Sexual violence is a significant problem within many Western militaries. Despite international attention to the issue and global #MeToo and #TimesUp movements highlighting the impact of sexual violence, rates of sexual violence are going up in many militaries. This book uses feminist theories of ‘rape culture’ and institutional gaslighting to identify the key stories, myths, and misconceptions about military sexual violence that have obstructed addressing and preventing it. It is a landmark study that considers nearly thirty years of media coverage of military sexual violence in three case countries – the US, Canada, and Australia. The findings have implications not only for those seeking to address, reduce, and prevent sexual violence in militaries, but also for those hoping to understanding rape culture and how patriarchy operates more broadly. It will appeal to students, scholars, and general readers interested in gender, feminism, and the military.

MEGAN MACKENZIE is one of the world’s leading experts on gender and the military. Her book Beyond the Band of Brothers: The US Military and the Myth That Women Can’t Fight (2015) was a landmark contribution that shaped debates on gender integration and military culture. Since then, she has led international studies on military suicide, sexual violence, and women in combat roles.
Good Soldiers Don’t Rape

The Stories We Tell About Military Sexual Violence

MEGAN MACKENZIE
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For unconditional feminist friends
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This damn book. I like to imagine writing books that are breezy, joyful, and that are written effortlessly while listening to music. Instead, I write about violence, militarism, and patriarchy through painful fits and starts, in silent stretches interrupted by my own loud exhales. Writing a book on sexual violence has been difficult, draining, and at times I needed to take significant breaks. To write this book I needed to read hundreds of articles about military sexual violence. Each of these articles shared a personal story of an event that forever changed someone’s life for the worse. I’m an empath. Despite reading all the books about boundaries and attempting to draw lines around my work, I soaked up every single one of these stories as if they were water being absorbed into a thick coat. By the end of the writing process the weight of the stories and my imaginary heavy coat kept me in bed some days.

And yet, I wanted to write this book; I needed to write this book. Why start the acknowledgements this way? I want to make it clear that this project was important to me, and difficult. To write this book I didn’t just need time and funding and space (though those were important). I needed feminist friends to go for a walk with me and despair together about the patriarchy. I needed my partner to insist I turn the light off, and get outdoors and out of the house during the last weeks of writing. I needed my colleagues and friends to assure me that although the early drafts were rough – and I am a terrible copyeditor – I was onto something. I needed my child to toddle into my bedroom as I sat at my desk staring at the screen to say ‘Mom, is this book really a year overdue?’

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