



Call for Papers

Third International MKGD-ZMSBw Conference

Sexual Violence in Militaries and Wars: Comparative and Long-term Perspectives

Wednesday to Friday, January 20 to 22, 2027

at the Bundeswehr Centre of Military History and Social Sciences Potsdam, Germany

Hosts:

- Research Network Military, War and Gender/Diversity (MKGD)
- Bundeswehr Centre of Military History and Social Sciences, Potsdam (ZMSBw)

In cooperation with:

- University of the Bundeswehr Munich, Department of Social Sciences and Public Affairs (UniBwM)
- Leibniz Institute for Contemporary History, Munich-Berlin (IfZ)
- Leibniz Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe, Leipzig (GWZO)
- Military History Working Group (Arbeitskreis Militärgeschichte, AKM)
- Working Group on Historical Women's and Gender Studies (AKHFG)

Organizers:

PD Dr Anne-Laure Briatte (Sorbonne University, France); Prof. Dr Isabelle Deflers (UniBwM); Prof. Dr Karen Hagemann (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill); Dr Gerhard Kümmel (ZMSBw); Prof. Dr Maren Lorenz (Ruhr University Bochum); Prof. Dr Elissa Mailänder (Sciences Po Paris) and Prof. Dr Maren Röger (GWZO)

Theme and Goals:

In recent decades, sexual violence has become an increasingly important topic for historians and social scientists researching gender, the military and war. Current studies emphasise that sexual violence in military and war contexts encompasses a wide range of behaviours. Next to rape, these include sexual mutilation, sexualised torture, sexual humiliation, forced prostitution as well as coerced pregnancies and abortions. Although victims of sexual violence are primarily women, commonly portrayed as civilians, they can also be men of any age and may belong to the military themselves. Sexual violence is not only practised by men in the military, but by women too.

Research also indicates that sexual violence can fulfil various context-specific functions. Rape has not only been a common practice of victorious soldiers and officers, but also was used by army leaders as a weapon of war or a war strategy. The motives and functions depend on the specific historical context. Also the frequency with which civilians are raped by military personnel has varied considerably over time and in different regions during armed conflicts, as has the way in which it is perceived and remembered. This is why it is crucial to understand the historically changing conditions of violent practices, and to carefully distinguish

between public discourse on rape, its representation in art and culture, the use of rape in war propaganda, its regulation in military and state laws, and its place in everyday war practices.

The third international conference organised by the Research Network on Military, War and Gender/Diversity (MKGD) and the Bundeswehr Centre of Military History and Social Sciences (ZMSBw) will examine the issue of sexual violence perpetrated by military and paramilitary forces, taking a comparative approach across regions and time periods. Our aim is to explore conflicts in Europe, North America and beyond from the Early Modern period to the present day. We appreciate contextualised case studies, as well as diachronic and synchronic comparisons. In particular, we welcome proposals on the Early Modern era and the nineteenth century, which remain relatively understudied in the developing historiography of conflict-related sexual violence.

The submitted proposals may address the following aspects and topics, but are not limited to them:

- Continuities and changes in discourses and practices of sexual violence during wartime and peacetime;
- The changing representations of sexual violence in armed forces and conflicts in art, literature, the media, and propaganda, as well as the aims, functions, and audiences of depictions;
- Patterns of conflict-related sexual violence with a focus on the political, social, military, and cultural factors shaping these patterns;
- Regulation, control, and disciplining of sexual violence in armed forces and conflicts, the evolution of such efforts over the centuries, and the motives and effectiveness of these regulatory attempts;
- Violence by military personnel within their own ranks;
- Non-dominant patterns of conflict-related sexual violence, against men and boys;
- Women as perpetrators, accomplices, or bystanders of conflict-related sexual violence;
- Reflection on methodological questions and source problems, including the role of language in historical and contemporary discussions of sexual violence.

Keynote Speaker:

- **Elizabeth Wood** (Franklin Muzzy Crosby Professor of the Human Environment and Professor of Political Science, International and Area Studies at Yale University):
Sexual Violence during War: Comparative Perspectives

Call for Papers:

The Call for Papers invites advanced doctoral students, postdoctoral researchers, and experienced scholars in the field to submit proposals. Presentations should be no longer than 20 minutes. The conference language is English. Unfortunately, we are unable to offer hybrid participation.

To apply for participation in the conference, please submit an English abstract (approx. 700 words) and a short CV (up to 2 pages).

Please send your application to **Prof. Dr Maren Röger (GWZO)** by **March 31, 2026**
Email <magda.wlostowska@leibniz-gwzo.de>

The accommodation expenses will be covered by the ZMSBw, in addition we hope to be able to cover the travel costs if needed (economy-class flights or train).

For information on the MKGD research network please visit the website:
<https://mkgd.hypotheses.org/>