

Southern New Hampshire University

# Edwardian stereotypes, social propaganda, American women in the military, and the Great War

A Capstone Project Submitted to the College of Online and Continuing Education in Partial  
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## Abstract

This is a research paper performing an in-depth examination of the power of Edwardian stereotypes and social propaganda and the lack of their effect upon American women's ability to serve in the military and military related service during the Great War. This is a worthwhile project that is of great historical importance not only to academics but of general historical interest to the public in general. Current historiography on either World War One or women's issues lack a synthesis and cohesion that this paper will address through original scholarship and research of primary documents and examination of secondary works by academic historians versed and knowledgeable in their particular disciplines.

This year marks the one hundredth anniversary of America's involvement in this worldwide conflict. Women's service in the Great War and how it was and was not affected by the constrictive but rapidly changing social mores of the Edwardian culture is a relevant but unexplored topic. This will be an examination of primary and secondary sources that reveals the lack of recognition of resistance to the influence of the stereotypes by these women in historiological and academic research and literature.

## **Dedication**

For grandmother and mother

Blanche Sweeds and Nannette L. Needham

Tireless workers and gentle hearts



Figure 1: American Servicewomen in Paris (1918)

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## Glossary

**Bobbing:** A style in which the hair is cut short and evenly all round so that it hangs above the shoulders.<sup>1</sup>

**Chauny:** a district in the Aisne department in Hauts-de-France in northern France.

**Conductorets:** Feminized form of Conductor. Used for the women who filled in for the male bus, subway, cable car, and railway conductors during WWI.

**‘Delilahesque’:** Reference to nature of the biblical Delilah who ‘sinfully’ cut Sampson’s hair, thus robbing him of his strength.

**Diana:** Roman goddess of the hunt.

**Dicksee, Sir Frank:** Art Nouveau painter. Sir Francis Bernard Dicksee KCVO, PRA (1853-1928) was an English Victorian painter and illustrator, best known for his pictures of dramatic literary, historical, and legendary scenes. Painted war related Joan of Arc iconography in 1918 titled: “Joan of Arc”.

**Edwardian:** Sociographical Term applied to the reign of Edward VII. The Edwardian era or Edwardian period of British history 1901 to 1910. It is often extended to capture long-term sociographical trends from the 1890s to the First World War.

**‘Hobble’ skirt:** Restrictive form of women’s fashion that created a tight hem around the circumference of a full-length skirt, thus impeding movement that created a ‘hobbling’ gait.

**Iconography:** the visual images and symbols used in a work of art or the study or interpretation of these.

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<sup>1</sup> This and all definitions come from the Oxford English Dictionary, accessed July 8, 2018, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/bob>.



**Peacette:** “A designation specifically applied to women, being coined on analogy with the *suffragettes* whose active campaigns had ceased with the advent of war... (both of which come from the *Daily Express* in 1915), *peacettes* refer to the members of Sylvia Pankhurst’s Women’s Suffrage Movement who intended to attend the Women’s Congress in the Hague.”<sup>2</sup>

**Propaganda:** Information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote or publicize a particular social or political cause or point of view.

**Sociodemographic:** A term which applies to social and political trends of a particular era, such as ‘the sociodemographics of the Edwardian Era’.

**‘Yeomanette’:** Slang term for Female Naval Yeoman recruit.

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<sup>2</sup> Lynda Mugglestone, “Writing War and Peace in 1914-15: Pacifists, Peace-Plotters and Peacettes,” *The Torch* (University of Oxford 2013): accessed 6/15/2018, <http://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/writing-war-and-peace-1914-15-pacifists-peace-plotters-and-peacettes>.

## Introduction

Like any purported 'era' in history (keeping in mind that we as a civilization call 'The Edwardian Era' the 'Edwardian Era' simply because we as a culture intrinsically accepted the name to describe the lives of human beings living approximately one hundred years ago), and like all other 'era's', gender roles and other constituents of societal behavior within them 'stick' as long as a majority of the society agrees that these rules are not considered arbitrary or ridiculous. When individuals within a societal norm begin to ignore them or frankly become bored with these rules, one of two things are bound to but not necessarily *guaranteed* to happen; either violent resistance to these changes, or the changes are so deep that they just 'bowl over' the preceding cultural norm.

Consider the age during World War One, socially known as the Edwardian age. Common knowledge of this society would define the "average" woman at this time as being either good and dutiful or wayward and disobedient. It is safe to say the "average" male 'kept' his woman in line, and everyone from the man who delivered your ice to members of the president's cabinet might and did buy into the stereotypes. Only the bold few did not. Mainstream propaganda and sociological standards made these stereotypes, and women who wished to enter military service were speaking out against them.

I feel that the current historiographical record or examination of evidence of the very specific reaction of women's reactions across history to female sociopolitical propaganda, particularly war propaganda, the use of specific fashion styles, literal (written) or visual propaganda of this age has not been thoroughly examined by historians. In clarifying the difference between 'stereotypes' and 'common trends' (both of which were highly influenced by propaganda) of the Edwardian Era, a tottering and self-absorbed sociodemographic on the brink of global war, some of these

stereotypes were innately derogatory, as in the persistent ideology that ‘women are weak-willed’ and some reflected an ideal of how women were expected to act and behave in a society that was “intolerant and incapable of incorporating dissenting points of view” concerning what was considered the “high moral standards supposedly revered in mainstream culture [in] the United States” that the Americans abroad such as Anne Wentworth, a Red Cross nurse who was “dissillu[sion]ed” about the war’s larger meaning and outcome.<sup>1</sup>

A research paper performing an in-depth examination of the power of Edwardian stereotypes and social propaganda and the lack of their effect upon American women's ability to serve in the military in the Great War is a worthwhile project that is of great historical importance not only to academics but of general historical interest. This year marks the one hundredth anniversary of Americas involvement in this worldwide conflict. Women's service in the Great War and how it was affected by the constrictive but rapidly changing social mores of the Edwardian culture is a relevant but unexplored topic.

The as-to-now unread and researched letters about how these women felt about said images when they wrote to family, each other and official agencies will provide important information not only related to the US involvement in this international conflict, but how women boldly entered this war for the first time openly without the necessary subversive coercion needed to enter previous conflicts. A historian committed to doing deep research into such archives as The Library of Congress and other sources will find a vast treasure trove of women's' records concerning their intimate feelings involving all aspects of US engagement in WWI. The both overt and subversive

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<sup>1</sup> Kathleen Kennedy, *Disloyal Mothers and Scurrilous Citizens: Women and Subversion during World War I* (Indiana University Press, 1999), 24. Lynn Dumenil, *The Second Line of Defense: American Women and World War I* (University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 152.

use of women's images were key factors in presenting the war to the American public. How women felt about this in the historiographical record is sketchy at best.

## Chapter 1: Propaganda and Gender Roles

In order to clarify and understand the propaganda and stereotypes of the dominant society and age in which the first cannon of the Great War sounded across the soon to be ruined landscape of northern Europe, the modern audience must understand the Edwardian age. Stepping out on the toes of the stuffy, lace ridden parlors of what has come to be known as the age of Victoria of England, Empress of India and Queen of Great Britain, the Edwardian age, named after her son Edward VII might well be summed up to the 21<sup>st</sup> century reader as ‘Victorian lite.’ Cleaned and trimmed, the Edwardian society of WWI still blindly clung to the outmoded values of the previous age. However, instead of brimming with the clip clop of horse’s hooves and the soft, deceptive glow of a large-globed Tiffany oil lamp, the Edwardian age glared back with the shock of whining incandescent bulbs and the blare of the automobile horn. With the coming turmoil of World War One, this uneasy mix of modern technology and old-fashioned values was as doomed as the brush of a chimney sweep or the calling card of a blushing debutante, and American women attempting to enter military service willingly rode this wave of change.

In the case of American women entering military service, (as with all women), the road to service in the military was still mined with the stereotypes reflected in the attitudes of such men as “James Reed of Missouri [who] fulminated at length against ‘discontented women’ who had disgraced ‘the very front yard of the White House’ while American boys were dying...who had hurled ‘anathema and insult upon [injury].’”<sup>1</sup> Women who should conduct themselves “in a ladylike, modest, and intelligent way” and not behave as “militants...in... fractious debate.”<sup>2</sup> Such were the surviving stereotypes women had to endure: Women at the outbreak of the war still

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<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Cobbs, *The Hello Girls: America’s First Women Soldiers* (Harvard University Press, 2107), 213.

<sup>2</sup> Cobbs.

endured the stereotypes of being considered by society as ‘militant’ and ‘fractious’ if they did not behave in a ‘proper ladylike manner.’

As would be reflected upon later for World War Two by Susan Mathis, author of “Propaganda to Mobilize Women for World War II”, the same could be applied to the female situation in World War One: From colonial times until the 1940s, most Americans believed that a woman's natural environment was her home and family. During wartime, however, society is interrupted and people are forced to make changes. Starting in World War I with the propaganda machine of George Creel, the government used propaganda to communicate the need for changes in women's roles for the duration of the war. These changes enabled women to enter factories by the millions and proved that women were capable of much more than having babies and washing dishes. The propaganda certainly helped the government to achieve its goal of mobilizing American women. But did it have enough impact to bring about a lasting change in gender roles?<sup>3</sup> Further evidence as supported by the statistics in changes in gender roles and studies in sociology and statistics involving artificial intelligence show unseen changes that were indeed impacted by these lasting changes as represented by the standards of the era and how American women in military service reacted to these changes.

Image propaganda was and still is used on multiple levels by government and private sectors to maintain or manipulate the status quo by organizations or individuals, whether it is used to control situations during peace, war or the transition period between wars, and this was a primary motivator in the ability of women to enter military service in the early twentieth century. Women

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<sup>3</sup> Susan Mathis, “Propaganda to Mobilize Women for World War II,” *Social Education*: 94-96, accessed 5/27/2018, (National Council for the Social Studies, 58(2), 1994).

reacted to as well as influenced these sociopolitical images of themselves by responding to how they felt about both social and governmental pressures largely in a positive and a somewhat less negative manner in all aspects and used many mediums to express this. Where is this information in the mainstream historiography of US economic and international development during the war? Again, the answer can be found in the un-researched material such as in the now-unread pages of *Over Periscope Pond*, where Esther Sayles-Root reflects upon her view of the economic and social destruction of the French countryside near Chauny:

“The strangest kind of things would be lying in the piles of debris—an iron bedstead, twisted and red with rust, an old baby carriage, a boot, a candlestick, all sorts of little domestic things” which must have contrasted sharply with the fields as she looked out the ruined “back windows [with the] vistas of grass and trees.”<sup>4</sup> As a poignant reminder of the areas once lush culture and thriving life, Esther claims the “one relic [she] cared to keep...” a “heavenly turquoise blue” tile, “smooth and perfect...I prefer it to a charred brick or a bent piece of iron. It was there in its place in the war, the bombs, and the shells.”<sup>5</sup> A rather level headed and humanist reaction for a female who, according to the stereotypes of the day, should be leading “lives of invalidism and a sense of uselessness<sup>6</sup>”.

Many of these women who went into service went from a state where they were considered “nervously unstable” to being “improved in health and succeed[ing] in... overseas work” in order, as Schneider reveals using the words of Mary Roberts Rinehart, to provide a “respite from boredom,”<sup>7</sup> Even these ‘positive’ stereotypes would be overwhelmed with the very real and human

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<sup>4</sup> Root.

<sup>5</sup> Root.

<sup>6</sup> Dorothy and Carl J. Schneider, *Into the Breach: American Women Overseas in World War I* (Viking Press, 1991), 19.

<sup>7</sup> Schneider.

desire of these women to simply “cl[i]ng to the belief that the highest calling of women is to serve. They wanted to serve suffering humanity” and be useful, real human beings instead of stereotyped as ‘saints’ or ‘sinners’<sup>8</sup>.’ This ‘saint or sinner’ demographic is clearly illustrated in the situation of the military nurse during the Great War: “several recruitment posters and magazine covers featured nurses imposing themselves between recumbent, wounded soldiers and the threatening, robed figure of Death lurking in the foreground. A typical drawing, inscribed "The Angel of Life in the Valley of Death," featured an ethereal, illuminated nursing figure standing and pointing the way for a group of fallen soldiers in [the]no-man's land” of imminent death.<sup>9</sup>

Not much of this information is woven into the mainstream historiography concerning wartime recruitment propaganda. At this point historians have been largely reticent in creating a true historiography concerning the use of war propaganda to create a changing awareness of women's social, political and economic standing in the American sociopolitical structure during this time frame, and how women felt about how this propaganda represented them. Time and again writers of war history who include women merely state basic facts such as ‘women were first allowed to enlist in the Navy in World War One’ without any in depth examination into the connections between war, enlistment, women, and their reactions to and interpretations of the stereotypes surrounding them and how these women reacted to and maintained their dignity and self-respect amid timeworn homilies spouting their ‘weakness’ ‘insecurity’ and, most of all, the dreaded ‘hysterics’ which the stereotypes of the age insisted were a true and real impediment in keeping women from effectively participating in the war effort as enlisted personnel.

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<sup>8</sup> Schneider, *Into the Breach*, 19.

<sup>9</sup> Beatrice J. Kalisch, *Anatomy of the Image of the Nurse: Dissonant and Ideal Models: Image of Nursing in the Mass Media Project*, (Division of Nursing, Bureau of Health Professions, Health Resources Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1984): 8-9, accessed 6/15/2018, [file:///C:/Users/me/Documents/anatomy\\_of\\_the\\_image\\_of\\_the\\_nurse\\_ocr.pdf](file:///C:/Users/me/Documents/anatomy_of_the_image_of_the_nurse_ocr.pdf).



An examination of Women, World War One, propaganda, and the military would never be complete without a nod to that WWI master of American spin, George Creel. Creel, chair of the “Committee on Public Information's Division of Pictorial Publicity” for the United States government, was extremely knowledgeable about the social condition of the American public.<sup>10</sup> He “felt strongly that posters would be extremely important in influencing Americans’ feelings: ‘I had the conviction that the poster must play a great role in the right for public opinion’” concerning the war effort, and such iconic images as shown below were the major fare shown on “billboard[s] (across America) was something that caught even the most indifferent eye” and were one of the most potent weapons in the American propaganda arsenal.<sup>11</sup>

Women fired back by ignoring these dramatic and compelling images that insisted on women behaving in the acceptable manner according to the Edwardian status quo of silent demureness, yet very little, (other than now-unread and obscure published memoirs), is in the public record that credits them with their own brand of resistance of these stereotypes by steadfastly and humanely performing their duties, while, not in the manner of a saint or a sinner, but as a logical and sometimes emotional human being.

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<sup>10</sup> Smithsonian, The National Museum of American History website, “Women in World War I War Posters,” accessed 6/8/2018, <http://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/object-groups/women-in-wwi/war-posters>.

<sup>11</sup> “Women in World War I War Posters”, Victory Girls propaganda poster - ABC News (Australian Broadcasting Corporation), accessed 6/8/2018, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-10-01/wwi-propaganda-poster-victory-girls/5783106>.



Figure 2: "Victory Girls" propaganda poster (1917)

ABC News (Australian Broadcasting...ABC Victory Girls propaganda poster - ABC News  
(Australian Broadcasting Corporation). © Getty Images 2018.

This poster shows the unnaturally calm placid image of a young woman rowing a tiny lifeboat serenely in a dark, rough, endless sea. This ‘saint/sinner’ image helped perpetuate the stereotype of ‘Angelic’ behavior expected of women in service whether in Australia, Europe or the U.S., where the mainstream cultural stereotypes dictated that any show of real human emotion from women might suggest a tendency towards unacceptably ‘hysterical’ behavior.

The United States used overt, covert and sublime forms of propaganda in various political and social mediums concerning women's roles, and this affected sociological attitudes in relation to American women's service in the military. Images drawn by Charles Dana Gibson during WWI showing “the woman he leaves behind” does not reveal how women felt when they observed this image in leading magazines when the government encouraged use of these images to manipulate public opinion to support both the war efforts.<sup>12</sup> Many historians have written about women's awareness of this, and how they worked with it. However, these historians have written differently about the many various strategies that were used by women during this time, and not necessarily in concert, and nothing is written as to how this all relates to the ability of women to enter military service in the first world conflict that openly allowed female enlistment.

The use of the female image in propaganda to create support for both wars was a popular vehicle for artists, politicians and organizations, and, like mentioned earlier in the primary source of Dumenil, is repeated in Gubar's article “This is my Rifle, this is my Gun,” which describes the permeating image of the male soldier and the “girl they left behind” which was prevalent in both wars and changed throughout the process.<sup>13</sup> Posters of women in diaphanous gowns looking

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<sup>12</sup> Lynn Dumenil, *The Second Line of Defense: American Women and World War I*, 208.

<sup>13</sup> Susan Gubar, ““This is My Rifle, This Is My Gun”: World War II and the Blitz on Women” in *Behind the Lines: Gender and the two World Wars*, edited by M.R. Higgonet (Yale University Press, 1987), 231.

longingly out a window towards a mysterious sea where their men fought the war beyond their mortal vision were created to stimulate patriotism in men stranded far from home performing their duties and create a sense of purpose in a time of chaos and change. The record of how women felt about this is rather thin.

Anne Wiltsher, a well-known free-lance writer for the *Guardian* and *Observer*, wrote a work on early twentieth century militant feminist peace campaigners Rosika Schwimmer, Jane Addams and the other feminist campaigners who attended the International Women's Congress at The Hague in April of 1915 to promote world peace entitled *Most Dangerous Women: Feminist Peace Campaigners of the Great War*. On page 90 is a political cartoon depicting a frumpy, bespectacled 'Mrs. Gladhand' dispiritedly crouched at the closed door of an international steamship office frowning beneath an absurd, over-sized 'peacette' feather, looking down at enormous, over-sized clown shoes. American women who entered military service surely must have had something to say about this.

Nowhere in the text is any mention of how these women felt about this political cartoon purposefully promoting a public propaganda image to the American public of the ineffectiveness of the efforts of these brave and intelligent women. A dedicated examination of personal diaries and correspondence would likely reveal how these women felt about these widely published images promoted by newspapers like *The Daily Express*, who described these women as "super-cranks" and other negative epithets, all of which the federal government largely encouraged by turning an eye that was either blind or still undeveloped towards the idea of rational women presenting what they considered practical solutions to world peace.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Anne Wiltsher, *Most Dangerous Women: Feminist Campaigners of the Great War* (Pandoras Press, 1985), 90.

In Dorothy Schneider's' two acclaimed late twentieth century works on women in the early twentieth century, *American Women in the Progressive Era*, and *Into The Breach, American Women Overseas in World War I*, her descriptions of the embarkation of the aforementioned "Peace Ship" *Oscar II* that carried these distinguished women to Europe to discuss international peace policies, does not mention how suffragist Jane Addams and the "other women who had worked so responsibly and patiently for peace" recorded their reactions to the published images and the "jeers of the press" when responding to these images related to their endeavor.<sup>15</sup> In neither volume does Schneider make mention of how they *must* have corresponded about the utterly ghastly publicity photograph of Mrs. Borden Harriman and two other representatives of the Peace conference and how it must have been commented on by their female readers.

One can imagine how she would have gasped at how eerie and ineffectual these women were made to look by the limited photographic process of the time. Any number of rejected stills used by the original periodical would have been more flattering than the mocking propaganda of female inefficacy this photograph is meant to purposefully instill upon the viewer. As yet undiscovered primary documentation may reveal how these women felt about these images. If such resources exist, Dr. Schneider has not used them in this influential historiography of Progressive era women.

Women, propaganda, and women's roles in both world wars have been researched separately by historians on propaganda and social media before, during the interim, and after both wars. There are numerous and omnipresent gaps left by historians that have related to the changing images of American women from 1915 to 1945 by the use of propaganda that presented how women took

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<sup>15</sup> Dorothy Schneider and Carl J. Schneider, *American Women in the Progressive Era* (New York: Facts on File publishers, 1993), 203. Dorothy Schneider, *Into the Breach: American Women Overseas in World War I* (New York, Viking press, 1991), 251.

control of the female image and used it for their own agenda in gaining suffrage and other areas not open to women in the past during these wars.

In “A Base Hospital Is Not a Coney Island Dance Hall,” historian Kimberly Jensen discusses the “many examples of women’s resistance to a hostile military workplace environment” and how women challenged traditional roles by entering medical service during the war. Women may have “internalized these expectations” during World War One, but these images depicting the “moral unease surrounding the intimate relationship...between the nurse and soldier” do not reveal how the women of the time ‘internalized’ their feelings about this imagery.<sup>16</sup>

Jensen also examines how there was hostility and harassment at front line and base medical facilities where female doctors and nurses experienced “a hostile workplace” and whether or not the possibility of the creation of formal rank would help alleviate this volatile situation.<sup>17</sup> Professor Jensen does not include how women felt about how promotion of women within the war effort by the use of popular propaganda and women's' response to this “iconography of Great War Posters” and the recruitment posters that depicted women as dependent appendages rather than intelligent rational beings helped a great deal in promoting this untenable situation for women doctors and nurses during the First World War.<sup>18</sup>

The inclusion of this critical information would have aided the reader in understanding why this viewpoint was so prevalent among male military doctors and medical servicemen during this time. In her critically acclaimed history of American women in the First World War *Mobilizing Minerva*, Jensen does deep and critical research in how women rose to the challenge when

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<sup>16</sup> Kimberly Jensen, “A Base Hospital Is Not a Coney Island Dance Hall,” *Frontiers* (26.2. 2005.)

<sup>17</sup> Jensen.

<sup>18</sup> Jean Gallagher, *The World Wars through the Female Gaze* (Southern Illinois University press, 1998), 16.

presented with male stereotypes during WWI in presenting how “the relationship between women and guns during the First World War became a part of the fabric of popular culture.”<sup>19</sup> This does not mention how these women felt about propaganda images of women that depicted them in these stiff, paper doll cutout, two dimensional male created patriotic representations of “Feminine Patriotism” as depicted in a wartime poster from the National Archives showing women in various forms of dress related to war effort recruitment.<sup>20</sup>

Recruitment of women in the domestic sphere during wartime employed propaganda images of women in their heated kitchens laboring in patriotic bliss supporting Doughboys in the trenches. Much domestic female related propaganda was created by official sources to promote the war effort on the home front. In the academic treatise “Onward Kitchen Soldiers”, historian Marsha Gordon employs images of women in the domestic sphere rationing sugar as “common rhetoric of the period”<sup>21</sup>. She describes how in using basic staples to aid the war effort on the home front helped the war effort but does not discuss women's' reactions to these images.

Gordon explains the necessity of the use of female imagery propaganda by the American War Department but does not explain or research and include the voice of the American feminist's reactions to these images of the time, who were also fighting as well for both women's' rights and victory for the Allies. How this important imagery propaganda influenced American military women is anybody's guess. How women felt about how the female image was employed to promote the American war effort is a critical part of the history of American involvement in WWI that has largely been left out in these historiographies of World War One female image propaganda.

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<sup>19</sup> Kimberly Jensen, *Mobilizing Minerva: American Women in the First World War*, (University of Illinois press, 2008), 57-58.

<sup>20</sup> Jensen.

<sup>21</sup> Marsha Gordon, “Onward Kitchen Soldiers: Mobilizing the Domestic During World War I,” *Canadian Review of American Studies* (29.2 1999): 72.

Poems, Posters and letters used to show women's participation in the war effort and how images promoted this participation and mobilization of the home front are extant in the historiography of World War One. Images promoted by the War Department in concert with other wartime organizations employed to promote the 'home front' show how propaganda images of women were used as 'soldiers' at home for the men in the battlefields of Europe by being efficient homemakers and mothers. There is little in the current historiography of US involvement in WWI and about women's feelings on the matter.

Two examples that can easily be applied to World War One and the sociological persecution of the 'saint or sinner' propaganda imagery used to 'control' women were propaganda and newspaper images and posters showing saintly images of Joan of Arc and, at the opposite end, the dark 'Mata Hari' types which were used in propaganda to show the 'fickle' nature of the 'weaker sex'. Specifically, after her execution for treason, studio shots of the infamous Mata Hari were published in various journals and newspapers in the Allied countries which showed the 'qualities' that this 'siren' used in obtaining sensitive military information. Such were the propaganda images women in service endured when proving their worth. Keep in mind that both of these examples were used by male-dominant cultures for the same reason: Both women in 'extreme' cases stepped out of their 'proper' stereotypical roles and were blatantly used in social propaganda in an attempt to 'keep women in line'. Both were executed.





Figure 3: Margaretha Geertruida Zelle, a.k.a. Mata Hari.

Image copyright Hulton archive. File #3372916. Getty images. 2018.

In the opposite extreme, Jennifer Kilgore uses Joan of Arc as an example of ‘saint’ propaganda by describing how the actions which had her “Burned at the stake for heresy in Rouen in 1431, with the execution ordered by Bishop Pierre Cauchon of Lisieux, it is possible to imagine that Joan’s failure to completely liberate France from the English is somewhat responsible for bringing the University of Caen into existence: Soliciting patriotism by using American women’s images in the form of ‘sympathy’ and ‘atrocities’ propaganda was promoted both in concert and independently by both the government and the media, and historians have provided ample research on how the government and the male dominated private sector have presented this propaganda, but not the reactions of the women to their images used to promote either war sympathy, recruitment, or reaction to Axis ‘barbarities’” in World War One sociopolitical imagery propaganda. While no extant images of the real woman survive, this propaganda image of her as the ‘maid of Heaven’ shows the effectiveness of her imagery in WWI propaganda.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Jennifer Kilgore, “Joan of Arc as Propaganda Motif from the Dreyfus Affair to the Second World War,” *LISA e-journal*, accessed May 27, 2018, <http://journals.openedition.org/lisa/519>.  
<http://www.socialstudies.org/sites/default/files/publications/sc/5802/580210.html>.

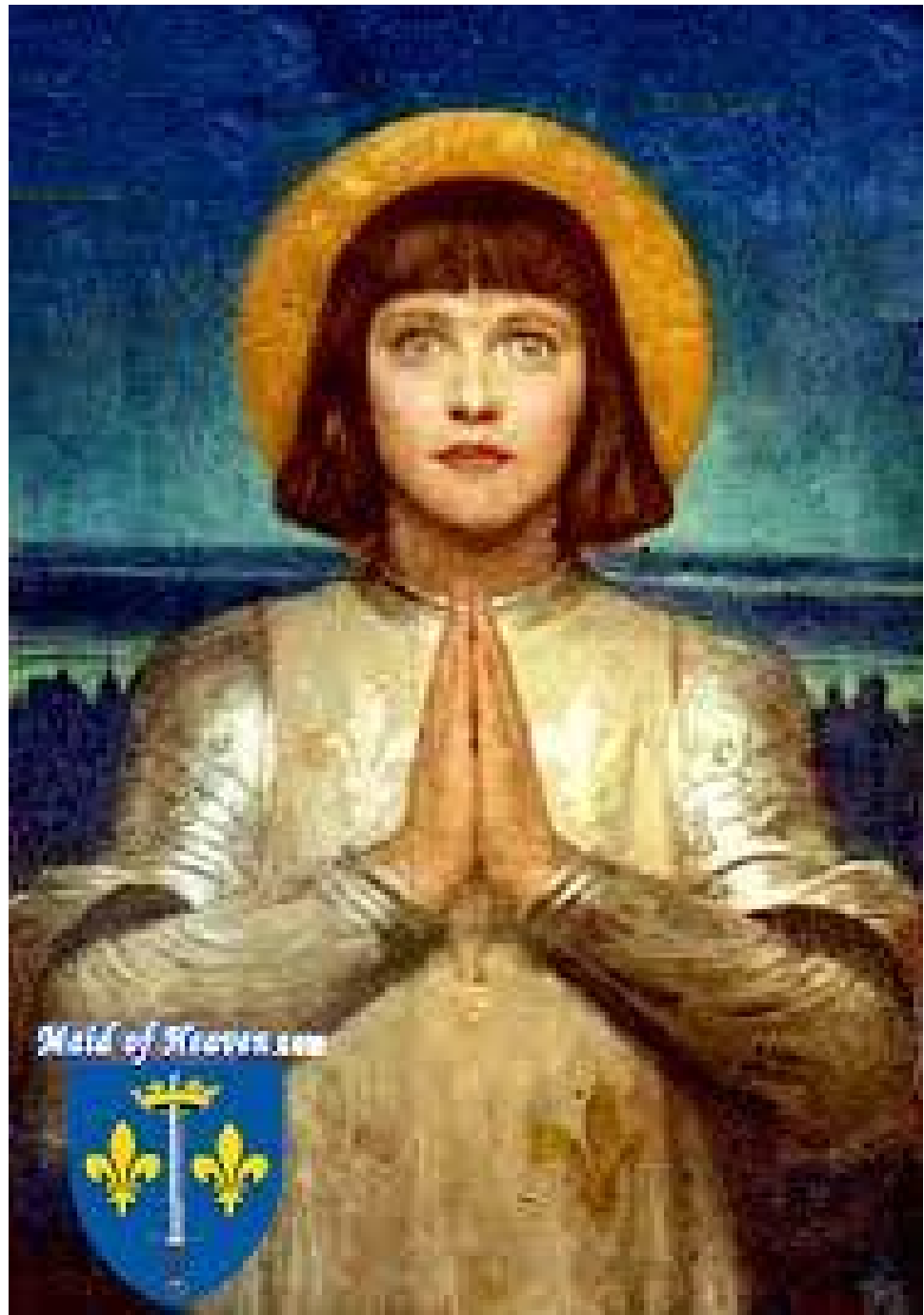


Figure 4: Portrait of Saint Joan of Arc by Sir Frank Dicksee (1918)

Source: Sir Frank Dicksee, *Portrait of Saint Joan of Arc*, 1918, accessed 6/15/2018,

<http://www.maidofheaven.com/>.

Burned at the stake for heresy at Rouen on 30 May, 1431 and also known as 'The Maid of Orleans', Jeanne D'Arc was a poor, uneducated French girl who was claimed to be touched by God to save the nation of France. For over five hundred years, this single female has been used as an iconic image of 'female saint'. Painted by Sir Frank Dicksee in 1918, this painting was lithographed into thousands of posters and used as a major figure in WWI female imagery propaganda. Note the dark images of the buildings in the background. A quick glance at a tattered copy of this poster on the wall of a building on a wet, war torn street by war-tired civilians and service people would blur these images as being either Medieval Gaulish or Modern French buildings under threat of destruction and placed under the 'heavenly' protection of a larger than life female protector image.

How did the use of female imagery propaganda affect the play on the world stage as female propaganda imagery related itself through the world during the Great War? Was this historically valid? Did this go on? How did a woman in 1917 feel about similar female images on tattered posters on a wall in Berlin? A woman in New York? A woman in Paris? Beijing? Tokyo? London? How did a woman in Warsaw feel standing on the cold streets, staring at the image of an ape in German Imperial garb holding a fainted ravished female? How did that woman on that cold street in 1917 as she was wearily wandering home to her war damaged apartment? How did Queen Elizabeth, wife of Edward, feel about female war propaganda imagery? How did the French scullery maid working for a French bourgeois woman now working as a secretary now in a bomb factory feel about this? What about Marjorie Crocker and Esther Sayles Root? Did they ride the Paris tram together and see this female propagandist imagery? How did they feel about this? Did their men care how they felt about this? How did women across the world during WWI express their feelings about female war propaganda imagery?



Figure 5: Esther Sayles Root

© The Sayles-Root family trust.

Esther Sayles Root, “Rootie” to her friends, Miss Root in Park at Saint-Germain, circa 1917-18. Note the cumbersome skirts and full hair drawn up. These items were part of the social fabric of the Edwardians: Heavy woolen skirts in the winter that gathered moisture and dirt like a sponge and full, long hair that needed constant attention. These were the visible signs of the Edwardian stereotypes forced upon these women: It would be another five years before women would be accepted in public in trousers, and women would not begin ‘bobbing’ their hair until after the end of the war. When American women saw these images of themselves in their local newspaper or newsreel, how did they react? Neither positive or negative response by these women is forthcoming. Personal correspondence in the form of letters to friends, relatives, and municipalities was a vital way of communicating their feelings concerning any given situation. Undiscovered

letters written by these women would reveal a plethora of personal information related to and about this visual war propaganda would have added more historical dimension to these works.

In his article “Freedom in Manners and Morals”, James McGovern employs the primary source of Dorothea Dix, a women writer who promoted traditional ideals during WWI. This work comes tantalizingly close to describing women's’ feelings concerning WWI female images in war propaganda in relation to women driving, smoking, and having ‘open’ relationships with men, and how these images affected American women's ability to enter military service. It also reveals Dix’s response to imagery presenting girls “boyish rather than womanly,” but nothing about how the women *in the images* felt about it.<sup>23</sup>

Kathleen Kennedy's' monograph “Declaring War on War” searches deep into the relationship of women’s imagery propaganda to promote Americas involvement and the US diplomatic and international relationship to the war in Europe. Her references to World War One illustrator Robert Minors propaganda cartoon employing the negative imagery of a garishly colored poster of a prostitute “shoving the war” down an enlisted man’s throat in order to promote enlistment says little about these women's’ feelings about such government wartime propaganda imagery<sup>24</sup>. Human Rights of prostitutes mattered little at the time, but this did not stop them reacting to it. A search into old microfiche records may reveal forgotten missals written by these women.

John V. H. Dippel, an independent historian who studied at Princeton and Trinity College Dublin, reveals in his monograph “Avenging the Primal Wound,” more negative propaganda using women's imagery as described by Kennedy. Dippel employs the imagery of women ‘sirens’ luring

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<sup>23</sup> James R. McGovern, “The American Woman’s Pre-World War I Freedom in Manners and Morals,” *The Journal of American History* (Oxford University Press, 55.2, Sept. 1968): 324, accessed July 8, 2018, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1899561>.

<sup>24</sup> Kathleen Kennedy, “Declaring War on War: Gender and the American Socialist Attack on Militarism, 1914-1918”, *Journal of Women’s History* (7. 2, Summer, 1995): 34.

men “into signing up” and describing women as the “sweethearts who had turned their backs on them” the “frail, weak, and indifferent creatures” who were displayed coquettishly on posters and popular sheet music of the time.<sup>25</sup> Did these women applaud or condemn these images?

The current ‘new age’ of ‘global’ and ‘women’s’ historiography has neglected this particular aspect. How did women feel about these ‘savior’ or ‘demon’ images of themselves and the accompanying messages that clearly implied that their men felt that the ‘new woman’ would be entirely temporary, particularly those entering or attempting to enter military service? Mouthing expected rhetoric with the all covering demure smile and a quiet ‘yes dear’ to her husband over morning coffee while he reads about the war in Europe in order to not make waves at home may not reflect a woman’s inner feelings about this. Research into unexplored primary sources such as personal correspondence and un-researched feminist documentation of the period could reveal the feelings of the ‘inner woman’ of the wartime American female patriot during WWI as opposed to what was expected of her, and how she used this to her advantage to gain access to military service in the Great War.

Singularly useful primary sources have been blatantly overlooked by these and other prominent historians that depict how the everyday woman involved in the war effort during The Great War viewed female propaganda. These come from unexplored personal correspondence such as in *Over Periscope Pond*. This contains the correspondence of Esther Sayles Root and Marjorie Crocker and has much personal information concerning all aspects of the war, including propaganda. such as in the National Archives; "The Story of the Female Yeomen during the First World War.... ‘Until World War I, however, the military establishment did not officially accommodate women who

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<sup>25</sup> John V. H. Dippel, “Avenging the Primal Wound: Women as the Unacknowledged Enemy in World War I,” *Peace and Change* (41. 1, January 2016): 19.

wished to serve'<sup>26</sup>." Concerning social propaganda, a song of the time noted the 'worldly girl' of the 'yeomanette' of WWI and perpetrated the saint/sinner idea of women in the military: A yeoman (F) on Submarine K-5 gazes through her binoculars. (80-G-1025873)

"I've been in frigid Greenland and in sunny Tennessee,  
I've been in noisy London and in wicked, gay Paree,  
I've seen the Latin Quarter, with its models, wines, and tights,  
I've hobnobbed oft with Broadway stars who outshone Broadway lights;  
But North or South or East or West, the girls that I have met  
Could never hold a candle to a Newport yeomanette.  
—Newport Recruit, 1918"<sup>27</sup>.

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<sup>26</sup> Nathaniel Patch, "The Story of the Female Yeomen during the First World War," *Military Resources: Women in the Military*, *National Archives Website*, (Vol. 38, No. 3 Fall 2006), accessed March 3, 2018.

<sup>27</sup> Patch.



This propaganda image courtesy of the United States Naval War College aptly illustrates the stereotypes women had to contend with.<sup>28</sup>

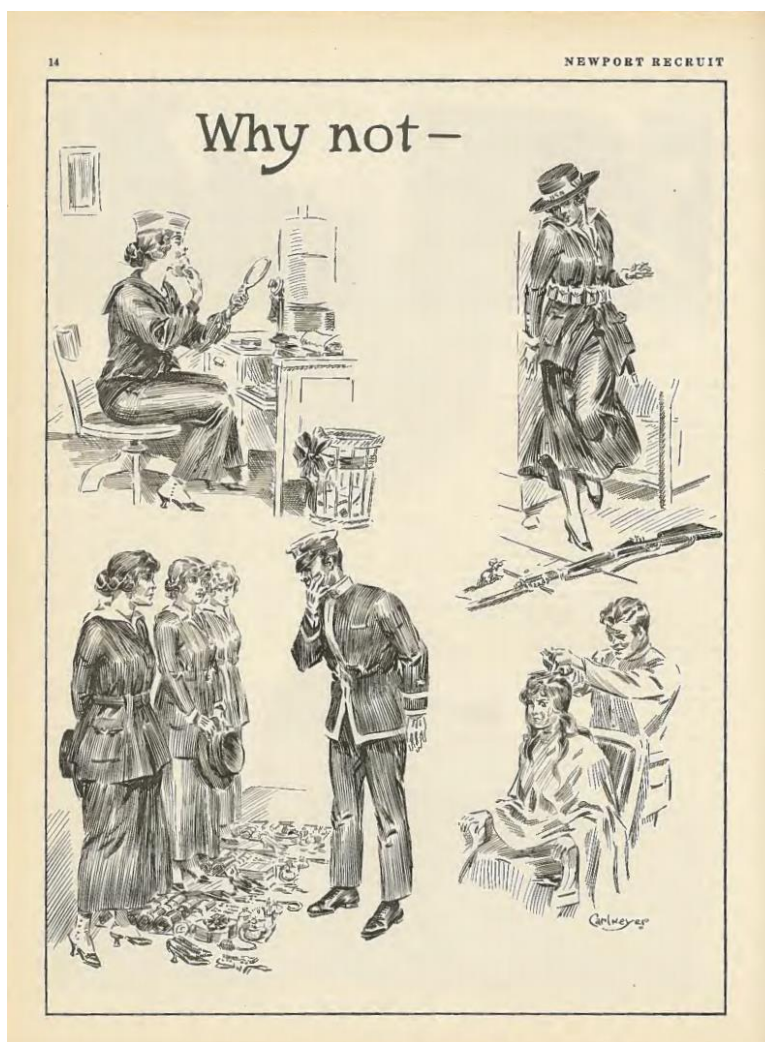


Figure 6: “Why Not” Cartoon in *Newport Recruit* (1918)

<sup>28</sup> Naval Historical Collection, U.S. Naval War College, accessed 5/31/2018: Cartoon that appeared in a 1918 issue of the *Newport Recruit*, the newspaper of the Naval Training Base at Newport, RI: The cartoon illustrates reasons why women should not be recruited for the U.S. Navy; reasons include vanity, fear of mice, inability to pack efficiently, and anger over required haircuts. The illustration appeared in the 1918 issue without commentary.

The propaganda image on the preceding page from WWI shows the prevalent social stereotypes that women had to endure: a. vanity. b. ‘hysterical’ fear of guns and mice. c. obsession with fashion: excessive accouterments. d. Unwieldy full-length hair that the prevalent stereotypes falsely presented that women would not part with. As history has shown, it would not be long after WWI that women would cast off a good portion of this stereotypical ‘weight’ by shedding these bulky layers of clothing with many ‘bobbing’ their hair during ‘The Jazz Age’ of the 1920’s.

Written in margins of letters to their families back home, personal responses to such ditties contain valuable information concerning the real everyday war efforts of women and how they viewed themselves in relation to the war and propaganda. A November 26, 1916 entry describes Esther writing a letter home to her mother requesting needed supplies of shoes, shirts and “heavy union suits.”<sup>29</sup> Esther requests of her mother that if she has any “command” of the New York sewing circles that she should “like to use it as a part of the propaganda, if I may” to make a simple unadorned request of basic supplies in war ravaged Paris.<sup>30</sup>

The ‘real’ women of the time appear to be more concerned with supplies than image. Working this knowledge into the historiography would reveal a great deal about how these women actually felt about all aspects of the war, including propaganda. For all the glamorous and moving war propaganda imagery depicting American girls being defended from the Hun or wistfully playing their part to support the war effort, the real “great needs [of] just plain clothes” seems to belie any

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<sup>29</sup> Esther Sayles Root, *Over Periscope Pond: Letters from two American girls in Paris, October 1916-January 1918*, by Esther Sayles Root and Marjorie Crocker, (Boston and New York, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1918), 36,37.

<sup>30</sup> Root.

purported influence that the wartime propaganda Esther is clearly referring to in a rather tongue-in-cheek manner may or may not have had on her volunteering her services to the war effort.<sup>31</sup>

Writing about women's mainstream wartime imagery propaganda and how women of the time viewed this propaganda is impossible without reference to Oliver Jensen's' brilliantly conceived pictorial of the 'revolt' of the 'new' woman during WWI, *The Revolt of American Women*. In this graphic work, over two hundred images of the American female depict various images of women from the American Civil War to a stylized photographic image of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt listlessly holding a pencil while gazing off into space with that buck toothed enigmatic smile.

While this over-sized male-centric image pictorial does depict and describe "the revolt of American women against the life they led in the Victorian Age", there is no recorded response to how WWI era women would have reacted to the silly 1914 propaganda poster depicting "how women would act when the guns were fired" and the accompanying photo of Waves plugging their ears aboard ship in 1950 when "a real gun goes off."<sup>32</sup> Clearly this photo is staged. Were the women embarrassed when they saw these propaganda photos later as they read that particular issue of *Life* magazine? Again, no record of how these women *reacted* to this obvious 'weak' women's' war propaganda is forthcoming from this otherwise revealing pictorial work.

Women and their images both visual and literal have been used and manipulated by the use of propaganda to promote the particular side of a war long before the World Wars of the early twentieth century. How these images were used for these wars began to change from previous wars

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<sup>31</sup> Oliver Jensen, *The Revolt of American Women: A Pictorial History* (New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971).

<sup>32</sup> Jensen.

such as the American Civil War or the Spanish American War, which left women's public Victorian images largely intact from the nineteenth century through 1912-14.

In "Inventing Citizens During World War I: Suffrage Cartoons in *The Woman Citizen*", author E. Michele Ramsey offers substantive research in describing how this early twentieth century women's periodical represented the role of woman as mother to her role as an essential and competent companion to her 'man on the front lines' in its description of feminine support of morale during World War one. In the "first wave of feminism" that began in the United States in the first half of the twentieth century, women's magazines like *The Woman Citizen* showed how a "competent and essential, yet feminine, woman also existed during this time" that subsisted beyond the mainstream, passive, obedient feminine stereotypes so ardently desired by the 'average' Edwardian male.<sup>33</sup> Little or no information is present about how women viewed these images in any academic research on the topic. While Suffragist leader Jane Addams would have had approval veto on all images of this periodical, Ramsey tells us little about Addams' feelings concerning how this magazine influenced women's position in society and how this affected their ability to join and function in military service.

From 1914 on, the American pro war propagandist machine aggressively and willingly used or manipulated the gradual and not so gradual changing social images of women in the form of posters, comic strips, films and literary works. These showed the changing sociopolitical female image before, during and after World War I and how it was used in visual and literal propaganda to promote the war effort in both a positive and negative manner for both the Allied and the Axis powers. It showed how both sides played off each other's war and pre-war women's visual

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<sup>33</sup> E. Michele Ramsey, "Inventing Citizens During World War I: Suffrage Cartoons in *The Woman Citizen*," *Western Journal of Communication* 64, no.2 (Spring 2000).

propaganda as well. While there is much information about the actual use of these changing images of women in propaganda, again, very little is said about these women's reactions to it.

Both sides of the conflict reacted to each other's various propaganda-related images of women presented in both government and civilian works. These images could be used in both a positive and negative aspect, and these aspects could be reversed and manipulated by the nature of the propaganda. Filling in the historiographical gaps in the historiography of women's reactions to the effective and ineffective public and private use of the sociopolitical female image before, during and after World War I would show how this image changed when placed in the context of how American women who wished to enter military service related to the economic, cultural and ideological changes brought to the United States by its involvement in World War One and after.

The male dominant mainstream society which controlled these individual societies, the societies of east and west and how they interacted, all wished temporary female involvement in the war effort. To use a British axiom on an American situation, mainstream visual and literal war propaganda involving women's' war efforts at no time should reflect that women were going to retain these positions, and that it would all be 'tickety boo' (normal) again after the war. How did women react to this? Did society care? How did women make society care? How did an exhausted woman nurse going home after having her arms elbow deep in blood at a hospital in France feel about Jeanne D'Arc being used as female propaganda imagery in the Dreyfus affair? Did she care? Did it anger her? Did it make her proud? *Where is this recorded in the historiographical record?*

When recruiting women's' 'temporary' participation using visual and literal propaganda in the war effort during WWI, the war departments of the Republic of the United States, the Constitutional Monarchy of Great Britain, the Democratic Socialist nation of France, Tsarist Russia, Kaiser Wilhelm's Germany, and even the Chrysanthemum Throne of Imperial Japan used

female imagery propaganda. How was female propaganda used? How did women react to this? How have historians recorded this? Where are the gaps in the historiography concerning this, particularly in relation to how American women served overseas in relation to all of these various male dominated cultures involved in the war? The fact that this specific topic in my opinion has not been thoroughly examined by historians lends itself to vast amounts of reinterpretation and introduction concerning the historical aspect of women's views of this topic by myself and other historians.

## Chapter 2: Primary and Secondary Sources

There is a lack of current academic research in this specific topic. From graduate to undergraduate level, the cold hard facts of women's service in World War One are hardly discounted, but what is lacking is a historiography that connects the sociological implications of Edwardian stereotypes, their influence on social mores at the beginning of the conflict, and how these propaganda and stereotypes reinforced this sociological type.

Many prominent and not so prominent historians have written historiographies concerning the use of female patriotic 'sympathy' and 'atrocities' propaganda in the prospective English and French Civil Wars of the Revolutions, promoting the world wars in the first half of the twentieth century, as well as how women's images were used in popular media in both nationalistic 'sympathy' and "atrocities propaganda" since time immemorial<sup>1</sup>. Much has been written about how this was both consciously and unconsciously achieved, but not about how women through history reacted to the image, who developed it, and how it was used through the ages to promote war or political upheaval. These ongoing aspects of female imagery propaganda would influence women's reactions to war propaganda during World War One.

Much has been written about how this was both consciously and unconsciously achieved, but not about how women through history reacted to both the image, who developed it, and how it was used through the ages to promote war or political upheaval. Starting with Cleopatra, whose iconic image of pressing an asp to her breast in order to avoid capture by Augustus Caesar has been used through the centuries in political propaganda to the Hundred Years War and the propaganda associated with Jeanne D'Arc who is associated with such statements as "I am not afraid... I was

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<sup>1</sup> Kathleen Kennedy, *Disloyal Mothers and Scurrilous Citizens: Women and Subversion during World War I*, (Indiana University Press, 1999), 10.

born to do this”.<sup>2</sup> Compare this ‘heroic’ stereotype to the ‘sinner’ stereotype in how Margaretha Geertruida Zelle (Mata Hari) was treated by the authorities and the press when “In 1915, she asked permission to visit her lover, Captain Vadim Maslov, a Russian pilot flying with the French, at a hospital in the Hague” and the gossip surrounding this action that added further to the hypocrisy of the falseness of the stereotypes of the day when she supposedly uttered the immortal words ‘here are the papers’ to him under her breath.<sup>3</sup> The iconic image of Mata Hari has been applied to everything from film to pinball games to promote her ‘mysterious allure’ and her associations with being a famous female exotic dancer spy during WWI and the multitude of seductive war and political posters attributed to the use of her imagery. All of this influenced women’s World War One propaganda, how Edwardian society interpreted it, and how American women in military service reacted to it.

Yet the very real vagaries of the war which created an immediate need of service that not only dismissed sexual stereotypes through necessity also created critical situations which opened doorways that created a unique condition and charged an opportunity for American women to ignore these stereotypes and fulfill very real time human achievements. This created an unusual sociological ‘domino effect’ in that at times these changes seemed to whiz by unseen, quickly, and absorbed into the constantly changing social fabric, yet at times this process also slows to a near standstill, creating rare moments of introspection of their situation that these women shared through personal correspondence to home and literary reactions to the Great War. It was this very real-time flux of action, need, changing social circumstances and strong character that helped

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<sup>2</sup> Maid of Heaven website: the purported quote is "I Am Not Afraid For God Is With Me I Was Born For This!" accessed 5/27/2018, [http://www.maidofheaven.com/joanofarc\\_quote\\_I\\_am\\_not\\_afraid.asp](http://www.maidofheaven.com/joanofarc_quote_I_am_not_afraid.asp).

<sup>3</sup> Stuart Jeffries, “Did they get Mata Hari wrong? Supporters call on French to open files on wartime legend,” *The Guardian*, (Tue 16 Oct 2001), accessed 5/27/2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/oct/16/humanities.highereducation>.



propel these women forward through this constantly changing atmosphere with the very real human courage, dedication and strength as revealed through their primary source documents.

I feel that the specific historical records of women's actual reactions at the time to female propaganda is scant. We know how society felt. We know how men felt. We know how governments felt. We have some information as to how women at the time felt about the use of the female image in war propaganda, and peace propaganda for that matter. One affects the other, 'hand in hand' so to speak. I feel the primary sources are out there in the form of unread diaries and letters. Not all the diaries and letters of women have been read or published from, say, the sixteenth to the early twentieth century. Women had to express themselves. I feel that, if they have not been destroyed by time or war, there are letters and diaries as yet unread and unfound that would reveal this story in the historiographical record.

As revealed by the National WWI Museum and Memorial website, during this great conflict, "The Salvation Army, the Red Cross and many other organizations depended on thousands of female volunteers. The American Red Cross operated hospitals to care for war casualties, staffed by nurses, hundreds of whom died in service during the war. Thousands of women also served in the U.S. Army Nurse Corps and the Navy Nurse Corps. While the American Expeditionary Forces were still preparing to go overseas, U.S. Army nurses were sent ahead and assigned to the British Expeditionary Force. By June 1918, there were more than 3,000 American nurses in over 750 in British-run hospitals in France."<sup>4</sup> These women served "as truck drivers, mechanics, radio operators, telephone operators, translators, camouflage artists and munition workers. They had the

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<sup>4</sup> National WWI Museum and Memorial website, "Women in World War I," accessed May 13, 2018, <https://www.theworldwar.org/learn/women>.

same responsibilities as their male counterparts and received the same pay of \$28.75 per month<sup>5</sup>.” One hundred years later, it is time to set the record straight and give these brave American women who ignored the stereotypes of their era who served to give them the recognition they deserve and that is so long overdue.

The foundations for American women in military service in WWI lie in the exploits of the women who disguised themselves as men and entered both the American Revolution and the Civil War. During the American Revolution, “women served in the war by passing themselves off as men. Deborah Sampson Gannet and Anna Maria Lane fought with Washington’s army dressed as male soldiers<sup>6</sup>”. Both sides during the Civil War had women in the ranks in disguise. The northern army had a female doctor, Mary Edwards Walker. However, “Lincoln would not invite a national controversy about women's work during the Civil War by appointing a female physician to the Union Army, even one he knew had been acting in such capacity on nearly half a dozen battlefields<sup>7</sup>”. It is utterly amazing that “even though women weren’t legally allowed to fight in the Civil War, it is estimated that somewhere around 400 women disguised themselves as men and went to war, sometimes without anyone ever discovering their true identities “and I do not wish to lessen their contribution.<sup>8</sup> The reason for choosing to start with World War I is because it is the first war that women were openly allowed to directly participate as women without disguising

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<sup>5</sup> “Women in World War I.”

<sup>6</sup> Kaia Danyluk, “Women’s Service with the Revolutionary Army,” *Colonial Williamsburg Foundation newsletter*, (2018), accessed June 27, 2018, [http://www.history.org/history/teaching/enewsletter/volume7/nov08/women\\_revarmy.cfm](http://www.history.org/history/teaching/enewsletter/volume7/nov08/women_revarmy.cfm).

<sup>7</sup> Alexis Coe, “Mary Walker's Quest to be Appointed as a Union Doctor in the Civil War,” *The Atlantic*, accessed April 30, 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/sexes/archive/2013/02/mary-walkers-quest-to-be-appointed-as-a-union-doctor-in-the-civil-war/272909/>.

<sup>8</sup> Jess Righthand, Smithsonian.com, “The Women Who Fought in the Civil War,” accessed May 30, 2018, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-women-who-fought-in-the-civil-war-1402680/>.

themselves as the days of old and openly enlist in service. The American Civil War was the last war women had to enter in disguise.

Women have been entering armies under disguise since the days of ancient Greece. While it may not be thought of as a military action, the very real actions lost in the mists of time and disguised under the myth of Jason and the Golden Fleece was a bid for political power, and there were women who always wanted to be a part of the action. "the Greeks Apollodorus (Library I.9.16), Diodorus Siculus and Pausanias, and the Roman Hyginus." Lists one "Atalanta (Ἀταλάντη) Arcadian or Boeotian huntress" as the only female member of the Argonauts.<sup>9</sup> History has shown that there have always been women who have wanted to be an active part of war enlistment as 'defender' rather than as 'defended'.

My choice to begin with the first global war in modern history is because it was the first war we are aware of in history that openly sanctioned, legalized, and legitimately enlisted women into the armed forces down to complete and 'proper' physical examinations. The stereotypes and prejudices of the age were also reflected with the process of conducting physical examinations for the small group of women entering the Marines. While the practicality was recognized in the need to the Victorian-influenced stereotypes of the age also created a false sense of 'delicacy' when conducting physical examinations in that "while the Bureau of Medicine realized the obvious source of embarrassment caused by the examination, it was strongly felt that thoroughness should not be sacrificed because of it. Accordingly, each medical examiner was instructed to "use such tact and courtesy as will avoid offending in any way the sensibilities of the applicant. He shall not, however, by such attitude, allow himself to deviate from a proper fulfillment (sic) of all the

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<sup>9</sup> Timeless Myths website, "Facts and Figures; Lists of Argo's crew", accessed May 30, 2018, <https://www.timelessmyths.com/classical/argocrew.html>.

requirements. The applicant should be previously instructed to arrange her clothing in a way that will insure ease, facility and thoroughness in the examination. A loose gown of light material will not interfere with the examination or taking of the measurements. Corsets should invariably be removed.”<sup>10</sup> The writer herself of this monograph continues to persist in perpetrating these sexual stereotypes by reminding us in relatively sexist terms that “Among the five ladies chosen on that occasion” they had “to be "top notch" and had to be able to “demonstrate their qualifications under the pressure of a stiff recruiting examination”<sup>11</sup>. However, the real human reactions of these women to these requirements is left with a weak “the spirit of these first women Marines is indeed something to be admired” that is delivered with all of the insight of the sensually deprived in a typically clinical manner<sup>12</sup>. No revealing insights to these women's feelings towards the stereotypes that influenced their participation are provided. This may seem to be starting in the middle of women' history, but it is, in my opinion, the merging point of military and women's history and I think that this is a good point to begin in recognizing women being openly enlisted in any active military force or action in any significant manner.

Another stereotype ignored by women at the time and unrecognized in historian's academic works on the subject which was also perpetrated by the Edwardians at the outbreak of the Great War and so effectively shunted under the carpet in the annals of war history by general lack of interest was that of women as being unable to be trusted with information. Until women like original ‘Hello Girl’ Grace Banker proved different through their performance, the ‘woman as siren’ myth was another roadblock strewn across the path of American women attempting to enter

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<sup>10</sup> Linda L. Hewitt, “Women Marines in World War I,” (Department of the Navy, History and Museums Division Headquarters, U. S. Marine Corps, Washington, D.C., 1974), accessed May 23, 2018, 6.

<sup>11</sup> Hewitt, 17, 9.

<sup>12</sup> Hewitt, 8.

military related service during WWI. A recent honorable mention monograph written by an undergraduate student ardently describes how “The women were anxious to serve and excited to get into areas where they would see heavy activity” but as in every paper written on the subject, nothing is mentioned of the critical importance of the sociological stereotypes so prevalent in the period that were so influential in creating resistance to American women serving in military positions in any form and how these women resisted and challenged these stereotypes.<sup>13</sup> On the graduate level, a paper written in May of 2016 by graduate student Cayleigh Ross of Simmons College of Boston, Massachusetts does well in helping her audience to “understand how one worker perceived herself and her work concurrent with her wartime experience”, but fails to connect this to a larger understanding of women, the war experience, and how these women reacted to the propaganda of the age that restricted women.<sup>14</sup> As the posters of the time depicted docile women behaving properly with all Edwardian values firmly in place, Ross through her description of women's service through the eyes of one Martha May Henshaw aptly yet without any detailed connection to the influence of Edwardian stereotypes on women's behavior describes how the war helped create a real time situation “in which Martha not only functioned, but also excelled” yet fails to examine fully the sociological implications of the current historiography as it relates to how American women resisted or ignored these stereotypes and indeed spends much of her dissertation describing how “much of the literature concerning telephone operators touches on the feminization of the position” then further “emphasizes the harsh realities and corporate

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<sup>13</sup> Carolyn Prickett, “The Hello Girls of World War I,” accessed May 23, 2018, <https://tncc.edu/sites/default/files/content-documents/Carolyn%20Prickett%20-%20Honorable%20Mention%2C%20Scholarly%20Writing.pdf>.

<sup>14</sup> Cayleigh Ross, “Am I Not a Fortunate Girl?,” *Martha May Henshaw and the Hello Girls of the Army Signal Corps in World War I* (master's thesis, Simmons College, Boston, Massachusetts, May 2016), 16, accessed May 23, 2018, <http://beatleyweb.simmons.edu/scholar/files/original/208612926c33230eeb15acb620073dce.pdf>.

manipulation of employee behavior and motivation through the frame of employee unrest and discontent.”<sup>15</sup> She is thorough in relating how “This analysis speaks to Martha’s discipline and strength of mind, as well as why she found her work in France to be easier than that at home” yet she fails to connect this to the larger picture of wartime experience and American Edwardian women’s reaction (or lack thereof) to these rapidly changing social mores and indeed how these women failed to allow these outmoded rules of behavior to interfere with their duties.<sup>16</sup>

To show what changes have already occurred in the past 100 years for women in general, “researchers are now developing artificial intelligence (AI) to help... measure the stereotypes of the past after the past is gone.”<sup>17</sup> how does this research in AI help us understand Edwardian stereotypes in relation to American women’s service in World War One? “Looking at published English text from various decades, they found that their program’s embeddings clearly lined up with the results of surveys on gender and ethnic stereotypes from the same times. Then they analyzed sentiments that had not been surveyed, using 200 million words taken from U.S. newspapers, books, and magazines from the 1910s to the 1990s”<sup>18</sup>. This study confirmed that “going decade by decade, they found that words related to competence—such as “resourceful” and “clever”—were slowly becoming less masculine,”<sup>19</sup> thus reflecting the changing norms in a society that was changing exponentially to situation, action, and outcome. The actions of these women during World War One, their service, written reactions to home, the personal responses to these

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<sup>15</sup> Ross, 7.

<sup>16</sup> Ross.

<sup>17</sup> Matthew Hutson, “Artificial intelligence reveals how U.S. stereotypes about women and minorities have changed in the past 100 years,” *Science* (Apr. 6, 2018, 8:00 AM), accessed May 27, 2018, <http://www.sciencemag.org/news/2018/04/artificial-intelligence-reveals-how-us-stereotypes-about-women-and-minorities-have>.

<sup>18</sup> Hutson.

<sup>19</sup> Hutson.

missives, and the reflection of this in the changing social structure, such as allowing the director of the Navy in 1917 to casually dismiss sex as a requirement for service in the clear face of moribund male opposition to change the requirement wording from ‘men’ to ‘persons,’ shows the beginning of this ongoing change in social construct and behavior.

The vital connections between stereotypes, incorrect preconceived ideas of individual performance based on illogical assumptions created by ill-informed propaganda, actual performance, and resistance through discredit by lack of recognition of these stereotypes through performance by these women is one of those few truly unexplored facets of women’s and military history that this paper will examine. There is multiple evidence that these women were entirely aware of their situation. These women used this inner strength to defend themselves against the stereotypes of the age, to create as a shield, like the fogs of Paris that “nothing can penetrate...a mist which seems hardly more than air [that] protect [ed them] as neither iron nor can do”, that gave them an invisible strength against these stereotypes as much as the dense fog shielded them from the Germans.<sup>20</sup>

Concerning the theme of American women in military service in World War One and their reaction to Edwardian stereotypes, There are three sections of this historiography as they relate to three aspects of American early twentieth century social behavior in relation to the actual behavior these women displayed: Actual Edwardian mores, stereotypes that are an exaggeration of these mores, and the reaction to both the actual mores and the propaganda related to these social phenoms by the women in service who were affected by them.

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<sup>20</sup> Esther Sayles Root, *Over Periscope Pond*, 295.

American women in WWI, Red Cross and Navy nurses, and Specifically Female Navy yeomen who were legitimately the first females openly enlisted in military service in the United States, and women in communications, often referred to as General James 'Blackjack' Pershing's, 'Hello Girls.' are these three 'sections.' They interact in a manner that is lineal, circular, and amorphous, and they more than likely interact in a multiple fashion on all these levels. I have created a diagram of these interactions which is shown in the chart on the following page:



	<b>1. Edwardian Social Mores</b>	<b>2. Propaganda related to these mores</b>	<b>3. Expected behavior</b>	<b>3-a: Actual behavior</b>
<u>A:</u> <u>American Red Cross and Navy Nurses</u>	This is the traditional expected role of females in WWI. The nursing profession as traced back to women such as Clara Barton and Dr. Mary Sewell.	Rescuers. Salvation. “Angels in white” poster propaganda. Literary works such as Hemingway's “A Farewell to Arms”.	Chaste, virginal. Highly moralistic.	Human. Reflected in such fictional works as Hemingway's’ A Farewell to Arms which can be cross-referenced to: Propaganda.
<u>B:</u> <u>Female American Navy Yeomen</u>	Men in congress Believed women lacked physical strength to complete tasks and resisted enlistment. Women were ‘Physically weak’.	“Save me, save me” mentality. Females must be rescued by males, therefore incapable of physical military service.	Wild and crazy. Forward. Nicknamed “Yeomanettes” and songs were written about their ‘brashness and forwardness’.	Human. Were respected by fellow male yeomen and praised by superiors for their dedication to service and willingness to work.
<u>C:</u> <u>Communications workers:</u> <u>Pershing's ‘Hello Girls’</u>	Women gossip. They are ‘social butterflies’ and ‘gossipy hens’ engaging in ‘tittle tattle’.	Women ‘chickens gossiping’ in propaganda of the day. ‘Mata Hari’ types. Women do not have moral strength for service in battle situations as they will give up secrets with their ‘weak constitutions.’	Will give away secrets ‘at the drop of a hat.’	American women in communications during World War One were honest, reliable, and dedicated to serving in extreme military situations.

What the Great War was doing to the ‘cultural norms’ of the Edwardians was smashing down time honored traditions brutally and rapidly and, through sheer necessity, this action was creating an opportunity for women who wished to openly be in war-related service. These women took broad and full advantage of this opportunity with the style, grace, and determination that only these girls through their upbringing could have achieved, as shown in the primary source work *Over Periscope Pond*, which is a telling work of how these girls felt. Frankly, from their letters to home, these girls, Marjorie and Esther, thought the rules they had to live under ‘back home’ in the States were completely absurd, and they brought these new attitudes home with them when Armistice was declared. Like a snowball rolling down a hill, the impetus could neither be slowed nor stopped. Change was inevitable, and the awareness of these changes were fully experienced and prompted by these women in their outgoing and purposeful behavior, all the while retaining a sense of dignity and purpose. Because of its permanent changes on a society that had technically been intact for only a mere century itself (women’s Victorian/Edwardian mores were far different from the Colonial and early Republican values of their grandmothers and great grandmothers.) the First World War was a startling social catalyst that these women used with impunity.

The current information on American women in service during World War One in the United States Library of Congress, a national resource that unofficially has touted itself as the most ‘complete’ library on the planet, sadly consists of one single lost copy of Ida Clyde Clark’s 1919 copy of *American Women and the World War*. For a supposedly complete and extant collection of primary and secondary source works, the Library of Congress was a bitter disappointment for researching this topic. Not only is there little or no information on even basic sources, any information relating to women’s character and the stereotypes of the era that supposedly held them socially and politically ‘in check’ are nonexistent to the point of challenging any existence of them

at all. Only the very real research that has already been done on this work by myself exists in any purport on this topic concerning this source.

A far more complete library, the library at Brigham Young University, has an electronic version of this primary work. Ida Clyde Clark's' primary work on women's service in the Great War is the only work in existence that directly address this topic, and almost foreshadows my intent: "The purpose of this book is twofold: first, to discover to American women themselves their tremendous opportunities and responsibilities [sic] in the present world conflict; second, to record in a form that is in some degree permanent the actual beginnings of the greatest massed effort of women the world has ever known. History has not been attempted, because history has not yet been made; events of engaging interest, often of international import, follow each other with lightning-like rapidity, and scarcely seem a situation be described before one more vital, more interesting develops. But if this book shall serve as an inspiration [sic] or shall form the groundwork of a future history of woman's part in the war, one of its chief purposes will have been accomplished."<sup>21</sup>

American women first established themselves in military service in the field of nursing. Communications and yeomanship were to not fully manifest themselves until the war itself. The essence of nursing can be traced back to the beginnings of time. As described in Karen J. Egenes historiography, *The History of Nursing*, "the development and evolution of the nursing profession is intricately connected to historical influences through the ages, beginning in antiquity" and continued to evolve through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance with the slow development of midwifery.<sup>22</sup> The establishment of nursing as a profession for women in the mid nineteenth

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<sup>21</sup> Ida Clyde Clark, *American Women and the World War*, (D. Appleton and Co, 1918), electronic copy, Brigham Young University library, accessed May 13, 2018, <http://net.lib.byu.edu/estu/wwi/comment/clarke/clarke00tc.htm>.

<sup>22</sup> Karen J. Egenes, *History of Nursing*. (Jones and Bartlett Publishers, 2009), accessed May 19, 2018, [https://www.jblearning.com/samples/0763752258/52258\\_ch01\\_roux.pdf](https://www.jblearning.com/samples/0763752258/52258_ch01_roux.pdf).

century with “Florence Nightingale, the woman who would not only reform nursing as it existed at that time, but also lay the foundation for nursing as a profession” which establishes it firmly as the first foundation in the triumvirate of American women’s military service and the first place that American women could express their stability and spirit in dismissing Edwardian stereotypes in World War One.<sup>23</sup>

American military women’s service in the nursing field was established “in 1901 and was seventeen years old at the time the U.S. entered WWI on April 16, 1917. The Corps was small (403 nurses on active duty and 170 reserve nurses). At this same time, there were 8,000 nurses in the nursing service reserves of the American Red Cross...from 1914-1916 American civilian nurses volunteered with the American Ambulance Service in Paris and as nurses at a French Army field hospital” located near the Belgian front.<sup>24</sup> “American nurses also sailed to France with the American Red Cross “Mercy Ship” expedition in 1915 [returning] to France again with the Red Cross or with the ANC in 1917- 1918” when the declaration of war was officially made by Congress and America officially entered WWI.<sup>25</sup> These forces had already been actively working in France for three years and had about a thousand patients under their care.<sup>26</sup> As described by Jessica Webb in her revealing article on Victorian/Edwardian mores, “Why Women Fell: Representing the Sexual Lapse in Mid-Victorian Art (1850-65),” these were the same American women that were represented by the contentious “position [of]the female as victim. In emphasising her blamelessness, the fallen woman is apparently separated from the dangerously independent

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<sup>23</sup> Egenes.

<sup>24</sup> Elizabeth A. P. Vane, Sanders Marble, *Soins: La revue de référence infirmière*, (June 2014), accessed May 19, 2018, <https://e-anca.org/History/Topics-in-ANC-History/Contributions-of-the-US-Army-Nurse-Corps-in-WWI>.

<sup>25</sup> Vane.

<sup>26</sup> Vane.

figure of the prostitute.”<sup>27</sup> In the other extreme, these women also suffered from the hobbling effects of the ‘fallen woman’s’ counterpoint: the angel of mercy.

As brilliantly established by Beatrice J. Kalisch, Ed. D. in her article, “Anatomy of the Image of the Nurse: Dissonant and Ideal Models,” American women trying to establish a sense of purpose and dedication that belied the frippery-clad expectant notions of their male counterparts in this great conflict were up against strong “propagandistic attitudes of filmmakers [that] usually guaranteed that there would be a few scenes of a brutal and animalistic German officer threatening to rape the nurse. In these World War I media portrayals, a model of an ‘Angel of Mercy’ with new values merely layered over the old was depicted. The nursing identification provided one effective way to mask the novelty of female independence with traditional female values that was the trademark part and parcel of the social structure of the era.”<sup>28</sup> Social mores, government regulations, and the media propaganda that helped fuel these stereotypes were the major hurdles of the American woman in service. The very real tribulations of the war were exacerbated by these outdated and time-honored sociological and political values. Only the very real dedication of these women would overcome these barriers that the vagaries of the war itself were slowly eating away.

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<sup>27</sup> Jessica Webb, “Gender: Power and Authority,” *Esharp*, (Issue 9, September 8, 1966), Electronic edition, accessed May 19, 2018,

<file:///C:/Users/me/Documents/Why%20Women%20Fell%20Representing%20the%20Sexual%20Lapse..pdf>.

<sup>28</sup> Beatrice J. Kalisch and Philip A. Kalisch, “Anatomy of the Image of the Nurse: Dissonant and Ideal Models,” (US National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, 1983), accessed May 19, 2018, [file:///C:/Users/me/Documents/anatomy\\_of\\_the\\_image\\_of\\_the\\_nurse\\_ocr.pdf](file:///C:/Users/me/Documents/anatomy_of_the_image_of_the_nurse_ocr.pdf).

### Chapter 3: Source Analysis

American Women who entered military service in WWI through the navy as Yeomen fared no better than women entering service through nursing when it came to enduring the dusty Edwardian stereotypes that were desperately clinging to their last social justifications of dominance over women. Subjected to the same stereotypes as women in the Red Cross or Pershing's 'Hello Girls', women who joined the United States Navy as yeomen were stigmatized by the Edwardian stereotype of 'loose women' through the popular music of the day. Consider this song as written by World War One lyricist Douglas Moore. Examined in a compilation of primary source music which looks at the popular music of the Great War by historian Ron Pen, this tune exemplifies the boorish mentality of the average male in describing the 'availability' of the Yeomanettes and the brash 'forwardness' of their behavior which purportedly allowed males to have "a sweet Yeomanette for each office[er] to pet "perpetrating the propaganda that women in service were readily 'available' for social concourse regardless of how these women may have felt about this.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ron Pen, *I Wonder as I Wander: The Life of John Jacob Niles*, (University Press of Kentucky, 2010), accessed May 23, 2018.



Figure 7: Jennie Biron, USN Yeoman

Biron was a Washington State resident who enlisted as a ‘yeomanette’ during WWI. Note the ‘halo’ imagery of the photograph commonly used in such portraiture imagery of the day. Such portraits often unwittingly crossed the invisible line of ‘trend’ into the more insidious realm of ‘propaganda’ in giving a ‘luminous’ quality to this rather standard image of the day<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Pinterest website, “Discover ideas about Military Service,” Jewish Historical Society of Greater Washington (JHSGW), accessed June 15, 2018, <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/215539532141785196/>.

As described on the 2016 You Tube broadcast for *Pritzker Military Presents*, author Edward Gustaitis asserts “The army would not admit women, but the navy did. The secretary of the navy was named Josephus Daniels, and he was fine with admitting women. They didn't really go overseas and serve on ships, but they did a lot of work here as clerical jobs freeing up men. These navy women were known as Yeomanettes, which is not a word that Josephus Daniels liked very much, but it caught on.”<sup>3</sup> Yet this gives nothing on how these women actually felt about this, nor does it give any detail on the current sociological stereotypes as shown in examining the microcosm of the city of Chicago in relation to the United States and Americas involvement in World War One and how women resisted the propaganda that fueled such stereotypes.

An official website of the United States Navy entitled *The Sextant* helps reveal the social standards these women stubbornly resisted by giving the standard foundation upon which the stereotypes of the day were built which helped fuel women's resistance to these standards of male dominance and superiority: “Upon the end of World War I in November, 1918, there were 11,275 yeomanettes in the Navy. Within the following two years, every woman was released from active duty. Most Americans had considered the use of female employees and female recruits to be a necessary but temporary wartime measure” that established social mores and rules would help in guiding these women back to their ‘proper’ post war positions<sup>4</sup>. Little or nothing is given in relation to how these women resisted these stereotypes by their actions more than how “on March 19, 1917, the Navy officially authorized the enlistment of women with the Naval Reserve Act, which

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<sup>3</sup> Edward Gustaitis, personal interview, book review of *Chicago Transformed: World War I and the Windy City*, Ken Clarke, *Pritzker Military Presents*, transcript, (YouTube Broadcast, April 14, 2017), accessed May 23, 2018,

[file:///C:/Users/me/Pictures/211 Chicago Transformed transcript%20women%20in%20WWI%20yeomanettes'.pdf](file:///C:/Users/me/Pictures/211%20Chicago%20Transformed%20transcript%20women%20in%20WWI%20yeomanettes'.pdf)  
<sup>4</sup> Megan Churchwell, “Beyond Rosie the Riveter: A History of Women in the Navy,” *The Sextant*, U.S. Navy web magazine (March 29, 2018), accessed May 23, 2018,  
<http://usnhistory.navylive.dodlive.mil/2018/03/29/beyond-rosie-the-riveter-a-history-of-women-in-the-navy/>.



allowed for enlistment of qualified “persons” for service, without mention of gender” which completely negates any effort on the part of the women, falsely giving the illusion that the Navy itself was entirely responsible for this major shift in the social paradigm without any significant assistance from the women themselves.

Black women had an additional hurdle during World War One that their female Caucasian counterparts did not have to contend with that unfortunately their white sisters in military service may have unknowingly perpetrated: Complete invisibility. Historians like Jean Ebbert and Marie-Beth Hall in *Cross Currents: Navy Women from WWI to Tailhook* “report having gone to some lengths to verify the sources used by two contemporary historians to assert that a group numbering either “twenty four” or “thirty” Black women served as Navy ‘Yeomen (Female)...Ebbert and Hall both declare that none of the White former Yeomen (F) interviewed in their research had known or heard of any Black women in naval service and that no references could be found in their careful examination of local newspapers, library collections and contemporaneous studies of Blacks in the armed forces.”<sup>5</sup> Yet in his article “The Golden Fourteen”, Richard Miller has found further evidence from Ebbert and Hall “that a group numbering either ‘twenty-four’ or ‘thirty’ Black women served as Navy ‘Yeomen (Female)’” but declare that “none of the White former Yeomen (F) interviewed in their research had known or heard of any Black women in naval service” during World War One.<sup>6</sup>

Concerning this strange anomaly of these Caucasian women not remembering fellow Black women serving alongside them during WWI, it may reflect an unspoken prejudice filtered

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<sup>5</sup> Richard E. Miller, “The Golden Fourteen, plus: Black Navy Women in World War One,” *Minerva* 13,3, (December 31, 1995): 2, accessed May 30, 2018, ProQuest.

<sup>6</sup> Miller, 1.

through the lens of male Edwardian stereotypes of the age: many individuals who are frustrated at their situation or condition in life may manifest this cognitive dissonance by reflecting these stereotypes thrust on them to those ‘next in the pecking order’. Further research into primary records may reveal this ‘blindness’ as displayed by white military women in WWI towards those of different race and social standing while these women themselves were ‘dealing’ with their white male counterparts. Race aside, “the women Marines of World War I are taking their place in history because of the dedication and commitment of the Women’s Marines Association (WMA). The WMA has sponsored the registration of 76 of these WWI veterans...three hundred and five women served in the Marine Corps during World War I.”<sup>7</sup> According to Helen Laukes, national president of the WMA “So many of them are no longer around or are unable to [let people know] themselves” about women’s military WWI contributions.<sup>8</sup>

In chapter XII, “The Red Cross Nurse”, This primary work of a woman deeply involved in the war effort pulled no punches in demanding service from American women, and American women responded in kind: “Every woman in the country should be an enrolled Red Cross member. It is becoming increasingly important that the great work of war relief should be controlled in such a way as to reduce to a minimum both the waste of effort and material, and the women of the country have an opportunity as never before to sink individual opinions and work shoulder to shoulder to make the war a success.”<sup>9</sup> No fainting wallflowers here. Here is *prima facie* evidence that women of the time, to use the Edwardian vernacular of the day, ‘had no truck [time] for such foolishness.’

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<sup>7</sup> Helen Laukes, “Women Marines Association Registers Women Marines of World War One,” *GenderWatch*, (1.8. Mar. 31, 1990): accessed 5/30/18, The Minerva Center, Pasadena, CA.

<sup>8</sup> Laukes.

<sup>9</sup> Laukes, “Women Marines Association Registers Women Marines of World War One,” Chapter XII, “Red Cross Nurses.”

## Chapter 4: Topic Interpretation

A thorough examination of the lack of effect of suffocating Edwardian stereotypes upon American service women's ability to work effectively on or near the front during the First World War will have great sociological impact in relation to the understanding of the history of women's studies in world history. This includes current and future public and private reflections on women's roles in 'the War that was supposed to end all wars.' Through the use of primary sources and historical works by prominent historians and popular writers, I will provide new first conclusions and versions that differ from present historical scholarship. This will serve to address existing gaps or defects in the current academic writings concerning this topic.

examples of this typical Edwardian stereotype are shown in military costume historian Jonathan North's *An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Uniforms of World War I*. This illustrated work shows the image of the 'noble female' in goddess-like attire proclaiming with dramatic gestures in "a poster declaring [that men] 'Take Up the Sword of Justice' advocat[ing] that Americans take revenge for the sinking of the Lusitania" which attracted American women as well as men who rallied around the now well-known battle cry 'remember the Lusitania.'<sup>1</sup> American women in military related service during World War One endured such ignorance and propaganda involving male Edwardian stereotypes.

It would be wise to show that American women in military service during WWI suffered from the same illnesses, debilitations, and destabilizing mental and physical conditions as the men, and should be completely and justly recognized not only for their participation in the war effort, but for all jointly and individually experienced aspects of the war across the board. A nagging and

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<sup>1</sup> Jonathan North, *An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Uniforms of World War I*, (Lorenz books, Anness Publishing Ltd, 2012), 158.

restrictive ‘condition’ that would bleed over from the dark stereotypes of the Victorian age and, indeed, a status attributed to women since time immemorial, that amorphous bugaboo stereotype known as ‘hysteria’ would be a major deciding factor in male Edwardian resistance to women's participation in WWI military service.

In her article “The Forgotten Female Shell-Shock Victims of World War I” Hannah Groch-Begley, a research fellow at Media Matters for America, describes these very real conditions that all individual’s male and female were experiencing near and on the battlefield: “Though a misnomer, historians have argued that shell shock provided a convenient way for doctors to separate the mental traumas exhibited by soldiers from the “effeminate associations of ‘hysteria.’” For centuries, hysteria was thought of as a uniquely female condition, used to explain everything from fainting to sexual desire. Victorian women assumed they were so susceptible to the disease that they carried smelling salts around with them, believing pungent smells could help keep their emotions in check. But while hysteria might have been accepted as an explanation for a Victorian woman's nerves, it was considered an inadequate, emasculating explanation for a male [or female] soldiers' mental health. Not only did medicine separate the experiences of men and women; the experience of the soldier was understood as uniquely difficult and traumatic.”<sup>2</sup>

In this article from *The Atlantic*, Groch-Begley introduces the general public to women, mental illness, and the Great War, hooks its audience completely with an iconic image of female American Marines and introduces us to the idea of ‘shell shock,’ today known as PTSD or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and describes that “during World War I, the relatively new field of psychoanalysis

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<sup>2</sup> Hannah Groch-Begley, “The Forgotten Female Shell-Shock Victims of World War I,” *The Atlantic* (September, 2014), accessed May 13, 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2014/09/world-war-ones-forgotten-female-shell-shock-victims/378995/>.

was full of possibility and, unfortunately, thousands of new patients. The war's destruction was not limited to the physical; the psychological devastation was immense, and soldiers returned home from the front every day exhibiting a range of new symptoms, including "hysterical paralysis," deafness, mutism, arthritis, facial spasms, "fear, disgust, fatigue," "delirium," "suicidal thoughts," "stammer," and more."<sup>3</sup> This article strangely introduces itself as oriented towards the discussion of women, 'shell-shock' and these conditions first formally associated with the Great War, then fizzles out and only focuses on civilian women and military men, leaving us to wonder why the image of the women Marines was even included at all, and finally confesses that women's mental health during the war "has received attention from only a handful of historians, with sensational cases like Huntley's as the exception. Instead, the focus remains on the male experience. Jay Winter argues that historians have turned shell shock "from a diagnosis into a metaphor," a way to describe the "metaphysical" symptoms of war: soldiers who refused to be soldiers, men who refused to be "men." Even Elaine Showalter's seminal 1985 text on hysteria, *The Female Malady*, devoted its chapter on World War I entirely to men."<sup>4</sup> Further research will hopefully reveal these conditions as experienced by American women in service at this time but disappointingly not fully examined in this article.

Perhaps a lack of historical interest in past generations in this topic has led to a general loss of information in the vast shuffle of information overload, and such vital information was gleaned and discarded in past research as 'immaterial.' If so, the loss is great indeed. Such lack of interest in the past may make the research more difficult, but not impossible. As in the case of the primary source of Ida Clyde Clark and her primary source work *American Women and the World War*, more

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<sup>3</sup> Groch-Begley.

<sup>4</sup> Groch-Begley.

of this vital information is locked away in the dusty vaults of private educational institutions and locked in the attics of individuals descended from these women. If so, the current social implications of this may mean that time is running short and more intensive action to be taken in securing and revealing this critical information.

To further examine the stereotypes of Edwardian America I shall describe another paradigm that set women firmly into two categories: innocents and stalwarts to be defended and upheld, or tarts and spies to be avoided and destroyed. As stated in *The Western Experience*, a standard undergraduate history text currently in use in the average community college: “This feminization...however, was not accompanied by new enlightened attitudes toward women. War propaganda reinforced traditional gender stereotypes by emphasizing the enemy’s brutality towards women and the maternal care that nurses provided the wounded.”<sup>5</sup> These stereotypes had little impact on the ability of American women during the war to serve and perform their duties well and with distinction. Even “a limited number of women were recruited to the U.S. Marines during the war” thus creating an impetus which effectively changed women's status and position in American society.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Mortimer Chambers, et al, *The Western Experience: Volume II; Since the Sixteenth Century*, (McGraw-Hill publishers, 2010), 791.

<sup>6</sup> Chambers, 159.

## Chapter 5: Topic Defense

Through the examples of the secondary works of historians and primary sources, I will demonstrate how American women's ability to serve well in military related service during World War One despite social propaganda stereotypes and their ability to effectively ignore them helped define modern feminist movements. This was assisted by removing or diminishing the prevalent stereotypes of female inequality found in Edwardian social media and propaganda when this culture was abruptly terminated by the civilization-ripping circumstances of World War One. A critical primary source for my argument that shows a lack of effect on the daily life of two American women in service overseas during the war are the letters of Esther Sayles Root and Marjorie Crocker. These two vivacious American young women performed humanitarian related service in Paris during WWI. This work was promptly published by the early literary publishing giant Houghton Mifflin entitled *Over Periscope Pond. Letters from Two American Girls in Paris October 1916-January 1918*. This book was instantly popular with the American post war public.

Pre-eminent labor historian and “distinguished professor of history emeritus at the University of Florida” Robert H. Zeiger wrote the highly popular and readable *America's Great War, World War One and the American Experience*.<sup>1</sup> This book gives us the most secondary information on women in general in a mainstream text on World War One. In the section “Women and War” Zeiger is the single major historian to date who effectively encapsulates the contributions and attitudes of women. He describes the challenge of enduring the backlash of resistance in the efforts of Edwardian society to enforce “peacetime quintessential ‘feminine’ virtues” on American women

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<sup>1</sup> American Historical Association Memorial website, accessed March 29, 2018, <https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/may-2013/in-memoriam-robert-h-zeiger>.

who “faced the wrath of authorities who charged them with being ‘unnatural’ and subversive<sup>2</sup>”. He tells us how the war “greatly affected...American life [and] created unprecedented occupational opportunities” but gives us an anticlimax with how “the advent of peace eroded these gains...the war itself had ambiguous effects upon women's status and circumstances.”<sup>3</sup> Zeiger’s work is a well-used text in college courses, and this leaves students without any information concerning the real time gains of American women's attitudes towards their positive military service contributions in WWI.

John Keegan, recipient of the Duke of Westminster Medal for Military Literature (1999) relates in his definitive work on the subject, *The First World War* that this conflict “created the modern world. A conflict of unprecedented ferocity, it abruptly ended the relative peace and prosperity of the Victorian era, unleashing such demons of the twentieth century as mechanized warfare and mass death. It also helped to usher in the ideas that have shaped our times – modernism in the arts, new approaches to psychology and medicine, radical thoughts about economics and society – and in so doing shattered the faith in rationalism and liberalism that had prevailed in Europe since the Enlightenment.”<sup>4</sup> However, Keegan’s “superb narrative” of WWI relegates not only the importance of women’s role in ‘the war to end all wars’ to two pages out of 427 pages of extant text, it mentions little of the social battles women endured period, and of American women or their capabilities, nothing at all.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Zeiger, 137-38.

<sup>3</sup> Zeiger.

<sup>4</sup> Review of *The First World War (The World Wars #1)* by John Keegan, accessed March 24, 2018, [https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/8914.The\\_First\\_World\\_War](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/8914.The_First_World_War).

<sup>5</sup> John Keegan, *The First World War*, “thanks to the mobilisation of women for factory work...female mortality...increased by 11.5 per cent in 1916, 30.4 per cent in 1917 above pre-war rates.” 275, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999).



Girard De Groot, recognized expert on WWI history and history professor at St. Andrews, was asked in 1999 to write a “short book about the First World War” and resisted “the temptation to make it twice as long as the publisher wants.”<sup>6</sup> In acquiescing to his publishers request, he gives the briefest example of the stalwart tenacity of the female American Navy yeomen, Red cross nurses or the defiantly stylish courage of Pershing’s female communications workers as exemplified by Cobb in *Hello Girls*. In her monograph “Fighting on Two Fronts”, Cobb informs us how women “had to prove little beyond their age...some started the very day they walked into a recruiting office. When one young woman called her mother...with the startling news. Her mother ‘was stunned into silence, then asked weakly, ‘oh, sister, can you ever get out? but opposition soon turned to pride.’”<sup>7</sup>

In comparison, De Groot feeds us the standard fare of women's participation and gives it to us reluctantly with no enthusiasm then insults women to boot: “women, so the argument goes, gained personal esteem and societal recognition by moving into jobs vacated by men.”<sup>8</sup> All accomplishments for women during WWI go down the drain with the statement “These positive effects have been grossly exaggerated. Take the case of women. During the war they were but temporary men—cheap labour.”<sup>9</sup> Try telling that to primary participants Sayles, Root, or any number of American women who gave their efforts during the war with spirit, aplomb and human dignity as exemplified by the numerous other secondary historians mentioned here.

An example of a more comprehensive attempt at including real women's participation in the war effort is exemplified by Elizabeth Cobb in *The Hello Girls: America's first Women Soldiers*.

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<sup>6</sup> DeGroot.

<sup>7</sup> Elizabeth Cobbs, “Fighting on Two Fronts: World War One, Women’s Suffrage, and John Pershing’s ‘Hello Girls’,” *South Central Review*, no.3 (Fall 2017): 34, accessed March 27, 2018, St. Martin’s University, Olympia, WA, Project Muse, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/677909>.

<sup>8</sup> Cobbs, 154-155.

<sup>9</sup> Cobbs.

Written in 2017, it is a work written for both academic use and readily readable to the average public. This work focuses on American female military service telephone operators working in Europe during World War One. In *Hello Girls*, Dr. Cobb describes how Woodrow Wilson “did not enfranchise half the adult population of the United States single-handedly” but then offers little evidence on how Wilson accomplished this for these women, let alone what these women did for themselves<sup>10</sup>. Nothing is shown or offered on these women's self-accomplishments and how they felt about this. There is little or no information as yet researched by Cobb or other historians on the relation of their personal perspectives in connection to well-known active and inaccurate social propaganda that focused on their abilities to perform their duties; n active historiological prospectus is needed to address these as yet undisclosed issues as can be gleaned from as yet unused primary sources. The first step in writing about American women's military service has been established through such historiographies. The next step is to incorporate a comprehensive viewpoint of these women's vision of their ability to serve and how they accomplished this.

American women who were known for their spirit and verve wished to serve in the war like women in Australia and France that were making great sacrifices for their countries, and the evidence is present in such primary sources as Over Periscope Pond, as well as. “Those women who got close to the action enjoyed it too.”<sup>11</sup> American women eagerly read accounts of British women like May Sinclair who were proclaiming in letters to home that ““I wouldn’t have missed this run for the world...exquisite moments of extreme danger” and attempted in their own style of wit and intelligence to boldly resist while following social dictates to refrain from displaying

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<sup>10</sup> Elizabeth Cobbs, *The Hello Girls: America’s First Women Soldiers* (Harvard University Press, 2017), 123.

<sup>11</sup> Niall Ferguson, *The Pity of War: Explaining World War I* (New York. Basic Books, 1999), 362.

unladylike qualities in champing at the bit to serve in the war as described in their vivid and revealing personal accounts.<sup>12</sup>

The crippling and outmoded social values in American society during the Great War that attempted to restrict women as much as the haute couture ‘hobble skirts’ so in fashion on the ballroom floors back in New York were difficult tightropes to walk that American women on front felt they could endure with spirit, intelligence, humor and dignity. They displayed their ability to weather such things in letters to home and in the photographs they snapped on their “democratized” Brownie cameras that displayed their forward, direct, yet restrained and respective manners that belied their ‘slavery’ to any such code.<sup>13</sup> They felt this as much if not more as any woman from Australia or Canada, and historians have failed to extensively examine this in relation to the Edwardian stereotypes that declared the inferiority of women yet was ultimately ineffective in its demand of their service on its terms. These historians fail to account how American Women subtly and overtly resisted these social stereotypes and served well in spite of them. A historiological gap concerning the topic of American women’s military service, stereotypes and their ability to ignore or overcome the social propaganda related to the stereotypes of American women’s service is blatantly apparent in many if not all of the secondary source works with information related to women’s service in World War One.

Barton C. Hacker, writing for the Smithsonian Institute in their website *Oh Say Can You See, Stories from the National Museum of American History*, tentatively asks the question that I wish to examine more fully and in depth in this paper, and which shows the dedicated spirit in which

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<sup>12</sup> Ferguson.

<sup>13</sup> Gary Cole, et al, “The Most Important Cardboard Box Ever?” *BBC News Magazine*, website, (1/5/2015), accessed May 4, 2018, <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-30530268>.

the women of the period wished to show their sincerity and dedication in military service. One way in which women wished to display this was in the masculine bent in the design of their uniforms. For these women, to show their desire to appear serious and without frivolousness, fashion and *haute couture* would not enter the picture at all. The stark masculine designs of these uniforms would show how “In 1919 the Colonial Dames, proud of what their members had done in the war and certain that women’s wartime contributions were historically significant, began to assemble uniforms worn by its members and others, which they insisted, successfully, belonged in the grand exhibit of First World War artifacts at the United States National Museum. The women’s uniforms remained on display until 1929.”<sup>14</sup>

In describing the fascinating “collection of uniforms that radically reshaped [his] ideas about military history in general and World War I in particular”, Hacker provides uninspired but adequate information and substantial images of “The hundred or so uniforms in the extraordinary and unique Colonial Dames Collection of World War I Women’s Uniforms represented the participation of tens of thousands of American women in what was then called the Great War.”<sup>15</sup> Hacker, like myself, asked “What made the war of 1914–1918 different from earlier wars? Why were so many women eager to serve in uniform?”<sup>16</sup> In the treatise, “Uniforms Make the Woman”, Margaret Vining and Hacker explore more fully the intent of American women in military service. They discuss the concept of “women negotiating for recognition... and assesses the larger significance

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<sup>14</sup> Barton C. Hacker, “Women in Uniform: World War One edition,” *Oh, Say Can You See? Stories from the National Museum of American History*, Smithsonian Institute, Barton C. Hacker Blog, accessed May 10, 2018, <http://americanhistory.si.edu/blog/2011/09/women-in-uniform-world-war-i-edition.html>.

<sup>15</sup> Hacker.

<sup>16</sup> Hacker.

of women wearing uniforms” in military service during the Great War.<sup>17</sup> They display such participation factually, but fail to explain in detail how the spirit of these male influenced military designs helped American “Women especially [who] took to motorcars and trucks, both as drivers and mechanics, transporting soldiers and supplies in both the United States and Europe where they sometimes worked close to the front lines.”<sup>18</sup> These women performing these duties had little time for boorish male stereotypes of the period, as shown in these practical and unassuming garments.

The very nascent nature of this monograph will reveal the fact that this did not interfere with their work as well as show their very real and utter disregard for what they considered outdated and ridiculous rules set by an outdated society and that the social propaganda of the age canvassed aggressively for their interpretation of moral, social and military behavior in women is present in the primary sources that reveal the very lack of direct acknowledgment of this control beyond legal recourse. This information is contained in the very real direct references within the sociological construct as shown in remarks in letters and personal correspondence as shown in the primary literature and reveals much about the social nature of these women.

What little they mention about women at all relates directly to European women. Because of the lateness of America’s involvement in the war, World War One, many historians, like Spencer C. Tucker in *The Great War, 1914-18*, fail to mention the mental and physical resilience of American women in this global conflict at all. His description of American women’s experience is completely lacking, and what insight is given us amounts to “for women workers the war was a mixed experience. Labouring conditions were hard and many women lived in barracks and worked

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<sup>17</sup> Margaret Vining and Barton C. Hacker, “Uniforms Make the Woman,” *Artefacts Consortium* (May 2004): accessed 5/10/2018, <http://www.artefactsconsortium.org/Publications/PDFfiles/Vol5Mil/5.04.Military-Vining.Hacker.Uniforms75ppiFFFWEBF.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> Vining and Hacker.

12-hours shifts for wages far less than...men...women were also the first to be laid off at the end of the war.”<sup>19</sup> This is hardly revealing news.

An examination into personal accounts of women involved in the war would reveal more information how these women felt about this, and, again, any information on American women at all, let alone in military service, and anything related to the stereotypes of the day concerning their involvement in the war is also glaringly absent. This is a historian who “held the John Biggs Chair of Military History at the Virginia Military Institute for six years [and] the author of twenty-five books including the award-winning *Stephen Decatur: A Life Most Bold and Daring*.”<sup>20</sup> One would think he would have included in a book about WWI information about American military women's involvement in it, considering his background.

Anthologies of the history of World War One also lack any work by any historian that examines women's military roles and their resistance to cultural stereotypes in successful military service. Edited by Hew Strachan, *World War I, A History*, is a compilation of works of a synergistic cross section of World War One historians. Gail Braybon’s “Women, War, and Work” ironically includes two excellent examples of American made propaganda posters depicting the stereotypical assistance to war that women were capable of: Being faceless victims of the marauding Hun (page 149) or wooden-shoe-clad munitions workers, blandly performing duties as automatons (150) then waxes well on the “patronizing, misleading, and so inaccurate as to be unworthy of further discussion” of the “hyperbole [of] exaggerated... assumptions about social changes” without one word of the positive strides any women did in relation to the Great War, let alone American

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<sup>19</sup> Spencer C. Tucker, *The Great War, 1914-18*, (Indiana University press, 1998).

<sup>20</sup> U.S. Naval Institute Website, accessed March 28, 2018, <https://www.usni.org/author/spencer-c-tucker>.

servicewomen and their strength to resist Edwardian stereotypes to enter the conflict and create changes for themselves despite this.<sup>21</sup>

A quick examination into one of any primary sources such as *Over Periscope Pond* would reveal her inaccuracies in portraying the involvement of women in the war and her intrigue over “the extent to which so many recent social historians have also accepted the idea that the war was a social and political ‘watershed’ for women.”<sup>22</sup> An examination into any reliable first-hand account of American women’s involvement would find that the women considered their active and cognizant involvement in the war anything but a collective ‘watershed’.

In another compilation of short works of Great War historians, *The Great World War, 1914-1945*, James Cook, in his monograph, “The Experience of Being Abroad: Doughboys and GI’s in Europe,” counts the numbers well and finally gives women their long overdue accolades: a scanty half a paragraph somberly notes that “women served all across the front with the American forces, and the closest many ever came to French champagne was the bitter fighting in that region.”<sup>23</sup> A close perusal of *Periscope Ponds* Sayles and Crocker activities in WWI Paris would have told him that while these girls were dedicated and serious, they showed far more aplomb and veracity than he credits them for. A minor oversight? Not if you want to view the women who served as real flesh and blood individuals and not dark, somber stereotyped cardboard cutouts.

In his own extensive volume on World War One, touted as a “brilliant and authoritative new book” on the subject, Hew Strachan, in *The First World War, Vol. I: To Arms*, writes a lugubrious two volume in-depth examination of one of history’s greatest conflicts which pathetically renders

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<sup>21</sup> Gail Braybon, “Women, War, and Work,” *World War I: A History*, ed. Hew Strachman, (Oxford University Press, 1998), 150.

<sup>22</sup> Braybon, 149-150.

<sup>23</sup> James Cook, “The Experience of Being Abroad: Doughboys and GI’s in Europe,” in Peter Liddle, *The Great World War: 1914-45, 1: Lightning Strikes Twice* (Harper Collins, 2000,) 244.

the entire involvement of women in the war in volume one to “women were vital in helping men accept their obligations.”<sup>24</sup> This historiography renders the personal voices of the ‘Hello girls’, the nurses, and the American Navy Yeoman bitterly silent.

Women and the War are even further silenced in Dr. Edward Coffman’s *The War to End All Wars: The American Military Experience in World War I*. Coffman, professor emeritus of history at University of Wisconsin, wrote his work on the Great War in a decade long after the war had ended. Written in an age when women were ‘emancipated’ and hailed in 1998 as “the best single account of America’s participation in World War I”, his work gives ample, outdated and pathos laden credence to the voice of “the Negroes who had hoped that the war would give them an opportunity to demonstrate their loyalty and to bolster their appeal to the whites,” and leaves women literally out in the cold.<sup>25</sup>

Not even Red Cross nurses are noted when he describes how “transportation across the old No Man’s Land remained a serious problem, and influenza began to run its course.”<sup>26</sup> The women who drove the vehicles and overcame the hurdles of ‘no man’s land’ as described by Cobb in *Hello Girls* or mentioned in the exploits of Crocker and Root in the primary work O PP overcame these very hurdles. If Coffman had read Cobbs work he would have certainly rectified the error. Women are not even footnoted nor mentioned in the index. For Coffman, women were not even victims or spies let alone vital support in the very war he describes. It is as if it were a war fought by men alone for men alone.

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<sup>24</sup> Amazon Editorial Reviews, accessed March 28, 2018, <https://www.amazon.com/First-World-War-Hew-Strachan/dp/0143035185>. Hew Strachan, *The First World War: Volume I: To Arms*, (Oxford University press, 2001), 155.

<sup>25</sup> Review of Edward Coffman, *The War to End All Wars: The American Military Experience in World War I*. Edward Coffman, *The War to End All Wars: The American Military Experience in World War I*, (University of Kentucky press, 1998), 320.

<sup>26</sup> Coffman, 321.



Peter Rees contains more information than Coffman in his Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Book of the Year Nominee (2009) publication which he examines in *The Other Anzacs*, a work about Australian nursing women who already grimly and doggedly were enduring stalwartly the horrors of the front: “I had my right arm under a leg, which I thought was [the patient's], but when I lifted it I found to my horror that it was a loose leg with a boot and a puttee on it. It was one of the orderly's legs which had been blown off and had landed on the patient's bed. The next day they found the trunk about 20 yards away.”<sup>27</sup> A rather direct and cognizant account from ‘the weaker sex.’ Rees indirectly touches on the strength of these women in the face of current stereotypes without directly addressing it.

In researching much of my primary source work, particularly Mary Borden, I found that these women showed a far more human reaction to war trauma that belied the stereotypes of the age, and I have observed through my research that far more than shrinking back in uncontrollable paroxysms of crippling fear, rather, many of these women developed a clinical, almost detached fascination with either the wounds themselves, or the apparatus used to tend these wounds. Much of the medical equipment we use today was developed during WWI, and these prototypes were elaborate contraptions made from miles of steel, rubber, and other natural materials. Photos of pre-triage type areas show how these ‘proto’ triage areas that these women worked in were the “the prototype of triage [which] arose from the experience gained in the difficult campaign in Egypt and Syria [during the Napoleonic Wars]. Subsequently, triage was refined by Napoleon's military surgeon, D. J. Larrey, who created the ambulance transport system.”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Peter Rees, *The Other Anzac's: Nurses at War 1914-1918*, (Allen Unwin publishers, 2008).

<sup>28</sup> Hiroyuki Nakao, Isao Ukai, Joji Kotani, “A review of the history of the origin of triage from a disaster medicine perspective,” *Acute Medicine and Surgery* (Oct. 4.4. 2017), (NIH, published online 2017 Jul 14), accessed May 20, 2018, doi:10.1002/ams2.293, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5649292/>.

Carrying this image down the timeline into WWI, these 'proto' triage areas from the battle front show the use of these bizarre contraptions which made the scene look like some grisly episode from *Frankenstein*, and the source of these women's unusual 'shell shock' symptoms. As far as the stereotypes of how these women were expected to react to war related trauma, these 'symptoms' are counter-assertive towards establishing the veracity and legitimacy of the bourgeois Edwardian stereotypes of the period. Rather than shying away and cringing in helpless fear at the gruesome sight of primitive blood transfusions and amputations, a large majority of these women in their reactions to this manifested itself in a curious, most unladylike fascination in either the gore itself, or the machinery to treat the wounded men. This was a far more realistic reaction to war atrocity on a far more human level than the false puritanical stereotypical propaganda which was slowly experiencing its last gasp of social control over these women.

Another example that counters these stereotypes was shown when researching the history of women serving on other capacities as well. In order to fully examine these stereotypes and dispel the cultural myths of 'weak' women, in pursuing this research, further work was required in creating access to a site in which it was necessary to create a guest account in order to gain access to go beyond the surface of this topic. For example, the State Historical Society of Wisconsin was the only source for an extant facsimile of a digital copy of the primary source document *The First Enlisted Women, 1917-1918*. This is a digitized version of an original primary source work by Navy yeoman Eunice Dessez, a woman who served as a Navy 'yeomanette' in the United States Navy from Wisconsin. She provides a more personal accounting of how such important men of her youth such as Secretary of the Navy Daniels "tweaked the nose of tradition" in making the now

famous statement concerning the sex requirement of Naval Yeomen<sup>29</sup>. Dessez provides a peculiarly curious look at the stereotypes of the day when writing her memoirs. She assumes, (probably quite correctly), that “the officers of the board were speechless as they looked at each other, completely confused by the question”<sup>1</sup> of women serving in the military. She is correct when she reminds us how, in her youth that “this was a period in history when the manners of Victoria prevailed,” thus asserting the stereotypical Victoria-influenced values of the Edwardian age in which the war took place, yet it is very obvious that this was not a deterrent or an influence for enlistment for American women.

On the other end of the propaganda scale, if the American women who wished to serve were not ‘wicked’ they were ‘sacred’. As displayed in this iconic propaganda image by poster artist William Souter, Image 7, the symbolic 1917 Red Cross nurse recruitment poster. the nurse, done in a highly stylized manner, is holding her hands out in Christlike supplication. Compare this to the ‘sinner’ ‘Delilaesque’ Mata Hari imagery in Image 3. This tendency to look at the female nurses of WWI as ‘saints’ would prove to make the lives of these women as difficult as the ‘sinner’ imagery of the Mata Hari types. Attempts to live up to such unrealistic sociographic expectations left many women as emotionally traumatized as the men. These Edwardian values of the ‘nobleness’ of the nursing profession were also reflected in the literature and film of the age. The iconic WWI novel *A Farewell to Arms* reflects this in the nature of the character Catherine Barkley. While Barkley is from England, the propaganda of ‘sacred’ nature applied to American nurses as well.

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<sup>29</sup> Eunice C. Dessez, *The First Enlisted Women: 1917-1918*, 11, (University of Wisconsin digital archive, 1955, 2018,) accessed 3/18/2018.



Figure 8: Red Cross Nurse Propaganda Poster by William Souter (1917)

Source: William Souter, "Help," 1917. Image source: Google Website, accessed June 4, 2018,

[https://www.google.com/search?q=image+of+WWI+female+related+propaganda&rlz=1C1JZAP\\_enUS778US778&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwikiYm-lrrbAhWMKnwKHcxDAfEQ\\_AUICigB&biw=1777&bih=827#imgsrc=rRHEUgBbEYd5nM](https://www.google.com/search?q=image+of+WWI+female+related+propaganda&rlz=1C1JZAP_enUS778US778&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwikiYm-lrrbAhWMKnwKHcxDAfEQ_AUICigB&biw=1777&bih=827#imgsrc=rRHEUgBbEYd5nM). ©

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Susan Zeiger, past professor of History at Regis College in Weston, Massachusetts, where she “taught courses in gender and global studies and all aspects of U.S. history,” in *Uncle Sam’s Service* examines more closely how “During World War I, the first U.S. war in which women were mobilized by the armed services on a mass scale, more than sixteen thousand female personnel served overseas with the American Expeditionary Force. Elite society women—the so-called heiress corps—have dominated the popular perception of women’s service ever since... Zeiger shows that the majority of these female nurses, clerical workers, telephone operators, and canteen workers were wage-earners whose motives for enlistment ranged from patriotism to economic self-interest, from a sense of adventure to a desire to challenge gender boundaries” who by and large performed their duties with alacrity and selfless dedication.<sup>30</sup>

Dr. Lynn Dumenil in her academic history *The Second Line of Defense*, closely examines the stereotypes and propaganda related to mothers and ‘sirens’ related to war propaganda and the Great War, as well as the polar opposite saint/sinner sociopolitical propaganda so prevalent in the sociographical record. She addresses the “companies assessment of their necessity and competence”, but this is not examined fully, and does not synthesize her research with Zeiger’s “theme of female power and its implications for war” or any other academic work in relation to American service women’s wartime performance.<sup>31</sup>

Dumenil does not connect the difficulties these stereotypes presented to American Service women but comes close in describing the typical stereotypes of American servicewomen in relation

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<sup>30</sup> Primary Source website, accessed March 29, 2018, <https://www.primarysource.org/about-us/our-staff/susan-zeiger>. Susan Zeiger, *In Uncle Sam’s Service: Women Workers with the American Expeditionary Force, 1917-1919*, (University of Pennsylvania press), <http://www.upenn.edu/pennpress/book/14003.html>.

<sup>31</sup> Lynn Dumenil, *The Second Line of Defense: American Women and World War I*. Zeiger.

to civilian ‘Conductorets’, a clumsy word delineating the service of women in civilian service aboard the street cars, a social indicator of this prevalent stereotypical propaganda which “stressed their spiffy uniforms of neatly tailored jackets and skirts, with matching hat.”<sup>32</sup> This was also a facet to be considered in military service as uniforms were part and parcel of the stereotypes of women as men thought they would be more concerned with their looks over performing their duties. For example, such stereotypes were also perpetrated in a so called ‘positive’ propaganda poster of the day that showed an elegantly posed female Marine creating the appropriate ‘s-curve’ silhouette as she is gaily depicted by “Marine Corps artist Morgan Dennis... waving "Good—bye" to the Marine she released for overseas duty.”<sup>33</sup>

Military expert Jean Ebbert examines the unique situation of the ‘pseudo’ enlisted status of all women in military service during the Great War in *Crossed Currents: Navy Women from WWI to Tailhook*. The American Navy “Yeomanettes” were the first actual women to enlist in the American military. Ebberts work touches on but does not fully examine the tantalizing evidence prevalent particularly in early military service during the Great War. She mentions that “because of limitations on the number of female officers allowed, many very high-caliber women settled for enlisted status, and as a consequence male officers sometimes greatly underestimated them were neatly outmaneuvered by them.”<sup>34</sup> This work on women in the United States Navy is the only one which hints at how women at this time “seldom announced success with a blare of trumpets and clash of cymbals. Instead, they tended to savor quietly the moment when their intransigent boss(es)

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<sup>32</sup> Dumenil.

<sup>33</sup> Hewitt, “Women Marines in World War I,” 13.

<sup>34</sup> Edward L. Beach, Capt. USN, *Crossed Currents: Navy Women from WWI to Tailhook*, (Maxwell Macmillan publishers, 1993), xii.

not only accepted defeat but (in a manner of speaking) praised them for it<sup>35</sup>. This example gives real but meager proof of their competence and dedication.

In a June 30, 1997 review of Lettie Gavins work, *They Also Served*, prominent women's historians Carl and Dorothy Schneider praised Gavin as “An award-winning journalist [who] has employed her reportorial skills to construct a book from an engaging series of personal interviews and unpublished memoirs [that] is very very good.”<sup>36</sup> Gavin uses actual interviews of elderly women survivors of the conflict and interviews with their descendants. One of the stereotypes of the age that she mentions is the prevalent and prominent newspaper propaganda of the age. “When the Navy’s call went out in early 1917 for female yeomen, popularly christened ‘Yeomanettes,’ many newspapers published bitterly critical letters from readers. Even the Navy’s own board of legal advisers reacted violently. ‘W-o-m-e-n in the Navy, fantastic, ridiculous,’ they cried. ‘Petticoats in the Navy! Damn’d outrage! Helluva mess! Back to sea f’r me’.”<sup>37</sup> Gavin also illustrates the necessity of wartime assistance from all sectors including the upper echelon of the Navy when Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels changed military service forever when he offhandedly asked the basic question ‘Is there any regulation which specifies that a Navy yeoman be a man?’ and gives us a hint that not all men were subject to the main sociological stereotype so unjustly and ignorantly prejudiced against servicewomen.<sup>38</sup>

As to American servicewomen’s mental health in World War One, only recently has any historiography been written that even touches on the subject in any decent capacity worth

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<sup>35</sup> Beach.

<sup>36</sup> Carl and Dorothy Schneider, review of *American Women in World War I: They Also Served*, Minerva, (15.2. June 30, 1997), accessed March 18, 2018, <https://search.proquest.com/prinviewfile?accountid=11199>.

<sup>37</sup> Lettie Gavin, *American Women in World War I: They Also Served*, (University Press of Colorado, 2006), accessed March 18, 2018, Proquest ebook central,1.

<sup>38</sup> Gavin.

mentioning. In connection to mental health and women's service in the military during the Great War, the U.S. department of Veterans Affairs, and the effect of ongoing sociographical stereotypes as they relate to Edwardian values, the effects of which are filtered down through further wars, sociological change, and even environmental and technological concerns, all of which influence each other through the 'circulinear' flux and change of time and society as mentioned in other sections of this treatise, think of this as the effect of which would be as a person drawing continuously with a Spirograph: while the lines may run in a circular motion and even cross themselves, they at the same time continue on in a linear fashion, all of which is being continuously affected by the charged random ions of pure chance and sheer luck.

For women in military service in WWI, the cosmic flux of these circulinear influences in this convoluted timeline had no greater influence than in their mental health, so important to consider in an age when a woman could be locked up for the catch all condition known as 'female hysteria'. Women's mental health was a serious consideration in the allowance of Edwardian male stereotypes in permitting women to perform military duties. To help create a background setting for our topic, as so aptly stated in "The Final Women's Report" by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, "women have proudly served their country throughout all periods of United States history, whether disguised as male soldiers during the American Revolution and Civil War, as nurses in World War I, or as combat helicopter pilots in Afghanistan... it is the extent of their involvement, degree of militarization, and integration into the services that have changed dramatically over time."<sup>39</sup> This is confirmed in the important point that "It was not until World

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<sup>39</sup> Maribel Aponte, et al, "Military Service History and VA Benefit Utilization Statistics," Department of Veterans Affairs, National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, (November 23, 2011): 9, accessed May 27, 2018, [https://www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/SpecialReports/Final\\_Womens\\_Report\\_3\\_2\\_12\\_v\\_7.pdf](https://www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/SpecialReports/Final_Womens_Report_3_2_12_v_7.pdf).



War I that the military implemented a physical examination requirement for [all] Service members, thus making it impossible for women to continue disguising themselves as men in order to serve.”<sup>40</sup>

This is an important consideration for women’s mental health at this time: no longer would they have to contend with what surely must have been mentally anguishing moments in previous conflicts at the horrible consequences of being ‘discovered.’ Now women were openly enlisting, completely eliminating this mental condition. Now, serving ‘unfastened,’ so to speak, from this former situation that was a prime consideration in all previous conflicts, what medical conditions women suffered from in connection to mental health in the military or conflict conditions would consist openly of “Women’s service contributions in World War I [that] showed that they either had, or could quickly learn, nontraditional skills needed by the military,” thus eliminating the timeworn stereotype of women’s supposed stereotype of the mental inability to perform these ‘nontraditional’ military duties.<sup>41</sup>

Dr. Susan Grayzel’s work *Women and the First World War* is one of the first works to address a general audience which “offers an introduction to the experiences and contributions of women during what may be accurately labelled the first modern, total war” which required the mobilization of not only military and civilians, but changed the roles of some from civilian to military such as women who had never performed formally in the role of being enlisted in the military.<sup>42</sup> Grayzel examines the impact of the war on women across the globe, notably in Europe, North America and Australia and New Zealand. Her reference to an American poster which reveals “the female ‘house manager’ with her basket of food proudly marching in formation with armed

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<sup>40</sup> Aponte, 2.

<sup>41</sup> Aponte.

<sup>42</sup> Susan Grayzel, *Women and the First World War*, (Pearson/Longman publications, 2002), 3.

troops” unveils how positive propaganda outweighed the traditional male stereotypes of female inefficiency.<sup>43</sup>

Dr. Kathleen Kennedy’s *Disloyal Mothers and Scurrilous Citizens: Women and Subversion during World War I* is a history on prevalent social norms of Americans during World War One that examines the complex cross-currents of sociopolitical sexist propaganda which plagued the era. She re-enforces the current norms and prevalent stereotypes of Edwardian America that blurred the very propaganda spouted by mainstream male politicians and military leaders of the day, which confused the issue even further and literally contradicted itself. Such confusion over women's stereotypes were echoed in the words of such men as Rear Admiral Goodrich who “agreed that women’s primary contribution to the war effort was as mothers, some proponents of war were profoundly ambivalent about women’s socialization of their sons...for Goodrich and other advocates of compulsory service, American homes were ill-suited for citizenship training.”<sup>44</sup> This reflects accurately the general attitude of males not only in the military but in civilian life as well and shows how the very stereotypes of the age contradicted themselves in their messages of the competency in general of women whether in military or civilian service.

Mainstream historical writers David Stephenson and Lynn MacDonald make an attempt at a more in-depth examination to find how women exemplify how they resisted Edwardian stereotypes with the attitudes that seemed to defy what American women were capable of but sadly fall short of providing us anything new. As described in *With Our Backs to the Wall*, Stephenson unfortunately only gives us statistics of British women without including their American sisters

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<sup>43</sup> Grayzel, 13.

<sup>44</sup> Kathleen Kennedy, *Disloyal Mothers and Scurrilous Citizens: Women and Subversion during World War I*, (Indiana University press, 1999), 9.

and gives the standard response by telling us “Britain, uniquely, set up uniformed women’s auxiliary services under military discipline” completely disregarding American women in any form. In MacDonalds’ *The Roses of No Man’s Land*, she melancholy relates the tired old saw how “On the face of it, ....no one could have been less equipped for the job than these gently nurtured girls who walked straight out of Edwardian drawing rooms into the manifest horrors of the First World War...” and gives us little else.<sup>45</sup>

In their social history of the war that “combines American, British, and French archival material to present a fresh and modern evaluation of America’s performance” in World War one, the Herries’ *The Last Days of Innocence, America at War* shows a glaring absence in the record of the advances of female Naval Yeomen.<sup>46</sup> Completely ignoring the fact that the United States “Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels authorized the enlistment of women on March 19 1917” and was the first of the armed services to let women serve, Merion and Susie Herries did recognize the advances of the ‘Hello Girls’ and the nurses.<sup>47</sup> While they acknowledge the gains of the “militant women [who] had extracted a price for their support in the war”, the services of other American military women such as the Yeomen are negated with the statement that the “jobs [that] had opened purely because of the war, women were promptly evicted.”<sup>48</sup> Nothing could be further from the truth for the fully enlisted female Navy Yeomen who wished to continue to serve and remained enlisted at the end of the war.

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<sup>45</sup> Lyn Macdonald, *The Roses of No Man's Land* (Penguin UK, 1993, first published October 6th 1980), accessed March 24, 2018.

<sup>46</sup> David Stephenson, *With our backs to the Wall: Victory and Defeat in 1918* (Penguin publishers, 2012), 441. Merion and Susie Harries, *The Last Days of Innocence: America at War: 1917-1918* (New York, Random House, 1997), 436.

<sup>47</sup> NHHC, “The Navy’s First Enlisted Women, 19 March 1917,” *People, Women, and World War*, Naval History blog, U.S. Naval Institute Website, accessed March 18, 2018, <https://www.navalhistory.org/2011/03/19/the-navy%E2%80%99s-first-enlisted-women-19-march-1917>.

<sup>48</sup> “The Navy’s First Enlisted Women,” 437.

Coming tantalizingly closer to the goal of discovering how real women in Edwardian America resisted male stereotypes, Dr. Keith Robbins short history *The First World War The Outbreak, Events, and Aftermath* is described in a Cambridge University press review as giving a “clear chronological account of the campaigns on the Western and Eastern Fronts and then moves on to investigate areas that many studies ignore – the war poets, the diplomacy of war aims and peace moves, logistics, and 'the experience of the war'.”<sup>49</sup> He tells us how “for every woman who resented war as an activity of men there was another who resented the exclusive rights over fighting which men seemed to exercise” and gives us the statistical information of women's service with little written about their mindset.<sup>50</sup> If Robbins wished to include, as he states, more personal information, the historiography edited by Yvonne Klein, *Beyond the Home Front: Women's Autobiographical Writing of the Two World Wars* would have provided more critical related information for his work.

In this well written compilation of first hand female accounts of military related service during both World War One and Two, professor of English of Dawson college, Quebec, Dr. Klein has skillfully created a multiple author work that utilizes the autobiographical writing of women. One such author, Mary Borden, a “wealthy American from Chicago,” seems to illogically defy or deny the Edwardian stereotypes of the day she lived with in her vignettes which comprise her 1929 collection of short stories *The Forbidden Zone*. Recounting her own war experiences in the form of short stories, what seemed at the time strange and bizarre behavior may actually be the real behavior of an actual person, cutting through the stereotypes of the age and revealing an actual un-

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<sup>49</sup> Oxford University Press review of Keith Robbins, *The First World War: The Outbreak, Events, and Aftermath* (Oxford University Press), accessed March 29, 2018, <http://www.oupcanada.com/catalog/9780192803184.html>.

<sup>50</sup> Keith Robbins, *The First World War: The Outbreak, Events, and Aftermath*, (Opus Publications, 1985), 161.

ladylike admiration for “a dozen new platinum needles. I was very pleased with them’ he said ‘Come and help me a moment...He darted off to a voice that was shrieking somewhere. There was a man stretched on the table. His brain came off in my hands when I lifted the bandage from his head...I left [the male orderly] to finish the dressing and went about my own business. I had much to do.”<sup>51</sup> This belies and supports my thesis of how the stereotypes of the day had little to do with actual women's emotions in war, even reflected in personal memoirs translated into short story fiction that reflects the changing social mores.

*Over Periscope Pond* is one of the primary source references that in thematic value is related to Wiltshire's work *Most Dangerous Women*. In direct relation to Wiltshire's examination of the assumed social stereotype of supposed Edwardian male stoicism in warfare and the stereotypes of glamorization, this primary source supports and exemplifies such supposed stoicism placed by stereotyped Edwardian values of the general population, particularly the elites or those of ‘scientific’ mind. In a letter to home dated June 20, 1917, Marjorie observes the typical upper society Edwardian age snobbery and impersonal detachment of a “Dr. C [who] joined us and took us through two wards. We watched some dressings which were gory and quite interesting. He assured us that he did not hurt the patient, but there was a difference of opinion on that subject, for the poilus [soldier] yelled nobly most of the time.”<sup>52</sup> The intellectual fragments of the philosophical gentlemanly ‘detachment’ of the eighteenth century ‘science/philosopher’ is seen to take its last pseudo gasp in this culture and is brought out by these examples in wartime.

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<sup>51</sup> Mary Borden, “Blind,” from *Beyond the Home Front, Women's Autobiographical Writing from the Two World Wars* (New York University press, 1997), 69.

<sup>52</sup> Marjorie Crocker, *Over Periscope Pond: Letters from Two American Girls in Paris* (New York, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1918), 192, The Evergreen State College Rare Books Collection.

This cleverly written tongue-in-cheek statement from a primary source turns the prevalent and currently accepted social propaganda and stereotypes of American Edwardian values at the time of the Great War literally on its ear. Here the ‘Edwardian dove’, the lady, which Marjorie clearly is in the stereotypical sense in having ‘aesthete’ values—she knows Latin—and is ‘interested’ in the ‘gory’ dressings as the ‘noble’ soldier who, according to the doctor ‘doesn’t feel a thing’ is screaming his lungs out. Marjorie clearly dispels any of the prevalent ‘noble male’s soldier silent sacrifice’ that was dished out in the cultural war propaganda of the war in order to uphold morale and keep current social values ‘from falling apart’ which, if they were not ‘falling apart’ were clearly changing, almost mutating, if you will.

The article for *Social Education* “American Women in World War I” by the prominent American historians Carl and Dorothy Schneider written in 1994 helps focus how “American women experienced this ‘Great War’ differently than any previous war.”<sup>53</sup> They address the important factual issues of “for the first time, the Army and Navy nurse corps were activated. It was the first American war in which no woman enlisted as a foot soldier disguised as a man, for it introduced thorough physical examinations.”<sup>54</sup> Such a seemingly assumed fact as thorough physical examinations is another unaddressed historiological gap.

Major World War One historians Dorothy and Carl Schneider’s *Into the Breach, American Women Overseas in World War One* examines with more detail the stereotypes related to women in military service in WWI. Yet the detail is more related to the viewpoint of the military authorities and other male figures and does not give central voice to women in this work that examines more

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<sup>53</sup> Carl Schneider, “American Women in World War I,” *Social Education* (Feb. 1994. 58.2), accessed 3/18/2018.

<sup>54</sup> Schneider.

directly the work of women in military service overseas. “The men at the head of the ALA answered by assuring the women that children’s librarians were making an unparalleled contribution to the war effort. (Rock the cradle not the boat).”<sup>55</sup> What I disagree with is how there is a great deal of information concerning women’s service from the viewpoint of the dominant male society but little from the women serving themselves. It does support the stereotypical male dominant values of the time that women in military related service had to overcome.

Kimberly Jensen's *Mobilizing Minerva: American Women in the First World War* gives us tantalizing evidence of her awareness of sociopolitical propaganda and stereotypes concerning service women in WWI and mentions how “the work of elite women nursing leaders to ‘lift’ the profession to institutional acceptance through training but also through adherence to middle-class values of respectability and moral purity” but little of how the women in service themselves avoided the pitfalls of the sociopolitical propaganda of the age, I do not agree with her assessment that women seeking recognition in military service received from the male dominant society fully “gained endorsements from [male] leaders and those prominent in military” branches and organizations of American military service.<sup>56</sup>

Anne Wiltshers *Most Dangerous Women: Feminist Peace Campaigners of the Great War* does not specifically discuss American women in military related service *per se*, but it does discuss the prominent stereotypes faced by all women of the age. Wiltsher examines the prevalent stereotypes connected to women and ‘real men’ concerning bravery in battle and the prevalent Edwardian stereotypes which doggedly insisted on the inability of women to endure directly in battle the

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<sup>55</sup> Dorothy and Carl Schneider, *Into the Breach: American Women Overseas in World War I*, (Viking Press, 1991), 151.

<sup>56</sup> Kimberly Jensen, *Mobilizing Minerva: American Women in the First World War*, (University of Illinois Press, 2008), 125.

horrors of war in any form due to their inherent ‘delicate’ and ‘frivolous’ nature. In the chapter “To the Rulers of Europe” Wiltsher examines the propaganda and stereotypes of specifically how “in America—if not the rest of the world—[male] soldiers were always courageous and strong, glorious and glamorous. To be a soldier was to be a ‘real man’. You fought for the protection of others—especially women and children--... ‘human nature’, of course, proved that men were not only far superior to women but, by golly, had no qualms about killing in cold blood!”<sup>57</sup> This is a perfect example of the typical male mainstream stereotype of the time that American women in military service ignored.

These historians have all interpreted parts of their evidence concerning propaganda and American women in service with differing emphasis in relation to the proposed research I am examining. Those that are not as fully examined will be more fully approached and analyzed with further research. The research done and, more importantly, that which has been overlooked by these historians has been a great influence on my personal research. This makes me wish to examine how they have, in relation to the evidence, succumbed to prevalent social opinions and stereotypes of western civilization in general in their historiography.

Concerning their historiographical approach to the topic of women's service in WWI, even female historians can potentially be lured into the trap of unconsciously succumbing to the use of stereotypical male style approaches to this topic, which can become visibly present in the historiography. They have not fully examined how American service women, their contributions, and the stereotypes and propaganda of the time influenced this service. The lack of general and practical connections, points and conclusions these historians have failed to accomplish

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<sup>57</sup> Anne Wiltsher, *Most Dangerous Women: Feminist Peace Campaigners of the Great War*, (Pandora's Press, 1985), 121.



concerning this topic are what is mostly apparent in the gaps and mis-connections of the complexity of this subject. This evidence supports my argument that when it comes to practicality, necessity is not only the mother of invention, it is a powerful leveler and dispeller of societal myths.

These works from these historians re-enforce the actual feelings of American women in that they “wished they could serve nearer the action. ‘I’m tired of being a feather-bed soldier,’ Ellen Turner wrote her family from the port of Le Havre. She hoped to be ‘lucky enough’ to be ordered to the front” like her British sisters as describe in Janet Lee’s *“War Girls... who volunteered for service in the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry (FANY) during the Great War.”*<sup>58</sup> American girls wished “their experiences on the Western Front [could be like it was] with the Belgian, British, and French Armies, [who] worked as nurses and ambulance driver-mechanics.” these women were “inspiring stories of female heroism and solidarity.”<sup>59</sup> This attitude hardly reflects the feelings of a ‘wilting wallflower’ that faints at the first sight of blood or dangerous situations.

The very nascent nature of this monograph exposes the fact that this did not interfere with their work and also shows their very real and utter disregard for what they considered outdated and ridiculous rules set by an outdated society for their moral, social and military behavior. The very lack of direct acknowledgment of this control beyond legal recourse is contained in very real direct references within the sociological construct as shown in remarks, letters and personal correspondence as shown in the primary literature and is revealed in the very core of my thesis.

The general public will find it significant, I believe, in finding out the fact that this was the first war that introduced complete physical examinations, another critical element that assisted in

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<sup>58</sup> Janet Lee, *War Girls: The First Aid Nursing Yeomanry in The First World War*, (Manchester University Press, 2005), 184.

<sup>59</sup> Amazon Editorial review of *War Girls: The First Aid Nursing Yeomanry in the First World War*, accessed March 24, 2018, <https://www.amazon.com/War-girls-First-Nursing-Yeomanry/dp/0719067138>.

creating a new social military ideal in which “women officially and openly served in the [American] Navy, the Marine Corps, and the Army Signal Corps. For the first time in the history of the world, 25,000 women...crossed a hostile ocean...women struck out on their own like entrepreneurs, finding their own ways to help people and seeking the money and capital to accomplish their goals” in a manner which would give continued and growing credibility to future generations of American women in military service. The need to address the lesser detailed knowledge related to such seemingly assumed actions by American women in the military during the Great War as thorough the application of physical examinations is critical in explaining the social stereotypes and propaganda of the age and how these women deftly responded to these with strong and positive feminine skills that gave rise to a more complete status within western civilization.<sup>60</sup>

The Edwardians and the propaganda of Edwardian stereotypes which continued in shattered remnants along the historiological timeline, (being influenced from the Victorian and those ages before it) were finally laid to rest when congress lifted the ban enacted in 1994 forbidding women serving in combat. The necessities of war have finally crossed and indeed eliminated all societal ‘niceties’ of women's sociological stereotypes in modern society. What is left of our Edwardian values consists of our confusion of them when researching our ancestry online. By filling Congress’ need for physical bodies in combat situations, the role of women in the military continues to evolve, along with the stereotypes that dominate modern society. For American women, the drooping ‘peacette’ Peacock feathers have been replaced by anti-aircraft guns. Try manipulating one of those around an afternoon tea.

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<sup>60</sup> Review, *War Girls*.

When the ban against women in combat was lifted, the flurry of rebuff in many sectors of society made certain enlisted women were “drowned out by the cacophony of the incoming administration [in] the fact that America’s first female recruits began infantry training at Ft. Benning, Ga., ... More than a year after the Pentagon lifted the ban on women serving in combat roles, the first class of coed 11Xth (infantry with options to attend advanced schools such as Ranger and Special Forces) [and] recruits [were] set to graduate in May” of 1997.<sup>61</sup>

One year after this historic moment, we have women in combat. Perhaps when our military finally reaches into the vastness of Outer Space, there will come a time when a real-time female military combat soldier like the fictional Ellen Ripley as conceived in the classic sci-fi film *Alien* will ask “what the Hell is *that*” far, far from where her distant grandmother who became one of the many “growing number...of ‘Fair Diana’s’ who were eager to learn to shoot a rifle” during WWI and expressed surprise over her evenings rations on the Argonne after relaying communiques during battle as she deftly and somberly ‘dug in.’<sup>62</sup> I am convinced that the American servicewoman of the future will do so with the memories of the spirit and dedication of the American Naval Yeomen, Red Cross nurses and Pershing’s ‘Hello Girls’ who laid the foundations for women in the military today back in the fields of Flanders so long ago and which they so firmly expressed in their hearts, words, and actions.

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<sup>61</sup> Scott Beauchamp, “Why Are Women in Combat?” *The American Conservative* (February 23, 2017), accessed April 13, 2018, <http://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/why-are-women-in-combat/>.

<sup>62</sup> Ridley Scott, *Alien*, IMDb, R, 1h, 56min, Horror, Sci-Fi, (22 June 1979 USA), accessed April 13, 2018, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0078748/>. Kimberly Jensen, *Mobilizing Minerva: American Women in the First World War*, 55.

## **Outline of Analytical Basis on Bias and Stereotypes endured by Women during WWI.**

The following points provide the basis for my analysis:

### **I. 'Real Time' situations for American Edwardian women.**

1. Actual American Women in military service in WWI.
  - a. Served with dedication.
  - b. Performed exemplary service.
  - c. Showed incredible endurance.
2. False Female Edwardian Stereotypes that attempted to interfere with women's service.
  - a. Women were 'weak-willed'.
  - b. Inherently mentally unstable.
  - c. Women were childlike and unable to make clear decisions.

### **II. Military Service.**

1. Communications. Pershing's 'Hello Girls'.
2. Red Cross nurses and military Nursing.
3. First female American Naval Yeomen.
4. General military-related service (cooks, inventory clerks, etc.).

### **III. Propaganda.**

1. Positive- 'innocents to be defended.'
  - a. Dedicated and selfless mothers.
  - b. Chaste and honorable virgins.
2. Negative- 'harlots or spies to be destroyed.'
  - a. 'world weary' prostitutes.

- b. 'Mata Hari' types.
  - c. Unstable and emotionally weak women.
- 3. Destruction of 'time honored' values.
  - a. confusing mores in rapidly changing society.
  - b. men made 'weak' from strong women.
- 4. Use of female saint/sinner imagery in Posters.
- 5. Films showing rewards for 'good girls' and disaster for 'bad girls.'
  - a. Filmographic propaganda of the day that showed confused strong/weak signals relating to women's position as example lack of character for service.
  - b. Films relating to dedicated wartime mothers and sweethearts.
- IV. Lack of academic recognition of how American women ignored Edwardian stereotypes to perform military duties.
  - 1. Lack of examination of primary historical sources.
  - 2. Lack of integration into the historical record by secondary sources.
  - 3. No viable academic attempt to synthesize and amalgamate these historical features into the main historiological record.

## **Conclusion**

I believe and feel that my project has very unique un-researched historiographical aspects, and that conducting exhaustive physical and electronic original research using as yet unused primary source documents and sources relating to the viewpoint of women in history concerning the use of female imagery in political and social war and peace propaganda will contribute new and exciting historical information to the currently accepted norms of the history of Western Civilization. Sources in primary books, for example, that were once considered secondary sources are now, due to the literal passage of time, considered primary source documents.

Again, as an example: A letter from an American woman in Buffalo, NY in 1914 written to a female friend in San Francisco concerning how she felt about a visual women's aspect of a war-related propaganda poster she saw while A. promenading. B. visiting. Or C. shopping concerning the growing disturbances in Europe using female imagery at one time. This in the past was considered a secondary source in relation to the primary information. Due to the passage of time and a great change in sociological aspects, this is now a primary source document. I feel hundreds perhaps thousands of such documents lie in various areas, libraries and attics as yet unread or researched. At one time these documents were considered frivolous, almost useless to historians. Now historians are realizing the valuable contribution these as yet to be discovered documents can add to further complete the overall picture of history and historiographical contributions by myself and future historians concerning the complete history of Western Civilization.

These histories are all competently and creatively written, informative, and present well thought out and deeply examined research into how women's images were used by the government and private sector to promote women's participation and aid during the war. Little has been written by these historians concerning both women's' positive and negative reactions towards the use and

creation of this male-centric war propaganda. Further research into primary documents such as *Over Periscope Pond* would have provided critical information relating to women's' positions and how they felt about these images of feminine propaganda that were developed by a male-gender-dominant society whose goal was to promote American women's involvement in a great conflict. Including information of women's reactions to propaganda in these WWI historiographies would have given further insight into this period of American History and presented a different and fresh aspect concerning Americas involvement in the Great War.

The connections between service women in World War One and the influence of the male-centric propaganda on their military service in this rapidly changing world are rather superficially affiliated or almost nil in these works and concerning the importance of the influence of stereotypes and propaganda on the ability of American service women to serve effectively and equally, there is little or nothing which shows how they efficaciously endured and overcame this. American military women successfully ignored the stereotypes and propaganda of the Edwardian age which made women's work in the military service fraught with the landmines of outdated male-centric propaganda and stereotypes. American military women dealt with this effectively, with growing respect, and eventually diminishing prejudice of their male counterparts in such monumentally life threatening and world changing situations.

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