



**Kimberly Jensen.** *Mobilizing Minerva: American Women in the First World War.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008. xvii + 244 pp. \$65.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-252-03237-0; \$30.00 (paper), ISBN 978-0-252-07496-7.

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**Published on** H-Minerva (April, 2009)

**Commissioned by** Kara Dixon Vuic

## A War for Full Citizenship

World War I coincided with the height of American women's struggle for full benefits of U.S. citizenship, and it provided a battleground on which suffrage activists staked women's claim to full membership in the American body politic. Focusing on three groups of women—physicians, nurses, and armed women—Kimberly Jensen examines the ways in which some women identified military service as the medium through which to gain the right to participate fully in civic life. Moreover, Jensen explains that, in using the military to claim citizenship, women pushed to change the links between armed service, gender, and violence. This is key to her study, which she places in a context of violence against women, both on the war front and on the home front. Thus, the story Jensen tells is not simply a tale about World War I or the women's suffrage movement, but a story of the complicated intersection of gender, citizenship, violence, and war in the early twentieth century.

Jensen opens her narrative at a suffrage parade in Washington DC, in March 1913, where marchers faced violence and harassment from onlookers. Leaders of the parade had anticipated such a backlash and sought protection from DC superintendent of police Richard Sylvester and Secretary of War Henry Stimson, but their requests fell on mainly deaf ears. The day before the march, though, Stimson ordered the Fifteenth Cavalry to be on call in case any ruckus should occur during the parade. Troops eventually had to be called in, for opponents attacked suffrage activists to the degree that about forty marchers were hospitalized for several days. Those who challenged the marchers argued that the activists were members of a "suffrage army" perpetrating a gender war and thus were combatants who deserved any violence they encountered. These angry responses exposed the limits of the gendered division that deemed men the protectors and women the protected.

The suffrage parade illustrates the climate of violence that women who demanded voting rights and access to military service faced in the United States in the early twentieth century. Jensen then examines connections between gender and citizenship, exploring the martial ideal of citizenship available to men and the Progressive Era notion of civic participation as the basis for women's citizenship. The outbreak of World War I fueled antisuffrage activists' contention that voting should be linked to the defense of the nation, but supporters of women's suffrage attempted to use the war to demand admission to the armed services and the benefits of full citizenship. In doing so, they also sought to change the military's gendered use of violence, in which victorious troops displayed their masculine power by raping the women of the vanquished enemy. In addition, American women who worked with the armed forces as doctors and nurses faced sexual harassment that sometimes turned violent. Advocates for establishing rank for women nurses in the military argued that adding women to the ranks of the armed forces would calm the hostile environment. However, it was not until 1947 that the military granted women nurses commissions, pay, and benefits appropriate for their experience.

Written by a less capable scholar, the multilayered narrative Jensen weaves could have come across dense, confusing, and jargon-filled. But Jensen presents her argument and evidence in a clear and concise manner and makes it accessible to both scholarly and general audiences. Each chapter begins with a paragraph that outlines the chapter's main themes, and vivid anecdotes bring the theory and analysis to life. And beyond being a work that explores an aspect of the past, Jensen's important book has implications for today. As more women enlist in the U.S. military, sexual harassment and violence against women remain concerns as they were nearly one hundred years ago.

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**Citation:** Heather M. Stur. Review of Jensen, Kimberly, *Mobilizing Minerva: American Women in the First World War*. H-Minerva, H-Net Reviews. April, 2009.

**URL:** <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=24422>



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