

In 20th-century America, military heroism became a key symbol of what was regarded as a heterosexual, masculine white nation. Military heroism thus became a major discursive battleground on which dominant notions of race, gender, and national identity were negotiated, challenged, and revised. The conference seeks to probe this complex interrelationship and how it changed between 1914 and 2014, asking how military heroism helped to construct and challenge racialized and gendered hierarchies in the United States. It seeks to examine how praise for heroic behavior on the battlefield or the refusal to give such praise became either a means of marginalization or a resource that minorities could utilize to protest against their marginal status. This process is closely linked to dominant notions of masculinity and femininity, to scientific and popular understandings of race, and to politicized ideals of heroism and American citizenship. It is this interrelationship that the conference will focus on.

Conference Venue: Goethe-University of Frankfurt
IG-Farben Building
Grüneburgplatz 1
60323 Frankfurt
Room IG 1.314

Conference Organizers: Simon Wendt and Matthias Voigt
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Race, Gender, and Military Heroism in U.S. History From World War I to 9/11



March 20-21, 2015
Goethe-University of Frankfurt

Conference Program

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Friday, March 20, 2015

10:00-10:30 a.m.	Arrival and Registration
10:30-11:00 a.m.	Introduction Simon Wendt (University of Frankfurt) <i>Race, Gender, and Military Heroism in U.S. History</i>
11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	Panel 1: Military Heroism and Race during the Interwar Period and World War II Chair: Simon Wendt (University of Frankfurt) George Lewis (University of Leicester) <i>"Service": The American Legion, Americanism, and Military Heroism, 1919-1941</i> Ellen D. Wu (Indiana University) <i>Nisei in Uniform: The Invention of World War II's Iconic Japanese American Soldier</i>
12:30-2:00 p.m.	Lunch
2:00 - 4:00 p.m.	Panel 2: Racial Minorities and the Construction of Military Heroism from World War I to the Vietnam War Chair: Isabel Heinemann (University of Münster) Brian Behnken (Iowa State University) <i>Hero Street and Beyond: Ethnicity, Masculinity, and Mexican American Military Heroism from the Great War to Vietnam</i> Simon Wendt (University of Frankfurt) <i>Black Military Heroism in World War II and the Vietnam War</i> Matthias Voigt (University of Frankfurt) <i>Code Talkers and Warriors: The Making of Native Heroes during World War II</i>
4:00-4:30 p.m.	Tea and Coffee
4:30-6:30 p.m.	Panel 3: Gender, Sexuality, and the Vietnam War Chair: Matthias Voigt (University of Frankfurt) Ingrid Gessner (University of Regensburg) <i>You Were My Heroes: Remembering Military Nurses of the Vietnam War</i> Steve Estes (Sonoma State University) <i>American Heroes and Anti-Heroes in the Vietnam War</i> Simon Hall (University of Leeds) <i>Gays, Military Heroism, and the Perils of Patriotic Protest in the Vietnam War Era</i>

Saturday, March 21, 2015

10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	Panel 4: Continuities and Discontinuities in the Heroization of U.S. Soldiers Chair: Simon Wendt (University of Frankfurt) Amy Lucker (Rutgers University-Newark) <i>Displaying Heroism: Media Images of the Weary Soldier, World War II, Korea, Vietnam</i> Sonja John (Humboldt University Berlin) <i>Three Generations of Lakota Veterans and the Idea of Intergenerational Heroism</i> Alexander Bielakowski (Command and General Staff College) <i>Forgotten Heroes: Ethnic and Racial Minorities Denied the Medal of Honor</i>
12:00-1:15 p.m.	Lunch
1:15 - 3:30 p.m.	Panel 5: Race, Gender, and the Heroic Warrior in the 21st Century Chair: Brian Behnken (Iowa State University) Kristin Hass (University of Michigan) <i>The Price of Freedom and the Problem of the American Heroic Imaginary</i> Carrie Andersen (University of Texas at Austin) <i>Virtual Warfare: Drones and the Future of the Soldier in the Call of Duty Series</i> Ahu Tanrisever (Free University of Berlin) <i>Whiteness, Masculinity, Class, and the Post-9/11 Warrior Hero</i> Sarah Makeschin (University of Passau) <i>The Negotiation of a 21st-Century Female Warrior</i>
3:30-3:45 p.m.	Tea and Coffee
3:45-4:30 p.m.	Final Discussion Chair: Simon Wendt (University of Frankfurt)