

Uncertain Warriors

In an era where ‘history’ had supposedly ended, what was an army for? This question confronted the US Army at the end of the Cold War. Although public support for the military remained high, fewer were sending their children to enlist and questions were raised about the uncertainty of future operations: How would Army leaders prepare soldiers for difficult peacekeeping operations that called for a more human-oriented approach in light of the promises of high-tech warfare? What was the best way to navigate the broader debates about changing gender and sexual norms in American society? Pulled in different directions, the Army struggled to put forward a compelling vision of who and what the American soldier should be. In *Uncertain Warriors*, David Fitzgerald reveals how, in response to this uncertainty, they eventually fell back on an older vision of martial masculinity, embracing a ‘warrior ethos’ that was meant to define the contemporary American soldier.

David Fitzgerald is a lecturer in international politics at University College Cork. His first book, *Learning to Forget: US Army Counterinsurgency Doctrine and Practice from Vietnam to Iraq*, was a finalist for the Society of Military History’s Edward M. Coffman prize.

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Uncertain Warriors

*The United States Army between the
Cold War and the War on Terror*

David Fitzgerald

University College Cork



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For Daniel

Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>page</i> viii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	ix
Introduction: Warriors at the End of History	1
1 The Post-Vietnam Recovery, Operation Desert Storm and the Veneration of the Volunteer Soldier	18
2 Gender, Sexuality and the Profession of Arms: Don't Ask Don't Tell, Women in Combat and the 'Band of Brothers'	60
3 Warriors Who Don't Fight: The Dilemmas of Peacekeeping Operations	101
4 Downsizing, Recruiting and Debates over Military Service	139
5 Technological Transformation and the American Soldier	179
6 The Warrior Ethos	216
Epilogue	251
<i>Index</i>	270

Figures

1.1 Military policemen being taught to recognise drug paraphernalia, 1973	page 23
1.2 A soldier waves an American flag during a ticker tape parade in New York City to welcome troops home from the Persian Gulf, June 1991	50
2.1 Extract from the Army’s 2001 publication <i>Dignity and Respect: A Training Guide on Homosexual Conduct Policy</i>	64
2.2 Female soldiers of the 82nd Airborne Division put on gas masks as they prepare for a nuclear-biological-chemical warfare exercise during Operation Desert Shield	77
3.1 A soldier from the 555th Military Police Company attempting to hold back a crowd in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, 1994	102
3.2 An M1A1 Abrams tank from the 1st Armored Division crosses into Bosnia, 1995	125
4.1 Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen presents a framed citation accompanying the Department of Defense Medal for Distinguished Public Service to Steven Spielberg at a ceremony in the Pentagon, 1999	160
5.1 A soldier testing the Dismounted Soldier System Unit during the Advanced Warfighting Experiment at the NTC, Fort Irwin, California, 1997	189
5.2 A civilian electronics technician inspecting and testing the installation of a computer in an armored personnel carrier during the Advanced Warfighting Experiment at the NTC, Fort Irwin, California, 1997	199
6.1 Soldiers donning their berets during a beret transition ceremony marking the Army’s 226th birthday on 14 June 2001	232
6.2 The Army’s Warrior Ethos tattooed onto the forearm of First Sergeant Aki Paylor	245
E.1 A soldier taking part in Recruiting Command’s Warrior Fitness Team try-out	262

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I first started thinking about the ideas that ended up in this book in 2007 when, as a visiting graduate student in New York City, I found myself reckoning with the strange relationship that the United States seemed to have with its military, which was then off fighting wars in far-away places while leaving the rest of the country to get on with life as normal. If I was to identify a particular moment when the idea for this book began to form, it was probably in a conversation in a hostel living room with my friend Allison, as she explained to me the weirdness of signing up to serve in a peacetime military and then suddenly finding herself at war in the Middle East. The other reason I date the origins of the book to my time in New York is that that is where I first encountered Marilyn Young, whose unique combination of fierce intellect, political commitment, personal warmth, and inexhaustible generosity had a huge impact on me, as it did on many others. Marilyn pushed me to take culture seriously in my work and was characteristically supportive when I first began to think about this book in more detail.

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x Acknowledgements

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xii Acknowledgements

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