

Women as Veterans in Britain and France after the First World War

This is the story of how women in France and Britain between 1915 and 1933 appropriated the cultural identity of female war veteran in order to have greater access to public life and a voice in a political climate in which women were rarely heard on the public stage. The ‘veterans’ covered by this history include former nurses, charity workers, secret service agents and members of resistance networks in occupied territory, as well as members of the British auxiliary corps. What unites these women is how they attempted to present themselves as ‘female veterans’ in order to gain social advantages and to give themselves the right to speak about the war and its legacies. Alison S. Fell also examines the limits of the identity of war veteran for women, considering as an example the wartime and post-war experiences of the female industrial workers who led episodes of industrial action.

Alison S. Fell is Professor of French Cultural History at the University of Leeds and Director of the Leeds Arts and Humanities Research Institute. She is Co-Investigator of the Gateways to the First World War AHRC Public Engagement Centre. She regularly acts as a historical consultant and interviewee for television and radio, including the *Woman’s Hour* drama *The Camel Hospital* and the BBC’s *The World’s War: Forgotten Soldiers of Empire*.

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