, not just as an adornment to delight the eye, not just as a cook and a cleaner. Instead woman has the holy duty to be a life companion, which means being a comrade who pursues her vocation as woman with clarity of vision and spiritual warmth.[26]

However, the wartime reality of so many German men going to the front lines left many women on the home front with no husbands and no children. The Nazi government attempted to inject these women into the labor force in order to maintain agricultural and industrial production levels. With no husband and little money, they experienced the worst of the ration lines and least desirable rationed items, while the married women with children received the best available goods and services. The childless and single German women, who both needed employment and were encouraged to work, resented those wives and mothers staying at home and enjoying the largesse of Nazi pro-natal policies. Although the single German women did work outside their homes, their numbers accounted for only a fraction of the female population and a fraction of the nation's total wartime labor force. Instead, Germany utilized millions of slave laborers and prisoners of war to supplement its work force and maintain its wartime productions. After all, from the Nazi perspective, *untermenschen* had little value and few uses other than working to death as manual laborers. Only in 1943 would married German women be mobilized and enter the factories in significant numbers, but this change would prove to be too little and too late.[27]

Germany's declining fortunes in the air war and on the Eastern Front occasioned shifts in its military policies regarding gender. In 1943, Hitler allowed

26 Paula Siber, "The New German Woman," in *Fascism*, ed. Roger Griffin (Oxford University Press, 1995), 136–38.

27 Bock, *Women in European History*, 218–32. See also Claudia Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family, and Nazi Politics* (St. Martin's Press, 1987).

German women to be trained and utilized in the *Luftwaffe*'s AA crews and searchlight crews. Tens of thousands of women served in various capacities in the crews; but, like the women in British AA unit, they were expressly forbidden to fire the weapons because this would violate Germany's strictest divisions between woman and warrior. The continued severe loses of German *man*power in defense against the Soviet onslaught in 1944 drove the Nazi regime to draft women into military service as true auxiliaries, by definition and implementation. In the last year of the conflict, some 450,000 women would eventually wear uniforms and perform many male-only administrative and clerical tasks. As D'Ann Campbell points out, however, these German women were never officially called "female soldiers" and thus never truly destabilized the accepted cultural and ideological gender divisions.[28] Campbell goes on to write that, "Hitler and his advisers firmly believed that [German] public opinion would never tolerate these auxiliaries firing weapons. Indeed, German propaganda warned all women in the auxiliaries not to become 'gun women' (*flintenweiber*). . . the contemptuous term for Soviet women who carried or fired weapons."[29] In Germany's death throes in 1945, a few women took up arms against the Soviets, but these were isolated cases that serve more as minor footnotes to history, rather than as significant changes in Nazism's ingrained prohibition against women warriors.

The United States

Shimmering lines of aluminum aircraft, tended to by swarms of dungaree-clad workers, many female, wielding rivet guns and acetylene torches. Massive hulls of steel, destined for battleships and landing craft, welded into shape by the wives and sisters of workers called into service. Shapely women, claiming the legitimate authority inherent in the uniforms – conductors, bus drivers, traffic wardens – they wore on the job. And everywhere, American women and men of different races and creeds, all working together to win the war against Hitler and Tojo. These are only a few of the images we accept as a matter of fact in the mythology of the "Good War." Not surprisingly, this mythic past has accrued power – witness the iconic image of Rosie the Riveter's rolled-up sleeve – at the expense of reality. If the history of the Second World War is to be one of the larger American community working together to save the world from the dangers of fascist militarism, then the glorification of an idealized domestic war effort is

28 Campbell, "Women in Combat," 317.
29 *Ibid*., 318.

central to this narrative. The reality behind the myth of American wartime mobilization is less selfless than the heroic narrative.[30]

The Second World War witnessed a major transformation in the composition of the American industrial workplace, where women were needed to fulfill the needs of wartime mobilization. The actual number of women belies the popular perception of massive employment; some estimates identify only 12.5 percent of the 33 million unemployed women joining the wartime effort. Of this substantial number – approximately 4,125,000 persons – only 16 per cent – 660,000 women – worked in wartime industries. What was different about the Second World War, however, was the increase in married women entering the workplace. By 1944, married female workers outnumbered single female workers. Again however, this is dwarfed by the number of women who stayed at home.[31] In the end, the American industrial war effort preferred white male labor, then minorities, then women, for employment. Thanks to the massive unemployment preceding the war during the Great Depression – nineteen percent even as late as 1938 – there were ample workers for placement even with conscription to circumvent widespread reliance upon female employment.

Where were the majority of American female workers employed, if not in industry? The two chief areas relying upon female labor were agriculture and the federal government. The sudden spike in relatively high-paying industrial jobs created a massive drain on agricultural labor. In addition to hiring Mexican and West Indian laborers and (after 1942) prisoners of war in the fields, farmers began hiring women. In May 1942 alone, the American Women's Volunteer Services recruited 1,500 women to work during the coming harvest, while the U.S. Agricultural Extension Service instituted a massive training program for 750,000 women in the Women's Land Army. Those women not inclined to hard agricultural labor could find ready employment in the suddenly massive wartime government bureaucracy. Washington, D.C, doubled in population between 1940

30 The historiography is surveyed in Sarah Parry Meyers, "'The Women Behind the Men, Behind the Gun,': Gendered Identities and Militarization in the Second World War," in *The Routledge History of Gender, War, and the U.S. Military*, 87–94. Seminal works include Karen Anderson, *Wartime Women: Sex Roles, Family Relations, and the Status of Women during World War II* (Praeger, 1980); Susan H. Hartman, *The Home Front and Beyond: American Women in the 1940s* (Twayne, 1984); D'Ann Campbell, *Woman at War with America: Private Lives in a Patriotic Era* (Harvard University Press, 1984). And, more recent works include Melissa McEuen, *Making War, Making Women: Femininity and Duty on the American Home Front, 1941–1945* (University of Georgia Press, 2011); Donna B. Knaft, *Beyond Rosie the Riveter: Women of World War II in American Popular Graphic Art* (University Press of Kansas, 2012).

31 Michael C.C. Adams, *The Best War Ever: America and World War II*. (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 70, 123.

Figure 7.1: Unnamed riveter assembling a bomber at the Consolidated Aircraft Corporation, Fort Worth, Texas. While the legend of thousands of "Rosie the Riveters" remains popular, more women were actually employed in agriculture and by the federal bureaucracy than in heavy industry.
Source: Library of Congress.

and 1943, largely on the basis of single women coming into the city to work as clerks, typists, switchboard operators, and secretaries.[32]

Regardless of the precise number or ratio of women in wartime industry, the conditions were generally the same for all. Where they participated directly in the industrial production of wartime material, women faced no shortage of institutional obstacles and informal insults. On average women earned two-thirds the pay of their male coworkers. Likewise women were the target of direct harassment on the assembly line, from peers and supervisors alike. Many men resented the presence of women in the industrial line. Workers who claimed exemptions on the basis that their skills were essential to the war effort feared they could now be replaced and sent off to war. Other men felt that women could cheapen their post-war bargaining power with management, or gain "secret" gender-based

32 Carl J. Schneider and Dorothy Schneider, *An Eyewitness History: World War II* (Facts on File, 2003), 96–97.

advantages that would be denied to men. Yet others simply rejected women as coworkers on the basis that their presence somehow emasculated their status as breadwinners. Sexual harassment – both in the form of crude jokes and comments, and overtly sexual provocation – was common.[33] While some women were able to shrug off the advances and crude innuendos of their coworkers, many others suffered silently, unwilling to jeopardize their livelihood – and at times, that of their families – over such actions.

Whereas millions of American women made contributions to the civilian war effort, some 350,000 women volunteered for the armed forces in support roles where they would "Free a Man to Fight." All services maintained female auxiliary branches: the Women's Army Auxiliaries Corps (WAAC) and later the Women's Army Corps (WAC); the Army Air Force's Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Service, which evolved into the Women's Auxiliary Service Pilots (WASPs); the Navy's Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Services (WAVES); the Marine Corps Women's Reserve; and the Coast Guard's verbosely named "*Semper Parantus* – Always Ready" (SPARs). Unlike other Allied nations – particularly the Soviet Union – which maintained relaxed recruitment standards, the United States military mandated that all women volunteers possess high levels of education and experience. Most enlisted women possessed at least some post-secondary education, and female officers frequently held advanced degrees. The average enlisted woman was at least six years older than the average male soldier of equal rank, and female officers were sometimes fifteen years older than the male officers of similar rank.[34]

American women's contributions to the war effort belied their small numbers. They did more than merely take dictation or type letters; American women in uniform performed more than 400 separate clerical, logistical, and technical specialties, half of which were previously male exclusive occupations. Women, for example, worked as radio operators, air traffic controllers, engine mechanics, meteorologists, parachute riggers, gunnery instructors, and cryptologists. U.S. Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall briefly considered fielding mixed-gender AA units, but he backed away from the idea because of likely public and Congressional backlash. In the absence of a dire threat to national security matching that facing the Soviet Union or Germany, it is not surprising the United States excluded women from service in combat units. Cultural discourses and assumptions of female physical strength, physiology, and psychology were never threatened by military

33 See Marilyn Hegarty, *Victory Girls, Khaki-Wackies, and Patriotutes: The Regulation of Female Sexuality during World War II* (New York University Press, 2008).
34 De Pauw, *Battlecries and Lullabies*, 247–51.

contingency. Likewise the social pressure of the recent economic collapse of the 1930s was a greater social factor that had some effect on accepted tropes of masculinity. Many American men remained economically displaced at the start of the war – an experience that essentially emasculated them as family providers. No wonder American male-dominant society resisted the intrusion of women into the traditionally masculine-exclusive military sphere.[35]

Just as in the civilian workplace, resentment against female service personnel ran deep. Women in uniform faced numerous insults and slurs against their character, many of them sexually charged. Many women were cast either as promiscuous girls offering sexual favors to male service personnel or as mannish lesbians preying on susceptible young female recruits. Such egregious attacks were not confined to the services; civilians also spread the rumors, shunning female service personnel as suspected sexual deviants. Obviously the rumors were outrageously and patently false – the War and Navy Departments imposed strict moral strictures on their female personnel, who could be discharged without question for any breach. Yet the tenure and vehemence of the attacks offers a window into the accepted gender norms of 1940s American society, that in turn reveals just how much of a challenge to the established order female military mobilization presented. It was disruptive enough that women entered the workforce due to wartime manpower shortages, the social norm held. However, military service – regardless of the role – was traditionally a masculine-exclusive environment. Women entering the service represented an invasion that harkened back to ancient fears of gender inversion; if they were so compelled to enter the man's world of military service, then it was assumed that women were also compelled to adopt male sexual behaviors. The sole juxtaposition to maintain a semblance of balanced gender relations was to classify the women as feminine first and then as service personnel second. And any such individuals in turn represented a drastic challenge to the "normal" public world of clearly defined sexual restraint and family values. Absent the immediate threat to national security, American morality itself, therefore, was seen as being placed at risk by military contingency.

The Segal Model and Its Conclusions

So what then, of the Mady Segal model. How do these case studies inform our understanding of the contingencies of war as they apply to the broad mobilization

35 See Campbell, "Women in Combat;" Mattie Treadwell, *Women's Army Corps* (Government Printing Office, 1953); and Holm, *Women in Combat*.

across gender of society? First it must be noted that, with reference to the Second World War case studies, the model itself is not intended to offer an answer as to why women were mobilized – the case studies present that in of themselves. Instead they offer us a means by which to understand how societies at different stages in social and cultural modernity respond to national security threats. By understanding how the three case studies here responded, we can identify scenarios that may result in the relaxation of gender-based norms restricting military service access for women.

The three case studies all represent different socio-political systems and cultural takes on gender identity and the roles assigned to each gender in peacetime and war. If we were to classify the three in order of their ability to accept the ready mobilization of women in wartime (and it must be noted this is not intended as a value assessment), the Soviet Union would rank at the top of the list, with the United States as second, and Germany as third. This is partly based on simple empirical observation. Obviously the Soviet Union's mobilization of some 800,000 women in various combat and support roles places it at the top. Likewise, the German decision to keep women out of the industrial workplace even after Joseph Goebbels' January 1943 Total War speech at the Berlin *Sportzplatz*, and the reluctance to field auxiliaries outside of the clerical capacity – even at the most dire point of national security survival – places it third. But simple observations aside, consider how the three match up using the Segal model:

Table 7.2: The Segal model applied to the three case studies.

Nation	Societal Factors	Cultural Factors	Military Factors
Soviet Union	High	High	High
United States	Medium	Medium	Low
Germany	Low	Low	High

In the Soviet Union, the Societal Factors described by Segal (demography, social structure, economy, and family structures) all may be ranked as "High" in terms of how they provide for gender equity in the public sphere. The same may be said about the Cultural Factors (Gender and Family values, public discourse, and economic necessity) and the Military Factors – in particular, the immediacy and scale of the threat to Soviet political survival. While Germany also faced a dire struggle for survival (one caused by its own actions, of course), Nazi political and cultural ideology presumed women were subordinate members of the hyper-masculine society, and that they should remain in the maternal nurturing domestic sphere. American society, for all of its imagined wartime equality and shared sacrifice,

absorbed the workplace mobilization of women, but American were not culturally or socially prepared to permit greater gender equity. The absence of a clear threat to national security survival only reinforced existing gendered role boundaries.

Race and the American Military in Wartime, 1941–1945

Even outside of the extremely violent conduct on the Eastern Front and the Pacific Theater (See Chapters Six), race was a major factor in the prosecution and execution of the war on both sides. Obviously the Nazi regime's ideological hatred of Jews and other alleged inferior groups affected Germany's military policy and strategy. Likewise Stalin's distrust of various ethnic groups in the path of the German Armies in 1942 helped precipitate the mass forced settlements of the Caucasus region. Japanese and American racist ideologies aside, the race-based policies of other European imperial powers in Asia were no less costly and divisive. British insensitivity to the needs of the population of Bengal in the face of the wartime appropriation of grain exacerbated existing food shortages, resulting in a massive famine killing over three million Bengalis in 1943. Meanwhile French colonial authorities in Indochina openly collaborated with Japanese occupiers, while pursuing its counter insurgency against the Vietnamese nationalist resistance. In the United States, the Second World War directly influenced ideologies and policies toward its non-white citizens. Contrary to the imagined construction of a "Greatest Generation" united in pursuit of victory, the American war effort was marked by misperception and misuse founded in a bankrupt racist world view.

In the case of African Americans, the Second World War was only one episode in a long history of injustice. Since the close of the First World War, they had long suffered from the intransigent growing influences of Jim Crow in the United States Army. They made only limited inroads into Caucasian-dominated hierarchy during the First World War, and most of these gains came while fighting under the French flag. The U.S. Army relegated most black soldiers to segregated units that, although preforming essential logical tasks, never saw combat and thus could never measure up to white standards for manhood, valor, and experience. Of the hundreds of thousands of blacks who volunteered and were conscripted, only two provisional infantry divisions – the 92nd and 93rd – were organized under white command. Rejected by AEF commander John J. Pershing, these two divisions acquired a spotty record. The 92nd Division was broken in futile attacks against strong German fixed positions in the Meuse-Argonne, while the 93rd Division fared better after being handed off to the French Army, who employed its constituent regiments alongside French units.

The fate of segregated black units in the Army endured more setbacks because of a series of post-war performance evaluations, memoirs, and official reports. In 1925, an Army War College memorandum criticized the ability of black troops to serve in combat, basing its recommendations largely on the 92nd Division's performance at Binarville in October 1918.[36] Consequently, by 1930, the Army became an increasingly hostile environment for blacks. The four "colored" regiments were pulled from the line (of combat units) and consigned to maintenance and support duties, including cleaning stables for white cavalry regiments and the U.S. Military Academy. Other personnel were detached to serve as orderlies and servants, rather than undergo regular military training. Likewise black National Guard units languished in their states with only minimal federal support and failed to muster together even once for peacetime training during that decade.

In 1937, the U.S. War Department unveiled a plan for mobilization and training that included black troops for the first time since the 1918. Proceeding from a general estimation of African Americans comprising ten percent of a wartime military, the plan called for creating a segregated Negro cadre of reservists who would be fleshed out in wartime with recruits drawn proportionately from the Army's enlistment pool. Resistance from Southern congressional members restricted this plan; the 1940 Selective Service Act, for example, while committed to inducting blacks in direct proportion to the percentage of their population (10.6 percent), provided for the formation of only forty-seven distinct organizations comprised of an enlisted strength of 44,737 men. Except for the pre-existing four Regular regiments, the six National Guard organizations on the books, and two new artillery regiments, all new units would be support and supply formations. Thus even in the face of conscription, African Americans found themselves directed toward menial labor and support functions, rather than service in the combat arms.[37] Such restrictions flew in the face of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's preference for a desegregated military; but given the strength of the Southern faction of the Democratic Party, he was left with little choice other than to going along, unable or unwilling to press further out of fear of alienating Southern Democrats.

When the United States entered the war, it made inefficient use of the African Americans in the Regular Army, whether they volunteered or were conscripted into service. Undersecretary of War Robert Patterson and Special Envoy William Hastie spearheaded efforts to ameliorate the living and working conditions for black recruits, while also seeking to improve training. Their best efforts could not

36 AWC 127-25, "Employment of negro man power in war," November 10, 1925 in Franklin Delano Roosevelt Library Library. https://fdrlibrary.org/documents/…doc…/4693156a-8844-4361-ae17-03407e7a3dee (Accessed February 4, 2018).
37 *Ibid*., 39–40.

blunt the hostility of Southern communities adjacent to the segregated camps. Black soldiers routinely complained of mistreatment at the hands of white policemen and armed civilians. Denied access to the same lunch counters and ice cream shops frequented by white German and Italian prisoners of war, many black soldiers questioned the legitimacy of the war effort. Freedom for whites in Europe living under Nazi repression meant little to blacks denied their own equal rights in the United States. No less oppressive were the institutional and casual racisms in the Army itself. Black officers and NCOs were routinely insulted and ignored by uniformed white bigots. Just like a generation earlier, circumstance and custom forced black officers to navigate a system fraught with bigotry and prejudice. Subordinates refused to obey orders or return salutes, while senior officers actively sought out examples to expose the discomfort and inadequacy of their black junior officers to lead in these situations.[38]

The final indignity came in the wartime assignment of the overwhelming majority of black soldiers to what were euphemistically known as "labor units." Following the recommendations of the 1925 Army War College memorandum, the War Department designated African Americans as generally unfit for combat on the basis of their poor education and an assumed lower capacity for showing initiative and drive essential for high combat performance. Hundreds of thousands of black troops found themselves in construction, stevedore, and trucking units in the rear echelon, where they performed with manual labor jobs considered too menial for whites.

Despite the demeaning treatment at the hands of white officers, black support units ably executed essential tasks throughout the war, as witnessed in the performance of transportation companies ferrying gasoline, ammunition, and other supplies to the front lines in the fabled "Red Ball Express." And their work was not quite so removed from the front as the War Department expected; in Normandy, along the Rhine, on Bougainville, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa, African-American support units worked under direct enemy fire. When given the chance, they took the field to ferret out snipers and machine gunners in their secure underground bunkers. A further chance to take the field came in the ETO in January 1945 with the formation of the "Fifth Platoons" comprised of African-American soldiers under white leadership. To alleviate manpower shortages gripping American infantry companies, the War Department authorized the creation of these extra platoons for attachment to otherwise all-white companies in a few select infantry

38 *Ibid*. See also Morris J. MacGregor and Bernard C. Nalty, eds., *Blacks in the United States Armed Forces*, 13 vol. (Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1977); Morris J. MacGregor, *Integration of the Armed Forces, 1940–1965* (United States Army, Center of Military History, 1981); and most recently, Kimberly Phillips Boehm, *War! What is it Good For?: Black Freedom Struggles and the U.S. Military from World War II to Iraq* (University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 20–64.

divisions. Even though the platoons remained segregated, the overall experience of integrated infantry companies helped convince some regimental and divisional commanders of the fallacies of segregation.[39]

When it came to formal combat organizations, however, the War Department's treatment of African-American soldiers was uneven. First, there were the cases of the Army's four regular colored regiments. The 9th and 10th Cavalry Regiments, after making up the core of the 2nd Cavalry Division, were inactivated in 1944, their members scattered among labor battalions in the Mediterranean theater. The 24th Infantry Regiment was dispatched early in the war in April 1942 to the South Pacific, where, upon its arrival, its battalions were sent to different bases where they worked as labor battalions. Not until February 1944 did the 24th Infantry Regiment take to the field as tactical reserve for the 37th Infantry Division on Bougainville. The 25th Infantry Regiment trained and deployed as part of the newly activated 93rd Infantry Division, joined with support units to establish the 25th Regimental Combat Team (RCT). After a short period of training on Guadalcanal, the 25th RCT was deployed to Bougainville in March 1944, joining the Americal and 37th Infantry Divisions in combat against some 25,000 defending Japanese soldiers and sailors. At no point did the 25th RCT lose contact with the enemy, nor did it once break under fire; nevertheless, the unit's white officers voiced scurrilous – and ultimately unverifiable – rumors about the alleged poor morale and other failings of the regiment.

The mistreatment of the four regular regiments and the 93rd Infantry Division pales in comparison with the abuse heaped upon the 92nd Infantry Division. Reconstituted in October 1942, the division was built around a cadre of black National Guard units. The 92nd Division underwent extensive training in the United States under the direction of its commander, Major General Edward "Ned" Almond. A graduate of the Virginia Military Academy, Almond was advanced ahead of his peers to take charge of the Negro division, largely on the basis that as a Southerner, Almond "knew" how to handle and interact with blacks. The decision to appoint him was one of General George Marshall's few mistakes in the Second World War. The 92nd division's new commander soon gained a reputation among his men as a martinet, who was widely disliked. In order to extend his style of control, Almond selected like-minded Southerners as staff officers and senior field subordinates, men who frequently rated low in competence and motivational skills.

39 See David Colley, *Blood for Dignity: The Story of the First Integrated Combat Unit in the U.S. Army* (St. Martin's Griffin, 2004).

In August 1944, the 92nd Infantry Division moved into position opposite the Gothic Line adjacent to the 1st Armored Division. After the division was fully consolidated, it went into action along the Serchio River front in November. Following a failed river crossing attempt, the 92nd was hit by a strong joint Italian and German counterattack opposite Castelnuovo di Garfagnana. Despite heavy casualties totaling 2,997 killed, wounded and missing, Almond scapegoated his black troops rather than accept responsibility for his unit's poor performance. Post-combat inspections of the division revealed high levels of distrust among the black troops toward their officers, who in turn expressed their own dissatisfaction with their men. Almond denied these realities even in the face of strong evidence to the contrary, insisting that African Americans were ill-suited for combat, echoing the charges levied in the 1925 Army War College memorandum. Almond subsequently broke up the 92nd Infantry Division, sending one regiment to the rear for additional training, while another was splintered into labor and security battalions. By the time the division returned to the line in late March 1945, it included only a single black regiment; the other two black regiments were replaced with an all-white regiment and the all-Japanese 442nd Regimental Combat Team.[40]

The US Army fielded a handful of other all-black combat units throughout the war, most notably the 761st Tank Battalion, the 827th Tank Destroyer Battalion, and the 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion. While the 761st Tank Battalion performed admirably in battle, collecting eleven Silver Stars and 69 Bronze Stars in its six months in action, other units did not fare so well. The 555th Parachute Infantry, dubbed the "Triple Nickel" by its men, spent most of the war in training and as smoke jumpers – airborne forest fire fighters – in the Pacific Northwest. Attached to the 82nd Airborne Division after Japan's surrender, the battalion was absorbed by the 505th Airborne Infantry Regiment in December 1947. The 827th Tank Destroyer Battalion suffered greatly from its experience in training, during which time it was reorganized four times and led by eight different commanders. By the time it entered the line in France in December 1944, morale in the battalion had fallen to abysmal levels, the nadir being reached on January 6, 1945, when two separate shooting incidents in the unit occurred. Widespread desertion and insubordination bordering on mutiny only compounded the situation, which ended with the 827th Tank Destroyer Battalion being pulled out of the line for reorganization.[41]

40 Booker, *African Americans in the Army*, 246–52; and Nalty, *Strength for the Fight*, 172–74.
41 Booker, *African Americans in the Army*, 139–44, 162–66, 288–23.

Another product of military segregation that stood out were the four squadrons – the 99th, 100th, 301st, and 302nd Fighter Squadrons – comprising the 332nd Fighter Group, the acclaimed "Tuskegee Airmen." In January 1941, the US Army Air Corps was an exclusively white-only branch. This policy changed in the summer when President Franklin D. Roosevelt ordered the Army Air Force to institute a flight training program for black officers. The first cadre of thirteen aviation cadets at Tuskegee Army Air Field, Alabama, included First Lieutenant Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., son of Brigadier General Benjamin O. Davis, Sr., and the future commander of the 332nd Fighter Group. After completing its training in March 1942, they deployed to North Africa as the 99th Pursuit Squadron.

Figure 7.2: Tuskegee airmen Roscoe C. Brown, Marcellus G. Smith, and Colonel Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., confer prior to escort mission. Ramitelli, Italy, March 1945.
Source: Library of Congress.

In North Africa, the 99th Pursuit Squadron, under the command of the newly promoted Lieutenant Colonel Davis, Jr., experienced no shortage of mistreatment from whites. The squadron was routinely criticized for poor performance by superiors and was on the verge of being rotated back to the United States as a failure. Lieutenant Colonel Davis convinced a War Department inspector that on-base segregation – ordered by the base commander in North Africa – denied his pilots the chance to learn from other, more experienced white pilots. In the final report, the inspector ruled against transfer, noting there was no qualitative difference between the 99th Pursuit Squadron and other all-white, squadrons in the theater. This report paved the way for Davis' promotion to Colonel and command of the newly organized 332nd Fighter Group. During its subsequent service over Italy, Romania, France, and Germany, the Tuskegee Airmen flew over 15,000 sorties, earning the respect of their peers and the bomber crews they escorted. Despite the later debunking of the claim that they never lost a bomber they escorted, the 332nd Fighter Group record proved no less outstanding and deserving of recognition. On the basis of Colonel Davis' leadership, the performance of the Tuskegee Airmen facilitated the easy assimilation and integration of the Air Force following President Harry S. Truman's Executive Order 9981 mandating the end of segregation in the American military.[42]

African Americans encountered still more institutionalized racism in the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps to include strict limits on advancing in rank and prohibition from service in combat units. To Secretary of the Navy Franklin Knox, Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Ernest King and the Marine Corps Commandant General Thomas Holcomb, the "negroes" (the civil name by which they were known in the 1940s) lacked the capacities for leadership, initiative, and intellect necessary for effective fulfillment of key duties.[43] The Navy and Marine Corps set up policy barriers that kept black Americans from serving in combat units and limiting their upward mobility in rank.

Similar obstacles faced black sailors in the U.S. Navy. In the 1920s, African Americans were rejected entirely from the service, subjects of a recruitment ban that lasted until the Roosevelt Administration. Subsequent recruitment remained

42 See William Alexander Percy, "Jim Crow and Uncle Sam: The Tuskegee Flying Units and the U.S. Army Air Forces in Europe during World War II," *Journal of Military History* 67 (July, 2003): 773–810.

43 John W. Davis, "The Negro in the United States Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard," *Journal of Negro Education* 12 (Summer 1943): 347–48; David J. Ulbrich, *Preparing for Victory: Thomas Holcomb and the Making of the Modern Marine Corps, 1936–1943* (Naval Institute Press, 2011), 119–20, 166–67; Routledge M. Dennis, "Social Darwinism, Scientific Racism, and the Metaphysics of Race," *Journal of Negro Education* 64 (Summer 1995): 243–46.

low, no doubt influenced by the Navy's restriction of virtually all black sailors to the Steward's Branch. Here some 5,000 sailors (in December 1941) served in menial roles as butlers, waiters, and personal valets to naval officers, outside of the standard chain of command and authority. Initial efforts to create service opportunities outside of this menial service class foundered over similar obstacles erected in the Army – black seamen lacked the initiative and intelligence to conduct highly technical tasks; the morale and integrity of the service would suffer if ships were integrated; etc. By July 1942, however, the Navy gradually began to open technical specialties – electrician, machinist, signalman, for example – to black sailors. Progress was painfully slow: in February 1943, only 26,909 black sailors were listed on personnel rolls, amounting to only two percent of the entire enlisted establishment. And over two thirds of these men were employed in the Steward's Branch. Ultimately over 164,000 black sailors were enlisted or conscripted for the Navy, including sixty men and women commissioned as ensigns, during the war.[44] And while fewer were sidelined as Stewards, most were employed on manual labor details, generally working at loading and unloading freighters and tenders.[45] A single destroyer escort, the USS *Mason*, was outfitted with an all-black crew, save for officers, in 1944, a gesture toward an indeterminate future for black sea service within an institution that would remain after the war one of the most stubborn bulwarks against integration in the Federal Government.

In the U.S. Marine Corps, no blacks had ever served as Marines before 1942, and long-standing prohibitions also existed against other selected minorities. Nowhere was this race-based discrimination more tellingly routine than in a form letter from Marine Corps Headquarters rejecting an American man of Filippo descent who wanted to join the Corps just days after the attack on Pearl Harbor. The letter answered his request:

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44 See correspondence by Navy leaders in McGregor and Nalty, *Blacks in the United States Armed Forces*, 13–14; McGregor, *Integration of the Armed Forces*, 62–67; Nalty, *Strength for the Fight*, 185–87; Steven J. Ramold, *Slaves, Soldiers, Citizens: African Americans in the Union Navy* (Northern Illinois University Press, 2002), 182–86; MacGregor, *Integration of the Armed Forces*, 89, 98.

45 While the Navy considered stevedore duties to be non-hazardous, the reality for black sailors was far different. Often led by callous and incompetent white junior officers, enlisted blacks were often employed in haphazard and unsafe conditions. On July 17, 1944, a series of mishaps connected to an informal contest between white officers over whose crew was faster at loading the ammunition tenders they served led to an explosion at Port Chicago, California, that claimed the lives of 250 black sailors and 50 other persons. The ensuing work shutdown protest was quickly deemed a mutiny by the Navy. Some 50 sailors were court-martialed on grounds of mutiny, a decision ultimately overturned by Thurgood Marshall's intervention. See Robert L. Allen, *The Port Chicago Mutiny: The Story of the Largest Mass Mutiny Trial in U.S. Naval History* (Heyday, 2006).

> It has long been the custom of the Marine Corps to accept for enlistment only men of the Caucasian race because of the limited size of the Marine Corps and the diversified duties performed by its members. To make an exception to this policy in your case is not deemed practicable. . .[46]

Other examples of institutional racism can be seen in the Corps as evinced in January 1942, when Commandant and General Thomas Holcomb testified about manpower mobilization to senior admirals sitting on the U.S Navy's General Board. The Commandant cloaked inequitable policies in progressive management terms, stating that "there would be a definite loss of efficiency in the Marine Corps if we have to take Negroes."[47] Holcomb worried that units would lose combat effectiveness if blacks, like Filipino-American applicants, were permitted to join the Corps. His later testimony revealed other fears that training and supervising African-American units would sap his always-short supply of qualified officers and non-commissioned officers. Holcomb closed his remarks to the senior admirals by stating that "the Negro race has every opportunity now to satisfy its aspirations for combat in the Army – a very much larger organization than the Navy or the Marine Corps – and their desire to enter the naval service is largely, I think, to break into a club that doesn't want them."[48] Holcomb thus went so far as to question African Americans' motivations for joining the Corps as less than patriotic because he felt they were only doing so for the sake of attaining membership in an exclusive group, rather for other more legitimate reasons like patriotism.[49]

Sadly, bigoted beliefs were too deeply entrenched in the officer corps and among the senior leaders in the seaborne services. The Marine Corps, for instance, never had any African American to join its ranks. Even if they entered in the Corps or the Navy, the Navy's General Board later agreed that they should not see combat because "their value generally for field service is gravely doubted."[50] Many sources also reveals that, for General Holcomb and Admiral Ernest King, the institutional racism reinforced personal racism and vice versa.[51]

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46 Major W.E. Burke, USMC, to Louis C. Padillo, Jr., 29 December 1941, MCGC 1939-50, Box 619, RG 127, NACP. See also Jarvis, *Male Body at War*, 131, 135–36.

47 Holcomb, testimony in hearings of the General Board of the Navy, 23 January 1942, Subject: "Enlistment of Men of Colored Race (201)," cited in Henry I. Shaw, Jr., and Ralph W. Donnelly, *Blacks in the Marine Corps* (History and Museums Division, 1975), 1.

48 *Ibid*.

49 See Morris J. McGregor, Jr., *Integration of the Armed Forces, 1940–1965* (GPO, 1981), 100–101.

50 General Board Study of Men of the Colored Race in other than Messman Branch, 20 March 1942, p. 9, File 18E, Holcomb Papers, Box 19, MCURA.

51 For analyses and archival citations, see Heather Pace Marshall, "Crucible of Colonial Service: The Warrior Brotherhood and the Mythos of the Modern Marine Corps, 1898–1934" (M.A. thesis,

In terms of opening the ranks of the seaborne services to minorities during war, President Roosevelt resolved the wartime matter officially in May 1942 when he signed the legislation authorizing the inclusion of African Americans in the Navy and the Marine Corps. Although more socially progressive than many of his contemporaries and certainly influenced by his wife Eleanor also a champion of human rights, the President was also pragmatic. The U.S. needed to muster all available people to fight a global war. It is worth noting that, back in June 1941, Roosevelt set a precedent for such integration measures in his Executive Order 8802, which prohibited employment discrimination and to promote equal opportunity for all races, creeds, colors and national origin in defense-related industries and government agencies. Despite these decisions, however, personal racism among many individuals and in many sectors slowed the process of inclusivity in the U.S. military. While not prepared to defy Roosevelt, senior Navy and Marine Corps leaders regulated inclusion by establishing racist promotion and manpower allocation policies.[52] For the Corps, all newly organized African-American units would be segregated and led by Caucasian officers. No black could receive an officer's commissions. These caveats translated into preserving combat effectiveness of amphibious assault units and other combat formations as all-white entities. Segregation would remain *de jure* in the U.S. military until 1948 when President Truman issued Executive Order 9981; and it would remain *de facto* throughout much of the Korean War.[53]

Meanwhile on the home front, African-American civilians supported the war effort while also struggling to improve their social and political status in the face of tremendous repression. Over three million blacks left the rural Deep South in search of work in the factories of the Northeast, the Great Lakes, and the Pacific Coast. The so-called "Great Migration" proved no easy move for the families seeking a fresh start. Many factories sought to exclude blacks entirely, despite the Roosevelt Administration's efforts to ban workplace segregation in factories fulfilling federal contracts. Many local tradesmen and industrial unions joined in the exclusionary efforts, seeking to preserve jobs for local members. Families seeking housing in the North and Pacific Coast found themselves shunted into

University of Hawaii, 2003); McGregor, *Integration of the Armed Forces*, 3–16; Cameron, *American Samurai*, 237; Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear*, 713, 773–74; Ulbrich, *Preparing for Victory*, 119–20, 166–67.

52 Chairman of the General Board to SecNav, 20 March 1942, Knox to Roosevelt, 27 March 1942, and Roosevelt to Knox, 31 March 1942, all in File 18E, all in Holcomb Papers, Box 19, MCURA; memorandum from Holcomb, 25 May 1942, in McGregor and Nalty, *Blacks in the United States Armed Forces*, 416; McGregor, *Integration of the Armed Forces*, 65–67, 99–103; Nalty, *Strength for the Fight*, 187–90, 199–200.

53 A recent overview can be found in Boehm, *War! What is it Good For?*, 20–64.

the worse urban neighborhoods, often without ready access to public transportation or shopping. As bad as the conditions were in the North and Pacific Coast, they did represent improvements of life compared to that of Southern sharecroppers. There state governments strove to restrict black migration, fearing for the negative impact on agriculture in the South. White racists stepped up their mistreatment of blacks, emboldened in their violence by the arrival in the region of Northern blacks who openly questioned Jim Crow. While nowhere near the level of the 1920s, public lynchings continued in the South, often on the most specious grounds and targeting innocent men.

In response to the pressures of Jim Crow and its slow, inexorable march northward following the Great Migration, civil rights advocates sought new legislation and other protections for African Americans, the "Double Victory" against fascism abroad and racism at home.[54] Many black citizens were uneasy about supporting a war against Nazism and Japanese militarism while they remained a second-class caste at home. Indeed, some initially sympathized with the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere claim of liberating Asia from white imperialist domination, changing their opinions only as the extent of brutality against non-Japanese persons became apparent. The lingering open racism against African Americans would prove to be one of the "Good War's" most prominent stains. Across the country – not only in the Southeast – African-American service personnel were harassed, denied services, insulted, beaten, maimed, and even killed by white bigots eager to deny black men and women the dignity of equal treatment in the uniform. The only positive outcome of the experience was the awakening of decent Americans – black and white – to the oppressive nature of racism in American society. Having defeated fascism, American civil libertarians were poised to take on Jim Crow in the post-war years.

African Americans were alone among minorities in feeling the effects of Wartime mobilization on the home front. From the forced confinement of West Coast Japanese-Americans, to the use of Native Americans as radio operators in the Pacific Theater; from the prejudice and oppression of Mexican Americans in the "Zoot Suit Riots" of 1942 and 1943, to the faith-affirming experience of American Jews serving in the armed forces – virtually every racial and ethnic

54 See Donald Takaki, *Double Victory: A Multicultural History of America in World War II* (New York: Back Bay Books, 2001); Daniel Kryder, *Divided Arsenal: Race and the American State During World War II* (Cambridge University Press, 2001); and Beth Bailey and David Farber, "The 'Double-V' Campaign in World War II in Hawaii: African Americans, Racial Ideology, and Federal Power," *Journal of Social History* 26 (December 1993): 817–43.

Figure 7.3: Group of young "zoot-suiters" boarding a Los Angeles County Sheriff's bus to make their court appearance. June 1943.
Source: Library of Congress. Reproduction Number: LC-USZ62-113319 (b&w film copy neg.) Item URL: http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/95504788/

group in the United States experienced a different war.[55] In the end the American war experience rarely matched the common cause image espoused in the consensus narrative. Rather the American war experience was one no less diverse and multi-dimensional as the current day. Hence aspiring and experienced historians specializing in the Second World War are obligated to highlight how the consensus narrative is flawed. As Michael C.C. Adams points out, "Sometimes we conjure up the past in such a way that it appears better than it really was. We forget ugly things we did and magnify the good things. This is wishful thinking, the desire to retell our past not as it was but as we would like it to have been. If

55 For context, see Jack D. Forbes, "'Indian' and 'Black' As Radically Different Types of Categories," in *The Social Construction of Race and Ethnicity in the United States*, eds. Joan Ferrante and Prince Brown Jr. (Longman, 1998), 120–22.

the past is remolded too drastically, it ceases to be real history. It becomes what we call myth, or folklore, instead."[56]

When it comes to the Second World War, Americans have fallen all too readily for the mythological interpretation of "Good War." Instead of the reality of a diverse America responding to the challenges of the outside world, restrained by its own systemic issues associated with racial intolerance and gender chauvinism, a mythic grand narrative of the United States as a homogenous society, all fighting together as one to save the world from itself, has taken root and become the prevailing wisdom of the experience. The following case studies offer a sobering perspective on America's great crusade, highlighting the value of using race and gender as tools of analysis.

On February 19, 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, setting in motion one of the most tragic missteps in American domestic policy since the founding of the Republic. Bowing to pressure from military authorities and civilian political groups throughout the West Coast, Roosevelt signed away the already tenuous civil rights of over 100,000 first and second generation Japanese-Americans. Despite their professions of patriotism and civic identity as Americans, thousands of families were forced to leave their homes and businesses in California, Oregon, and Washington for confinement in hastily-constructed internment camps for the duration of the war. In their absence, family homes and properties were seized by local authorities and sold for pennies on the dollar, often to neighbors and business competitors. Conditions in the camps, especially those built in the California Rockies, Utah, and the Arizona desert, were initially harsh. In the first months, many families struggled to survive in the face of fuel and food shortages. Conditions were slow to improve. Housing was built on specifications for temporary barracks, which left much to be desired for families living together over prolonged periods of time. Work details were initially few in number, and restricted to basic agriculture and construction details. An appeal of the resettlement order was denied by the Supreme Court in October 1944, citing the President's authority to secure domestic security in wartime by incarcerating enemy aliens. Since Japanese-Americans were formally classified as such in the Alien Enemies Act of 1941 and subsequent Presidential proclamations, the Court held, no law was broken. In a December 1944 decision, however, the Supreme Court ruled the detainment of loyal citizens was unlawful, while in a separate ruling again upholding the internment act. On January 2, 1945,

56 Adams, *Best War Ever*, 1.

the internment act was fully rescinded, and all interned families were released during the next year.[57]

The Puerto Rican National Guard activated its 65th Infantry Regiment in June 1940, and immediately set out a training regimen on the island to bring it up to continental National Guard standards. Given the ethnic makeup of the island's population, it was accepted as a matter of course that the cadre would be commanded by a white colonel and subordinate senior officers. In September 1944, the 65th Infantry Regiment deployed to Southern France, from which it occupied positions in the Maritime Alps. In January 1945, the Puerto Rican regiment joined Seventh Army in its drive across Lorraine and Southern Germany.[58] During the next months, the 65th was organized and treated in the same fashion as African-American organizations – with native-born enlisted personnel and junior-grade officers leading platoons, under the direction of white company, battalion, and regimental command grade officers.

By 1941, many young Jewish men and women sought to further their own personal assimilation by pursuing a secularized path to form an American identity. Almost exclusively urban dwellers settling in the Northeastern cities, American Jews understood the overall message of Nazi's race hatred, but were largely unfamiliar with how it was put into practice. After Pearl Harbor, Jewish males joined in the patriotic rush to enlist in the military. Unlike many other white Americans, however, Jews were themselves targets of racial bigotry in the military, particularly in the Southern and Midwestern training camps. Anti-Semitism did not disappear during their service abroad. What did change, however, was the Jewish soldiers' and sailors' willingness to conform to a secular American norm. As American Jews served abroad, they not only directly confronted the full extent of Nazi injustice, they also experienced disparate communities of observant Jews all across the world from India and Australia to England and Italy. A new sense of pride and purpose evolved as they recognized their distinct identity, their faith renewed in the face of extreme hatred and injustice, nourished by the prospect of a post-war community of survivors.[59]

57 See Allen Austin, "Eastward Pioneers: Japanese American Resettlement during World War II and the Contested Meaning of Exile and Incarceration," *Journal of American Ethnic Studies* 26 (Winter 2007): 58–65; Greg Robinson, *By Order of the President: FDR and the Internment of Japanese Americans* (Harvard University Press, 2003); and Roger Daniels, *The Japanese American Cases: The Rule of Law in the Time of War* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2013), 28–79.

58 Booker, *African Americans in World War II*, 160–61.

59 See Deborah Dash Moore, *GI Jews: How World War II Changed a Generation* (Harvard University Press, 2006).

Last Thoughts on the "Greatest Generation" Mythology

Since the 1980s, America's World War II generation has witnessed a dramatic shift in how their actions have been contextualized by and for the general public. In one sense, this was a predictable outcome, as the fiftieth anniversary of the war neared. As the pain of the Vietnam War and the domestic angst of Watergate faded under the bright glare of Ronald Reagan's staged positivism, Americans began to look more closely to their parents' and grandparents' experiences for evidence of a former state of greatness that was somehow free from the moral stain of the recent past. Following the lead of figures like Stephen Ambrose and Tom Brokaw, a flood of new books on the Second World War began to flood best-seller lists. Largely validational, if not even hagiographic, so many of these books offered blameless chronicles of the American GI locked in mortal contest for the soul of humanity with a wholly evil foe. Before long, the new historiography of the war was joined by film and television portrayals that presented American participation in the Second World War as something like a modern-day Passion Play, in which the noble wartime generation – the "Greatest Generation" – willfully gave of itself to deliver the world from evil incarnate. As audiences and readers consumed this fare, a new love of the military and its legacy took shape during the 1990s and 2000s.[60]

Fortunately these sensationalized interpretations to the Second World War have there detractors and critics. Some, like literary figures and veterans Paul Fussell, Joseph Heller, and Kurt Vonnegut, worked from the perspective that war at its most elemental state is one of collective insanity, in which young men and women are sacrificed without concern, all to fulfill the desires of a very select power elite.[61] These accounts are very important corrections to the over-romanticized perspective of the Second World War in American culture and history, but as a rule do not address specific issues associated with race and gender inequalities and misuses. Other more recent efforts have started to

60 Stephen E. Ambrose, *D-Day: June 6, 1944, The Climactic Battle of World War II* (Simon & Schuster, 1994); Michael D. Doubler, *Closing with the Enemy: How GIs Fought the War in Europe, 1944–1945* (University Press of Kansas, 1994); Stephen E. Ambrose, *Citizen Soldiers: The U.S. Army from the Normandy Beaches to the Bulge to the Surrender of Germany* (Simon & Schuster, 1998); Tom Brokaw, *The Greatest Generation* (Random House, 1998); and Peter R. Mansoor, *The G.I. Offensive in Europe: The Triumph of American Infantry Divisions* (University Press of Kansas, 1999).

61 Joseph Heller, *Catch-22* (Simon & Schuster, 1981); Kurt Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse Five, or the Children's Crusade* (Dell Publishing, 1969); Paul Fussell, *Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War* (Oxford University Press, 1990); and Paul Fussell, *The Boys' Crusade: The American Infantry in Northwestern Europe, 1944–1945* (Modern Library, 2005).

engage the "Greatest Generation" mythology head on. Kurt Piehler confronts the question of commemoration and memory in his 2004 book, *Remembering War the American Way*, while Michael R. Dolski's *D-Day Remembered: The Normandy Landings in American Collective Memory* takes on what for many remains the chief source of their adulation and neo-militarism. Elsewhere, military historian Eric Klinek calls into question the veracity of portrayals of "great" American soldier, and specifically the millions of wartime replacements shipped over to Europe. Klinek offers a necessary corrective to the usual celebration of American combat effectiveness by arguing that those replacement soldiers filling out units plagued by casualties were not always the superior fighting men.[62] Meanwhile, over the years, both Michael C.C. Adams and Studs Terkel have also received both popular acclaim and negative reviews for their efforts to shine a light on the misdeeds and failings of the "Greatest Generation" during the "Good War." And in some ways their efforts are indeed warranted. The Federal Government (including the War and Navy Departments) and the American people did behave and act on several occasions in ways that are, by contemporary standards, not only embarrassing but overtly criminal. Nevertheless, many readers and critics of the new revisionists miss the point of Adams, Terkel, and other historians who strive to create a more balanced, if rawer, look at World War II and the American war experience. Just as the United States made mistakes and errors in the prosecution of the war against Nazi Germany and the Japanese Empire, it also made great strides and improvements, not just militarily, but socially as well. Many of these advances would not become immediately apparent. Some, like the integration of the Armed Forces, would come a few years later. Others, like the open recruitment of women in the military along the same standards as men, would come a generation later. What is to be noted that even as tremendous social changes were being effected in American society, the United States was a country at war, and that it was able to consider social change at the same time as it contemplated the complete and utter destruction of its enemies.

Perhaps the most important outcome of America's World War II experience is the realization that armed conflict, as a highly socialized endeavor, has the power to wreak tremendous social change. Just as military institutions and war-fighting practices depend upon the mores and limits of civilian society to set the parameters and limits of their prosecution, so too does society respond to the challenges created by war to recalibrate the contours of citizenship and identity in

62 G. Kurt Piehler, *Remembering War the American Way* (Smithsonian Books, 2004); Michael R. Dolski, *D-Day Remembered: The Normandy Landings in American Collective Memory* (University of Tennessee Press, 2016); and Eric Klinek, "The Army's Orphans: The United States Army Replacement System in the European Campaign, 1944–1945" (Ph.D. diss., Temple University, 2014).

the subsequent peace. In this way more than any other, perhaps, the warning of George Santayana is realized. Consider, the full context of his famous quote:

> Progress, far from consisting in change, depends on retentiveness. When change is absolute there remains no being to improve and no direction is set for possible improvement: and when experience is not retained, as among savages, infancy is perpetual. *Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it*. In the first stage of life the mind is frivolous and easily distracted, it misses progress by failing in consecutiveness and persistence. This is the condition of children and barbarians, in which instinct has learned nothing from experience.[63]

If taken in this frame of reference, the great domestic social changes of the late twentieth century take on different meanings. Rather than individualized responses to social tragedies and injustices, perhaps they are part of the American effort to reconcile the Second World War's greater meanings at home after confronting them abroad. If so, then the real dimensions of victory are still unraveling today, over seven decades after the fact.

63 George Santayana, *The Life of Reason: Or the Phases of Human Progress* (Scribner, 1953), 82. Emphasis added.