

## Double jeopardy: Women, the US military and the war in Iraq

Sheila Jeffreys

*The Department of Political Science, The University of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, 3010*

Available online 24 January 2007

### Synopsis

This article argues that women in the military are in double jeopardy. They face the danger of rape from their male colleagues as well as the ordinary dangers of being killed or wounded by the enemy. They are used to send messages from one masculine military to another in their very bodies. This is particularly clear in the case of Lynndie England and the Abu Ghraib tortures where her womanhood, and sexual use of her by her comrades, were used as weapons to humiliate Iraqi prisoners. This sexual violence from their own side is the result of the fact that militaries are founded upon an aggressive masculinity that is vital to enable warfare to continue. For this reason the argument that it is important from the point of view of equal opportunities for women to be in all areas of the military, including the frontline, falls down. If aggressive masculinity is the necessary foundation of the military rather than being an unfortunate hangover of patriarchy, then women cannot be equal in this institution. Women's organizations should not be using the language of women's rights in calling for the subjection of women to these forms of violence.

© 2007 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Women in the military are in double jeopardy. Whilst male soldiers face the danger of being killed or wounded by the enemy, women also face sexual violence from their own side. The cause of this danger, I shall argue, is the masculinity of the military that is the necessary basis of warfare. Sexual domination is integral to military masculinity as is shown in the history of sexual violence against women that has been carried out by militaries historically and today (Brownmiller, 1975). Sexual violence against women civilians has been brought to public attention because of the rape camps of Bosnia, for instance, and the involvement of UN peacekeepers in the trafficking of women into prostitution (Kelly, 2000). The impact of war on women civilians in general has been subjected to feminist analysis (Hynes, 2004). What has been less well addressed by feminist scholars is the sexual violence against women soldiers that is part and parcel of this military masculinity. I shall suggest here that this sexual violence should cause liberal women's rights organizations to think again about campaigning against the restriction of women in many militaries to non-combat roles.

It is American liberal feminists in particular who have pursued the entry of women into combat as an issue of women's rights. They have gone so far as to argue that women should be drafted along with men. The National Organisation for Women in the 1970s argued that an 'all-male draft' prevented women from having full civil equality (Elshtain, 2000). The Australian organization WRANA (Women's Rights Action Network Australia), too, has campaigned to remove the Australian government's reservation to CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women), which stated the determination to exclude women from combat and combat-related roles. One argument as to the need to remove this reservation is that military service is an essential requirement of citizenship, and women cannot expect to be equal citizens and enjoy the benefits of citizenship if they do not serve in the defence of their country (Snyder, 2003). Another argument is that women cannot be equal in the military if they are restricted in the roles they play, and that promotion and remuneration at a high level are

withheld from women so long as they are not in combat roles. Women's entry to the military and their access to combat roles is then held up as an important aspect of equal opportunities for women.

April Carter has written a well crafted answer to this equal opportunities argument. She opposes the liberal feminist line of Betty Friedan that women have an 'equal obligation to fight' (Carter, 1996: 109). Friedan says that women in the US should be trained for military life, be conscripted and expected to fight in any future war and can become good soldiers without losing their female identity. Their presence in the army is good because it challenges male stereotypes and 'standards and values taken for granted' (Carter, 1996: 109). Carter explains that since women are still so unequal politically they do not owe an equal obligation to the state 'and in particular are not required to adopt the so far exclusively masculine obligation of fighting for their country' (Carter, 1996: 109).

She explains that using rights talk, such as the right of women to equality in the military with men, is inappropriate. Rights should only be claimed if they offer some substantial benefit. The inclusion of women in combat roles does not do so. Indeed the vast majority of US women soldiers oppose it, which is odd for a rights issue (Elshtain, 2000). Such women soldiers are prepared to say that they think the liberal feminists are betraying them by making an argument that may result in them having to be in combat whether they like it or not, whilst the liberal feminists themselves recline at home (Heineken, 2000). Carter points out that the women being recruited to the US military are disproportionately poor and black, so the burden of fighting for their country will fall unequally to black women (Carter, 1996). Those women arguing for equal opportunity are likely to be in positions of privilege on the grounds of race and class.

Another reason why this right to combat may not advantage women is the ability to bear children. Though women who are pregnant would not be likely to be sent into the frontline, 'women who have quite recently given birth can be sent into a battle zone, this is only possible at a cost to both mother and baby' (Carter, 1996: 104). The issue of who will care for their children can be a fraught one for mothers in the military who are sent overseas. They may already be caught up in custody battles with ex-partners, for instance, which can be exacerbated by their combat role. The biological fathers of the women's children may claim full custody whilst the women are deployed, and this is becoming more common as more and more women are serving overseas. The mothers may have good reasons for wanting their

children to remain with their new partners or with their parents while they are away, but courts are likely to recognise the biological father's rights (Custody Battles, 2004).

Liberal feminists are likely to argue that women's biology, such as their reproductive capacity, should not be the basis for treating women differently from men. The problems of pregnancy and childcare can be overcome so that women can become more like men and have 'equal opportunities'. But childbearing is not the only way in which women's biology can complicate such an approach. There are ways in which, within the culture of misogyny that dominates militaries, women's different biology can be targeted to punish them. Menstruation is one such. It always surprises me that women's memoirs about difficult experiences, such as hostage situations, seldom mention menstruation, perhaps because it is still taboo in a male dominant society. But women's menstruation can be used against them where misogyny prevails in a combat zone. Evelyne Accad quotes an email from a woman friend describing the behaviour of Israeli soldiers in the Jenin refugee camp 'the way they humiliated women and forbade them to go to the toilet...and you could imagine what happened next...the way they forbade girls who had their period to change... and they did not have any sanitary napkins...the filth was all over the place' (Accad, 2002: 424). Menstruation will have an effect on the experience that women and men soldiers have of captivity. Being forced to bleed through clothes and onto the ground would create a humiliation for women, with no need for overt violence, that men would not suffer. Women soldiers were encouraged by army medical officers in the Gulf War to take contraceptive pills continuously so that they would not menstruate (Noakes, 1998). Though this makes women more like men for the benefit of military operations it may not be desirable for women's health.

April Carter also gives the phenomenon of sexual violence as a cogent reason why women cannot be said to be in an equal position to men when they are in the military, and why they do not benefit. It is this aspect that I will concentrate on in this article; the way in which the sexual violence women suffer from their own side can affect the argument that women should pursue equal opportunities in the military. I will focus on Iraq and will not be covering the rape of women prisoners in Iraqi jails though there is evidence of this form of torture. This form of sexual violence has not been much reported though 'many Iraqis believe that sexual abuse of women in U.S. run jails was rampant' (Wilkinson, 2004). In the jails entirely innocent women are detained in the hope of

persuading male relatives to provide information and interrogators sometimes threatened to kill detainees (Wilkinson, 2004). The lack of reporting may be the result of the fact that women are unable to admit to having been raped in a culture where honour crimes take place i.e. they may be ostracized or even killed because they are seen as damaging family honour.

### Sexual domination and the military

Some feminist critics of the military and of militarization have pointed out not just that the military is a masculine institution, as are other institutions that women seek to enter such as the police force or fire service, but that it requires masculinity in order to function (Enloe, 1983, 2000; Morgan, 1989). Men in male dominated organizations have a tendency to use what Laura Miller calls 'gender harassment', to distinguish it from sexual harassment, in order to resist the intrusion of women into their gendered spaces (Miller, 1997). Miller has interviewed male and female soldiers about how this harassment works, in the form of 'sabotage, foot-dragging, feigning ignorance, constant scrutiny, gossip and rumors, and indirect threats' (Miller, 1997: 33). This behaviour is designed to enable male soldiers to protect the gendered nature of the institution. Such harassment does not necessarily manifest itself in sexual assault although it may do so. One result may be that some women soldiers are forced to mimic the masculine performances of male soldiers and to trivialize sexual harassment (Sasson-Levy, 2003).

The masculinity of the military, however, goes beyond this masculine protection of their turf. Masculinity is central to the basic enterprise of the military in a way in which it is not for the fire service. Male soldiers are trained to kill on the basis that they are men and that women are the 'other' against whom they can recognize themselves. Women are also offered as the 'other' that male soldiers are to defend and die for. Even the motherland that they fight for is usually gendered female (Yuval-Davis, 1997). Masculinity and the othering of women and homosexuality, gendered female, are used in training as soldiers are insulted with female epithets. Susan Faludi describes the behaviour of trainees to one another at the Citadel military academy in the US. One man explains 'They called you a "pussy" all the time...or a fucking little girl' (Faludi, 1999: 145–6). Masculinity in the military is not then just a historical hangover, but fundamental to what militaries are for and necessary for their operation. This masculinity is deliberately created by militaries through the provision of prosti-

tution and pornography which enable men to 'other' women and understand themselves as masculine.

The use of prostitution in its many forms to comfort and entertain soldiers, to pump them up, to maintain their military aggression, is pervasive across militaries and conflict zones. Pornography can be used in military training to encourage soldiers to distinguish themselves from women and develop their aggressive masculinity. Pornography was used, for instance, to encourage aggression when the Pakistani army invaded Bangladesh in 1971. Brownmiller (1975: 82) reports that, 'In some of the camps, pornographic movies were shown to the soldiers, "in an obvious attempt to work the men up," one Indian writer reported'. Hundreds of thousands of rapes of Bangladeshi women were carried out by the soldiers who had been so thoroughly 'worked up'. Though there is no evidence at this point that pornography was deliberately used in military training in Iraq it may have played a part in 'pumping up' the soldiers. The *Age* newspaper in Melbourne, for example, carried a series of photos depicting faces of the conflict in March 2003 (War in Iraq, 2003). In one photo described as 'Corporal Byron Estay of New York drives his truck past a portrait of Saddam Hussein in the port city of Umm Qasr' a soldier has a pornographic photo attached to the dashboard just below a set of what appear to be prayer beads. In the pornographic photo a large breasted naked woman sits on the ground legs akimbo.

Military prostitution has been long a staple resource in conflict zones for male combatants and for male peacemakers. Prostitution, like pornography, builds the aggressive masculinity of soldiers. Cynthia Enloe describes how the use of women in military prostitution constructs the masculinity of the abusers:

Among these different men there may be diverse masculinities. Women in Okinawa, Korea, and the Philippines describe how they had to learn what made American men feel that they were manly during sex; it was not always what they had learned made their Korean, Japanese, or Filipino sexual partners feel manly...Tourists, colonial officials, international technocrats and businessmen, and soldiers have long been the internationalizers of sexualized masculinity. (Enloe, 1992: 25).

It is a further development of the othering of women which is so fundamental to basic training in which men are accused of being women in order to toughen them up. Without the concept of 'women' as social inferiors from whom the male soldiers must differentiate themselves by their actions, the male soldier might have no founding myth to hang onto, no rationale. When

US soldiers buy prostituted women for use in rest and recreation in areas which are often supervised by military police as in Korea, they are further working to differentiate themselves from women and to develop the aggressive masculinity which will enable them to kill others (Sturdevant & Stoltzfus, 1992). They affirm male bonding by visiting brothels in groups. Women soldiers are deprived of this bonding activity and, presumably, of the other benefits that the US military considers that prostitution provides to its male soldiers. They are not equal in this respect but represent precisely in their persons the 'others' on and in whose bodies the male soldiers are being trained to be men. The distinction between their women comrades whom they are supposed to respect, and the women in the brothels that they are expected to use, may provide male soldiers with cognitive dissonance.

The ubiquity of prostitution use by militaries is evidenced in the behaviour of UN peacekeeping forces in the conflict zones of Cambodia and Mozambique, as Liz Kelly points out in her analysis of sexual violence in Bosnia.

One health official estimated the increase in women and girls involved in prostitution in Phnom Penh from 6000 in 1991 to 20,000 in 1992... the Italian component of the UN peace-keeping forces in Mozambique not only availed themselves of the local sex industry but became active in organizing it... (Of Cambodia) ... Someone might argue: but this is not war; this is peace'. (Anvig quoted in Kelly, 2000: 58).

The rape and sexual exploitation of women soldiers can be understood as a product of this pervasive climate of abuse of women.

Ruth Seifert (1994) explains that the background to the rape orgies in Bosnia–Herzegovina was a culturally rooted contempt for women that is acted out with particular vehemence in times of crisis. She employs this idea to explain how terrible atrocities against women came to take place, 'atrocities of a quasi-ritualistic character, whose core was the femaleness of the body. Thus, after being raped, women had their breasts cut off and their stomachs slit open' (Seifert, 1994: 65). This behaviour is held down to some extent during peacetime by the possibility of social disapproval and let loose in times of social crisis when such controls no longer apply, 'women are raped not because they are enemies, but because they are the objects of a fundamental hatred that characterizes the cultural unconscious and is actualized in times of crisis' (Seifert, 1994: 65). US soldiers behaved in a very similar way towards

the women seen as enemies in the Vietnam war. This is a description of an attack by US soldiers upon the sexual characteristics of a Vietnamese woman.

When we got up to her she was asking for water. And the lieutenant said to kill her. So he ripped off her clothes, they stabbed her in both breasts, they spread her eagle and shoved an E tool up her vagina, an entrenching tool, and she was still asking for water. And then they took that out and they used a tree limb and then she was shot (Brownmiller, 1975: 109).

Seifert also makes the important point that militaries make offers of masculinity to soldiers. Male soldiers expect a consolidation of their masculine status and receive this from training and the male bonding around violence in warfare. Seifert calls this 'the elevation of masculinity that accompanies war in western cultures' (Seifert, 1994: 65). This masculinity is likely to spill over into violence against wives both by soldiers and in the general culture of nations that are at war, thus, 'According to the women who work in women's shelters, "normal" domestic violence in Serbia and Croatia is said to have risen 100% since the beginning of the war' (Sander, 1994: xx. See also Adelman, 2003). Seifert was seeking to explain the violence of male soldiers towards the women of the enemy in conflict zones. She says that the hatred of women that the soldiers act out is cultivated at home through means such as pornography, 'Hatred is cultivated, for example, in socially accepted pornography, which is a peacetime celebration of the physical power of men over women...' (Seifert, 1994: 65).

Speaking of violence against enemy women Liz Kelly makes the same point forcefully, that the male combatants' violence towards women is not a result of warfare per se but culturally constructed before the men engage in conflict. She explains that: 'Feminist analysis of gender violence during war refuses to name it as fundamentally different from gender violence in other contexts... Sexual violence in the context of armed conflict intensifies already existing attitudes and behaviours' (Kelly, 2000: 55). Kelly says that feminists need to analyse whether all hierarchical groupings of men create sexual violence.

Men affirm one another as men through the exclusion, humiliation and objectification of women. What we need to explore in more depth is whether any hierarchical grouping of men, organized as men, creates conditions in which coercive heterosexuality is promoted and enacted. These groupings would include sports teams, private clubs, gangs, secret societies as well as the military (Kelly, 2000: 57).

However, the hierarchical groups of men that Kelly refers to are groups that depend upon masculinity for their very existence, and the military is such a group par excellence. If the military is characterised by an inflated and coercive masculinity then this may help to explain why there is a serious problem of sexual violence in the US military from male soldiers towards their female counterparts.

### Rapes of US military women

In recent years there have been a number of scandals about the serious sexual harassment of women in the US military. In the Tailhook affair the harassment seems to have been undertaken as a form of male bonding (Enloe, 2000). Tailhookers are navy carrier pilots. At their annual convention in 1991 Tailhookers engaged in behaviour where they made airforce women run through a hotel corridor whilst men on either side stripped off the women's clothes and sexually assaulted them. There have been revelations about military institutions in which serious numbers of individual rapes have taken place such as at the Air Force Academy (Lorch, 2003). In 2004 the issue of the rape of women in the US military by male soldiers came to public attention as a result of the setting up of a feminist organization in the US dedicated to combatting the problem, the Miles Foundation. The rape of US servicewomen is being taken seriously by the US military too because it is recognized that it leads 'highly trained women soldiers to leave the service' (Lowther, 2004). The Miles Foundation collated 129 complaints of rape in the 18 months up to April 2004 (Editorial, 2004). They pointed out that women soldiers feared that reporting an attack would hurt their careers and that the rapists would face only nominal penalties. The US Defense Department became sufficiently concerned to carry out a report into the issue in 2004 which found more than 1000 cases of reported 'sexual misconduct' in the military in 2003 and 900 in 2002 (Editorial, 2004). The actual figure was likely to be considerably larger because reporting military rape was such a hazardous enterprise. A survey by the Veteran Affairs Medical Center in Iowa City in 2003 found that 30% of female veterans reported having been raped or suffering a rape attempt during their military service (Editorial 2004). More than three-quarters of the 506 women, aged 20–83, reported some sort of sexual harassment during their service. One-fifth believed that rape was to be expected in the military (Editorial, 2004). Twenty-four women reported to a local rape-crisis center that they were sexually assaulted in 2002 while training at Sheppard Air Force Base in Texas (Editorial, 2004).

The 2004 revelations specifically concern rapes that take place in war zones. A couple of examples will suffice to show the extra form of warfare that women soldiers suffer from in combat zones. Major Beth Jameson, mother of two, was raped in the women's latrines in a camp in Kuwait during a scud missile alert 'the door just flew open and this person jumped in. He turned on me, kneed me in the groin and pushed me in the back of the bathroom. He had his mask on. He had his helmet on... All he said was, shut up or I'll kill you... The attack continued until two attendants came to clean the bathroom' (Nightline, 2004). This account suggests that latrines pose a particular danger to women in army camps. If women need to use them at night they must expose themselves to the danger of males lurking waiting for just such an opportunity. This is a danger they would not normally face back home or in other lines of work.

The latrine problem is now being taken seriously in some camps with various strategies being embarked upon to combat it. Some female soldiers at an army processing camp in Kuwait talk of taking loaded pistols with them even though loaded guns are not supposed to be carried in the camps. A female soldier in this camp who was about to go to Iraq said the camp safety officer told the women about the risk of rape and said 'no woman was to be anywhere on post-unescorted or alone at any time. This was passed through our entire chain of command, it was very open' (Bartlett, 2004). One strategy the military is employing in some camps is to barrack the women and men soldiers separately to protect the women, but a female military police officer at the Kuwait camp thinks this will not work because when women are living separately they are unable to seek the protection of male colleagues when they want to walk about and they might get careless 'When it's just girls together' and a woman might 'go out alone' (Bartlett, 2004). Also, she said, women in twos might not be safe because 'three guys' might 'show up'. Another woman reported that her sergeant 'doesn't let us go anywhere alone' and has ordered women to wake him at night to go to the latrines. She opposed female-only quarters (Bartlett, 2004).

Women can be raped multiple times. Thus former Army Capt. Jennifer Machmer was sexually assaulted three times before she left the military in early 2004. She was assaulted by a serviceman in Poland in 2001, when she was a platoon leader. In this case she reported the incident and, as his superior, had the attacker transferred. Then, in May 2002, she was assaulted by a military chaplain who was counseling her on her marriage problems. On this occasion she did not bother to complain. Then, a month into her tour of Kuwait in

2003, she was raped by a master sergeant she knew well. She reported it and found it terrifying because the authorities questioned whether the assault should be considered rape (Hong, 2004). These incidents suggest that a woman soldier's rank does not necessarily protect her.

One of the difficulties facing women who wish to report the rapes is that they can be seen as letting the side down. They are likely to be taught in training that the collective morale of a combat unit can be essential to the safety of every soldier in it. Reporting can be seen as undermining that morale. Women suffer too the problems that those subjected to sexual violence in any closed community, such as religious sects or families, face. They have to blow the whistle on one of their own and still relate to the group from which he comes, and which is likely to blame them. They may still have to relate to the abuser every day with no ready means of escape. In one case a woman said that she had to salute the man who raped her every day (Hong, 2004). There does seem to be something about the military that causes rape whilst actually inhibiting the commission of other kinds of crime. This is evidenced by the fact that though rates of violent crime in general are lower in the military than in civilian life this is not the case for rape (Hong, 2004).

### **Sexual use of women as message bearers between men**

It is not just the rate of rape and sexual harassment that suggests that there is something incorrigible about military masculinity. The use of US women soldiers by both the Iraqi combatants and the US military to send messages to the other side, shows that militaries see themselves as engaged in struggles between groups of masculine men for whom women are viewed as symbols of femininity. For instance in other side, for example being impregnated by their captors before being sent back, as were the raped women in the Bosnian Iraq 'A radical Islamic cleric has called on his followers to capture British women soldiers and keep them as sex slaves' (Adams, 2004). The likelihood of rape by the enemy if captured ensures that the situation of women in conflict zones is quite different from that of men. But it shows also the use of women as message bearers. The threat of raping women soldiers is expected to have an undermining effect because British military masculinity would be shamed by such treatment of 'their' women. The raped women would bear messages in their very bodies to be sent to the other side, for example being impregnated by their captors before being sent back, as

were the raped women in the Bosnian and Kosovan conflicts (Stiglmayer, 1994). The fact that sexual violence against women can be used as a message between one group of men and another constitutes a strong indication that the situation of women in the military can never be equal. The women are used as pawns in a game between men. In the Abu Ghraib prison torture scenario the women soldiers involved were used specifically to cause maximum shame to men who, the torturers were taught, would be particularly susceptible to sexual humiliation by women. Racism is clear in the way that this supposed cultural difference was manipulated, but there was an underlying misogyny and sexual violence, too, which created a quite different and unequal role for women soldiers. They were employed to send a message from a conquering group of men to those they had conquered.

The fact that the face and name of Lynndie England have come to symbolize the Abu Ghraib affair is an indication of the unequal way in which women soldiers are treated by the media. The male ringleader, Graner, is not so well known. England was demonized even though she was specifically employed by her military superior to send messages to the prisoners through sexual shaming (Morrison, 2005). If women's role in the military was equal then the males who ordered the tortures and were responsible for the worst abuses would be most well known. This discrepancy suggests that the scapegoating of women may be being used to divert attention from male violence and responsibility. The prison was run by a woman and three women were directly implicated in the torture. The involvement of women in the torture could be seen as an example of equality in the military i.e. both men and women are capable of torturing prisoners. But in the case of England in particular the manifest inequality of women in the military seems to be in evidence rather than their equality.

England, like most of the other soldiers involved in torture at Abu Ghraib, was a reservist. The US military likes to keep costs down by using reservists instead of regular troops that it would have to pay even when they are not in conflict zones. The reservists are usually less well trained and tend to come from poor areas of the US as England did. She was 'reared on a dirt road behind a sheep farm in the one-stoplight town. She made the honour roll in high school but was married and divorced before she was old enough to vote. And before she enlisted, England toiled in a chicken-processing plant...' (Becker, 2004). She became involved with Graner '35, a prison guard from a Pennsylvania Death Row prison, who was accused in divorce papers of beating his ex-wife and threatening her with a gun' (Becker, 2004).

England's inequality is clear on several fronts. Gender is itself a hierarchy (MacKinnon, 1989) but her inequality as a woman was exacerbated in Abu Ghraib by several other factors. She was a clerk and junior in rank to the man with whom she became involved. She was considerably younger, being 21 whilst Graner was 35.

Graner had been accused of a history of violence against his ex-wife and his behaviour in Iraq certainly suggests he was an extremely brutal man. England described Graner's behaviour thus, he, "would sew up prisoners' wounds with a needle and thread after beating them". She said: "He would take pictures of his work. In one incident, Graner ran a former Iraqi general into a wall and split his lip. Then he stitched up his lip" (Crerar, 2004). A man who demonstrated such violence would be able to wield considerable influence over a woman who was his sexual partner and subordinate.

Most importantly the way in which the sexual use of England was employed by male soldiers as one form of torture of the prisoners and captured on film, suggests severe difficulties with the equal opportunities approach to getting women into the military. Women soldiers were used in the torture of prisoners because this was expected to undermine them through severe humiliation. Thus England says that 'One of the things that they wanted was females to be there. So they knew they were being humiliated by having females see them naked' (Morrison, 2005). The sexual use of England was to send a message to the captives who were expected to react negatively to such a practice because of different cultural values. The media reported that 'According to several accounts...England...was shown having apparently consensual sex with several partners and ...in the presence of Iraqi detainees' (Cornwell, 2004). Though there is no evidence that force was used on Lynndie to encourage her to agree to this multiple partner sexual use, it does seem likely that forms of powerful influence were exerted upon her. The extraction of sexual access to women through superior power, higher status, means which do not involve direct physical force or its threat, should be understood as 'sexual exploitation'.

Interestingly, one significant form of torture at Abu Ghraib was turning the Iraqi male prisoners into women. One prisoner reported that 'he was threatened with rape by a U.S. soldier. "He drew a picture of a woman on my back and made me stand in a shameful position holding my buttocks," he said' (Langton, 2004). In a workplace culture such as this military prison it is hard to see how women soldiers could achieve equal respect. When the prisoners were not being humiliated by being treated as women they were treated as dogs, an equally abased category. Thus one prisoner said, 'they forced us to walk

like dogs. We had to bark like a dog and if we didn't, they started hitting us' (Langton, 2004).

Lynndie England reported one instance of prisoners being degraded by being treated as women, 'Iraqi prisoners crawled over broken glass wearing only sanitary towels, shamed soldier Lynndie England said yesterday' (Crerar, 2004). Similar torture techniques, of humiliating Muslim prisoners with the uncleanness of women, were employed at the Guantanamo Bay prison in Cuba in the same time period. An Australian prisoner, Mamdouh Habib reported that a prostitute was told to stand over him and menstruate on him (Habib, 2005).

Professor Donna Hughes in her comment on Abu Ghraib has pointed out that these practices are common to pornography and the prostitution industry. They are in all cases 'attacks on the victims' dignity, identity, and bodily integrity' (Hughes, 2004). Both women and men can be shamed and ritually humiliated in this way, by being turned into unclean women. She describes meeting a female sex trafficker in the Ukraine who explained how women were inducted into prostitution. Apart from having their passports confiscated and being forced to watch hours of pornography, they were ritually humiliated in ways similar to the Iraqi prisoners. The trafficker showed Hughes photos of the abuse of one, probably teenage, victim in which 'the young woman is seated naked on the floor with a soiled sanitary napkin tied to her forehead. In other photographs the victim's face is being forced into the buttocks and crotch of a naked woman who is squatting above her. In yet another her face is being forced into a stream of urine' (Hughes, 2004). As Hughes explains, the purpose is to transform the victim into a 'compliant slave who performs sex acts for men'. An important element of this 'breaking the victim' was its documentation on film 'so the victim knows that a record of her powerlessness and humiliation has been recorded' (Hughes, 2004). The photos can be used to force her into obedience to the pimp who threatens to send copies to friends, family, a boyfriend at home or put them on the Internet. Similarly the photos taken of the humiliation of Iraqi prisoners were used to threaten them. They were told that the photos of them naked and at the sexual mercy of women would be sent to their family and friends so that they were publicly unmanned.

There are several lessons to be learned from the creation of pornography out of the Abu Ghraib tortures. One of these is yet another way in which Lynndie England's experience has been unequal to and different from that of the male soldiers who used her. She is likely to have been harmed in a way that is quite different from that of her male colleagues who are photographed with

her. The photos that were distributed can be seen as a public shaming and a punishment of her. The politics of male dominance decree that the portrayal of the sexual use of a woman by a man raises the man's status as it lowers hers. This is sometimes called the double standard and it is alive and well. Another lesson is the centrality of porn to the commission of military sexual violence. The filming of the humiliation of prisoners or of women soldiers to create home made porn has analogies elsewhere such as the rape camps of the Balkan wars. Catharine MacKinnon reports that a woman who survived the Bucje rape/death camp in Serbian-occupied Croatia described 'the making of pornography of her rapes this way: "In front of the camera, one beats you and the other — excuse me — fucks you, he puts his truncheon in you, and he films all that...We even had to sing Serbian songs...in front of the camera"' (MacKinnon, 1994a,b: 75). The distinction that is likely to be made between the situation of England and this woman in a rape camp, is that England is represented in the media as consenting and voluntarily taking part in this behaviour. There is no evidence that England was physically forced but the extreme power difference between her and the orchestrators of her degradation in military pornography should be seen to mitigate any easy argument as to choice and voluntariness. Indeed this is clearly evident in the reasons why a mistrial was declared in the court case against her in May 2005 (Goldenberg, 2005: 15). A plea bargain deal resulted in her pleading guilty. However the evidence entered in support of mitigation by her lawyers resulted in the Judge throwing out the case. Her boyfriend and military superior, Charles Graner, appeared in court to say that he had ordered England to pose for the photographs and that the images were training aids. This evidence contradicted England's testimony that she thought at the time that the photos were just for the amusement of the guards. The Judge entered a not guilty plea on England's behalf. She was retried and sentenced to 3 years imprisonment in September 2005.

The *Guardian* columnist Katharine Viner argues, in an article on Abu Ghraib, that the soldiers were likely to have been inspired in their treatment of prisoners by the sheer ordinariness of sexual torture in mainstream pornography. To show the routine nature of sexual sadism in mainstream pornography she uses the example of the treatment of Lara Roxx, an 18 year old Canadian who moved to California to take part in pornography and contracted HIV in the unprotected sex which is common to the industry (Viner, 2004). The act through which the HIV was contracted was a double anal into which she was pressured by the director after arriving at the studio.

The double anal is now a staple of the mainstream industry and triple anals are carried out on women too.

She says: 'So I get there and Marc Anthony tells me it's a DA, which stands for double anal'. And I'm like, 'What? I've never done a double anal'. And he was like, 'Well, that's what we need. It's either that or nothing'. And that's how they do it...I think that sucks, because he knew double anal was dangerous'. Later, she says, she was in pain and could not sit down. (Viner, 2004).

She considers that the soldier torturers at Abu Ghraib are likely to have been familiar with the products of this industry, which is so important to western male dominant culture that it is protected by legal systems as free speech and men's access to it is defined as an important liberty (Mackinnon, 1994a,b). The scenarios carried out on the prisoners, and on Lynndie in front of the prisoners, followed well known scripts.

Donna Hughes points out a further similarity, besides the sadomasochistic script, between the Abu Ghraib images and other forms of the pornographic use of women i.e. the quality of being 'trophy pictures'. 'The sadistic MPs (military police) are shown posing, smiling, and gloating over their victims and what they have made them do' she says (Hughes, 2004). She explains that in research into pornography on the Internet she found 'numerous offers' from pimps 'for men to bring cameras and video recorders with them to make trophy images and videos of their sexual use of women and girls' (Hughes, 2004). She asks the very pertinent question as to why newspaper readers are shocked by the Abu Ghraib images but 'when the victims are women (or gay men) the images are called pornography or "adult entertainment"'? (Hughes, 2004). There is hypocrisy here. Like Katharine Viner, she argues that the soldiers may have learned from pornography to treat the prisoners in sexually brutal ways. This generation of male soldiers, she suggests, has 'grown up with' pornography that is very cruel to women on the Internet and 'learned to call (it) "adult entertainment"' (Hughes, 2004).

Linda Burnham, executive director of the Women of Color Resource Center in Oakland, California, wrote a comment on the Abu Ghraib torture pornography entitled 'Sexual domination in uniform: an American value' (Burnham, 2004). She describes the photos as exposing the 'unbelievably tangled strands of racism, misogyny, homophobia, national arrogance and hyper-masculinity that characterize the US military' (Burnham, 2004). 'Militarized sexual domination' she argues, is a 'daily practice'. She points out the irony of



campaigning for women's right to equal opportunities in the military in this context 'Iraqi prisoners made to wear women's underwear. Those who battled for women's equal right to serve should take heed. Degradation and weakness are still equated with the female in this man's army' (Burnham, 2004). Burnham points out, as many feminist critics of military sexual violence have done in the last decade, the importance to the US military of the sexual domination of women in the form of military prostitution which has been seen as legitimate rest and recreation for the troops, 'our military is built upon the daily subjugation of the sexual lives of thousands upon thousands of women to the sexual appetites of servicemen overseas' (Burnham, 2004).

### Should feminists campaign for women's equal opportunities in the military?

One feminist theorist who has suggested that feminists should work towards equal opportunities in the military is Charlotte Hooper, author of *Manly States*, a critique of the masculinism of international relations in practice and in theory. She considers that it is worthwhile for women to enter such masculine spaces and suggests that even the 'marginal appearance of women... together with feminist ideas... may sufficiently alter the overall ambience of such spaces that their masculine associations become weakened' (Hooper, 2001: 231). The last sentence of the book says that despite 'apparently limited gains' and 'regardless of marginalization or even derision, such actions may yet prove effective in the long run' (Hooper, 2001: 231). However, in the case of the military, there is little evidence so far of changed cultural attitudes towards women as a result of the entry of women.

In Iraq 15% of US soldiers are women (Leonard, 2004). The US military has been encouraging women's participation in the military because of a serious need for numbers. It is not equal opportunities that fuels this drive. But the numbers have not created greater safety for women. Indeed it is the large presence of women in the military that is being blamed by some for the sexually violent behaviour of the male soldiers. The fact that there are so many women and that a woman was in charge of the military prison at Abu Ghraib, has been used as evidence for the idea that women harm morale and order (Marquez, 2004). One newspaper article suggested that in the case of Abu Ghraib it was the presence of women in the military police that encouraged the 'obscene misbehaviour that the photos reveal' (Leonard, 2004).

The presence of women does not seem to have alleviated misogynist attitudes. It may be that it is the

very presence of women that is creating the wave of rape of women soldiers with which the US military is now faced. The male soldiers may be acting out of resentment of the intrusion of women into their male enclave and against such unnatural situations as having women officers (Miller, 1997). The Miles Foundation sees its role as changing military culture to discourage the rape of women soldiers. They seek better definitions of rape in military justice systems, greater willingness to believe women when they report, and support for the women rather than hastened discharge. Their campaign is based on the assumption that it is possible to change the military. But this raises the question of whether it is possible to create an effective military, that is one in which soldiers are prepared to kill persons they do not know and with whom they have no quarrel, without masculinity. A military without masculinity may be unrecognizable and may not be capable of aggressive warfare where there is no reasonable cause. Equal opportunities for women right now, however, in militaries that are founded in the degradation of women, does not look like an achievable goal. If aggressive masculinity is the necessary foundation of the military rather than being an unfortunate hangover of patriarchy, then women cannot be equal in this institution.

### References

- Accad, Evelynne (2002). The phallus of September 11. In Susan Hawthorne & Bronwyn Winter (Eds.), *September 11, 2001. Feminist Perspectives*. Melbourne: Spinifex (pp. 412–425).
- Adams, Neale (2004, 8 May). *Iraqi cleric's sick appeal to followers*. The Express.
- Adelman, Madelaine (2003, 9 Sept). The military, militarism, and the militarization of domestic violence. *Violence Against Women*, 9, 1118–1152.
- Bartlett, Jim (2004). *Females wary as military rapes surface*. United Press International 27 February.
- Becker, Maki (2004, May 7). *The face behind a nation's shame*. Daily News (NY).
- Brownmiller, Susan (1975). *Against our will. Men, women and rape*. London: Secker and Warburg.
- Burnham, Linda (2004, 25 June). *Sexual domination in uniform: An American value*. Counterpunch Retrieved 4 August, 2004 from [www.sisyphus.org/imprimer.php3?id\\_articles=1191](http://www.sisyphus.org/imprimer.php3?id_articles=1191).
- Carter, April (1996). Women, military service and citizenship. In Barbara Sullivan & Gillian Whitehouse (Eds.), *Gender, Politics and Citizenship in the 1990s* (pp. 100–119). Sydney, Australia: UNSW Press.
- Cornwell, Rupert (2004, May 14). *Iraq crisis: US officials split on whether to release images of abuse*. London: The Independent.
- Crerar, Pippa (2004, 19 May). *Iraqis crawled in broken glass*. Daily Record (Scotland).
- Custody Battles (2004, 29 October). *Custody battles for Michigan women soldiers heading to Iraq: Associated Press State and Local Wire*.

- Editorial (2004, March 2). *Enemy within the gates*. The Baltimore Sun.
- Elshtain, Jean Bethke (2000). Shooting' at the wrong target: A response to Van Creveld. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 29(2), 443–448.
- Enloe, Cynthia (1983). *Does Khaki become you*. London: Pluto Press.
- Enloe, Cynthia (1992). It takes two. In Pollock Sandra & Brenda Stoltzfus (Eds.), *SturdevantLet the good times roll: Prostitution and the U.S. Military in Asia*. New York: New Press.
- Enloe, Cynthia (2000). *Maneuvers*. The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Faludi, Susan (1999). *Stiffed. The betrayal of the modern man*. London, UK: Chatto and Windus.
- Goldenberg, Suzanne (2005, 5 May). Abu Ghraib guilty plea thrown out. *Guardian*, 15.
- Habib 'tortured with prostitute' 2005, Retrieved January 27 from <http://www.news.com.au/story/0,10117,12062502-421,00.html>.
- Heineken, Lindy (2000, November). Securing South Africa's future: Putting women in the frontline. *Strategic Review for Southern Africa*, 22(2), 76–97.
- Hong, Cathy (2004, May 18). *When will the U.S. military tackle the problem of sexual abuse?* *Salon.com*.
- Hooper, Charlotte (2001). *Manly states. Masculinities, international relations, and gender politics*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Hughes, Donna (2004, 6 May). *Not unfamiliar*. *National Review*.
- Hynes, Patricia (2004). On the battlefield of women's bodies: An overview of the harm of war to women. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 27(5–6), 431–445.
- Kelly, Liz (2000). Wars against women: Sexual violence, sexual politics and the militarised state. In Susan Jacobs, Ruth Jacobson, & Jennifer Marchbank (Eds.), *States of Conflict. Gender, Violence and Resistance*. (pp. 45–65) London: Zed Books.
- Langton, James (2004, 21 May). Appalling new torture claims at jail from hell. *Evening Standard*.
- Leonard, Mary (2004, May 16). Abuse raises gender issues. *Boston Globe*.
- Lorch, Donatella (2003, March 17). Ghosts of Tailhook: A growing scandal has the Air Force in a nose dive. *Newsweek* (pp. 43).
- Lowther, William (2004, April 2). *U.S. women soldiers 'raped' by colleagues*. Daily Mail London.
- MacKinnon, Catharine A. (1994). Turning rape into pornography: Postmodern genocide. In Alexandra Stiglmeier (Ed.), *Mass Rape: The war against women in Bosnia–Herzegovina* (pp. 73–81). Lincoln, Nebraska, USA: University of Nebraska Press.
- MacKinnon, Catharine A. (1994). *Only words*. London, UK: HarperCollins.
- MacKinnon, Catharine A. (1989). *Towards a feminist theory of the State*. Cambridge, A: Harvard University Press.
- Marquez, Myriam (2004, May 15). *Women warriors in depravity*. Orlando Sentinel.
- Miller, Laura (1997). Not just weapons of the weak: Gender harassment as a form of protest for Army men. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 60(1), 32–52.
- Morgan, Robyn (1989). *The demon lover: The sexuality of terrorism*. London: Methuen.
- Morrison, Keith 2005: Lynndie England speaks about her role in abuse of prisoners in Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison. *Dateline*. NBC Transcripts. NBC. 2 October.
- Nightline (2004, May 14). *ABC news transcripts*.
- Noakes, Lucy (1998). *War and the British: Gender, memory and national identity* London: I.B.Tauris.
- Sander, Helke (1994). Prologue. In Alexandra Stiglmeier (Ed.), *Mass rape. The war against women in Bosnia–Herzegovina* (pp. xvii–xxii). Lincoln, Nebraska, USA: University of Nebraska Press.
- Sasson-Levy, Orna (2003). Feminism and military gender practices: Israeli women soldiers in "masculine" roles. *Sociological Inquiry*, 73(3), 440–465.
- Siefert, Ruth (1994). War and rape: A preliminary analysis. In Stiglmeier (Ed.), (pp. 54–72).
- Snyder, R. C. (2003). The citizen–soldier tradition and gender integration of the U.S. Military. *Armed Forces and Society*, 29(2), 185–205.
- Stiglmeier, Alexandra (1994). *Mass Rape: The war against women in Bosnia–Herzegovina*. Lincoln, Nebraska, USA: University of Nebraska Press.
- Sturdevant, Sandra Pollock, & Stoltzfus, Brenda (Eds.). (1992). *Let the good times roll: Prostitution and the U.S. Military in Asia* New York: New Press.
- Viner, Katharine (2004, 1 June). The sexual sadism of our culture, in peace and in war. The Abu Ghraib images have all the hallmarks of contemporary porn. *Guardian*.
- War in Iraq (2003, Monday 24 March). War in Iraq. *Pictures The Age* : Melbourne.
- Wilkinson, Tracy (2004, 11 May). Iraq prison scandal. *Los Angeles Times*.
- Yuval-Davis, Nira (1997). *Gender and nation*. London: Sage Publications.