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978-1-107-04976-5 - Beyond the Band of Brothers: The US Military and the Myth that Women Can't Fight

Megan Mackenzie

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Beyond the Band of Brothers

Women can't fight. This assumption lies at the heart of the combat exclusion, a policy that was fiercely defended as essential to national security, despite evidence that women have been contributing to hostile operations now and throughout history. This book examines the role of women in the US military and the key arguments used to justify the combat exclusion, in light of the decision to reverse the policy in 2013. Megan MacKenzie considers the historic role of the combat exclusion in shaping American military identity and debunks claims that the recent policy change signals a new era for women in the military. Placing the policy in a broader context, MacKenzie shows how women's exclusion from combat reaffirms male supremacy in the military and sustains a key military myth, the myth of the band of brothers. She traces the band of brothers myth from Freud to HBO in her critical analysis and history of the role of women in combat. This book will be welcomed by scholars and students of military studies, gender studies, social and military history, and foreign policy.

MEGAN MACKENZIE is a senior lecturer in the Department of Government and International Relations at the University of Sydney. Her research centers on gender and security. Her book *Female Soldiers in Sierra Leone: Sex, Security and Post-Conflict Development* (2012) included interviews with more than fifty female soldiers who participated in Sierra Leone's civil war.

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For Jason, with love

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