



Women in War Films: From Helpless Heroine to G.I. Jane

Ralph Donald, Karen MacDonald

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War has been depicted in cinema for more than a century, from early silent films to more recent blockbusters such as *Saving Private Ryan* and *Lone Survivor*. Most war films, especially combat films, are about *men* engaged in battle. But while Hollywood has reinforced the cultural stereotype of war as a man's job, women have not been completely invisible in many of these films, whether waiting for their men to return home or standing shoulder to shoulder with their male counterparts on the battlefield.

In *Women in War Films: From Helpless Heroine to G.I. Jane*, Ralph Donald and Karen MacDonald examine the representations of females in war throughout the history of film. They identify various types of women portrayed in these films, from home-front wives and daughters supporting their loved ones from afar to nurses and doctors stationed near the front lines of combat. The authors also look at depictions of foreign females who comfort homesick soldiers, ordinary women who unexpectedly encounter the enemy, female spies, and modern enlistees taking on roles traditionally reserved for men. Through these representations, the authors explore what war films say about the culture that created them and the social construction of reality that these films assert.

The book covers an array of war films distributed in the United States, including *Hearts of the World*, *Wings*, *Mata Hari*, *Mrs. Miniver*, *Casablanca*, *Cry "Havoc,"* *Since You Went Away*, *The Best Years of Our Lives*, *From Here to Eternity*, *The Americanization of Emily*, *M*A*S*H*, *Coming Home*, *Courage under Fire*, *G.I. Jane*, and *Zero Dark Thirty*. Featuring an extensive filmography, *Women in War Films* will appeal to scholars of gender studies, history, and film, as well as to readers interested in the evolving portrayals of females in military-related cinema.

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