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RELATED ENTRIES

Advice Literature; Alger, Horatio, Jr.; Bachelorhood; Breadwinner Role; Bureaucratization; Business/Corporate America; Capitalism; Class; Consumerism; Crisis of Masculinity; Cult of Domesticity; Darwinism; Individualism; Industrialization; Market Revolution; *Organization Man*, *The*; *Playboy* Magazine; Professionalism; Progressive Era; Self-Control; Self-Made Man; Strenuous Life; Suburbia; Urbanization; Victorian Era; Work

—Jonna Eagle

MILITARISM

The concept of militarism occupies an uncertain place in U.S. history and in the development of American male identity. Militarism exalts the warrior (and masculine) virtues of loyalty, bravery, discipline, and physical strength. It emphasizes war, and preparation for war, as a necessity for national survival and idealizes military service as the highest calling for men. Militarists consider military service to be a rite of passage to manhood, regarding males who have not served in the military as incomplete men. Although military service in wartime has always been part of American male identity, militarism's values clash with the equally masculine virtues of independence and individualism that American culture also idealizes. The result has been an American brand of militarism that extols the citizen soldier while retaining a suspicion of standing armies and aggressive international behavior.

Early American views of militarism and masculinity originated on the colonial frontier, particularly during the American Revolution. Resentment of the large British military presence in the colonies following the French and Indian War (1754–63), combined with the notion that British Army regulars harbored low moral character, produced an image of standing armies as threats to liberty and republican government, and as antithetical to republican manhood. The colonists' victory in the Revolutionary War in 1783 strengthened the ideal of the male citizen-soldier who was a frontiersman, a yeoman farmer, or a shopkeeper. In the early republic, the ambivalent relation between militarism and manhood persisted. The standing national army remained an object of suspicion, constitutionally subject to civilian control, while the male citizen was expected to be willing to serve his family, community, and country in wartime through local and state militias. Women, defined as caregivers and supporters, were to raise and nurture men to be strong enough to serve their country when the United States had to go to war to defend itself, but at the same time they were expected to curtail the glorification of war and large armies that might undermine male republican virtues and foster aggressive international behavior. This view predominated through the Civil War (1861–65).

Several interrelated developments of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries led to a change in these attitudes and began to foster a more unambiguously positive relation between militarism and masculinity. First, the presence of large numbers of Civil War veterans generated a mystique that contributed to the rise of American nationalism and glorified military service. Veterans and government officials in

both the North and South used the celebration of Memorial Day—the annual commemoration of American soldiers killed in battle—and the dedication of dozens of local Civil War memorials to instill in young men a sense of duty to the state. At about the same time, industrialization and urbanization generated anxiety that modern “overcivilization” had made American men soft; Darwinism identified struggle (sometimes violent) as a norm of existence and a mechanism of evolutionary development; and journalists, intellectuals, and political figures (including Theodore Roosevelt), spurred by these developments, urged the United States toward overseas expansion and increased military strength during and after the 1890s. The crisis that arose with Spain over Cuba and the resulting Spanish-American War in 1898 offered a new generation of males born after the Civil War an opportunity to prove themselves in battle.

The first half of the twentieth century witnessed sharp swings in the debate over the United States’ proper role in foreign affairs, the importance of a standing military establishment, and the link between masculinity and military service. In the early years of the century, advocates of a large military saw new threats to American security from Germany and, after its victory in the Russo-Japanese War (1904–05), Japan. Against this backdrop, militarists continued to emphasize the positive impact that military service could have on the development of male character. At the same time, however, opponents of militarism and imperial expansion emphasized the corrosive impact military life could have on individual male creativity and independence, as well as the threat militarism posed to democratic institutions. Women’s political and social groups, which surged in the early twentieth century, also frequently expressed anti-militarist sentiments. These swings continued during and after World War I. American intervention in the war in 1917 temporarily strengthened militarist arguments, but postwar disillusionment and isolationism, which grew deeper with the Great Depression, strengthened antiwar sentiment, sparked serious misgivings about American involvement abroad, and undermined militarist arguments regarding the character-building nature of military life.

American participation in World War II, and the onset of the Cold War soon thereafter, prompted a decisive shift in society’s views on militarism, military service, and male identity. The onset of World War II, the perceived threat posed by Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan, and American entry into the war once again reinforced the need for enlarged armed forces, but this time, to build support for U.S. involvement, the federal government mounted a strong

propaganda campaign. To ease fears that American belligerency might destroy the country’s democratic values, government propaganda depicted the armed forces as democratic organizations where servicemen were autonomous beings, while also emphasizing military service as an opportunity for young men to prove their manhood. The cultural reverence for the citizen-soldier as an independent, democratic-minded male ready to defend his home and his freedom was thus vindicated. Associations of national military strength with manliness continued—and were asserted with heightened urgency—during the Cold War, resulting in a large permanent military establishment and a deep imbedding of militarist sentiment in American culture.

During the 1960s the unpopularity of the Vietnam War and the rise of the women’s movement revived longstanding mistrust of the association of militarism with manhood, but resurgent conservatism in the late 1970s and 1980s pushed these concerns into the background. Ronald Reagan’s election as president in 1980, after a campaign in which he promised to restore an image of American international strength and presented himself as vigorously manly, brought a large military buildup and militarist rhetoric directed against the Soviet Union. The swift and convincing American victory in the Gulf War against Iraq in 1991 strengthened the military mystique, as did the growing military use of computer technology—itself often defined as a “masculine” field. Even the increasing participation of women in the armed forces—and their challenge to patriarchal perceptions of the military—has not diminished the strong use of masculine metaphors in public rhetoric involving military activity. The cultural association between militarism and masculinity, strengthened by developments of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, remains powerful.

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RELATED ENTRIES

American Revolution; Antiwar Movement; Citizenship; Civil War; Cold War; Imperialism; Military; Rambo; Reagan, Ronald; Republicanism; Spanish-American War; Technology; Vietnam War; War; Western Frontier; World War I; World War II

—Walter F. Bell

MILITARY

A key element in the construction of gender identity throughout U.S. history has been the almost exclusive male monopoly on the role of warrior and soldier. This role grew from a belief in superior male physical strength, stamina, and courage that has deep roots in Western civilization. The forces that originally defined American culture established a strong tie between masculinity and military service in time of war and conflict.

Throughout American military history, government leaders and the military establishment have used this traditional notion of gender identity and obligations of male citizenship to persuade men to join the armed services and participate in the country's defense in wartime. This process

has drawn large numbers of young men into uniform with minimal formal coercion. It has helped to glorify behaviors that encourage a high level of combat effectiveness, such as loyalty to comrades and a willingness to face danger, and it has reinforced accepted gender roles in the wider society that portray men as warriors and protectors and women as supporters and nurturers.

Europeans colonizing North America brought with them the perception, reinforced by medieval concepts of chivalry, that men had the duty of protecting women from outside invasions or internal uprisings. During the Revolutionary War and in the early days of the republic, concepts of male identity that emphasized obligations to fight to guard family and community and to resist tyranny and centralized authority became more pronounced. The republican ideals embodied in the American Revolution stimulated an aversion to large professional armies and a belief in the male citizen soldier who served in local militia forces out of a civic obligation to protect the democratic values of the republic. The values and standards of the predominately small town and rural communities from which these men came shaped their male identities and strengthened the cohesiveness, discipline, and combat effectiveness of the militia units to which they belonged.

The American military experience in nineteenth-century wars, particularly the Civil War, strengthened the notion that military service was the preserve of men. In the conscript armies of World Wars I and II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War, the military authorities continued to manipulate these gender roles and symbols, placing an added emphasis on the individual soldier's loyalty to his primary unit (squad, platoon, or company). This imbedding of men's identity through linkage to the warrior role has led to the conceptualization of the American military as a male-oriented gendered institution. The masculine culture of the armed forces grew out of this view of military service as a young man's rite of passage, establishing not only citizenship, but also manhood itself.

The twentieth century witnessed increasing challenges to traditional gender roles, including the definition of the warrior/protector role as exclusively male. Forces such as industrialization, urbanization, the mobilization of American society for two world wars, and the growing impact of feminism during the 1960s and 1970s expanded women's occupational opportunities and undermined the traditional notion that certain professions were suitable for men only. Women were allowed into uniform as temporary auxiliaries in clerical roles during World War I. During World War II, women served as



This photograph of U.S. soldiers participating in a training exercise illustrates the traditional elements of American military models of manhood: physical toughness, personal discipline, homosocial bonding, and sometimes violent defense of the nation. (© Bob Krist/Corbis)

members of segregated branches of the armed forces (such as the Women's Army Corps) and performed low-risk support functions. In 1948, Congress passed the Women's Armed Services Integration Act, though there was strong opposition in Congress and in the military. This act established a permanent status for women in both the regular services and the reserves, but it excluded them from combat-related occupations and limited their numbers to no more than 2 percent of authorized strength. Congress abolished these limits when it ended the draft in 1973. Creation of the all-volunteer military brought women into the armed forces in increasing numbers, paving the way for complete gender integration in 1978. In the 1990s, however, Congress relaxed restrictions to allow them to serve on naval combat vessels and to fly jet fighters and helicopters. As of 2002, women were still barred from ground combat units.

This assimilation of women into the military in the 1980s and 1990s intensified the debate, which began during World War II, over their proper role in war. The possibility of women coming under fire conflicts with deeply held beliefs

among conservative elements in the military and political leadership about the ability of women in war. Gender integration in the military challenges the notion that men alone are physically and emotionally qualified to participate in governmentally and socially sanctioned violence. This perceived threat to the military's male-centered culture provoked traditionalists to increasingly distinguish between support functions (such as clerical occupations, where most women still serve) and the combat groups, which they define as suitable for men only. Spurred on by heightened concerns over issues of sexual orientation, which further challenges traditional male identity, they resisted attempts by the administration of Bill Clinton during the 1990s to force admission of homosexuals into the nation's armed forces.

Gender integration has forced changes in the traditional training and indoctrination techniques and the customary behavior patterns that, in the all-male military, had affirmed male traits and were thought to foster effective battlefield performance. Efforts to widen women's roles have encountered widespread resistance from traditionalists who argue

that gender integration into combat units threatens to undermine qualifying and performance standards, unit morale and cohesion, and general efficiency. This resistance has manifested itself in frequent gender clashes, such as the Tailhook incident, during which male naval aviators abused their female colleagues during a convention in Las Vegas in 1991, and the 1996 allegations of rape and sexual misconduct at the Aberdeen Proving Grounds in Maryland.

While male exclusivity in the military has ended, the assumptions that governed that monopoly still have considerable support. It now appears that the general reappraisal of individual male and female military roles and associated behavioral standards will not occur without intense and prolonged conflict at all levels of the United States' military and political establishments.

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RELATED ENTRIES

American Revolution; Chivalry; Citizenship; Civil War; Gays in the Military; Imperialism; Industrialization; Militarism; Republicanism; Vietnam War; Violence; War; World War I; World War II

—Walter F. Bell

MINISTRY

The term *ministry* refers to the work of persons sanctioned by a religious community to administer its sacramental rites and spiritual functions, including preaching, pastoral work, teaching, and community discipline. Although the ministerial office is a part of every major religious tradition, there has been debate over its character and shape particularly in many Christian communities throughout the history of the United States. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, the ministry was defined as a masculine calling in the book of Leviticus, where God commands Moses to consecrate "Aaron and his sons" as priests of the Levite tribe and makes this a "perpetual ordinance." While this concept of the ministry assumed a hierarchical form in most of western European Christendom, a parallel notion of potentially transformative social power—"the priesthood of all believers"—developed as well and became particularly influential during the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As in Europe, many settlements in the New World witnessed an ongoing debate over the meaning and authority of the ministry, and since that time Americans have at times either reasserted or challenged traditional assumptions about the ministerial office as a domicile of divinely ordained masculine authority.

The English Puritans who established the Massachusetts Bay colony in the seventeenth century modeled their society and ecclesiastical life upon their understanding of ancient