

"The Ideal Soldier": Masculinity in the Military and Sexually Assaulted Female Soldiers

Presenter

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Mentor

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Session

- [Session 2E: Communicating Race, Gender, and Citizenship](#)
- 234 MGH
- 3:30 PM to 5:15 PM

Masculinity in the military is culturally influenced by what it means to be an ideal soldier. From advertising images of soldiers, promoting specific leaders, and living among a community that actively portrays masculinity, the pressure to be masculine to be the ideal soldier has depended on violating the presence of women and femininity. Sexual assault in the military has been prevalent but in 2012, a Department of Defense statistical compilation showed that about 26,000 servicewomen experienced some kind of sexual assault, and of those cases only 3,374 were officially reported. This project examines how sexual assault against women soldiers is related to the image of the ideal soldier identified through a close reading of patterns and dynamics of 7-10 military court transcripts, signed documentation of concluded convictions, and court appeal papers. Various sources will ultimately provide specific answers about every case (i.e. what are the ranks, who are the jury members, what is the final conviction, what kind of diction is used, etc.) and look at the aftermath of military culture. This paper argues that regardless of whether female sexual assault victims win their cases, the military maintains its enforcement of masculinity. Results may suggest different preventive measures can be taken by the military to limit the enforcement of masculinity and future violence.