Thank you for your cervix: Female veterans' enduring battle for public recognition after the war

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Thank you for your cervix: Female veterans’ enduring battle for public recognition after the war

by

Lindsey Huber

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Major: Rhetoric Composition and Professional Communication

Program of Study Committee:
Margaret LaWare, Major Professor
Laura Brown
Abby Dubisar
Amy Rutenberg

The student author, whose presentation of the scholarship herein was approved by the program of study committee, is solely responsible for the content of this thesis. The Graduate College will ensure this thesis is globally accessible and will not permit alterations after a degree is conferred.

Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa
2021

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my sisters in arms who stood in the ranks of the Armed Forces of the United States of America before me, with me, and after me.

For my children, Finley Genevieve and Gideon Zachary Huber, always have the courage to stand up for what is right and use silence wisely.
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ABSTRACT

Some of the most fiercely argued issues that we see within society today are arguments of definition. For example, there are disputes amongst service members about defining who a veteran is. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) defines a veteran as a "person who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable" (US Department of Veteran Affairs). Nowhere in the VA's definition of a veteran does it reference biological sex. However, we, as a society, continue to see female veterans sifted out and silenced as bearers of the war story through various material representations such as mottos and war memorials.

This thesis argues that allegorical changes are necessary at this juncture in history to adapt to the continual revisions of definitions of soldier and veteran, to increase the visibility of female veterans, and to better recognize and support the needs of females as veterans. The current rhetorical context assumes that veterans are male. The lack of attention to changing norms of gender undercuts the well-being of veterans who do not identify as "male," which consequently cripples all veterans' well-being.

Keywords: Female veteran, war memorial, sifting, silence, and stasis theory
CHAPTER 1. AN UNWELCOMING MOTTO

On October 12, 2018, the Veterans Legal Services Clinic introduced a petition from the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA), Service Women's Action Network (SWAN), and NYC Veterans Alliance to the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) requesting that the VA revise their official motto to read more gender-inclusive (Yale Law School, n.d.). At the time of this request, the VA's official motto is a quote from former President Abraham Lincoln: "To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan." The motto as read now disregards and misrepresents female veterans’ service (Department of Veterans' Affairs, n.d.).

IAVA, SWAN, and NYC Veterans Alliance have offered an alternate motto that is more genderfluid. The proposed motto would read: "To fulfill President Lincoln's promise to care for those who shall have borne the battle and for their families, caregivers, and survivors" (Shane III). However, the idea of revising the motto was not widely accepted by all. Former VA Secretary David Shulkin allegedly ignored the calls and letters of the former IAVA Executive Director Allison Jaslow since March of 2017. In February 2018, a spokesperson for the former VA Secretary stated that the VA would still use Lincoln's quote as the VA motto, "unchanged" (Wax-Thibodeaux, 2018). The spokesperson noted that the "VA is proud of Lincoln's words as a historic tribute to all veterans, including women veterans, whose service and sacrifice inspire us all." However, Jaslow states, "They're missing the point - that women don't feel comfortable at the VA. That action enshrined a motto and a culture that often renders women veterans invisible at the agency, even to this day. Every day that the VA preserves this motto, it ignores and obscures the needs of far too many women veterans" (Wax-Thibodeaux, 2018). Jaslow's remarks highlight the VA's refusal to revise the current motto and expand their understanding and
perception of "veteran" and the array of identities and needs that are encompassed by the term "veteran."

How female veterans of the past are remembered creates frameworks for how female veterans are perceived today. Today, many female veterans do not participate in veteran services such as VA health benefits, vocational benefits, and other veteran services on college campuses. Today on most college campuses, one in five veterans associated with the GI Bill are females. However, this is not reflected in college veteran services, where a minuscule number of participants are female. There are several contributing factors to this, such as most female veterans under the age of thirty-five are more likely to be single parents, and women that return from combat are more likely to be battling PTSD from not only the combat theatre setting but also from sexual harassment and sexual assault (Sander, 2012, p. 2).

However, the most consistent answer from female veterans as to why they do not participate in veteran services is because they do not feel like a veteran, or some say that they are not defined by their time in service. "I served my country, and I'm very proud of that, but I don't need to wear it on my sleeve and say, 'Hey, I'm a veteran" (Sander, 2012, p.3). Through Kenneth Burke's Identification Theory, for women veterans to identify with veterans, they need to see themselves as veterans (Herrick, 2013, p. 210).

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1 Throughout this article I use the reference female veterans. I do not use “female” to exclude on the grounds of biological sex versus gender identification. I use female to recreate the military atmosphere for my audience. In the military, soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines are referred to and categorized by biological sex, male or female. For example, “Because the fucking females can’t get it right,” would echo through the halls of our barracks before the drill sergeants tossed our bays.
When applying Burke's theory to female veterans, there is a reasonable basis for why female veterans have not been able to identify with the term veteran. The vast majority of public memorials that are dedicated to veterans represent male veterans. The male veterans represented in public memorials reflect the ideology of masculinity that males stand firm, ready to fight and defend what they believe is right. The male veteran is portrayed as the protector of the nation and someone citizens owe their gratitude to. However, it is inequitable to expect that these public memorials represent the term veteran's inclusiveness, as female veterans cannot identify with these public memorials because they represent men.

When female veterans are excluded from history or misrepresented in war memorials, not in full uniform, and not prepared, the war story is not fully represented, and women are not seen as “real” veterans. The most significant problem is that these representations are misleading. Women are not exempt from uniform codes, preparation, and combat readiness. There is no extra help made available to females to complete tasks. The misleading representations seen in public memorials are enough for society to question women soldiers' capabilities, how seriously they should be taken, and how female veterans view themselves and their accomplishments.

A persistent echo from female veterans is that they do not identify with the label veteran, despite that the female veteran population is the fastest-growing veteran population. Female veterans have been approached with a "well you're a girl" attitude and do not believe that their service mattered; female veterans are still not acknowledged as veterans, based on the false presuppositions that females do not serve at the same capacity as males. Therefore, female veterans do not participate in veteran services because they do not feel accepted. Female veterans' lack of engagement with available resources can lead to more difficulty transitioning from military life back to civilian life.
A difficult transition from military life can have severe, if not permanent, consequences. While any suicide is a tragedy, a 2018 study has found that female veterans are 250% more likely to commit suicide than a civilian woman (Price, 2018). Homelessness is also on the rise for female veterans. A 2017 study revealed that on a single night in January, there were approximately 40,000 homeless veterans. Female veterans made up 9% (3,600) of this 40,000 homeless veteran population. These numbers may not immediately look alarming; however, when comparing this with the homeless veteran data from 2016, the homeless women veteran population rose by 7% in one year. The homeless male veteran population increased by a single percent from 2016 to 2017 (Richman, 2018). Sadly, the homeless female veteran population is now the fastest-growing homeless population in the United States of America.

A culture of sexual assault and misogyny is not news to the military. Female veterans have also endured catcalls within VA establishments, which are incredibly demoralizing for female veterans who have experienced sexual trauma during their time in service. "A report from a clinician in East Orange, New Jersey, said; 'I think there are many people [female veterans] who fall through the cracks and don't want to come here [the Department of Veteran Affairs] because they associate it with the very culture that traumatized them. That's a huge barrier to treatment"" (Wax-Thibodeaux, 2018). The clinician's remarks are bothersome; the VA is aware of veteran resource use disparities between male and female veterans. Yet, the VA is content to let female veterans slip away rather than make modifications to accommodate female veterans' needs.

The issue surrounding the revision of the VA motto has become a critical juncture for veterans and veteran organizations. Many argue that there are other pressing matters within the broken VA system, such as long waiting periods for appointments and multiple scandals that
need to be addressed before revising the motto. Indeed, the VA faces many problems that affect all veterans. However, there is a long history of long waiting periods and fraud throughout the VA system. The sudden call to address these problems seems suspicious as a way to dismiss those who support the more inclusive motto. If the motto were to be amended, the alteration would not deter from the VA's mission of helping veterans. The time and financial investment in amending the motto would be minimal compared to the extensive amount of investigations required to address significant issues such as long wait times and fraud. The dismissal and mocking of the call to revise the motto as "political correctness run amok, saying that changing Lincoln's words would amount to revising history" (Shane III, 2020) raises questions about the masculine culture created within the military and the identifying markers that we as a society have attached to labels such as veteran and soldier. One cannot help but question if the concern is to defend and preserve the military's masculine image, the need to look strong and aggressive, and not weak or feminized, rather than safeguarding history or President Lincoln's words.

Female veterans need to see themselves included and accurately represented in material representations such as mottos and war memorials. Female veterans may doubt their accomplishments that they have achieved while in the military. They may feel that they got lucky and that they did not earn their rank or service awards. They may feel like they are frauds and have no business serving in the military. These thoughts and feelings are very indicative of Imposter Syndrome, a sense that one's success is based on luck or fraud rather than skill (Young, V., 2011). These feelings of fraud are further exacerbated through the absence of public memorials dedicated to women veterans, their absence from textbooks, and the lack of research that has been conducted toward bettering the quality of life for women veterans (Jowers, 2018).
These issues go beyond female veterans of today. Due to the lack of acknowledgment of female veterans throughout history, many do not realize that females served in World War I and World War II. One of the more notable acts of discrimination against female veterans was the GI Bill benefit. Despite that, the GI Bill was not discriminately written; there was discrimination at the structural level. The Department of Veteran Affairs and the pro-segregation American Legion made it difficult for females and minorities to use their veteran benefits to their full potential, if at all (Murray, 2002, p. 120).

By the end of World War II, 332,000 women veterans were eligible for the GI Bill. However, only 19.5% (65,000) of female veterans were able to use their benefits. The GI Bill was later credited for sending 2.4 million veterans to further their education. Female veterans only made up 2.7% of all veterans that used GI Bill benefits post World War II. Many female veterans were not told about their benefits eligibility when they returned home, or their applications at public universities were denied to make room for white male veterans (Murray, 2002, p. 120).

This thesis argues that allegorical changes are necessary at this juncture in history to adapt to the continual revisions of definitions of soldier and veteran, to increase the visibility of female veterans, and to better recognize and support the needs of females as veterans. The current rhetorical context assumes that veterans are male. The lack of attention to changing norms of gender undercuts the well-being of veterans who do not identify as "male," which consequently cripples all veterans' well-being. One can speculate that the real rationale behind those threatened by the suggested revision of the motto as "cancel culture" is the assumption that masculine narratives of the war as they have been told and represented are the “true” stories of U.S. military history. However, many do not know that women have long been a part of U.S.
military history. Women's military service dates back to the Revolutionary War with Deborah Sampson serving from Plympton, Massachusetts, Cathay Williams serving from Independence, MO in the Civil War; both women disguised themselves as men to be able to serve their country and thousands upon thousands more women who would volunteer their service as soldiers in World War One, World War Two, Vietnam, and the Global War on Terror (GWOT). The numbers of females serving in the military have continued to increase through the course of history. This calls to question whose culture is really feared will be canceled. We, as a society, must remember that what it meant to be a veteran and who society recognized for their service was someone very different in the 1950s. Today, females serve in every capacity in all military service branches, including combat military occupational specialties (MOS).

This thesis considers how women struggle against some very deep-rooted attitudes and presuppositions that still resonate deep within society about women's roles in combat even today, attitudes that continue to deny women the ability to claim the name “veteran”. The U.S. has made revisions of who and what is celebrated to remember and recognize military histories and those who served. We once only celebrated the names of key officers or significant battles. However, we have since moved past recognizing specific names and locations. We now recognize the service of "legs" that actively served in the trenches rather than those that made decisions from a post afar. Yet despite these revisions of who we memorialize as a soldier or

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2 Many people are unaware of the large numbers of females that have served in the United States military. When I say served, I mean served as enlisted in a military service branch and earned military benefits. In World War I there is documentation of 11,000 females that served as soldiers. In WWII there is documentation of 332,000 females that served as soldiers. In Vietnam there is unfortunately very limited documentation of females that served, but 11,000 females are known to have served. There is no official count on females that have served during the Global War on Terror as this conflict still persists.
veteran, as an effort to include all soldiers, society still struggles with who we recognize as a soldier or veteran and, as a result, there are few females visible in material representations, such as memorials. Throughout the following chapters, I argue that female veterans appear silent as bearers of the war story if female veterans appear at all. This silence (and silencing) has helped create and perpetuate a culture that makes it difficult for female veterans to identify with terms such as soldier and veteran and makes it difficult for society to recognize and remember female service members as soldiers and veterans. In chapter two, I will discuss Cheryl Glenn’s discussion of silence as both a rhetorical strategy and a reflection of power and control of spaces of deliberation and public memory. I will examine what is considered silence and silencing as compared to absence. Chapter two will also include Hermogenes' Stasis Theory. I will delve into how Stasis Theory can be used to address deliberative arguments through four sequential questions: does something exist, what do we call it, what is the issue; and what do we do about it.

Chapter three will discuss arguments of fact and definition about what defines a veteran, who is a veteran, and who can be a veteran through Stasis Theory in order to lay out the process of moving towards a more visible and empowering definition of veteran that includes women. I will demonstrate disparities in the number of memorials dedicated to male and female veterans, including variations in the length of time and funding for constructing memorials dedicated to male and female veterans. Chapter three also provides a comparative visual analysis of memorials representing male and female veterans to examine depictions of the war story told through these public war memorials dedicated to male and female veterans. I will also investigate how female veterans' isolation in material representations such as war memorials makes it easier to repress female veterans as bearers of the war story. I examine the importance
of vernacular interactions for female veterans to see themselves as soldiers and veterans and discuss the consequences of female veterans not identifying with these labels.

Chapter four will address the final question of Stasis Theory, what do we do about it. We cannot merely apply a feminist lens, Queer Theory, and juxtapose female veterans' statues alongside male veterans and believe that we have solved the issue at hand. Chapter four will also advocate the importance of public memory studies because labels and definitions are constantly evolving. As a society, we need to be aware of how we come to attach labels and the ramifications of naming and assigning labels. In chapter five, I conclude by stressing the importance of language and that changes are necessary for material representations such as war memorials and mottos to reflect the continual revisions of definitions of soldier and veteran. Female veterans are hurting, and the VA needs to do better to find a way to support female veterans as females and as veterans. The VA must find a way to open its doors to female veterans.
CHAPTER 2. SAY AGAIN; CAN YOU HEAR ME; ARE YOU EVEN LISTENING?

On July 26, 2016, Meryl Streep took the Democratic National Committee (DNC) stage to introduce the Democratic Presidential nominee, Hillary Clinton. The crowd fell silent as Streep began her speech, “What does it take to be the first female anything? It takes grit, and it takes grace” (PBS, 2016). The audience remained silent, except for the occasional obligated applause, as Streep told a brief story of Deborah Sampson, the first woman veteran who served in the Revolutionary War. Streep told the audience Sampson served in the Continental Army, disguised as a man, and that Sampson was the first woman to take a bullet for her country. Streep informed the audience when Sampson was wounded in battle; she removed a musket ball from her leg to protect her identity from being revealed. Streep stated that Sampson was a model of grit.

Later that night, Meryl Streep’s speech was repeatedly fact and name-checked because no one had heard of Deborah Sampson. Over the months following the 2016 DNC, headlines of blogs and magazines would read, “Who was Deborah Sampson, and why wasn’t Meryl Streep my history teacher?” (Rose, 2018). One may speculate why Deborah Sampson is so unknown that thousands of people fact-checked Meryl Streep’s speech at the DNC. However, we — feminist scholars, should bring into speculation about how society remembers Deborah Sampson but how society recognizes, receives, and remembers all female veterans.

During the time of Ancient Greece, speech was considered to be a gift from the gods. Because speech was thought to be a gift from the gods, speech became a distinctive characteristic of humans; speech became a fundamental apparatus of human culture. Yet, in all speech, there is
silence “There are eventless periods in human history, periods in which history seems to carry silence - nothing but silence - around her; periods in which [wo/] men and events are hidden beneath the silence” (Glenn, 1997, p. 1). Glenn is saying that persons who do not appear in our records are assumed to be absent - not present, instead of being thought of as present and silent. As scholars, we must look at not just the silences but the rhetorical situation surrounding silence.

Throughout this chapter, I argue that female veterans appear silent as bearers of the war story, as those who have borne the battle if female veterans appear at all. Silence is defined as a “forbearance from speech or noise: Muteness – often used interjectionally” (Webster, n.d., Silence). Cheryl Glenn believes that silence carries the same value as speech and argues that “it is silence that reveals speech at the same time that it enacts its own sometimes complementary rhetoric” (Glenn, 2004, p. 3). Glenn goes on to define silence, through Max Picard, as not what occurs when one stops talking; “it is more than the mere negative renunciation of language; it is more than simply a condition that we produce at will. When language ceases, silence begins. But it does not begin because language ceases. The absence of language simply makes the presence of Silence more apparent” (Glenn, 2004, p.4). Silence can be voluntary, involuntary, purposeful, accidental, but most importantly, silence is powerful. There is privilege, there is power, to choose to be or not to be silent, and to have the ability to silence others — and vice versa. However, contextual materials determine if certain silences are subjectively different from other silences. For example, historians know that there are women such as Deborah Sampson who served in the Revolutionary War. Deborah Sampson is celebrated within the community she came from in Sharon Massachusetts; she spent her remaining years with her
husband and family after the Revolutionary War. However, her narrative has not really surpassed the boundaries of the community of Sharon, Massachusetts. Feminist scholars know that there have been multiple instances in our histories that have been written or rewritten to exclude women. As rhetorical scholars, we should ponder; if the how (whether it is purposeful or simply accidental or reflective of unconscious cultural blinders) of silence matters if the end result is the same, silence.

Of course, rhetorical scholars cannot simply write off the how of silence. We must be able to recognize how silence happens (i.e. what has caused silence), to understand the rhetorical situation of silence better. Rhetoricians have created various diagrams to describe and demonstrate the multitude of communication outcomes between speaker and audience and writer and reader. Diagrams such as the rhetorical tetrahedron (Figure 1) have been created and used by rhetoricians to help explain the how and why something is written, spoken, or created. The same can be done and create a diagram to demonstrate silence.

![Figure 1: Pennsylvania State (2021). The Rhetorical Tetrahedron.](image-url)
When one looks at figure two, affectionately coined the “Silence Triangle,” one can see the examples of where voluntary and involuntary silence between speaker and audience, between speaker and text, and between audience and text may occur. Unintentional silence between speaker and audience may be that the speaker is out of hearing range; in this instance, the audience may be too far away to hear the speaker or speak too softly for the audience to hear. Intentional silence between speaker and audience may be that the audience is deliberately plugging their ears to block out or muffle the speaker’s message.

Unintended silence between speaker and text may be that the speaker included a text, but the text is difficult to locate or read, for example, Deborah Sampson’s headstone at Rock Ridge Cemetery in Sharon, Massachusetts. The front of her headstone, her name Deborah Sampson Gannett is carved in stone. However, engraved on the backside of the stone, where a visitor may not look is, “Deborah Sampson Gannett, Robert Shurtleff, the Female Soldier Service 1781 to 1783.” Intended silence between speaker and text may mean that the speaker purposely excluded a text. There is also voluntary silence when a speaker chooses not to speak and exerts their agency to determine what is said and what is not spoken. Involuntary silence when the speaker is coerced not to speak, the speaker’s mouth is forcibly or metaphorically silenced by an outside person or institution. Unintended silence between audience and text may once again be the absence of a text. Voluntary silence between audience and text may be the audience purposely avoids a text, the audience walks around a text, covers a text, or turns the page to where they want to begin reading. The various situations of silence can be seen in war memorials dedicated to female veterans, such as the Women in Military Service for America (WIMSA), the Vietnam Women’s Memorial, and the Deborah Sampson sculpture.
Figure 2: Huber, Lindsey, (2021). Silence Triangle, similar to Rhetorical Triangle demonstrating voluntary and involuntary silence between speaker and audience, text and audience, and between speaker and text, created by Colin Payton and Lindsey Huber.

When one is silenced, they are rendered invisible. Those who are silenced are not granted the privilege of identity or recognition as those who are not silenced. One must be recognized to be accepted into the discourse or a genre. If one is not accepted into the discourse, these persons are effortlessly omitted or repressed. Silence grants the ability to misrepresent one's experiences. Arguably the most dismal part of the process of silence is society's blind acceptance of what is presented without challenge.
"Silence can be a plan
Rigorously executed
The blueprint to a life
It is a presence
It has a history a form
Do not confuse it
With any kind of absence."

- Adrienne Rich, "Cartographies of Silence" (Glenn, 2004, p.1)

Arguably silence creates an illusion of women's absence. The illusion of women's absence is designed by a patriarchal narrative to exclude, silence, and distort women's histories and experiences. Creating this belief of absence makes women's silence more acceptable for society and less likely for members to question why women have been omitted from histories, archives, and public memorials because it appears that women were never a part of the discourse.

Cheryl Glenn explains that absence does not carry the same meaning as "silence" or "invisible" (Glenn, 2004, p. 2). If we look back to the silence triangle, a speaker can have a physical presence but choose not to speak. Although the speaker is not speaking, the speaker is still present and a part of the conversation. The same can be said if a speaker is speaking too softly and is not heard by the audience, or if someone covered a speaker's mouth forbidding them to speak, none of these instances demonstrate the speaker as absent from the discourse. In these instances, the speaker is present but silent or silenced. Absence is defined by Merriam Webster as "a state or condition in which something expected, wanted or looked for is not present or does
not exist: a state or condition in which something is absent" (Webster, n.d., Absence). The very definition of absence is problematic when evaluating women in history. The statement, "something is expected, wanted or looked for," suggests that scholars have not been looking for women in our records before now. "Expected silences can go unrecognized, but unexpected silences are quickly labeled" (Glenn, 2004, p. 11). Glenn's statement helps illuminate the process of silencing of women as veterans. If society expects to not see female veterans included in military representations such as the VA motto then female veterans' absence goes unnoticed and unquestioned.

The silencing of women goes back to Aristotle. Those who are depicted as feminine have been methodically suppressed or silenced throughout Western social history, beginning with the writings of Aristotle. Aristotle placed women as inferior to be ruled and essentially dominated by men. Aristotle wrote, "Between the sexes, the male is by nature superior, and the female inferior, the male the ruler and the female subject;" and "One quality of action is nobler than another if it is that of a naturally finer being: thus a man's will be nobler than a woman's" (Glenn, 2004, p. 20). Glenn provides several quotes to demonstrate how Aristotle reinforced male superiority in his various commentaries. Over twenty-five hundred years ago, Aristotle influenced the framework of Western culture's gender narrative and the silencing of women by depicting women as discordant from men and not as accoutered as men physically or mentally to perform in a society dominated by men (Glenn, 2004, p. 20-22). In John Bunyan's words, he told women, specifically wives, to "take heed of an idle, talking or brangling tongue" and to remain silent when men, their husbands, are present. In the early 20th century, Anatole France bantered that "We have the medicine to make women speak; we have none to make them keep silence" (Glenn, 2004, p. 10). These statements made by educated men, playful banter or not, present
Western culture's gendered frameworks, that women, much like children, are to be seen and not heard.

**Sifting: Silence in Plain Sight**

However, despite women's appearance as silent, women have not been silent. Women have cleverly inserted themselves into the discourse through means of journals/diaries, poems, storytelling, quilting, garden and book clubs, and other means to make their presence and their influence known, and female veterans are not exempt from representation through diaries, ballads, and family members. The male-centered visual demonstration of the war story leaves us to question what should society do with females or the feminine, "other" who is also a soldier; where do we put our female soldiers? How do we make their experiences visible? One may suggest simply juxtaposing female veterans into materials that represent the war story. Others may suggest leaving female veterans out entirely, excluding them completely, which actively silences female veterans from the discourse surrounding the war story. Others may suggest including female veterans into materials, such as war memorials, but hiding them in plain sight so not to disrupt the masculine narrative. Rhetorical scholars must keep in mind that silencing can take on many forms, such as hiding or depicting in ways that essentially render women invisible to the average viewer. This can be the visual equivalent of placing women outside of hearing range, which is demonstrated in the Silence Triangle (Figure 2).

One can be silenced but still be very much present. We can see the silencing of women service members by excluding them or misrepresenting them in war memorials. War memorials can distort a secondary narrative - the narrative or experience that is not immediately visible; or the secondary narrative may take on the expectation of a dominant narrative; this is a process known as sifting. Carol Mattingly uses Kirk Savage's concept of sifting to describe how a
memorial that is considered a secondary narrative can become dominated by the primary narrative, and the secondary narrative then becomes sifted out and lost into the background (Mattingly, pp 134). Mattingly describes Savage's analysis of Civil War memorials dedicated to soldiers of color's memory and heroism. However, the memorials quickly took on the narrative of "white heroism" and the "black slave" thus sifting the soldiers of color out of the primary narrative (Mattingly, pp 134). Despite the stated purpose of that particular Civil War memorial, the recognition of African Americans who served in the Civil War, the memorial was overshadowed by the dominant narrative of the heroic white soldier who took on the duty of training and overseeing soldiers of color. Although a memorial was created to honor and recognize African American soldiers' service during the Civil War, the memorial merely included African American soldiers but “sifts out” their military service, denies them recognition as soldiers and veterans.

Rhetorical scholars can see the sifting out process within current war memorials and female veterans. While on the surface, some memorials include female veterans, it does not mean that the female veterans are accurately represented or visible at all. Some war memorials that include female veterans depict them in dresses, with soft, feminized features, in caregiver roles that do not mesh with the expectations of “veteran,” or the memorial may be placed in a less visible location. Some of the memorials that include female veterans, therefore, conform to the dominant narrative of traditional gender roles, and, since the dominant narrative of the soldier as male persists, these memorials “sift out” the experiences of female veterans. As I will show, the Korean War memorial, WIMSA and, to some degree, the Vietnam Women’s Memorial, all perform “sifting” to some degree.
Resistant Postmodernism

One way that scholars can challenge the primary narrative is through resistant postmodernism. Resistant postmodernism takes postmodernism an extra step further and does not stop at the recovery of secondary sources and narratives. Through resistant postmodernism, our consciousness of the one-sidedness of our written histories and how our written histories institute silence on various groups of people is strengthened. By becoming more aware of our written histories, it should help us view our written histories through a gendered lens and question the experiences of those that appear to be absent from our records; resistant postmodernism helps us become more aware of absences and silences; and to fill in those spaces to help give the silent a voice (Glenn, 1997, p. 5). Resistant postmodernism gives scholars an opportunity to sift in those who have been sifted out and make their narratives more visible by reassembling story fragments and identities.

According to Glenn, scholars should heighten our awareness of what our histories do - how our written histories influence the collective understanding of what is real and what is the truth. Glenn quotes Burke's statement, "The terministic screen, screen of each history writer's language, then, is a reflection of reality; but by its very nature, it must be a selection of reality. Consequently, all historical accounts, even the most seemingly objective historical records, are stories. And even these stories are selected and arranged according to the selector's frame of reference" (Glenn, 1997, p.7). Scholars must question if we can ever know the truth when it comes to our histories. As our histories are passed down from generation to generation, each generation adds its own personal flair; bias to the record.

There is great power in having the ability to choose which footprints of our past should be preserved. "Museums and archives have traditionally valued objects and texts, selected for
their enduring cultural value, over ephemeral manifestations of cultural heritage….This preference, furthermore, contributed to the loss of contexts in which artifacts and texts were produced to subordinate them to legitimizing narratives of historical progress and national identity” (Haskins, 2007, p. 402). Andreas Huysesen describes museums, archives, and memorials as "compensatory organs of remembrance" (Haskins, 2007, p. 402). Which as John Gillis notes "memory work was 'the preserve of elite males, the designated carriers of progress" (Haskins, 2007, p. 402-403). Gillis's statement opens us to question if history is true because of who determines what materials are worth preservation. However, according to Glenn, it is not a matter of who preserves what, as it is our ability through resistant postmodernism that scholars can look more critically at preserved materials, identify the gaps and silences, and work to fill in those gaps out of the pursuit for the truth.

A Silenced Eulogy

In 1838, eleven years after the death of Deborah Sampson, who fought in the Revolutionary War. John Quincy Adams eulogized Sampson before Congress. But just two years later, Adams' son, Charles Francis Adams, wrote about that day and excluded his father's eulogy to Sampson in his writing, as though it never happened (A. Young A., 2004, p. 280). At the same time, Charles Francis Adams compiled and edited a two-volume collection of letters written by his grandmother, Abigail Adams. In his compilation, he wrote, "the heroism of the females of the Revolution has gone from memory" and "nothing, absolutely nothing remains upon the ear of the young of the present-day" (Young A., 2004, p. 281). Charles Francis Adams's exclusion of Deborah Sampson's eulogy is interesting because he exemplified his grandmother as a significant woman of the Revolution. Abigail Adams was infamous for her letters to her husband John Adams; her letters have provided an eyewitness account of the Revolutionary War. Yet, despite
his grandmother's progressive inclusion as a strong woman of the Revolution, Charles Francis Adams excluded his father’s eulogy of Deborah Sampson, contributing to the erasure of Sampson from public memory. Sampson, who disguised herself as a man, served as a soldier in the Fourth Massachusetts Regiment. Adams's action calls for speculation of whether his actions were meant to reinforce the lines of who has what role in matters of war; women as the passive caregivers, petitioners, and letter writers, and men as the fighters who hold all the harrowing experiences, greatness, and glory of battle.

By excluding Deborah Sampson's eulogy from the record, Charles Francis Adams may have succeeded in silencing Deborah Sampson from textbooks. Still, he did not silence Sampson's memory entirely from the people of Sharon, Massachusetts. Sampson's memory lives on through this tiny community in plays, a holiday, a small park, the historical society, and a bronze statue in front of the local Sharon library. When it comes to women's influence in history, scholars and society should question why it should fall solely on their descendants or special interest groups to recover and preserve their memory.

Arguably, through special interest groups such as historical societies, garden clubs, and book clubs, women have been given a sense of agency, a sense of fulfillment, by contributing not only to women's histories but also shaping local memories and the collective memory - people, events, and traditions passed through generations. For example, Charlotte Hogg writes of the women in Paxton, Nebraska, in her book "From the Garden Club; Rural Women Writing Community." Hogg states, "Paxton women felt directly responsible for making their town better in terms of providing access to literacy and also providing culture to the community" (Hogg, 2006, p. 147). Hogg is writing that the women of Paxton, Nebraska, understand the importance of the role they singlehandedly play in the preservation of their community's collective memory.
Even if their work goes unnoticed, they know that it is up to them to add to the culture and keep their memory going in their community. Rhetorical scholars can note that memorials dedicated to female veterans, such as the Women In Military Service for America Memorial, Vietnam Women's Memorial, and the Deborah Sampson sculpture, have all been initiated, designed, or maintained by women.

Hogg recalls one of her experiences in a graduate class where her professor frequently reminded the class that it was their conscious choice to be a writer and continue writing. "Remember, no one cares if you write" (Hogg, 2006, p. 128). However, Hogg knows that the women of Paxton, Nebraska care that she writes. Here through the writings of younger generations, we can see the baton being passed from the older generation to the younger to keep the memory alive. The passing of memories and traditions creates a legacy, an assurance that the voices they have fought so hard to keep center stage will not be silenced over time. Women have not been silent throughout history; their voices have been carried forward in communities and families. And thanks to women, the memories of female veterans have been preserved in museums and sculptures in the nation’s sacred grounds of public memory – Arlington National Cemetery and the National Mall.

Throughout this chapter, I have so far discussed silence as written by Cheryl Glenn. I have demonstrated the various forms of silence, such as involuntary silence - the speaker is speaking too softly that the audience does not hear them or voluntary silence - the audience plugs their ears to deliberately ignore the speaker's message. I have discussed that although silence is often construed as absence, silence and absence are two very distinct and different entities. Throughout the rest of this chapter, I will discuss a traditional method, Stasis Theory, that rhetoricians can use to examine and address silence critically.
Stasis Theory

Although Ancient Rhetoric set the stage for silencing women, it does not mean that rhetoricians should "cancel" ancient rhetorics from the rhetorical canon. Feminist rhetorical scholars may be able to look to Ancient Rhetoric as a pathway to identifying and resolving the silencing of female veterans. Rhetoricians can look to Stasis Theory as a means to help us locate female veterans' narratives and broaden female veterans' narratives so that they become part of a wider collective memory and history. Written when he was only a teenager Hermogenes, On States in ca. 180 C.E. In Greek, "Stasis" meant both "stand" and "battle." The Greeks believed that the words stand and battle was similar because "one comes to a stand only when one reaches a limit or comes up against a counterforce that brings movement to a halt" (Bizzell et al., 2020)

Hermogenes believed that Stasis Theory, or sometimes known as Issue Theory, is a method for judicial and deliberative rhetoric (Bizzell et al., 2020). Deliberative rhetoric considers arguments about the future, what will happen or what should happen (Lunsford, 2019). Stasis Theory offers a very constructive system of sequential questions constructed to help persons work through their arguments. "People inevitably have to be convinced that a situation exists before they ask what caused it or move to decisions about whether the situation is good or bad and what should be done about it and by whom" (Fahnestock, 1986). The stasis questions are given in a specific order because each is contingent on the previous questions' answers. Stasis Theory asks the following four questions:
1. Does something exist?

2. What do we call it?

3. What is the issue?

4. What do we do about it? (Lunsford, 2019, p. 20)

Let's further examine the four stasis questions. The first stasis question that scholars must answer is: Did something happen? The first stasis question is an argument of fact. Arguments of fact typically comprised an account that can be proved or disproved with evidence. However, the work for speakers and audience members does not stop at collecting evidence. Speakers and the audience must ask themselves when reviewing evidence:

1. Where did the evidence come from?

2. Is the evidence, or where the evidence came from, reliable?

3. Could there potentially be an issue with the evidence? (Graham & Herndl, 2011, p. 154).

The second stasis question is: What do we call it? The second question is an argument of definition. Some of the most fiercely argued issues that we see within society today are arguments of definition. An argument of definition is defined as "an argument in which the claim specifies that something does or doesn't meet the conditions or features outlined in a definition" (Graham & Herndl, 2011, p. 153). For example, there are disputes amongst service members about defining who a veteran is. The VA defines a veteran as a "person who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable" (US Department of Veteran Affairs, 2019). The VA's definition of
veteran means that one does not have to serve in a combat zone to be called a veteran. However, some do not agree with the VA's definition of veteran and believe that there needs to be a distinction between those who have served in a combat zone and those that put in their time in service but never served in combat. The distinction between serving in a combat zone and those who did not is well noted on the Vietnam Women's Memorial Foundation's website, "over 265,000 women served in the armed forces of the United States. Nearly 10,000 women in uniform actually served in-country during the conflict. They completed their tours of duty and made a difference. They gave their lives" (Women's Vietnam Memorial Foundation). These statements call to question if one's military service matters, only if they are in a combat zone. These statements also suggest that your life is only at risk if one is dropped in a combat zone.

The third stasis question is: What is the issue? The third question is an argument of evaluation. An argument of evaluation is defined as "an argument in which the claim specifies something does or doesn't meet established criteria" (Graham & Herndl, 2011, p.154). Stasis question three calls for one to speculate the need to have criteria to define something, where do scholars draw the line that the requirements have been met. Referring back to the definition of veteran example, some believe that one is only a veteran if one has served in a combat zone, yet one can be in a combat zone but never see combat. Anyone who enlists knows the chance that they are taking. They know that they are writing a blank check of up to and including their life in exchange for training and benefits. Everyone who enlists goes through the same Basic Combat Training (BCT) regardless of biological sex, military occupational specialty, active, reserve, or guard stasis. Some people's tickets get punched, and others do not. Historical and rhetorical scholars are left to decide where we draw the line and determine that specific criteria have been met to qualify as a particular label, such as veteran.
Finally, the fourth stasis question is: What do we do about it? The fourth stasis question is the final step after evidence has been verified, definitions are agreed upon, and evaluations have been conducted. The fourth stasis question is a proposal argument. A proposal argument is "an argument in which a claim is made in favor of or opposing a specific course of action" (Graham & Herndl, 2011, p.155).

If scholars were to apply Stasis Theory to matters regarding the silencing of female veterans, some of our stasis questions might look like this:

1. Have females served in the military? Are there enough instances of females serving in the military that historical and rhetorical scholars can call this data, facts, or logos, and not noise or an exception to the rule?

2. What do scholars call females that serve in the military? Do we call them veterans, soldiers, or women in uniform?

3. If scholars call females that serve or have served in the military veterans or soldiers, are they full veterans and soldiers with all services, resources, and recognition, or are they a separate class?

4. How should society recognize and memorialize female veterans?

Throughout the remaining chapters, I will demonstrate the various means of silence amongst female veterans; I will approach these silences through Stasis Theory. Admittedly if scholars were to apply Stasis Theory to most social justice matters, one would notice a trend of a tendency to jump to and focus on stasis question three immediately; what is the issue and stasis question four; what do we do about it and completely ignore stasis questions one and two. One
cannot skip around or answer the stasis questions in random order because each answer is contingent on the preceding question. Scholars must first begin by asking: does something exist? Did something happen? Second, if we determine that something exists or that something happened, we must then decide how we will define what exists or what happened. Third, we must evaluate the quality of the argument or issue; how great is the offense? These questions must be answered before we determine a solution.
CHAPTER 3. WHO IS A SOLDIER AND WHO IS JUST WEARING A UNIFORM? A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF WAR MEMORIALS DEDICATED TO MALE AND FEMALE VETERANS

In November of 1982, Diane Carlson Evans made her way to the National Mall for the Vietnam Wall's dedication. Many veterans surrounded her, primarily men, "whose faces creased too early in life from the never-ending weight of war; smiles uncertain; and tears falling unabashed, breaching dams mortared with a stoicism that, on this day, could simply not hold back the emotions" (Evans et al., 2020, p. 3). Evans describes focusing on the sea of flags, field jackets, Boonie hats, and combat boots as she approached the Wall. "Bands played one patriotic song after another for this gathering, coming, as it were, long after a war that was not won, but lost. Lost by politicians who had their own complicated agendas and egos. Not us" (Evans et al., 2020, p. 4).

As she drew closer to the Wall and the 57,939 names that called her to the Vietnam Wall's dedication, the sense of pride that Evans briefly felt transformed into a numbness. "It was news of the names on the Wall that had summoned me to this place, but I still feared the memorial's power and meaning" (Evans et al., 2020, p. 4). As Evans made her way to the front row facing the Wall, she pushed back her Boonie hat and looked up. "Oh. My God. Names. So Many. Names. The death. So much death" (Evans et al., 2020, p. 6). Her eyes scanned the Wall as she searched for two particular names. She found one name. She remembered caring for this patient, changing his dressings and removing his stitches. She was touching her former patient again as her hands touched the carved black granite.

A hand tapped her on the shoulder. The hand belonged to a man in his thirties wearing a shabby field jacket. "Ma'am, were you a nurse in Vietnam?" (Evans et al., 2020, p. 7). Evans
was taken aback by this question; it was a question that she had never been asked. Although hesitant, Evans nodded her head, yes (Evans et al., 2020, p. 7).

The man looked anxious; he took a breath. "I've waited fourteen years to say this… to a nurse… but I never came across one. Until now: (Evans et al., 2020, p. 7). He stopped for a moment, took a breath, and said two words that Evans had never heard regarding her military service "thank you" (Evans et al., 2020, p. 7).

"I can never thank you nurses enough. I love you. Thank you for being there for us. You're all we had" (Evans et al., 2020, p. 8). He then wrapped Evans in a deep hug. As Evans stood there feeling blessed, a new feeling enveloped her. "I belonged. I actually belonged here, to these people. To this place. This place was also my place. If he belonged here. So did I" (Evans et al., 2020, p. 8).

There is hardly a more iconic tale of patriotism than the war story. As told through the war memorial, the war story demonstrates the commanding general on horseback or the towering obelisk that emanates a narrative of victory and valor that demands our gratitude (Haskins, 2007, p. 403). War stories are often exchanged amongst brothers in arms who fought together and are directly affected by war. Brothers would sit together and laugh while reminiscing about the good times during training exercises and the pranks pulled on deployments. Brothers who would also sit and cry together as they solemnly drink their beer, remembering the hard times, and raise a glass to those lost in battle.

However, if in that moment of the sharing of the war story, an outsider, someone who is indirectly affected by war, enters the vicinity, the sharing of the war story is immediately shut down. Historical and rhetorical scholars must recognize some are insiders who have been
construed as outsiders, which has unfairly excluded them as insiders. One can imagine what would happen if Evans attempted to sit at a table with her fellow Vietnam veterans having a beer, reminiscing and trying to share her experiences in Vietnam. The war story is traditionally a "soldiers only" genre; not everyone in society can participate in the war story's oral exchange. Society is then left with materials to remind us of the sacrifices of those who have borne the battle. Through these materials, those directly and indirectly affected by war can view a version of the war story.

As society has progressed through time, we can see a slight alteration in those we consider as bearers of the war story—those that can share their experiences of combat. War memorials once memorialized a specific general, officer, or battle. These memorials did not recognize or represent those who fought or were wounded in battles. We must remember that our society once put officers on a pedestal as a veteran, soldier, and patriot, and at the same time turned their heads in disgust at the enlisted soldier who was maimed in combat.

Today, war memorials tend to honor the enlisted, those who served on the enlisted side in the trenches as "grunts" or "legs" who fought in battles, rather than those that gave orders from a safe distance. Some memorials provide images of "grunts" such as the Korean memorial; others are abstract or "post-modern" and hold names, arranged by date of death or loss, such as the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (Blair et al., 1991). However, there are very few memorials that represent women as bearers of the war story.

Female soldiers' material representations in war memorials are sparse; their names are not visible, their images too often follow stereotypical portrayals as caretakers or support staff, and the female soldiers are not depicted as active participants. War memorials dedicated to female soldiers ought to provide a vehicle to revise and expand war stories: who has authority to tell the
war story; who is seen as potentially driving the war story's action. Instead, war memorials dedicated to female veterans are often viewed as feeble attempts to be politically correct or aimless juxtapositions for the sake of inclusivity. Throughout this chapter, I will argue that there are disparities between the number of memorials dedicated to female veterans and male veterans. Through comparative visual analysis, I will discuss the misrepresentations of the war story as assumed to be experienced by male and female veterans. I will also address stasis question one: have females served in the military, stasis question two: what do we call females that serve and have served in the military and stasis question three are females a different class of veteran.

**One of Us Is Not Quite Like the Other**

It is not difficult to notice that women are missing from our histories, archives, and public memorials. In his article "It Is Way Too Hard to Find Statues of Notable Women in the US," Danny Lewis writes that in 2016 there were 5,193 public memorials in the United States of America. Only 394 (7.5%) of the 5,193 public memorials are dedicated to women (Lewis, 2016). War memorials dedicated to women veterans' memory do not appear to have the same amount of support as those that depict a man's war story.

When comparing the development of the Vietnam Women's Memorial to the Vietnam Wall, the Vietnam Women's Memorial took ten years to be completed, and a personal loan of $350,000 had to be taken out to compensate for the absence of donations to complete the memorial. The Vietnam Wall took three years to complete and did not require any personal loans to be taken out for monetary support (Evans, 2020, p. 237).

The Vietnam Women's Memorial is not the only memorial dedicated to female veterans that have faced challenges to create. The Women in Military Service for America (WIMSA) has
faced many challenges with funding, not only for the memorial's construction process but also to even keep the doors to the memorial open. On October 18th, 1997, almost 40,000 female veterans and active service members gathered for the dedication of the Women in Military Service for America (WIMSA) Memorial. It should be noted that WIMSA serves as both a memorial and a museum dedicated to the service of female veterans; WIMSA is the only national memorial to recognize all-female service members. However, it appears that a mere twenty years after WIMSA was dedicated, the memorial has since been forgotten.

Figure 3: Women in Military Service for America (WIMSA) memorial, (2021). An aerial image of the WIMSA memorial/museum, located near Arlington Cemetery. One can faintly see the images of the white headstones in the background.

WIMSA is located near the entrance of Arlington Cemetery. The memorial was constructed from a stone gate known as the hemicycle. The hemicycle was intended to be a ceremonial entrance into the Arlington Cemetery; however, it was never utilized (Kenney, 2017). Unfortunately, WIMSA's existence is largely unknown, despite what one would think would be a
convenient location to draw an audience. WIMSA receives an estimated 150,000 visitors a year that tour the various exhibits within the memorial. In comparison, the World War II Veterans Memorial had approximately 5 million visitors a year (Kenney, 2017).

WIMSA faced struggles before the memorial was dedicated. In 1986, Congress authorized the Women in Military Service for America Foundation to build the memorial. That same year legislation passed requiring commemorative works to obtain their construction permit. The passage of this legislation meant that the WIMSA Foundation had until 1991 to raise enough funds to break ground.

In 2017, Air Force Brigadier General (RET.) Wilma Vaught stated, "First you've got to get the word out, and that is difficult for something like this" (Kenney, 2017). Vaught, who is the President Emeritus of the WIMSA Foundation, went on to say, "Women's things don't get advertised the way other things do" (Kenney, 2017). Vaught continued that the WIMSA foundation had to go before Congress twice to ask for an extension on the groundbreaking date. The WIMSA foundation avoided going a third time before Congress by taking out a $3 million loan. "Toward the end there, to get [the] groundbreaking, to avoid going back to Congress for another extension, I got the Bank of America to give us a $3 million loan," Vaught recalled (Kenney, 2017). The lack of donations and the need to seek funding by taking out bank loans to complete a project is a glaring example that memorials dedicated to the feats of women are not held in as high regard as those dedicated to men, which calls for us to closely examine the unequal financial support for material representations such as WIMSA, as a means to silence female veterans as bearers of the war story.

In 1995, nine years after Congress authorized the Women in Military Service or America Memorial to be built, construction finally began. WIMSA was dedicated in 1997 and
immediately began to rely on Congressional funding to operate. In 2010, Congress stopped reserving $1 million in funds to support the WIMSA Memorial. Unfortunately, Congress's funds were roughly a third of WIMSA's budget; drastic cuts had to be made to keep the WIMSA Memorial open (Kenney, 2017).

In 2016, the WIMSA Foundation found that the memorial was $850,000 in debt and six months behind on rent for their administrative offices. Thanks to the budget cuts, they were able to get current on their rent, and they were able to decrease their debt by two-thirds. WIMSA continues to hope to get more money from Congress to help secure the memorial's financial situation (Kenney, 2017). The continued financial struggle of the WIMSA memorial illustrates the efforts that women must endure to bring awareness to female veterans' experiences in the military.

In 2017, the National Defense Authorization Act authorized up to $5 million to assist museums and memorials' financial support. On August 9th, 2017, the WIMSA Foundation announced that they had successfully secured a $5 million grant from the Department of Defense (DOD). Through this grant, WIMSA will upgrade a few of its exhibits, equipment, and facilities. However, this grant's funds cannot be used for expenses such as electricity or the telephone bill, basic utilities which enable the WIMSA Memorial to be open to the public (Kenney, 2017).

WIMSA is not entirely limited to relying on funds from the government. Army Major General (RET) Dee Ann McWilliams, and former president of the WIMSA foundation, states that roughly 74% of WIMSA's funding "come from constituents or people honoring them" (Kenney, 2017). The AcademyWomen, a non-profit organization that offers advisors and networking opportunities, is currently trying to help raise donations through its Military Women eMentor program. The AcademyWomen set a goal of raising $1.5 million before October 18th,
2017. When the Kenney article was published on August 25th, 2017, fifty-four days before their fundraising goal deadline, only $111,987 of the $1.5 million goal had been raised.

The lack of financial support and foot traffic through the WIMSA memorial seems rather dismal and circles back to the comment made by Air Force Brigadier General (RET.) Wilma Vaught, that "Women's things don't get advertised the way other things do" (Kenney, 2017). One would think that the WIMSA Foundation's mission of honoring and sharing female veterans' narratives would be welcomed and widely accepted, especially by the self-proclaimed patriots of the United States of America. If one is genuinely patriotic and "supports the troops," one would think the enthusiasm and financial support for honoring military service members would be similar if not equal regardless of the biological sex of the soldier that is being recognized. The lack of financial aid and enthusiasm for memorials dedicated to female veterans calls for speculation if biological sex is a part of society's criteria about who is or who can be a veteran or what type of veteran someone is; is a separate class of veteran by attaching adjectives such as male and female to veteran.

There is another challenge facing WIMSA within the female veteran population. The youngest generation of female veterans is struggling to identify with the WIMSA Memorial. Air Force Lieutenant Colonel (RET) Donna Parry, who works as a volunteer at the WIMSA Foundation, said that female veterans "don't see themselves as needing to represent something that set us apart" after working for so long to serve side by side of male soldiers (Kenney, 2017). The enigma that is created by Parry's statement about current female veterans struggle to identify with the WIMSA Memorial calls for speculation about how society can recognize and celebrate differences without setting people apart. For now, the WIMSA Memorial remains open. However, WIMSA still struggles to get people through the doors of the memorial and to obtain
donations. Sadly, the fate of the only national memorial to recognize the service of female veterans is unknown.

In the case of the Women in Military Service for America Memorial (WIMSA), we see how the physical location of WIMSA allows for the memorial to be overshadowed by Arlington Cemetery. One can see the cemetery from the WIMSA memorial; however, one cannot see the WIMSA memorial from the cemetery. Arlington Cemetery's dominance dwarfs WIMSA to the point where the WIMSA Memorial fades into the background, entirely unseen. When referring back to the Silence Triangle (Figure 2), rhetoricians could view the placement of WIMSA as a silence between audience and text in that the text—WIMSA is placed in a location that it can be easily avoided or ignored by the audience. In this way, female veterans within the context of Arlington, which celebrates the sacrifices of veterans, are sifted out of the war story; they are rendered invisible and thereby silenced through that invisibility.

The number of war memorials and funding of war memorials dedicated to female veterans' narratives is not the only issue at hand. War memorials that have been constructed to honor female veterans' experiences have very stark differences representing female veterans' narratives compared to memorials that mark the experiences of male veterans. Throughout the remainder of this section, I will analyze through comparative visual analysis the substantial differences between war memorials dedicated to female and male veterans to demonstrate how the image of veteran is cataloged as "male." For my analysis, I will focus on memorials such as the Korean War Memorial, the Marine Corps War Memorial, the Vietnam Women's Memorial, and the Deborah Sampson sculpture.
Korean War Memorial

The Korean War Memorial, located in the National Mall in Washington D.C., is a famous war memorial that has strayed from the traditional means of memorializing a specific officer or battle. The Korean War Memorial displays male soldiers moving in a formation across what can be assumed as an open area where they are exposed and vulnerable. The Korean War Memorial demonstrates the mundane experiences of war as compared to depicting heroics, fighting, and valor. The soldiers depicted in the Korean War Memorial are wearing military-issued ponchos, marching, and armed with rifles. The soldiers are not smiling; they appear to be tired and worn.

Figure 4: National Park Foundation (2021). The Korean War Memorial located in Washington D.C. displays nineteen soldiers in Ponchos moving together in a triangular formation.
Some soldiers are looking over their shoulder; this can be interpreted as the soldier showing fear in response to being vulnerable as a moving formation exposed out in the open. The ponchos suggest that the weather is bad, allowing the viewer to actively see the “hells of war” by the soldiers being subjected to the elements. The Korean War Memorial reflects on the daily hardships that soldiers experience when they are in war but not necessarily active combat. Soldiers still experience fatigue, they are scared, and they are subjected to the elements of nature such as wind, rain, and snow. The Korean War Memorial depicts “hells of war” are experienced in the soldiers’ everyday life whether or not they are actively fighting. Through this depiction, the Korean War Memorial is arguably shaping the definition of words such as veteran and soldier by demonstrating that one does not have to be in combat to be considered a soldier or a veteran.

The nineteen male soldiers in the Korean War Memorial are moving together in a formation as a unit. Even though these figures are made of stainless steel, the viewer can see that the statues are still actively participating and communicating through facial features and hand signals with one another in the Korean War Memorial. The collective representation of these soldiers demonstrates that they are one, they are a team, they are in sync with one another, and that they belong. From the representations of the nineteen male soldiers depicted in the Korean War Memorial, society is to assume that they reflect the norm and wholly represent the experience of the Korean War. However, matters of analysis are not just what an audience sees but also what the audience does not see. The Korean War Memorial ought to make one ask, where are the female veterans.

At a glance, the Korean War Memorial conceals female service members’ presence in the Korean War. However, upon closer inspection of the black granite wall backdrop, one will find
the names of the females that served during the Korean War. Unknown to many, 120,000 females served during the Korean War; one-third of these females were healthcare workers (Korean War Legacy Foundation, 2021). However, the viewer would never know that females served in the Korean War because the Korean War Memorial's dominant face is male—the sculptures of the soldiers marching in their panchos all appear to be male. Yet behind these nineteen male soldiers are the voices of 120,000 female soldiers, stagnant, unseen, unheard, just silence in plain sight. The 120,000 female soldiers names are present, but they are sifted into the background of the sculpture; visitors may walk between the sculptures without ever seeing much less reading the names on the memorial.

![Image of the Korean War Memorial with sculptures covered in snow.]

Figure 5: Traces of War (2021). The Korean War Memorial in Washington D.C. The sculptures are covered in snow. This allows for the viewer to see the hardships of the elements on the soldiers.
United States Marine Corps War Memorial

The Marine Corps War Memorial, located in Arlington County, Virginia, is another famous war memorial. The Marine Corps War Memorial represents one of the most iconic moments during World War II, the United States Marines erecting the American flag on Iwo Jima’s island. Once again, the audience can note that the soldiers in this memorial are all male. The soldiers are shown armed with weapons slung. Their faces are focused; they are not smiling.

The soldiers depicted in the Marine Corps War Memorial are also working together as a collective group. The six bronze male soldiers shown in this memorial may not be actively looking at one another, communicating through hand signals, or verbally speaking with each other. However, the viewer can determine that these male soldiers are in sync with one another as they erect the American flag up on Mount Suribachi of Iwo Jima Island (Britannica, n.d.).

The soldiers exhibit strength and unity as they raise America’s flag, symbolizing American freedom, valor, and victory on that rocky, uneven terrain. Again, the highlighted geography - the rocky terrain that would make it difficult to raise the flag - demonstrates to the viewer the perils experienced in war. The United States Marine Corp demonstrates patriotism through being a soldier and the performative action of raising the flag of our country on foreign land. The act of raising the American flag helps reinforce the symbolic attachments that society has about the United States’ flag with patriotism; the flag is an abridgment symbol representing various facets of patriotism and the United States’ identity and pride. These actions help invoke feelings that suggest who is a soldier, a patriot, and what it means to be patriotic. Yet, in all of this patriotism and love of country, one cannot help but notice that someone appears to be
missing. Historical and rhetorical scholars should not just question who is “missing” but also what their lack of presence suggests.

Figure 6: National Park Service (2021). Image of the silhouette of the Marine Corp War Memorial, depicting a group of United States Marines raising the American Flag at Iwo Jima

Figure 7: National Park Service (2021). Close-up image of one of the United States Marines shown in the United States Marine Corp Memorial
“We Were Good Enough To Serve In Vietnam, But Not Good Enough To Be Represented Like Men.” - Diane Carlson Evans

The idea to include a sculpture dedicated to the female veterans who served as nurses in the Vietnam war was met with resistance; the Commission of Fine Arts was concerned that the addition of a memorial dedicated to female Vietnam veterans would detract rather than add to the memorial and suggested that the Vietnam Women's Memorial Foundation wait until ground broke for the WIMSA memorial to include their sculpture in Arlington instead. However, the Vietnam Women's Memorial Foundation did not want to be displayed in a collection of veterans from other wars on the basis that all of them were female. The Vietnam Women's Memorial wished to be represented within their war, with those they served with in Vietnam. In October 1987, the Commission of Fine Arts held a meeting to determine if the proposed model by Roger Brodin coined "The Nurse" could have a place near the Vietnam Wall. The original prototype for the Vietnam Women's Memorial was not the memorial that tourists can see today in the Constitution Gardens in Washington D.C., which is a sculpture of three females and a wounded male. The original model displayed a lone military nurse holding a combat helmet. Sculptor Frederick Hart, who designed the Three Servicemen statue near the Vietnam Wall, rejected the proposed prototype suggesting it would "demolish" and "compromise the fragile balance" of the Wall (Evans et al., 2020, p. 172). Another member stated that they felt that the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial should be left as is, that the Three Servicemen statue designed by Hart enhanced the Vietnam Wall. The suggestion is that the "soldiers'' experience has been wholly represented by the three male servicemen. One might speculate if this member suggests that the Vietnam Women's Memorial would detract from the Vietnam Wall (Evans et al., 2020, p. 174). Former Secretary of the Navy Jim Web stated, "There will never be an addition of another statue
at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. All these special interest groups want statues including the K-9 corp" (Evans et al., 2020, p. 174). Neil Porterfield stated that he "feared the proposed memorial 300ft from the Wall in a grove of trees would destroy the dynamics of the Wall," that the memorial would fail to accomplish what Evans had hoped for; Porterfield stated that the Women's Vietnam Memorial was "unnecessary as a means of healing the wounds from Vietnam" (Evans et al., 2020, p. 174). Rhetorical scholars can use the Silence Triangle (Figure 2) to examine the silence of the Vietnam Women's Memorial Foundation by the Commission of Fine Arts. By denying the Vietnam Women's Memorial Foundation’s request to include a memorial to female Vietnam veterans the Commission of Fine Arts is silencing female Vietnam veterans in the same light as if someone would place their hand over a speaker’s mouth to prevent them from speaking. The metaphorical covering of the mouths of female Vietnam veterans silences their experiences from the war story as told by the Vietnam veteran’s section of the National Mall. Rhetoricians are left to question if the Commission of Fine Arts is suggesting the healing process of all Vietnam Veterans is complete with the addition of the Three Servicemen to the Vietnam Wall. Porterfield suggesting that a memorial dedicated to the female Vietnam Veterans is "unnecessary" is silencing female veterans and the wounds that they experienced during the Vietnam War.

In a four to one vote, the proposed Vietnam Women's Memorial "The Nurse" was voted down by the Commission of Fine Arts. Diane Carlson Evans and Evangeline Jamison were beside themselves. They could not believe that the Vietnam Women's Memorial had been voted down: "The site was already ours, based on the legislation for the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial. It clearly states the ground is for the men and women who served in the Armed Forces of the Vietnam War. That's us. We were good enough to serve in Vietnam but not good enough to be
represented like the men. In fact, the implication was that we would harm what was already there" (Evans et al., 2020, p.179). The Commission of Fine Arts silenced the female Vietnam veterans by voting against the inclusion of the Vietnam Women's Memorial out of concern that the Vietnam Women's Memorial would impair the existing memorials. Here the speaker, the commission, the institution with power to determine what would appear in the national sculpture garden, attempted to exclude the text representing women in Vietnam; this was intentional silencing.

Figure 8: The Highgrounds (2021). “The Nurse.” The original prototype for the Vietnam Women’s Memorial by Roger Brodin. After the statue was not selected for the Vietnam Women’s Memorial the 36” model was placed in front of the flagpole at the Highground Veterans’ Memorial Park and Museum in Clark County, Wisconsin.
The morning after the Vietnam Women's Memorial was rejected by the Commission of Fine Arts; the newspapers held a mixed media response. Bill McClellan from the St. Louis Post-Dispatch wrote, "Feminists used Vietnam dead, nurses for own ends; the statue of a nurse has more to do with a cause - the feminist movement - than it does with nursing; it has almost nothing to do with Vietnam" (Evans et al., 2020, p. 181). Time Magazine ran a headline, "A Memorial Too Many," and the writer referred to the Vietnam Women's Memorial as the "intruding nurse" (Evans et al., 2020, p. 181). A letter writer for New York Times later responded to these suggestions that a memorial to women "termed the proliferation - of - memorial argument as 'specious,' 'specifically sexist,' and 'an insult to the women of all the services' 'Women are not an 'ethnic' or 'specialty' group" (Evans et al., 2020, p. 181). The Boston Globe offered their support, stating, "It is on its own merits that the Vietnam Women's Memorial Project deserves support. As the project's staff notes, to this day, 'many women have never told their friends, colleagues, or even loved ones about their tour in Vietnam.' They (Female Vietnam Nurses) were young, mostly in their early 20s, and if the nation did not understand - or fully accept - the experiences of the young men who served in Vietnam, even less did it understand the experiences of the young women who served with them, in a war that had no front lines and in which were no safety, and no shelter from its horrors” (Evans et al., 2020, p. 181). Here the Boston Globe is advocating that the Vietnam Veteran's memorial does not accurately represent all Vietnam veterans' experience and that female Vietnam veterans need a space to heal, be recognized, and be heard.

Unfortunately, the media was not the only source of hostility for the women who supported the Vietnam Women's Memorial Project. Board members received hate letters, hate phone calls, and even death threats. However, the worst blow was when the Vietnam Women's
Memorial Project was working to make a comeback, members of the project began to resign and join in on the late-night hate phone calls. Evans recalls receiving a phone call from a voice she knew and had once respected, "you are nothing but whale shit," said the caller (Evans et al., 2020, p. 187). Allies were quickly turning into adversaries. Still, Evans persisted, and in 1988 Evans went before the Senate and asked, "Who decides who America will remember?" (Evans et al., 2020, p. 190). Evans' question is so important because her question acknowledges that someone has the authority to choose who is worth remembering and who is not. Someone decides who is heard and who is not heard. That someone is saying that our female veterans are not worth remembering. That someone is silencing female veteran's voices. Evans' question also calls for us to ask why has no one else asked or challenged who is charged with deciding who and how society remembers someone or something; or has this question been asked before and it just went unheard.

In the Summer of 1990, the Women's Vietnam Memorial Project launched its final "Vietnam Women's Memorial National One-Stage Open Design Competition Program, Design Standards, Rules, and Procedures" (Evans et al., 2020, p. 203). Through this competition, the Vietnam Women's Memorial Project discovered artist Glenna Goodacre. Her design was of three nurses, and one of the nurses was holding a Vietnamese baby. Evans reached out to Goodacre and asked if she would be willing to work with the Vietnam Women's Memorial Project board to modify her proposed Vietnam Women's Memorial (Evans et al., 2020, p. 208). Goodacre inquired about the modifications, to which Evans replied, "we've been told that the memorial must not make a political statement" (Evans et al., 2020, p. 208). Evans then explained that even though many nurses cared for sick and wounded Vietnamese children, the
American GIs had been called "baby killers" and asked Goodacre if she would be willing to remove the baby.

In June of 1991, Glenna Goodacre flew out to Washington D.C. with her revised proposed three-dimensional model for the Vietnam Women's Memorial. The Vietnam Women's Memorial Project reserved a hotel conference room so that stakeholders, veterans, board members, and representatives from veterans' service organizations could come and meet Goodacre and view her clay model. Evans welcomed guests and proceeded with the order of business; would the Vietnam Women's Project take Goodacre's sculpture before the Commission of Fine Arts. Evans stated, "Our purpose here today is not to force anyone to like our recommendation for the memorial. Our purpose is to simply give you a chance to see it and tell us how you feel…..The question is: What do you think" (Evans et al., 2020, p. 211). Evans scanned the room and took in the smiles, the gasps, and the "it's beautiful." Evans then asked for a show of hands if the sculpture designed by Goodacre is what they would like to see as the Vietnam Women's Memorial. There was no reluctance; every hand in the conference room was raised (Evans et al., 2020, p. 212).

In the fall of 1991, Evans and the Vietnam Women's Memorial Project members found themselves in front of the Commission of Fine Arts once again. The Commission reviewed the sculpture and made a few "attention to detail" revision remarks. In the end, the Commission of Fine Arts voted unanimously in favor of the statue known as the Vietnam Women's Memorial (Evans et al., 2020, p. 213). In 1993, after all the campaigns, after the revisions, after all the tears, after all the persisting, the Vietnam Women's memorial was dedicated in the Constitution Gardens in Washington D.C.; four years later, WIMSA was dedicated. Had the women of the Vietnam Women's Memorial Foundation waited for WIMSA to be dedicated, as suggested by
the Commission of Fine Arts in 1987, it would have been another four years before their story would have been told. As Charlotte Hogg wrote of the women of Paxton, Nebraska, feeling directly responsible for improving and providing culture to their community, the women of the Vietnam Women's Memorial Foundation were directly responsible for sharing and passing on the memory of female Vietnam veterans. The women of the Vietnam Women's Memorial Foundation not only initiated and had a hand in designing the Vietnam Women's memorial, but these women had to fight for a space that was just as much rightfully theirs. Had the women of the Vietnam Women's Memorial Foundation not persisted in their efforts to establish a memorial to represent the service of female Veterans in Vietnam, the nation may have forgotten the efforts of our female veterans in Vietnam.

**Vietnam Women’s Memorial**

The Vietnam Women’s Memorial, located in the Constitution Gardens in Washington D.C., has been one of the more praised war memorials dedicated to female veterans. The Vietnam Women’s Memorial skillfully inserts female veterans, specifically Army nurses, into the discourse. The Vietnam Women’s Memorial uniquely memorializes a memory instead of a specific person, battle, or date. By choosing to commemorate a memory and not honoring a particular someone, the Vietnam Women’s Memorial creates a scene that many female veterans that served as nurses or medics in Vietnam can identify with.

The Vietnam Women’s Memorial has done wonderful things for female veterans. The memorial has created a space for female Vietnam veterans to call their own. A place for them to gather, to remember, to acknowledge, and to heal. Female veterans can interact with the Vietnam Women’s Memorial. Veterans can be seen in the following pictures gathering and interacting with the memorial at celebrations to commemorate the Vietnam Women’s Memorial.
dedications anniversaries. Their interactions include leaving flowers or wreaths at the memorial site and reading the names of female Vietnam veterans who were lost in war and have since passed after the war.

Figure 9: Washington Post, an image of Vietnam Women’s Memorial (2013). The memorial depicts three female soldiers, one of the women soldiers is providing care to a male soldier, while another female soldier looks to the sky, and a third has taken a knee and appears to be looking at the ground.

One cannot deny the controversy surrounding the Vietnam War and the welcome home reception that Vietnam veterans received. Since the returning home of United States troops from Vietnam, there have been efforts to repair the relationship between Vietnam veterans and
society. Yet, those that have been the primary focus of this healing are the male government-issued (GI) and not female GIs. There is no official documentation of how many women served in the Vietnam War. Historians can only speculate that roughly 11,000 women served in the Vietnam War (Morden, 1990, p. 226). Women from all walks and stages of life, some as young as their early twenties, others in their forties, volunteered their services in the Vietnam War.

The sentiment and the significance surrounding the Vietnam Women’s Memorial are remarkable. There were 11,000, possibly more, narratives expunged from public memory. However, the Vietnam Women’s Memorial inserts these female veterans back into the military discourse and compels society to acknowledge and remember that they served too.

Figure 10: Vietnam Women’s Memorial Foundation (2013), photo of women veterans surrounding the Vietnam Women’s Memorial at the 20th-anniversary celebration of the Vietnam Women’s Memorial Dedication, November 13, 2013.

There is an unknown amount of civilian women who also volunteered their services in Vietnam. These women served in the Red Cross, Army Special Services, United Service Organization (USO), Peace Corps, and religious groups such as the Catholic Relief Services. Although it is unknown how many women volunteered their services it is known that 59 civilian women died on Vietnamese soil (History). Civilian women are not included in war memorials such as the Vietnam Wall, because these memorials are created to honor those that were enlisted in United States military branch.
The Vietnam Women’s Memorial has definitely set a bar where we as a society should be progressing towards as far as remembering our female veterans. However, a closer look reveals some issues with the representation of the women shown in this memorial as soldiers. Despite that, the women are portrayed in camouflage uniforms, they have rolled sleeves, their coats are open, their hair is touching their shoulders, and they do not have appropriate headcover for being outside or in combat.

Although this memorial may represent its time, female soldiers were not issued appropriate equipment or attire during the Vietnam war, such as an advanced combat helmet (ACH); the women’s representation in this memorial out of regulation discredits them as soldiers. How the Vietnam Women’s Memorial depicts the women featured in this memorial
makes it difficult for current female service members and veterans to identify with this representation because it does not replicate their military experiences. The Vietnam Women’s Memorial also makes it difficult for women to see themselves as soldiers and for society to remember women as soldiers.

Figure 12: Stars and Stripes (2021), close up image of Vietnam Women’s Memorial

There are several questions that the Vietnam Women’s Memorial raises about the capabilities of women as soldiers. There are no weapons visualized in this memorial, unlike memorials that depict male veterans, raising the question of whether women can defend themselves and their comrades against the enemy. The ratio of three women to one man could also be interpreted as suggesting that it takes three women to do one man’s job.

It cannot help but be noted that each of the memorials dedicated to female veterans demonstrates a single or isolated female soldier. Arguably there are three female soldiers in the Vietnam Women’s Memorial. However, closer analysis suggests that these female soldiers are
not collected together at that moment. The female soldiers do not appear to be working together; they appear out of sync with each other; they are not functioning together as a unit; they present as three individual soldiers that have been juxtaposed together.

Isolating female soldiers permits society to ignore and further silence female veterans. Through isolation, it becomes easier to dismiss and repress female veterans from the military discourse because isolation demonstrates them as a fluke, an exception to the rule, and not as a consistent part of the discourse. Carolyn Heilbrun writes that it is imperative “for women to see themselves collectively, not individually…..Individual stories from biographies and autobiographies have always been conceived of as individual, eccentric lives” (Heilbrun, 1988, p. 46).

Males, however, have often been represented in groups throughout history. The collective depiction of male soldiers makes challenging the masculine narrative of the war story more complex. Through consistently demonstrating male soldiers in groups, the masculine narrative is presented as the social norm within the military discourse, and the feminine narrative is other.

The Vietnam Women’s Memorial conforms to traditional gender roles that women are the caregivers. By conforming to these roles, the memorial can invoke sympathy from the viewer. The Vietnam Women’s Memorial radiates “Our poor boys” because the male soldier is the only one that is wounded. The Vietnam Women’s Memorial disregards the physical and mental wounds women have experienced and continue to experience in combat. Arguably the Vietnam Women’s Memorial perpetuates the presupposition that all females that serve in the military are nurses. Despite that most females who served during the Vietnam War were nurses,
women also served as physicians, air traffic controllers, intelligence officers, clerks, and other various occupations (Morden, 1990, p. 226).

Another problematic issue surrounding the Vietnam Women’s Memorial is defining terms such as soldier. Only the male depicted in the sculpture is identified as a soldier in the description of the memorial on the Vietnam Women’s Memorial website: “It depicts three uniformed women with an injured soldier” (Vietnam Women’s Memorial, 2021). “Uniformed women,” suggests some ambiguity about whether the women are really soldiers. Every person who uses this website for a reference on the Vietnam Women’s Memorial is directly told who the soldier is and who is merely wearing a uniform. In conjunction with the visualization, definitions draw a hard line about who has what role in the military.

![Vietnam Women's Memorial](image)

Figure 13: Wikipedia, (2021) an image of Wikipedia’s description of the Vietnam Women’s Memorial. The image states that the memorial “depicts three uniformed women with a wounded soldier”

**Deborah Sampson Sculpture**

One afternoon artist Lu Stubbs had a visitor at her studio. One of her friends stopped by to chat, and she commented Stubbs that Stubbs had done a lot of work for other areas and that
Stubbs should consider doing something for her local community of Sharon, Massachusetts. Stubbs thought about this for a bit, and her thoughts instantly went to Deborah Sampson. Stubbs had always been infatuated with Sampson, the woman who disguised herself as a man to serve in the Revolutionary War, and decided that she would create a statue of the local heroine (Stubbs).

Stubbs knew that there were two living descendants of Sampson that still resided in Sharon. When Stubbs met with Sampson’s family members, she found that they owned items that belonged to Sampson. The family members directed Stubbs to another family member who lived on the Cape that had one of Sampson’s dresses in their possession, which Stubbs drove up to photograph. Stubbs also photographed other items such as a musket, powder horn, hat, and colonial jacket used in local reenactment events. She used all of these photographs to help create her vision of the Deborah Sampson statue. Stubbs then made a miniature model of her vision and showed the sculpture to local townspeople. Many supported Stubbs’s vision of Sampson. The community immediately started a fundraiser to cover the costs of the bronze sculpture (Stubbs, 2016).

One year later, on November 11th, 1989, in front of a jubilant crowd, the Deborah Sampson sculpture was dedicated in front of the Sharon, Massachusetts library. The 18th Massachusetts Regiment fired off a twenty-one-gun salute. The air was full of patriotic music, and of course, “George and Martha Washington” made a guest appearance at the Deborah Sampson sculpture’s unveiling (Stubbs, 2016). Similar to Charlotte Hogg’s women of Paxton, Nebraska, had the memory of Deborah Sampson not been so well preserved by members of the community of Sharon, Massachusetts sculptor Lu Stubbs may not have known about or been inspired by Sampson’s heroics in the Revolutionary War. Even more so, had the conversation between two women, between two women friends, not occurred, the Deborah Sampson sculpture
may never have been placed in front of the library in Sharon, Massachusetts; the sculpture has helped breathe new life into the memory of Sampson, making her visible, releasing her from silence.

Figure 14: Huber, Lindsey (2018). The bronze sculpture of Deborah Sampson at the front entrance of the Sharon, Massachusetts Public Library, March 2018.

The bronze statue of Deborah Sampson is located in front of the Public Library in Sharon, Massachusetts. Sampson served eighteen months disguised as a man, Robert Shurtleff, in the 4th Massachusetts Regiment of the Continental Army. She was selected to serve in the
Light Infantry. One of her most significant accomplishments as a soldier was when she led thirty infantrymen on a mission that captured fifteen British allies or Tories (SARBC, 2005, p. 79).

The statue displays Sampson in a dress, not a military uniform. She has a powder horn in her right hand, a musket propped against her left arm, and a colonial jacket draped over her right shoulder. Arguably Sampson looks accessorized with pieces of soldier attire; she does not give the appearance that she is prepared to defend herself, her comrades, or her country. A close-up of Sampson’s face reveals that her facial features have been softened, and there is almost a hint of a smile. One may conclude that this representation of Sampson does not portray what society may envision as an accomplished soldier, a leader of men.

The Sampson sculpture tries to bring the complexities of Sampson’s military service and her female identity together. As a result, the depiction of Sampson may not seem, at first glance, to be a depiction of a military veteran. From a contemporary viewpoint there are multiple inconsistencies that make it difficult for contemporary female veterans to identify with Sampson as a veteran. As previously noted, the statue shows Sampson in a dress with a musket propped against her left shoulder and a soldier’s coat draped over her right shoulder. A female veteran observing the Deborah Sampson sculpture may not identify with this vision of Sampson as a veteran. Like Sampson, female veterans did not serve their country in a dress; they wore the appropriate standard-issued uniform worn by everyone. A female veteran may also have difficulty identifying with Sampson because of her presentation with the musket. Everyone in the military is taught how to use and handle a rifle appropriately. Sampson is presented as being posed or accessorized with a musket; she does not appear to be prepared to defend herself or her comrades.
Figure 15: Huber, Lindsey (2018). A close up of the facial features of the bronze sculpture of Deborah Sampson, in front of the Sharon, Massachusetts Public Library. March 2018.

However, Sampson’s sculpture’s execution appears to have executed a few key attributes significant to Sampson’s real-life physical appearance and personality. It was known that Sampson had masculine physical features and masculine mannerisms before her enlistment into the Army. Sampson stood at five feet seven and a half inches tall; this may sound like an average height today, but Sampson lived in a time when the average man stood at five foot three inches, and the average woman stood at four foot nine inches. Sampson was said to have a long face, a strong jaw, and a prominent nose, see Figure 12. Figure 12 is of a bronzed image of Sampson’s from-life painting when she was discharged from West Point (SARBC, 2005, p. 79). When comparing the bronze sculpture created by Lu Stubbs, Figures 11 and 12, there are some
notable differences in the facial features. Figure 11 portrays Sampson’s facial features to be softer and more feminine.

![Image](image_url)

Figure 16: Huber, Lindsey (2018). A close up of the bronze from life portrait of Deborah Sampson, located on a Civil War Memorial in the Rock Ridge Cemetery, Sharon, Massachusetts. March 2018.

The sculpture of Sampson disappointingly does not radiate honor and courage as memorials that represent male veterans do. One could come to construe that society has developed distinct presuppositions about who is a veteran, despite the definitions of veteran and soldier. However, suppose the memory of females as veterans is accepted. In that case, those who accept the memory of females as service members hold very distinct and segregated ideologies about men and women’s capabilities and roles in the military.
There is no plaque to offer education to those that pass by, the absence of a plaque demonstrates the silence between text and audience, when referencing the Silence Triangle (Figure 2). Unless one has prior knowledge about Sampson, they would not know who or what the memorial represents; for all one knows, the Deborah Sampson sculpture may be of a fictional character such as Amelia Bedelia. The absence of a text is exceptionally problematic for the Deborah Sampson sculpture because the lack of a plaque or text renders that there is no message. The passerby is then forced to seek knowledge from another source about the Deborah Sampson statue. The seeking out of information from another source is troubling because it creates a situation that the passerby may receive a false narrative. For example, author Herman Mann, in his attempt to make Deborah Sampson’s biography “more interesting,” Mann wrote that Sampson served in the Siege of Yorktown; however, this battle occurred from September 28th, 1781-October 19th, 1781. Sampson did not enlist until May 23rd, 1782, making it impossible for her to have served at the Siege of Yorktown (Cheny, 1967, p. 180).

Like the Vietnam Women’s Memorial, the Deborah Sampson sculpture allocates community members opportunities to interact with the statue. Members of the Sharon community often would leave flowers, wreaths, or patriotic clothing items such as scarves around the sculpture’s neck. However, not all interactions with the Deborah Sampson sculpture have been welcomed by community members. Yet, feminist scholars cannot ignore the silencing of narratives through policed spaces. Spaces that are policed create the questions of how someone or something is to be remembered and who is allowed to participate in remembering or the memorialization process.
Celebrations of Deborah Sampson

The community of Sharon, Massachusetts, is not limited to a sculpture of Sampson to celebrate her heroism. The community of Sharon has dedicated a street and a park to help memorialize Sampson as the heroine of Massachusetts. On May 23rd, 1982, the state of Massachusetts declared Sampson as the state heroine and declared May 23rd to be Deborah Sampson day. The state selected this date because Deborah Sampson successfully enlisted as Robert Shurtleff on May 23rd, 1782 (Massachusetts Historical Society, 2005). This day is celebrated within the community of Sharon, Massachusetts, through plays, war reenactments, and Sampson being included in the school curriculum.
Figure 18: Library Land Project, (2019) an image of the Deborah Sampson Sculpture holding an American Flag.

Figure 19: Huber, Lindsey (2018). Image of Deborah Sampson Street, a street dedicated to the memory of Deborah Sampson within the town of Sharon, Massachusetts.
The state of Massachusetts has created a military award, coined the Deborah Sampson Award. Each year this award is given to a female veteran from Massachusetts who has played a notable role in their community and military service. The Deborah Sampson award is presented each year in November at the Massachusetts State House in Boston (Massachusetts Government, 2013). Pictured below is the former Navy Airman Nancy Ross presenting the Deborah Sampson Award to retired First Sergeant Christine Tron on November 8th, 2019.

Figure 20: Boston Herald (2019). Photo of former Navy Airman Nancy Ross presenting the Deborah Sampson Military Award to First Sergeant Christine Tron US Army (RET) in front of the Massachusetts State House in Boston, on November 8th 2019

However, despite the plethora of celebrations to remember Deborah Sampson, she is still not commonly known outside of Sharon, Massachusetts. One cannot help but question if the continued silencing of Deborah Sampson is because efforts being made to memorialize her, are
not being heard by the audience; if the efforts to bring Sampson’s feats to light are equivalent to whispering, “Go, Red Sox,” at a crowded Fenway Park. Using the Silence Triangle (Figure 2), rhetoricians can examine if the silence surrounding the celebrations of Deborah Sampson is because the speaker is speaking too softly and is out of earshot of the audience.

However, rhetorical scholars cannot rule out voluntary silence either. As we will explore in the next chapter, not all may be as welcoming or progressive as it may seem in the community of Sharon, Massachusetts. There are instances of purposeful silencing and exclusion that have taken place within the community of Sharon, Massachusetts, that raise questions about how the community of Sharon believes Deborah Sampson should be remembered.

**The Need For Vernacular Interactions**

The Deborah Sampson sculpture has encountered challenges with vernacular and official memory. Members of the Sharon community often would leave flowers, wreaths, or patriotic clothing items such as scarves around the sculpture’s neck. In January 2017, during the women’s marches, a pussy hat, a pink crocheted hat that has become an emblem for raising awareness for women’s rights, was left on the Deborah Sampson sculpture.

The library staff immediately removed the hat because they felt that it was too political. The library board soon had a meeting regarding the sculpture. The Sharon Public Library now enforces a rule that approved items left with the Deborah Sampson sculpture have to be removed by the person who placed the item(s) there within twenty-four hours, or else they will be removed and disposed of by the library staff (Umbreit, 2018). The development and enforcement of this rule calls to question how the community of Sharon, Massachusetts, wants Sampson to be remembered and challenges the flexibility of the term community. Rhetoricians should ask if the
Deborah Sampson sculpture was for the community as a whole, as suggested in Stubbs’ artist statement or if the statue is for members of a select community instead (Stubbs, 2016). The rule that the Sharon Public Library created in response to the pussyhat being left with the Sampson sculpture is a form of silencing in that it dictates not only who is allowed to remember Deborah Sampson but also how.

In response to the library’s enactment and enforcement of the rule about what items can be left with the Sampson sculpture and how long items can stay with the Deborah Sampson sculpture, some community members now leave items at Sampson’s gravesite in Rock Ridge cemetery instead. These items include flags, wreaths, flowers, and coins. Items left at the grave do not have to be removed in a specific time period and are not discarded if they do not adhere to the preferred standard.

Figure 21: Huber, Lindsey (2018). Deborah Sampson’s gravestone at Rock Ridge Cemetery in Sharon, Massachusetts. The gravestone is decorated with flags, flowers, patriotic wreaths, and other various artifacts left by those who have visited Sampson’s grave. March 2018.
Figure 22: Huber, Lindsey (2018). Coins left on Deborah Sampson’s headstone. Leaving coins on the headstone of a grave is a military tradition. A penny left means you visited the soldier’s grave. A nickel means that you and the soldier went to Basic Training (BCT) together. A dime means you served with the deceased soldier. A quarter means that you were there when the soldier was killed (ABC 7). March 2018.

Our ability to participate and interact with memorials, archives, and artifacts affects how society remembers people, events, and how our individual identities are constructed. If spaces are highly policed, vernacular interactions are not allowed and, therefore, limit participants’ ability to interact and develop their own memories and identity. David Lowenthal remarks, “The past is integral to our sense of identity….Ability to recall and identify with our past gives existence meaning, purpose, and value” (Haskins, 2007, p. 402). Vernacular interactions often diverge from the hegemonic official memory. Vernacular practices are often transitory forms
such as parades or brief interventions. Bodnar wrote, “such practices convey what social reality feels like rather than what it should be like” (Haskins, 2007, p. 403). Vernacular interactions give society the opportunity to express and remember an event or person in their own way and to construct their identity from their vernacular interactions.

In reference to war memorials representing female veterans there is a conflict with historical accuracy and contemporary representation. Memorials such as the Deborah Sampson sculpture and Vietnam Women’s Memorial are represented historically accurate. Deborah Sampson was a woman who served in the Revolutionary War disguised as a man, to represent her as a man would be historically inaccurate. Stubbs represented Sampson in the attire that Sampson would have worn in her era and included items such as the powder horn and colonial jacket that would have been worn by colonial soldiers. The Vietnam Women’s Memorial is accurately represented in that females serving in Vietnam were not issued weapons such as firearms, they were not issued an official uniform, and most did not complete Basic Combat Training (BCT). However, the problem lays with female veterans of today. Today’s female veterans cannot fully identify with the representations of Sampson or the women represented in the Vietnam Women’s Memorial, because they are issued the same uniform, weapons, and are subject to the same training as their male counterparts. Definitions of soldier and veteran have been modified to better represent contemporary circumstances, however, materials that physically represent these definitions to society has stayed the same. The lack of change in the material representation of female veterans makes it more difficult for modern female veterans to create their own identities and celebrate where they fall into women’s histories. The historical distance creates barriers to seeing themselves as part of a longer history. The inability for female veterans to interact with existing materials such as the Sampson sculpture or the Vietnam
Women’s Memorial at any time and in their own way further complicates and inhibits female veterans’ abilities to construct their own identities as veterans.

**Matters of Definition and Quality**

Throughout this chapter, the military service of females has been demonstrated through various forms of evidence. Historical and rhetorical scholars can agree that and answer stasis question one, does something exist. Yes, there are females that have served in the military and continue to serve in the military. There are enough instances of females serving in the military that female service members are not a chance occurrence. Stasis question two then asks us to define what society should call females that have served and continue to serve in the military. Rhetoricians should question if society should call female service members soldiers, veterans, or as in the case of the Vietnam Women’s Memorial, “uniformed women” (Vietnam Women’s Memorial, 2021).

A veteran is defined as “1: a person who has had long service or experience in an occupation, or office. 2: a person who has served in a military force, especially one who has fought in war (Dictionary, n.d., Veteran). A soldier is defined as “1: a person who serves in an army; a person engaged in military service 2: an enlisted person, as distinguished from a commissioned officer. 3: a person of military skill or experience” (Dictionary, n.d., Soldier). Neither of these definitions references a person’s biological sex or gender.

Therefore females that serve in the Army should be called soldiers. The females depicted in the Vietnam Women’s Memorial are not uniformed women. These females were enlisted in the Army as nurses; they were not donut Dollies or Red Cross members; they were soldiers. The Vietnam Women’s Memorial depicts four soldiers, not three uniformed women with one soldier.
Through the same reasoning, females that have served in the military should be called veterans. However, matters of definition regarding sex and gender are messy and are not quickly resolved by referencing a dictionary. Unless scholars can reach an agreement on defining female service members, we cannot proceed to stasis questions three and four.

Suppose historical and rhetorical scholars agree to define female veterans as veterans. In that case, scholars must now ask if female veterans are a separate class of veteran and what criteria must be met for society to conceptualize female veterans as full veterans. How female veterans are demonstrated to the public is suggestive that female veterans are considered to be a separate class of veteran, despite the definition of veteran. Female veterans are demonstrated in traditional caregiving roles; their facial features are softened, they are depicted out of uniform and without weapons, all of which draw questions about female soldiers’ training and capabilities. Female veterans are often demonstrated as isolated and not shown collectively as male veterans are typically depicted, which makes disregarding female veterans’ service easier. Rhetoricians must ask what criteria need to be met for female veterans to be considered veterans or why additional criteria beyond the definition of veteran to determine who is a veteran is needed at all.

**Cause For Concern**

Feminist rhetorical scholars should consider the combination of excluding female veterans from history and the attitudes of society towards female veterans and its influence over female veterans’ identity formation and their struggle to find their place within a community as a consequence of how we have defined who is a soldier or veteran. Feminist theorist Simone de Beauvoir writes that women eventually accept society’s perspective and accept their devaluation
in society, and serious consequences come when women allow their minimization (Bartkowski et al., 2013). I believe this is what the VA and scholars are seeing in the female veteran population today. Female veterans have been approached with a “well, you’re a girl” attitude and do not believe that their service mattered. Therefore, they do not participate in veteran services because they do not have a feeling of acceptance. Female veterans’ lack of engagement with available resources can lead to women veterans having more difficulty transitioning from military life back to civilian life.

A difficult transition from military life can have severe, if not permanent, consequences. While any suicide is a tragedy, a 2018 study has found that women veterans are 250% more likely to commit suicide than a civilian woman (Price, 2018). Homelessness is also on the rise for women veterans. A 2017 study revealed that on a single night in January, there were approximately 40,000 homeless veterans. Female veterans made up 9% (3,600) of this 40,000 homeless veteran population. These numbers may not immediately look alarming; however, when comparing this with the homeless veteran data from 2016, the homeless female veteran population rose by 7% in one year. The homeless male veteran population increased by a single percent from 2016 to 2017 (Richman, 2018).

This information has left some scratching their heads. Many are still under the impression that women are not allowed to serve in active combat. In January 2013, the Pentagon lifted the ban on women serving in combat (Londono, 2013). However, many do not understand that women had actively served in combat for years before this ban was lifted. Many women served as truck drivers, engineers, and medics that found themselves in ambushes and firefights. Many do not understand that the ban that was lifted merely allows women to choose a combat
military occupational specialty (MOS) such as infantry now, where they could not before the ban was removed.

The Department of Veteran’s Affairs is confounded that programs that have been implemented to accommodate male veterans’ transition back into the civilian world do not appear to be working for female veterans’ transition. How extraordinary that something that works for one person or group does not universally work for everyone.

This brings us to stasis question three: what is the issue. Throughout this chapter, I discussed the struggles that female soldiers and veterans have with self-identifying as soldiers or veterans. Female soldiers’ and veterans’ inability to identify with veteran and soldier labels may provide increased obstacles for females’ engagement in veteran resource programs. The VA is seeing an increase in homeless and suicide rates in the female veteran population, which should be a cause for concern.

**Further Research**

Further research should be done to include more war memorials for visual comparison, as the number of war memorials used in this analysis is few compared to what war memorials exist in the United States. Memorials are constantly being created and proposed; further research needs to be done to see updated numbers of memorials, specifically war memorials, and to see if the disparity in the number of memorials dedicated to male and female veterans persists. At the time of writing this thesis, I could not find exact numbers of war memorials in the United States of America.

Further research needs to be done to analyze the collective public memory of female veterans. Further analysis could include toys, films, books, and memes to evaluate how female
veterans and their roles in military service have been demonstrated to the public. Despite
definitions of terms such as veteran and solider have evolved to reflect current representation
within the military, materials that represent these definitions to the public have not changed.
Further research also needs to be conducted to reflect more current information on suicide rates,
sexual assaults, and homelessness is needed to examine trends further and if these issues
continue to persist.
CHAPTER 4. LOOKING BEYOND SILENCE AND STITCHING FEMALE VETERANS INTO THE STARS AND STRIPES

One may ask how scholars might assist in overcoming the predicament of how society recognizes and remembers female veterans, which brings us to stasis question four, “what do we do about it?” How can society avoid silence, sifting, and the overall appearance of absence in material representations dedicated to our female veterans?

I have discussed how Stasis Theory is an advantageous method to utilize when presented with arguments of definition, such as “veteran.” Remember who society once looked at and memorialized as a veteran was very different in the Revolutionary War and Civil War than who society recognizes and commemorates today. Revisions have been made to definitions such as soldier and veteran. For the most part, modifications have been made to the material representations such as war memorials to reflect these ever-evolving definitions. Yet, female veterans are still silent from most of these material representations.

Stasis Theory can also help rhetoricians look at silence more critically. Feminist rhetorical scholars can recognize the silence of someone covering the speaker’s mouth — the Commission of Fine Arts voted down the Vietnam Women's Memorial. We can recognize the silence of the speaker choosing not to speak — as female veterans choosing not to use veteran resources such as the VA. We can recognize the silence of the audience plugging their ears — as people not advertising or donating money to help promote and support memorials dedicated to female veterans. We can recognize the silence of the speaker speaking too softly — as the community of Sharon, Massachusetts, being unable to share Deborah Sampson's narrative outside of their community. We can recognize the silence of no text being available — as in the Deborah Sampson sculpture not having a plaque within the statue's vicinity. Regardless of
“how” silence occurs, the outcome is still the same, silence. However, Stasis Theory helps feminist scholars recognize that one's silence does mean that one is absent.

Sifting is the visual equivalent of silence. Imagine that you are looking closely at the wall in the Korean War Memorial's backdrop; you look at the names of the 120,000 females that served during the Korean War. You take a step back, and another, and another. Soon, the names on the wall disappear; they are overshadowed by the nineteen male soldiers depicted to represent the Korean War experience. The 120,000 names of the female veterans are still present within the Korean War Memorial; the names did not "jump off" the wall. These female veterans' names were important enough to be included but not important enough to be seen from a distance or heard; their voices are drowned out and lost within the noise. The names of the female Korean War veterans are sifted out and silenced before our eyes as we zoom out to take in the "whole" picture, yet we can use resistant postmodernism to zoom back in and sift in those 120,000 names.

Through resistant postmodernism, we can question the experiences of those 120,000 female veterans. Maybe they were scared as they boarded Medical Evacuation (MEDEVAC) aircraft or when they got behind the wheel of jeeps to transport officers between posts. Perhaps they were exhausted as they changed bandages, restarted IVs, and triaged those who could be saved from those that could not. Resistant postmodernism provides us with the opportunity to make the unseen visible, to give the silent, the unheard, a voice.

Scholars must not forget that overcoming this challenge is not as simple as the application of Feminist Rhetoric and Queer Theory, and suddenly, society's presuppositions about female military service members have been changed; nor a matter of juxtaposing women veteran memorials with those representing men. As feminist scholars, we must realize that gender, genre, and our histories are ideological. As Charlotte Hogg states, "regardless of how
much recovery work is done to learn more about women's lives, learning, and literacies, if the ideological framework dismisses what has been considered private or reads the private only as an absence of public and thus, as somehow deficient, we miss seeing their literacies, their lives, and their impact” (Hogg, 2006, p. 65). If the frameworks of how society is to define veteran does not change, society will continue to overlook, exclude, and misrepresent the service of female veterans. As feminist scholars begin to progress forward and challenge the masculine definition of the veteran that has been presented before society, whether through the recovery of secondary sources, or the application of methods such as resistant postmodernism, scholars cannot merely add women into our histories, archives, and public memorials. As Charlotte Hogg writes, "being innovative or nonconformist could risk disrupting the epistemology of settlement and could be viewed as a rejection of the ideologies of place and heritage held so strongly" (Hogg, 2006, p. 148). It is vital to avoid rejection if society is to pass on women's works and influence to the collective memory, people, events, and traditions passed through generations.

Our work as scholars, particularly feminist scholars, is not complete at recovering and reintroducing female veterans into our histories. We must continue to study Public Memory, as it has been noted that definitions and labels are constantly evolving. As a society, we must understand that there are consequences when we assign and attach labels to someone or something. Feminist scholars must further ponder how presuppositions about biological sex and gender affect definitions; and how society connects people to a particular definition. After all, one may ponder what it means to be a soldier or veteran; do these labels lose their prestige if a woman can do something that a man can do or has done.
CHAPTER 5. EPILOGUE

On Thursday, July 30th, 2020, almost two years after the original petition had been filed, a House panel voted in favor to amend the VA Motto to “To fulfill President Lincoln’s promise to care for those who shall have borne the battle and for their families, caregivers, and survivors,” despite resistance from the Trump Administration (Shane III). However, the bill signed on July 30th has a long and tumultuous campaign before the bill can be signed into law. Unfortunately, battling legislation is not the only hurdle the bill faces. Former VA Secretary Robert Wilkie disclosed that he “plans to install bronze plaques bearing the phrase [“To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan”] at each of the nation’s 140-plus veteran cemeteries later in 2020, in defiance of the calls for change” (Shane III).

Republican Representative from Tennessee, Phil Roe noted that President Lincoln’s quote was part of his second inaugural address in 1865; the VA did not incorporate Lincoln’s quote into its mission statement until 1959. Roe believes that the significant increase in females serving in the military and their presence at VA facilities warrants amending the VA motto (Shane III). Roe states, “Having President Lincoln’s full quote with its repeated use of the male pronoun, serving as the VA’s mission statement or motto, did not cause those discrepancies. Changing it will not solve them either; that said, words matter.” When this thesis was written and defended, the VA motto remained “To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and for his orphan” (Department of Veterans’ Affairs). As the numbers of female veteran suicide and homelessness continue to increase, it is critical that the VA needs to find a way to open its doors to our female veterans.
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