

Student Veterans (Past and Present)

Annotated Bibliography for 2016 NEH Summer Institute on Veterans in Society

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Altschuler, Glenn, and Stuart Blumin. *The GI Bill: The New Deal for Veterans*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Coming after Cohen's (2003) critique and Mettler's (2007) praise for the G.I. Bill, this volume attempts to create a new, balanced survey of the positive and negative impact of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act with particular focus on educational benefits. Though egalitarian in the opportunities the Act provided for African American and women veterans to attend college, the reality did not eliminate discrimination that limited the Act's use by these populations.

Arminio, Jan, Tomoko Kudo Grabosky, and Josh Lang. *Student Veterans and Service Members in Higher Education*. Florence: Taylor and Francis, 2014.

Like Moore's (2012) *Understanding and Working with the Veteran Student*, this volume is a guide for faculty and administrators seeking best practices for ensuring student veteran success in the classroom and on campus. It is however much more comprehensive in scope, and it identifies several fruitful avenues for future research in the fields of public policy, psychology, and social work.

Bennett, Michael J. *When Dreams Came True: The GI Bill and the Making of Modern America*. Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, 1999.

Though a political scientist, Bennett wrote one of the early histories of the G.I. Bill. His narrative fits a traditional, more celebratory tone, especially compared to what came later. With chapters dealing with the pre-G.I. Bill benefits given to veterans and the complicated legislative history of the act, Bennett goes on to celebrate its accomplishments as an example of the power of good public policy to transform society for the better.

Boulton, Mark. *Failing Our Veterans: The G.I. Bill and the Vietnam Generation*. New York: NYU Press, 2014.

Through a thorough legislative history of G.I. Bill benefits, Boulton argues that the Bill emerged as a clear and unrevokable answer to the question of what (if anything) the country owes its veterans. Despite committing to post-service benefits, postwar presidents struggled to balance veteran benefits with escalating budgets, and the resulting cuts hit the Vietnam generation the hardest. Other factors like the decline in veterans activist organizations, the perceived illegitimacy of Vietnam and later conflicts, and the growing number of non-combat veterans whose service, to some minds, didn't warrant the full benefits of the original G.I. Bill.

Chrisinger, David. *See Me for Who I Am: Student Veterans' Stories of War and Coming Home*. Albany, NY: Hudson Whitman Excelsior College Press, 2016.

An outgrowth of a first-year student veterans transitions course at the University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point, this anthology of twenty essays explores the experience of transitioning from military service to student life on campus. Unlike some anthologies written as part of an MFA program, the essays mostly run toward raw and honest accounts devoid of pretension. As such, it is a good account for the history of veteran transitions in the post-9/11 years as well as a useful text for introducing student veteran issues to faculty and staff who work with them.

Cohen, Elizabeth. *A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*. New York: Knopf, 2003.

Cohen's book launched a new wave of interest in the history of the G.I. Bill with her decidedly revisionist account. Instead of embracing the traditional argument that the G.I. Bill had a transformative effect on American society, Cohen suggested that those who benefited most tended to enter the military already better educated and with greater access to financial resources than the average citizen. As a result, the G.I. Bill helped solidly middle class veterans become more firmly ensconced in their position, but did little to effect class or social mobility among others.

Humes, Edward. *Over Here: How the G.I. Bill Transformed the American Dream*. Orlando: Harcourt Books, 2014.

Journalist Edward Humes writes his (mostly) celebratory account of the impact of the G.I. Bill on society as at least a partial political argument for the role of government in transforming society for the better. Though he acknowledges that the Bill did not deliver as promised for women and African Americans, on the whole he argues for its net contributions through the lives of a handful of veterans.

Mettler, Suzanne. *Soldiers to Citizens: The G.I. Bill and the Making of the Greatest Generation*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Mettler argues that the availability and ease of using benefits offered veterans after World War Two resulted in greater civic engagement by that generation. She is particularly interested in the two-way flow of benefits between citizens and government. The book includes analysis of the different experiences that Caucasian and African American veterans had using the G.I. Bill and engaging in public political discourse, but gives less attention to women.

Moore, Bret A. *Understanding and Working with the Veteran Student: A Guide for Educators*. Indianapolis: Pearson Certification, 2012.

This is a handbook for faculty and administrators who require a snapshot of the current student veteran population, along with copious resources on services available to assist military-connected families make the transition out of active-duty life. The chapter on "military culture in the classroom" would be particularly helpful for training faculty.

Ortiz, Stephen R. *Beyond the Bonus March and GI Bill: How Veteran Politics Shaped the New Deal Era*. New York: New York University Press, 2010.

Ortiz examines the critical period between the Bonus March and the G.I. Bill to unpack the ways that veteran organizing and advocacy shaped not only the future of veterans affairs but also the larger political narrative of the United States in a critical period in the twentieth century. Ortiz argues that veteran backlash against benefits cuts built into FDR's early budgets created a larger movement that renegotiated the role of veteran services in the newly formed welfare state. This volume is a much-needed supplement to the more extensive literature on the history of the G.I. Bill.

Severo, Richard, and Lewis Milford. *The Wages of War: When America's Soldiers Came Home—from Valley Forge to Vietnam*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989.

This early account of veteran history was written for a popular audience, and it argued that the treatment of the current generation of war veterans (at the time of publication, Vietnam veterans) was not an anomaly. Instead, only the public regard – in both policy and welcome – for World War Two veterans proved unusual, but on the whole the United States did not have a record of doing right by returning soldiers. The volume is more synthesis than original

research, and focuses on Agent Orange to exclusion of almost all else in the Vietnam chapters, but is a useful introduction to the field of veteran history.

Taylor, Richard H. *Homeward Bound: American Veterans Return from War*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2007.

Taylor tackles a broad subject in this volume, investigating the experience of American veterans returning home from the Revolutionary War to the post 9/11 conflicts. Taylor suggests that a wary governmental structure, too often concerned about the challenges veterans pose, has historically been best overcome when veterans advocate on their own behalf and take proactive measures to reintegrate into society. The book is mostly synthesis of existing studies, but does make some use of Library of Congress Veterans History Project interviews in the second half. As a short overview, it would be valuable for undergraduate courses dealing with veterans history, but more advanced study would require digging deeper.