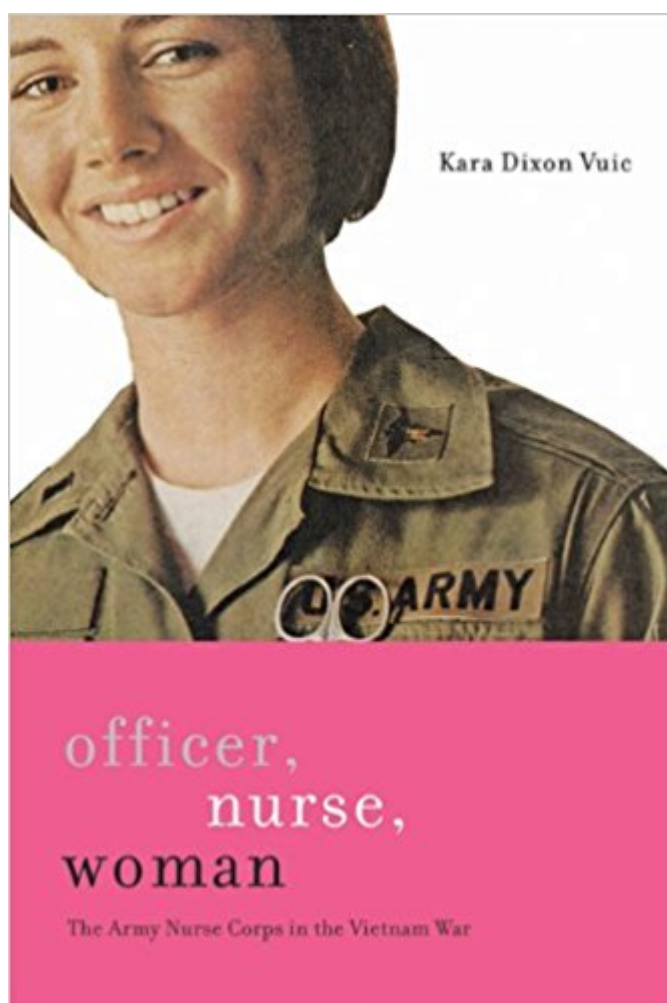


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Officer, Nurse, Woman: The Army Nurse Corps In The Vietnam War (War/Society/Culture)



Synopsis

"I never got a chance to be a girl," Kate O'Hare Palmer lamented, thirty-four years after her tour as an army nurse in Vietnam. Although proud of having served, she felt that the war she never understood had robbed her of her innocence and forced her to grow up too quickly. As depicted in a photograph taken late in her tour, long hours in the operating room exhausted her both physically and mentally. Her tired eyes and gaunt face reflected the weariness she felt after treating countless patients, some dying, some maimed, all, like her, forever changed. Still, she learned to work harder and faster than she thought she could, to trust her nursing skills, and to live independently. She developed a way to balance the dangers and benefits of being a woman in the army and in the war. Only fourteen months long, her tour in Vietnam profoundly affected her life and her beliefs." Such vivid personal accounts abound in historian Kara Dixon Vuic's compelling look at the experiences of army nurses in the Vietnam War. Drawing on more than 100 interviews, Vuic allows the nurses to tell their own captivating stories, from their reasons for joining the military to the physical and emotional demands of a horrific war and postwar debates about how to commemorate their service. Vuic also explores the gender issues that arose when a male-dominated army actively recruited and employed the services of 5,000 nurses in the midst of a growing feminist movement and a changing nursing profession. Women drawn to the army's patriotic promise faced disturbing realities in the virtually all-male hospitals of South Vietnam. Men who joined the nurse corps ran headlong into the army's belief that women should nurse and men should fight. *Officer, Nurse, Woman* brings to light the nearly forgotten contributions of brave nurses who risked their lives to bring medical care to soldiers during a terrible and divisive war.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Vuic offers an important new contribution to how we understand women's participation in the U.S. military after World War II." (Tanya L. Roth H-Minerva, H-Net Reviews)"Vuic's book is important reading for anyone wanting a more thorough understanding of more than just the Vietnam War or nursing history. Its relevance also encompasses enduring complexities of gender, cultural representations, and collective memory. Highly recommended." (Choice)"Utilizing a feminist paradigm, Kara Dixon Vuic's evocative and unique dissection of the collective gender experiences of Army Nurse Corps officers in Vietnam and its aftermath breaks new ground in the history of military nursing... I found Officer, Nurse, Woman quite intriguing. I can unreservedly recommend it as a valuable addition to the literature documenting nurse participation in the Vietnam War." (Mary T. Sarnecky, DNSc, RN Nursing History Review)"Excellent study... The strength of this book is Vuic's main source: nurses who served in Vietnam... Officer, Nurse, Woman enriches a growing body of literature on second-wave feminism - its broad impact and successfully challenges and complicates the dominant narrative of military history and destabilizes familiar categories - especially our notions about women and war." (Susan Gelfand Malka Journal of American History)"A well researched, well written account that will be used by professors and students who wish to understand better the complexity of gendered military service." (D'Ann Campbell Journal of Military History)"Provides an important foundation for understanding how military women reflect social and cultural gender roles, how institutions respond to and influence gender norms, and how the response shapes and challenges our understanding of citizenship and nation... Vuic's book will be important for scholars of the time period as well as those interested in gender, women's work, nursing history, and the military." (Julie Fairman Bulletin of the History of Medicine)"The best one volume treatment available that integrates the personal experiences of nurses with a nuanced understanding of social, political, military, gender, and women's history alongside feminist theory." (Minerva: Women and War)"This is a wonderful book, chock full of oral history and riveting personal stories. It makes a meaningful contribution to Vietnam War and twentieth-century gender historiography." (Penelope Adams Moon Historian)"Vuic's Officer, Nurse, Woman is an important text for those interested in the history of nursing, the history of military medicine, gender studies, military history, oral history, and studies of women's work and serves as a

superb example of the usefulness of oral histories in historical analysis." (David J. Caruso Oral History Review)"A very interesting social history that deserves to be wide read." (Book Bargains and Previews)"Solid, engaging, insightful scholarship. To see the effective mixing of gender history and social history with military history is refreshing and welcome. Vuic addresses a deep hole in the scholarship on the Vietnam War." (William T. Allison, Georgia Southern University)" Officer, Nurse, Woman contributes mightily to the historiography of military nurses, of women in the military, and women in the paid work force after World War II." (Elizabeth Hillman, University of California Hastings College of the Law)

Winner, Lavinia L. Dock Award, American Association for the History of NursingA 2010 American Journal of Nursing Book of the Year in History and Public PolicyVivid personal accounts abound in Kara Dixon Vuic's compelling look at the experiences of army nurses in the Vietnam War. Drawing on more than 100 interviews, Vuic allows the nurses to tell their own captivating stories, from their reasons for joining the military to the physical and emotional demands of a horrific war and postwar debates about how to commemorate their service. Officer, Nurse, Woman brings to light the nearly forgotten contributions of brave nurses who risked their lives to bring medical care to soldiers during a terrible and divisive war."An important new contribution to how we understand women's participation in the U.S. military after World War II." H-Minerva, H-Net Reviews"Important reading for anyone wanting a more thorough understanding of more than just the Vietnam War or nursing history. Its relevance also encompasses enduring complexities of gender, cultural representations, and collective memory. Highly recommended." Choice"Vuic's evocative and unique dissection of the collective gender experiences of Army Nurse Corps officers in Vietnam and its aftermath breaks new ground in the history of military nursing." Nursing History Review"A well researched, well written account that will be used by professors and students who wish to understand better the complexity of gendered military service." Journal of Military History"Provides an important foundation for understanding how military women reflect social and cultural gender roles, how institutions respond to and influence gender norms, and how the response shapes and challenges our understanding of citizenship and nation." Bulletin of the History of Medicine"The best one volume treatment available that integrates the personal experiences of nurses with a nuanced understanding of social, political, military, gender, and women's history alongside feminist theory." Minerva: Women and War

This is a truly remarkable and groundbreaking book, one that will be of interest to anyone with even a passing curiosity in either military, social, or women's history. Professor Vuic's careful and thoroughly researched analysis promises to be the benchmark to which all studies of women and the Vietnam War will be compared to for many years to come. There are a number of ways that make Professor Vuic's such a very important work. For one, she has examined an issue that has been neglected for far too long. Over forty years after the Women's Movement of the 1960s, there remains far too little scholarship on the role of women during wartime. It is about time that a writer and scholar with Professor Vuic's knowledge and expertise examine the role of gender during the nation's longest war. As Diana Carlson Evans had asked the Senate in 1988, "Who decides who America will remember?" Another factor that makes this book a must read is Professor Vuic's unique approach to her topic. Drawing on more than 100 interviews, Professor Vuic gives the reader a personal account of how women impacted the war, and vice-versa. And the stories that she relates are incredibly moving and touching. Professor Vuic's study gives the reader such a wide variety of vivid and memorable recollections concerning the role of women nurses in the Vietnam War. In a war that is often reduced to statistics, Professor Vuic has provided a very human face. Professor Vuic's fascinating text is also quite timely. It is indeed quite remarkable how, thirty-five years after the end of the war, the Vietnam War remains an essential part of the American psyche. Everything from the recent PBS American Experience documentary of the My Lai massacre to the controversy surrounding Connecticut Attorney General Richard Blumenthal's past statements regarding his service during the Vietnam War demonstrate the continued power of the Vietnam conflict. And, of course, the controversial issue of women in combat has been an essential element to various analyses of our nation's current wars in both Iraq and in Afghanistan. As a teacher of American history, I look forward to using this book in my classes. But what makes this book so important is its usefulness to non-academic audiences alike. Anyone who wants to learn more about the Vietnam War, as well as about the impact and ramifications of the modern Women's Movement, would greatly benefit from the purchase of Professor Vuic's book. It is a must read.

Excellent. Well written. Thoroughly researched. Superb writing style. Hard to believe a "non-nurse," "non-officer" could have written this.

This is a well-researched social history of the experiences of US Army nurses in Vietnam. The author blends personal accounts with documentary evidence to create a coherent narrative and description of nurses' experiences. Anyone interested in the serious study of historical contexts and

the development of social phenomena must read this text.

Really an interesting, well-written book.

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If you are looking for stories and accounts of the brave Army nurses who served in Vietnam, this is not your book. At most you get short quotes from a wide variety of participants, all of which are used to support the analytical points being made in the book. This is, and reads like, an extended term paper, with 926 cited quotes from interviews and sources. If you are interested in a clinical dissection of women's issues in the context of military service during and after that war, then you will find this a good book for that purpose, although you really only get what appears to fit into the author's point of view instead of the whole story.

Didn't tell as much of her actual involvement, but rather more historical whys and what for. I wanted more of the actual work she did and her feelings, emotions, etc.

I served at the 8th Field in Nha Trang in 1965 and 66. We did not wear white uniforms then or ever. I know that brass wanted us to do so but COL later BG Anna Mae Hays, then Asst Chief ANC, during a visit broached the subject but agreed with the hospital staff that we had more important work to do than struggling with a primitive laundry system already overburdened with hospital linens. That said, Professor Vuic has provided an important analysis of earlier gender politics in the military.

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