100 Years of American Women in Uniform: Program Overview

- This FREE educational program for veterans includes four weekend experiences, to be held at the University of Maryland College Park and at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History (NMAH) in Washington, D.C.

- The program, sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and co-directed by Professor Marian Moser Jones at the University of Maryland, and Margaret Vining and Bart Hacker, curators at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, is open to all U.S. veterans or currently serving members of the U.S. Armed Services.

- Participants will be invited to commemorate and reflect upon a century of American women’s wartime participation in uniformed military service focusing primarily on OIF/OEF (Iraq and Afghanistan wars) and World War I.

- Participants not seeking college credit can participate in one weekend, or multiple weekends. The dates are October 7-9, 2016; November 18-20, 2016; March 17-19, 2017; and May 12-14, 2017. The programs will take place on Friday evenings, (6pm – 7:30pm), Saturday all day (9am – 4pm), and Sunday afternoon (1pm – 4pm).

- Each weekend involves: a) Lectures on the history of women in war; b) Book club-style group discussions of writings by women veterans, led by veterans and service members; c) Museum tours to see photographs and artifacts collected by the Smithsonian National Museum of American History and the Women’s Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery.

- Books, reading materials, and writing materials will be provided free to registered participants via post and email. We will send you the reading materials when you officially register.

- Student veterans can arrange undergraduate or graduate credit by individual arrangement. These students will be required to attend at least two sequential weekends and complete written and/or multimedia assignments. The program director will direct these independent studies.

- “100 Years of American Women in Uniform” is an educational program. It does not involve research on participants and is not intended as therapy or treatment. Discussion sessions will not be recorded. At the end of each weekend, participants will be asked to fill out surveys to give feedback on the program, so program managers can measure program success and improve future program sessions. These evaluations will be anonymous and will not be required of participants.

How to register: send the attached form by email to Dr. Marian Moser Jones at moserj@umd.edu, or to Program Manager Patri O’Gan at oganp@si.edu. Dr. Jones can also be reached at: (301) 405-8940. Questions are welcome. You will receive a confirmation via email and post.
Weekend overviews

Each weekend will be dress casual and will include:

- A Friday evening meet-and-greet session followed by a welcome and introductory lecture on women’s military history;
- A “book club”-type group discussion on each day facilitated by scholar-veterans. Participants will discuss a pair or trio of memoirs/visual sources, with at least one source from each period;
- An in-depth expert-led session that focuses on one source in which participants will learn about the source or item and will be invited to discuss its meaning in relation to their own military service; and
- Facilitated writing and reflection sessions led by a professional writing teacher.

Some sessions will also include behind-the-scenes guided visits to the Smithsonian American History Museum and the Women’s Memorial at Arlington Cemetery to view historic uniforms, gear, medals, and other items. Below is a description of each weekend. A detailed schedule will be sent at least two weeks in advance to all registered participants.

- **Weekend 1 (October 7-9, 2016): The Second Battlefield: From Army Nurses to Combat Psychologists.** Women have historically have been called upon to patch up the physical and psychic wounds of war. For this reason, the history of American women in uniform begins in the medical and nursing fields. In her memoir *The Forbidden Zone*, Mary Borden, a World War I military hospital administrator, vividly describes her experiences on “the second battlefield” - fighting for the lives and souls of her patients. Similarly, Navy veteran Dr. Heidi Squier Kraft’s memoir describes her work as a medical psychologist during a deployment in Anbar Province during Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). Borden and Kraft’s memoirs will be discussed this weekend, along with selections from Sarah Sand’s memoir of her work as an Army nurse at the Western Front during the influenza pandemic of 1918. We will also view nurses’ uniforms and other artifacts, as we explore what it means to be a woman in uniform and a caregiver in uniform, and how these experiences have changed over a century.

- **Weekend 2 (November 18-20, 2016) The (Un) romance of War”.** This weekend will focus on American women veterans’ straightforward and revealing depictions of military life in a war zone, including the terrifying, gritty, and sometimes boring or humorous aspects of this experience, as well as the relationships formed under these extreme conditions. Nurse Ellen N. LaMotte, in her 1916 memoir *The Backwash of War*, was one of the first American women to offer an un-romantic view of war’s blood and grit, while at the same time displaying a tenderness and affection for the men whom she treated. Miyoko Hijiki’s memoir *All I Could Be*, offers a similarly blunt and realistic description of life as a deployed...
National Guardsman in Iraq in 2004. Hijiki describes the realities of combat, life, and relationships. Other women serving in war have offered similar reflections in diaries, letters, and literature. This weekend will focus around the questions: “What does it mean to be brave, heroic, and female?” and “How have military women’s relationships/bonds with one another and with men in the military changed or remained the same over time?”


**Weekend 4: May 12-14, 2017: Representing Ourselves for Posterity**

During the third and fourth weekends, we will explore the ways that military women are represented, and have sought to represent themselves/ourselves, in visual and material culture. Laura Browder and Sascha Pflaeging’s book *When Janey Comes Marching Home* sought to break with a tradition of war photography that “traditionally focused on men as heroes and aggressors and on women and children as victims,” as the authors wrote in their introduction. This book will provide a primary text for both weekends, along with Beatrice MacDonald’s and Carrie Lynn Seale’s scrapbooks from World War I, as well as and other visual materials from the Smithsonian American History Museum collection of women’s military history, and women’s oral histories from the Library of Congress Veteran’s History project. The third weekend will focus on how women are represented in popular war photography vs. how women in uniform have represented themselves, as well as how these representations reflect the questions of what it means to be a woman in the war zone, and what it means to be brave, heroic, and female. The last weekend will look into the ways that veterans can document their own experiences for posterity. In this concluding weekend in the series, we will reflect back at how the World War I generation of women documented their experiences and the value of these first-person accounts and materials for military history. Then we will examine the oral histories of women veterans participating in the Veterans History Project, discuss the value and challenges of documenting your own experiences, and explore how to do so.
100 Years of American Women in Uniform: Frequently Asked Questions

Who is sponsoring this program? “The 100 Years of American Women in Uniform” program is being sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities, as part of a larger program entitled Dialogues on the Experience of War. This program “supports the study and discussion of important humanities sources about war, in the belief that these sources can help U.S. military veterans and others to think more deeply about the issues raised by war and military service.” It is part of the NEH’s larger initiative, Standing Together: The Humanities and the Experience of War.

Why is this program being offered? National Endowment for the Humanities Chairman William D. Adams served for three years as an Army officer, including one year in Vietnam, and has spoken of the role that his military service played in his choice to study and teach in the humanities field. “[A]s a 20-year-old combat infantry advisor, I came face to face, acutely, with questions that writers, artists, philosophers, and musicians examine in their work -- starting with, ‘What does it mean to be human?’” Under Adams’ leadership, the NEH launched the “Dialogues on the Experience of War program, which, as he describes it, allows “veterans and community members to explore together the experiences of war using humanities texts as the means of deeper understanding.”

Why does this particular program focus only on women? Of the 17 programs funded under the Dialogues on the Experience of War program in 2016, this is the only one to focus only on women’s experience. Given that women make up an increasing proportion of the veteran population as well as active-duty military and reservists, both veterans and non-veterans may benefit from reflecting upon women’s past and current roles as members of the military and members of military families. This program thus fills an important educational and civic need.

Is this program only for women veterans? No, while its educational focus centers on women’s experiences of war, the program is open to all veterans and current military service members.

Why does the program only focus on two wars? Aren’t World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf War important to U.S. women’s military history? And what about the Civil War? While it is true that women have played substantial roles in all wars in which the U.S. has been involved, from the Revolutionary War to the present, each of the Dialogues on the Experience of War programs focuses only on two conflicts. The selection of two conflicts allows participants to learn about each in greater depth, and to engage with the texts and artifacts related to each one, than would a broad survey.

Why were World War I and OIF/OEF chosen for this program? Materials related to these wars were chosen for this program because each of these conflicts has played a pivotal role in
women’s participation in war, and has influenced the role of women within U.S. society. World War I was the first war in which U.S. women officially served in uniform. It was also the first modern, global war. Women were granted the vote in the U.S. and Allied nations, partly in recognition of the roles they had played in the war. OIF and OEF were also the first wars in which U.S. women served in combat in large numbers, and in which so many women who are mothers were deployed to the war zone. Both periods of conflict have influenced changes related to the role that women play in civilian society, in ways that we have still yet to fully understand. Comparative reflection upon these two conflicts and women’s roles in them, therefore, may produce productive and fruitful discussions.

**What are the goals of the program?** The program aims to engage veterans in learning about women’s experiences in the U.S. military through introducing participants to women veterans’ writings, photographs, and artifacts. Its goals are to stimulate reflection upon these experiences, to encourage veterans to see their own roles as historical actors, and to train veterans as scholar-leaders. A longer-term goal of the program is to strengthen the veteran community - particularly the community of women veterans and their families - through engagement with women’s military history and literature.

**Do I need to be enrolled in a college or university to participate?** No. The program is open to all U.S. veterans and current members of the military.

**Do I need to show my DD-214 to participate?** This is one way to demonstrate eligibility, but you can alternatively present other official documentation such as a Veterans’ Administration I.D. In presenting any documentation, please make sure to black out your Social Security Number and provide a current address.

**Can I get college credit for participating?** Yes, if you would like to take the program for course credit and are a University of Maryland College Park student, you can sign up for an independent study with the Program Director, Dr. Marian Moser Jones. If you are enrolled at another accredited university, speak to your academic advisor. Dr. Moser Jones is happy to work with faculty at other institutions to co-sponsor supervised independent studies at the graduate and undergraduate levels.

**Can I participate if I do not live in the Washington, D.C. local area?** Yes, the program welcomes participation from all Americans who have served or are currently serving in the military. However, you will have to provide your own transportation to the Washington, D.C. area as well as arrange your own accommodations.

**Can spouses of veterans or military spouses participate in the program?** The program is generally for veterans only, but exceptions can be made for spouses to participate along with veterans in certain circumstances, with the program director’s permission.
Will meals be provided during the program? Consult the detailed program for each weekend. Snacks and beverages will be provided at all events, but some meals are on your own.

How can I get reading materials? By providing your name and a mailing address at least two weeks ahead of the program, you can receive the readings. You will not have to pay for materials or postage. Readings will be sent out as soon as you register for the program.

What are the qualifications of the Program Director to lead this program? The Program Director is a published scholar of women’s military history, the history of the health sciences, and public health, and has been a tenure-track professor at the University of Maryland College Park since 2011. She has also taught at Virginia Commonwealth University and conducted postdoctoral research at the National Institutes of Health, as well as served in managerial roles as a science and health journalist. Dr. Jones received her Ph.D. in Sociomedical Sciences (Public Health) and History from Columbia University, and her undergraduate degree from Harvard University.

Why is the Smithsonian National Museum of American History (NMAH) involved? The NMAH Division of Armed Forces History is involved as this Division houses the premier collection of women’s historic uniforms and artifacts, as well as an unparalleled archive of U.S. women’s military history. Margaret Vining and Bart Hacker, curators of the collections, have worked for several decades to advance U.S. women’s military history as well as U.S. military history.

Is the Program Director a veteran? No. The program director is not a veteran. However, the co-directors, from the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, are a veteran and the spouse of a veteran.

Will any veterans be involved in leading or managing this program? Yes, the discussion leaders and writing facilitator are all veterans or are currently serving in the U.S. Armed Forces. These leaders have been trained in discussion facilitation and in the materials.

Will the program address the current policy debates about women serving in combat? The program will not focus on this issue. While participants will not be expressly prohibited from discussing this issue or other policy issues related to gender in the military, this is not the focus of the program. Additionally, the program has no political agenda. The orientation of the program is historical, educational, and explanatory.