Introduction

The Woman Veteran as a World War II Memoirist

> "Mother, I cannot explain it to you," Tania said, "but . . . if, they assign me to a hospital behind the lines I will ask them to send me to the front. . . . I am not afraid of the front. . . . When I was in the resistance, I lived with an elderly woman who also was a doctor: she and I would go to sleep at night but could not sleep, so we would lie and not sleep and I would tell her: 'Sofia Leonidovna, what would I not give right now in order to be at the front?! What happiness it is to work at some frontline medical station among your own!' We talked about the front like about happiness, do you understand? Because we lived among the Germans who could take us away every minute."
>
> Tania Ovchinnikova's monologue from *The Living and the Dead – Part Two*, by Konstantin Simonov, Soviet wartime journalist, poet, writer[1]

> "If she is here, let her come in," I heard the [lieutenant's] voice. "Listen," the company commander began, "we have decided that you will stay temporarily here, at the headquarters, together with medical instructor Mariia." The blood rushed to my face: "Comrade Lieutenant, allow me! . . . I cannot be a medical orderly. I do not know how to attend to the wounds. I was trained to fire from the machine gun. . . . I am a woman machine gunner, comrade Lieutenant!"
>
> *The Youth Burned by Fire (Military Memoirs)*, by Zoia Medvedeva, Soviet machine gunner, senior lieutenant, female commander of a male machine-gun company during World War II[2]

In 1967, May 9 – Victory Day, marking the defeat of Nazi Germany in the Soviet-German War of 1941–1945 – was a very young Soviet national holiday. It was only two years old. In 1965, exactly twenty years after the war, May 9 had been marked with red on Soviet calendars as a national day off

[1] Konstantin Simonov, *Zhivye I mertvye. Kniga Vtoraia. Soldatami ne rozhdaiutsia* (Moskva: Prosveshchenie, 1982), 20.
[2] Z. M. Smirnova-Medvedeva, *Opalennaia iunost. Voennye memuary* (Moskva: Voenizdat, 1967), 14.

to celebrate the victory and to remember more than 20 million dead (then the official accounting of Soviet wartime losses). The chosen date symbolically conferred upon the Soviet Union the leading role in the defeat of Germany in World War II. It referred to Germany's surrender to the Supreme Commanders of the Soviet and Allied troops that took place in Berlin, in the dining hall of the military engineering school, during the first hour of May 9. The ceremony was organized and presided over by the Soviet Supreme Command. The guests of honor who made themselves comfortable at long tables to witness the historic event were there by Soviet invitation. They were Soviet generals whose formations had stormed Berlin a week earlier.[3]

The institution of Victory Day immediately led to the addition of new public rituals, the kind that only the state could afford. Military parades in major cities, jubilee medals for veterans, anniversary-timed compositions of war-themed songs, year-round production of war movies and TV serials, and new occasional war holidays – such as the thirtieth anniversary of the Defense of Odessa – constituted master building blocks in the state cult of the victory.[4]

Launching these grand public festivities, Soviet officials, many of whom had fought in World War II, inevitably drew on the popular memorial rituals that had arisen among veterans prior to 1965. In the absence of a national holiday that honored World War II soldiers, veterans had attempted to turn themselves into individual sites of celebration and, in the process, established an iconography of the Soviet War veteran.[5]

The early days of May 1967 displayed unmistakable continuities with earlier informal celebrations by veterans. As major cities across the country prepared their central squares for Victory Day parades, thousands of Soviet people in their forties, fifties, and sixties underwent a well-rehearsed transformation from everyday civilians into self-advertising war veterans. To do that, they took out their most festive clothes. Some put on military uniforms or added martial details to their civilian outfits. War medals, orders, and stripes designating numbers of wounds suffered during the war completed the transformation. Having transformed into iconic Soviet War veterans, they walked out into the streets and visually divided Soviet society, just for several days, into two camps: those who had been to the front and those who had not.

[3] G. K. Zhukov, *Vospominania i razmyshleniia* (Moskva: APN, 1990), 276.

[4] For a history of the Soviet cult and memory of World War II, see Nina Tumarkin, *The Living and the Dead. The Rise and Fall of the Cult of World War II in Russia* (New York: Basic Books, 1994); Jeffrey Brooks, *Thank You, Comrade Stalin! Soviet Public Culture From Revolution to Cold War* (Princeton University Press, 2000); Lisa A. Kirschenbaum, *The Legacy of the Siege of Leningrad, 1941–1995. Myth, Memories, and Monuments* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Denise J. Youngblood, *Russian War Films: On the Cinema Front, 1914–2005* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007), Chapters 5, 6, 7.

[5] For a history of the veterans' culture and movement in the Soviet Union, see Elena Zubkova, *Obshchestvo i reformy, 1945-1964* (Moskva: Rossiia molodaia, 1993); Mark Edele, *Soviet Veterans of the Second World War. A Popular Movement in an Authoritarian Society 1941–1991* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), Chapters 7 and 8.

This division was not, however, a gender division. Female veterans constituted a visible minority in this public demand for recognition. During the war, 520,000 Soviet women had served in the Red Army's regular troops and another 300,000 in combat and home front antiaircraft formations – a level of female participation far surpassing that in the British, American, and German armed forces. Women's effort to turn their military past into visible and recognizable public identities also constituted a familiar part of informal and official victory celebrations in the 1960s. To include themselves into the veteran collective, and yet, to call attention to its mixed constitution, women created an image of the veteran that was distinctively female. They wore medals and did not shy away from makeup. Their various combinations of civilian and military dress were decorated with easily recognizable female accessories – scarves, jewelry, hats.

Their age further aided their effort to cement the image of the Soviet veteran as shared between men and women. In their early-to-late forties in the 1960s, women belonged to the first postrevolutionary generation that had come of age in Stalinist schools and volunteered *en masse* to fight in 1941. Together with their male contemporaries, they made up the youngest cohort of veterans and looked strikingly youthful among decorated men who were in many cases ten, twenty and, sometimes, thirty years their senior. On the eve of demobilization in summer of 1945, young women comprised more than 70 percent of all Young Communist soldiers, those between the ages of seventeen and twenty-six. Since 1965, the visibility of women veterans among reunion crowds has only grown. The youngest, they have been gradually outliving their male counterparts. Women veterans now constitute the majority at many grassroots celebrations. Given this demographic situation, the last surviving World War II veteran in Russia could easily be a woman.[6] (Figure 1)

In 1967, male and female veterans – dressed up and decorated – exhibited their attachment to their pre-1965 celebration schedules by gathering in small groups and large crowds in the parks and squares of Soviet cities as early as May 2. Commencing years before the recently decreed national holiday, veteran reunions took up the whole week preceding May 9. Many traveled long distances to their reunion gatherings.[7] The stepping of the Soviet state into Victory Day celebrations offered veterans new spaces for public recognition and facilitated their travel across the country as invited guests of state-sponsored anniversary celebrations of battles and openings of war memorials. In spring 1967, Sevastopol, on the Black Sea, was one of the officially selected designations for veteran travel. A closed port city because of its naval base, Sevastopol

[6] V. G. Eremin and P. F. Isakov, *Molodezh v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny* (Moskva: Mysl, 1977), 91.

[7] I. Rakobolskaia, *Drugogo takogo polka ne bylo* in I. Rakobolskaia and N. Kravtsova, eds., *Nas nazyvali nochnymi vedmami* (Moskva: Izdatelstvo Moskovskogo Universiteta, 2002), 129; A. Khrenov, "Pulemetchitsa Zoia" in M. F. Loshchits, ed., *Pamiat ognennykh let* (Moskva: Voenizdat, 1975), 212.

FIGURE 1. "May 9 festive crowd near the Bolshoi Theater." Moscow, May 9, 1998. Photo by the author.

celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Germans' nine-month siege of the city in 1941–42. Local authorities opened up Sevastopol to nonresident veterans of the siege – those who had defended the city but did not live there. The majority of those invited had not seen Sevastopol since the war. In small groups, they walked around the rebuilt city and looked for old trenches and dugouts at its outskirts.

Speaking both for herself and her fellow veterans of the 25th Infantry Division, Zoia Medvedeva wrote in her memoir, "We admired the resurrected Sevastopol and remembered our comrades and bygone days. The distant past appeared in front of us with overpowering force." Tracing the encounter with her military past, she continued, "Right here, at the old defense line which has already been reclaimed by the young forest, sniper Volodia Zaria and reconnaissance soldier Vasilii Kozhevnikov were going off to hunt. Here, during an attack, they saved the life of Senior Lieutenant Ivan Samusev. . . . [And], there used to be strongpoint #1. . . . From there, I fired my machine gun, keeping back the Nazis' onslaught. . . . "[8] In spring and summer 1943, Medvedeva spent 200 days behind her machine gun. When the combat situation allowed, she relaxed by decorating her gun site with red poppies.[9]

[8] Medvedeva, *Opalennaia iunost*, 142–43.
[9] Khrenov, "Pulemetchitsa Zoia," 213.

Medvedeva was forty-five in May 1967, a war invalid, a married, working mother, and a veteran activist who kept a record of her fellow veterans' postwar whereabouts. She was about to become a published author. Her memoir *The Youth Burned by Fire* (source of the preceding excerpt) was coming out in the "Military Memoirs" series published by the Ministry of Defense Press later in the year.

Reading Medvedeva's memoir years after it came out, made me pause more than once. Growing up to the sounds of Victory Day parades, critical artistic interrogations into the means and cost of the Soviet victory, and mainstream war movies of the 1970s and 1980s, the postwar generations to which I belong did not feel compelled to ask questions about those women veterans they observed in reunion crowds. What did they do in the army? What wartime histories and identities were they so eager to preserve? What did they try to communicate to the postwar Soviet public? The answers seemed to be too obvious for any questions to be asked. They were, of course, medics, doctors, nurses, clerks, translators, radio-, telephone-, and telegraph operators – a roster of military occupations that literati, script writers, and film makers, regardless of their attitudes toward the Soviet system and its World War II effort, assigned to women veterans in an avalanche of postwar novels and films. Perpetual supporting characters, dashes of color applied to wartime backdrops, the many women who had served on or near the frontline were categorically marked in terms of service and of status as noncombatants for the Soviet mass reader, moviegoer, and TV viewer.[10]

A foundational image for such a collective remembering of the female experience at the Soviet front was laid down in *The Living and the Dead*, a controversial trilogy – written by Konstantin Simonov and published between 1959 and 1971. A famous World War II journalist and a leading advocate for a critical reassessment of the Soviet military effort under the Stalinist regime, Simonov attempted a radical departure from the official, triumph-defined history of the war, still governing the public memory in the 1950s. In his trilogy, Simonov did not allow the Soviet war effort, with its initial devastating military defeats, eventual spectacular military victories, and extraordinary human ordeal, to fall into a linear, ineluctable narrative of triumph. Instead, he reassembled the Soviet-German War into a history that emphasized its tortuous nature.[11]

The first novel of the trilogy, *The Living and the Dead* (from which the trilogy takes its name), is devoted to the first year on the Eastern

[10] See, for example, Yuri Bondarev, *Poslednie zalpy* (1959); Vasilii Grossman, *Zhizn i sudba* (written 1961, published 1988); Grigorii Baklanov, *Piad zemli* (1960); Vecheslav Kondratiev, *Sashka*; Bulat Okudzhava, *Bud zdorov, shkoliar!* (1961); films: *Ivanovo detstvo* (1962), dir. Andrei Tarkovskii; *Zhenia, Zhenechka i Katiusha* (1967), dir. Vladimir Motyl; *Osvobozhdenie* (serial, 1968–71), dir. Yuri Ozerov; *Goriachii sneg* (1972), dir. G. Egiazarov; *Aty-baty shli soltaty* (1976), dir. Leonid Bykov.

[11] For the best recent history of WWII on the Eastern Front, see Evan Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East. The Nazi-Soviet War, 1941–1945* (London: Hodder Arnold, 2005).

front – the year of Soviet defeat. It takes the reader to June 22, 1941, when Axis forces undertook the most massive operation of World War II up to the point: an attack on the Soviet Union along the full breadth of its 1,200-kilometer western border. Not without checks, the German troops pushed forward by repeatedly slicing the Soviet Army into isolated pockets of disorganized resistance, generating widespread panic and desertion. By October 1941, the Red Army, 5 million strong before the war, had melted away while the enemy began the siege of Leningrad, determined its final routes of attack on Moscow, and planned its operations in Donbas and the Crimea. Out of about 4 million Soviet military casualties, most were not combat dead but were either captured or surrendered.[12]

Simonov related the scale of the Soviet military and human disaster of 1941 by focusing on those lost soldiers who neither died in combat nor surrendered but tried to fight their way out of German encirclements. As Simonov's lost soldiers began to reflect critically about their wartime fate, Soviet readers were introduced to a hero unprecedented in their literature – the Soviet person who openly thought and spoke out of sync with the Stalinist triumphant narrative. The questions that Simonov's characters asked had been on many minds since 1941: Why did the catastrophe of 1941 have to happen at all and who was responsible for it? The second half of the Soviet-German conflict – during which the Red Army spent 1943 and 1944 regaining home territory, then swiftly cut across Eastern Europe, ultimately storming Berlin in spring 1945 – did not turn the national and personal traumas of 1941 into nonissues, as the Stalinist master narrative implied.

The 1959 publication of *The Living and the Dead* was a watershed in the cultural and political life of post-Stalinist society. It turned the nature of the Soviet war effort of 1941–45 into a major public controversy six years before the war had been promoted into a national holiday. Simonov's contribution to the positioning of women veterans and their role at the Soviet front in the popular imagination was no less consequential. He created Tania Ovchinnikova, described as the "little woman doctor," who narrowly defines the soldierly identity around purposeful acts of violence in combat and places her own role at the front entirely outside of the soldierly calling. In this way, Simonov accommodated his heroine's presence in combat situations as a frontline medic without conferring upon her the identity of soldier. A supporting character, Tania performs a crucial function in Simonov's complex adaptation of the

[12] Claims about the number of Soviet POWs captured in summer and fall 1941 vary widely. According to post-Soviet Russian recalculations, the Red Army lost 3,987,700 in summer-fall operations of 1941: 1,145,800 as wounded and more than 2 million as POWs. The German sources on Soviet POWs offer a much higher number – 3.3 million. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 102–03. For Soviet POWs captured between 1941 and 1945, see G.F. Krivosheev, ed., *Grif sekretnosti sniat: poteri Vooruzhennykh Sil SSSR v voinakh, boevykh deistviiakh i voennykh konfliktakh. Statisticheskoe issledovanie* (Moskva: Voenizdat, 1993), 130–31.

male-identified concept of the soldier: The front was no longer reserved for men alone, only the status and aspirations of the soldier were.[13]

Over the next thirty years, Tania, the literary archetype of the female frontline noncombatant, was replicated and reincarnated in similar forms in a stream of war bestsellers and cinematic blockbusters. In the controversial history of the war, the woman medic or telephone operator proved to be a staple and noncontroversial figure representing the collective experience of all frontline women.[14] Tania herself reached millions of Soviet readers as the three volumes of *The Living and the Dead* increased their editions from the Soviet standard of 200,000 copies in the 1960s to 2 million by the 1980s. The size of the Soviet literary readership naturally paled in comparison with that of the movie audience. In 1964, when the first part of Simonov's trilogy was made into a film, Tania acquired her cinematographic image – by the end of 1966, it had been seen by more than 80 million people.[15]

A one-time publication and never a movie, Medvedeva's memoir was no match for Simonov's *The Living and the Dead*. Her book belonged to a different stream in Soviet war-inspired literature – that of the veteran memoir which enjoyed a long boom from the 1960s to the 1980s but never made it beyond the veteran community to the mass audience. As these memoirs gathered dust in bookstores under the unexciting rubric of military–patriotic education, the veterans' May gatherings became key sites for their circulation.

During the 1967 reunion in Sevastopol, Medvedeva's memoir was still a few months from being published, but the news that it had been completed made the author the center of attention. A memoir by a trench-level machine gunner was no ordinary event in the building tide of veteran recollections. While some of Medvedeva's fellow veterans had authored short autobiographical sketches for jubilee anthologies accompanying the 1967 Victory Day celebrations, no one had entertained the ambition to write an extended war narrative. Medvedeva, on the other hand, had worked at her memoir for more than a decade, since the early 1950s, while her ambition to set down her recollections had an even longer history. She had begun her first notebook while serving in the very trenches she walked around in 1967. Writing in between battles, she pledged to her fellow combatants even then that she would preserve their memory for postwar generations. After the war, her self-assigned mission to tell the story

[13] Konstantin Simonov, *Zhivye I mertvye* (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel, 1960), 137.

[14] I discuss exceptions to this collective image of frontline women as noncombatants such as Boris Vasiliev's 1969 novel *A zori zdes tikhie* in Anna Krylova; "Neither Erased nor Remembered: Soviet 'Women Combatants' and Cultural Strategies of Forgetting In Soviet Russia, 1940s–1980s," Frank Biess and Robert G. Moeller, eds., *Histories of the Aftermath: The European Postwar in Comparative Perspective* (Berghahn Books, forthcoming, 2010).

[15] See, for example, the 1960 edition of *The Living and the Dead* by "Sovetskii pisatel" (200,000 copies) and the 1982 edition by "Prosveshchenie" (2 million copies); Youngblood, *Russian War Films*, 136.

of "our defense" of Sevastopol was known as a "promise" in the collective memory of her division.[16]

Like *The Living and the Dead, The Youth Burned by Fire* was devoted to the first year of the Soviet-German War, which Medvedeva spent fighting in besieged cities, encirclements, and retreats. However, her story – largely of military defeats – disputed the seemingly transparent identities that Soviet mass culture assigned to soldiers and veterans, male and female. Anyone who happened to read *The Youth Burned by Fire*, could not help but ask questions: "A woman machine gunner?" "Writing on behalf of her fellow combatants?" Unfolding her war story, Medvedeva involved a host of incongruent protagonists and scenes that added to the tortuous history of the Soviet war effort an unfamiliar gender landscape.

Nineteen years old in June 1941, Medvedeva volunteered before she or her conscription officers knew the scope of the Soviet military disaster. She was assigned, by a male lieutenant, to a reserve formation where her dream to serve "not as a woman telephone operator, not even as a woman medic, but as an actual soldier . . . came true": She was trained as a machine gunner. Her baptism by fire took place in besieged Odessa in August 1941. Less then two months later, as the Soviet troops surrendered the city, she and her 25th Rifle Division were already fighting in besieged Sevastopol. There, she became a commander of a male machine-gun crew with whom she spent almost seven months defending their position – strongpoint #1. Beyond the strongpoint, as well, Sevastopol's defenders did not comprise two mutually exclusive camps of male combatants and female noncombatants, according to Medvedeva. For example, her own combat role model was another female machine gunner, also a commander of a machine-gun crew.[17]

Medvedeva's war memoirs accomplish more than a factual correction to the gender profile of the Soviet soldier. The way she gives meaning to her role as a combatant in the Soviet trenches is deeply significant. In addition to her reportage of unfamiliar facts, Medvedeva employs a consistent interpretive language that shields an understanding of her military career against the prevailing gender discourses of the 1960s. In striking defiance of the conventional depiction of female characters in popular war novels and films, Medvedeva depicted herself as a young woman for whom the pursuit of her dream to be a machine gunner presented no conceptual challenge.

Writing of her combat experiences on the Eastern front, Medvedeva arranged the people and events she encountered in her military career into a complex, counterintuitive story that treats the *a priori* male prerogative to combat as not universally relevant to all men and all women at the front. In her telling, she bears the parallel identities of both "woman machine gunner"

[16] Medvedeva, *Opalennaia iunost*, 142–43; N. I. Krylov, "Ob etoi knige I ee avtore" in Z. M. Medvedeva, *My srazhalis pod Odessoi* (Odessa: Maiak, 1972), 4. *My srazhalis pod Odessoi* was Medvedeva's second book of recollections.

[17] Medvedeva, *Opalennaia iunost*, 4; Medvedeva, *My srazhalis pod Odessoi*, 8–9.

(*pulemetchitsa*) and a "woman soldier" (*zhenshchina-boets*). Neither was an implausible, hopeless contradiction in terms but a legitimate way – a variation – of being a young Soviet woman. What is more, when she volunteered in 1941, she understood the identity to which she aspired as culturally recognizable and counted on being treated in accordance with that recognition. Her first conversation with her company commander in the Odessa trenches allows us a quick glimpse into Medvedeva's mode of remembering the woman soldier as a legitimate female identity at the Soviet front:

> 'Listen,' the company commander began [addressing Medvedeva], 'we have decided that you will stay temporarily here, at the headquarters, together with medical instructor Mariia.' The blood rushed to my face: 'Comrade Lieutenant, allow me! . . . I cannot be a medical orderly. I do not know how to attend to the wounds. I was trained to fire from the machine gun. . . . I am a woman machine gunner, comrade Lieutenant!'[18]

Characteristic of the memoir's narrative structure, this brief passage, written sometime in the 1950s or 1960s, both encompasses and surpasses the prevalent gendered scripts of the period. The lieutenant's attempt to fit Medvedeva's presence at the frontline into a medical/headquarters profile, right along the lines of the prevailing gender discourses of the 1960s, does not annul the reality and legitimacy of Medvedeva's "true" identity. In fact, the passage captures the process of how the identity of the frontline soldier became a subject of discussion precisely because its gendered content was no longer taken for granted by everyone. To argue her way behind the machine gun, Medvedeva does not appeal to the extraordinary and catastrophic circumstances of the front. Nor does she ask for an exception to be made on her behalf in order to sneak into the male space of combat. She argues her case by asking the lieutenant to recognize hers as a legitimate type of womanhood: "I am a woman machine gunner!" For Medvedeva, the soldierly podium is not a solid male space but a split subject position that has room for both women machine gunners and men machine gunners.

Throughout her memoir, Medvedeva subjects her reader, accustomed in the 1960s to excusing women veterans from the ranks of Soviet soldiers, factually and conceptually, to provocative exercises that communicate her understanding of the soldierly identity as not inherently predicated on its oppositional other – the female noncombatant. Reading Medvedeva, I struggled to grasp her vision of the modern citizen-soldier as a gendered identity requiring no opposite.

Published in late 1967, Medvedeva's memoirs effectively highlighted the conceptually impoverished system of gendered identities that contemporary mass culture projected onto the Soviet war effort and its community of veterans. Medvedeva comes across as a determined revisionist equipped with the facts and language to write herself into war history on her own gender terms. It is precisely her cultural preparedness to tell her different story in a milieu

[18] Medvedeva, *Opalennaia iunost*, 13–14.

programmatically ignorant of any such story that posits her as historically enigmatic, as a subject whose cultural constitution and perseverance both before and after the 1960s presents a historian with a question: What was Medvedeva a cultural product of? As a well-prepared critic of the postwar poverty of ideas about gender, Medvedeva epitomizes the main protagonist and the main historical problematic of this book.

A history of Zoia Medvedeva – the female combatant, the veteran, and the memoirist – is, thus, inseparable from a history of her distinctive perception of the World War II soldier as a spilt subject position, legitimately shared by men and women. What cultural resources did she draw on to present herself as a woman soldier worthy of the attention of postwar generations? How and when did her self-identification as a female combatant become conceivable to begin with? Why did she assume that her dream identity was culturally recognizable by others and practically realizable during the war? How did she know in 1941 that she must and could fight?

Similar questions are posed in this book about a large cohort of female veterans who, like Medvedeva, anticipated the upcoming war with Nazi Germany as a realization of their combatant dreams to fight the enemy with "weapons in their arms" and "together with men." Hundreds of thousands of young women volunteered in June 1941; the cohort I examine stands for them and, most particularly, for those who were able to actualize their wartime aspirations in combat. The kind of combat positions that they ended up holding and the manner of their inclusion into army hierarchies carried the clear stamp of a state policy. The majority of women combatants were state mobilized, military trained, and belonged within the professional and technical elite of the Soviet armed forces. Serving as machine and mortar gunners, snipers, artillery fighters, combat pilots, and junior commanding officers in male, mixed, and female units, they constituted more than 120,000 out of half a million women in the field army during the war.[19] Fighting a specialized, technically demanding, and machine-dependent modern war gave female combatants a better chance of survival and a higher military status and rank than the average male infantry soldier. Together with women combat medics, frontline doctors, communications specialists, and technical and administrative personnel, they demonstrate the diversity of military experiences that men and women shared in the Red Army. One way to bring out the meaning of 120,000 young women in combat on the Eastern front is to point out that not much more than 800,000 American male soldiers (about 5 percent of the total American armed forces) participated in extended combat during World War II.[20]

After the war, in addition to participating in public celebrations of the victory, these women also attempted to insert themselves into popular memory by authoring war memoirs. As members of the first widely well-schooled

[19] For the discussion of how the number of women combatants is calculated, see Chapter 4.
[20] Gerald F. Linderman, *The World Within War. America's Combat Experience in World War II* (New York: Free Press, 1997), 1.