



Written by [Staff](#) on January 9, 2017

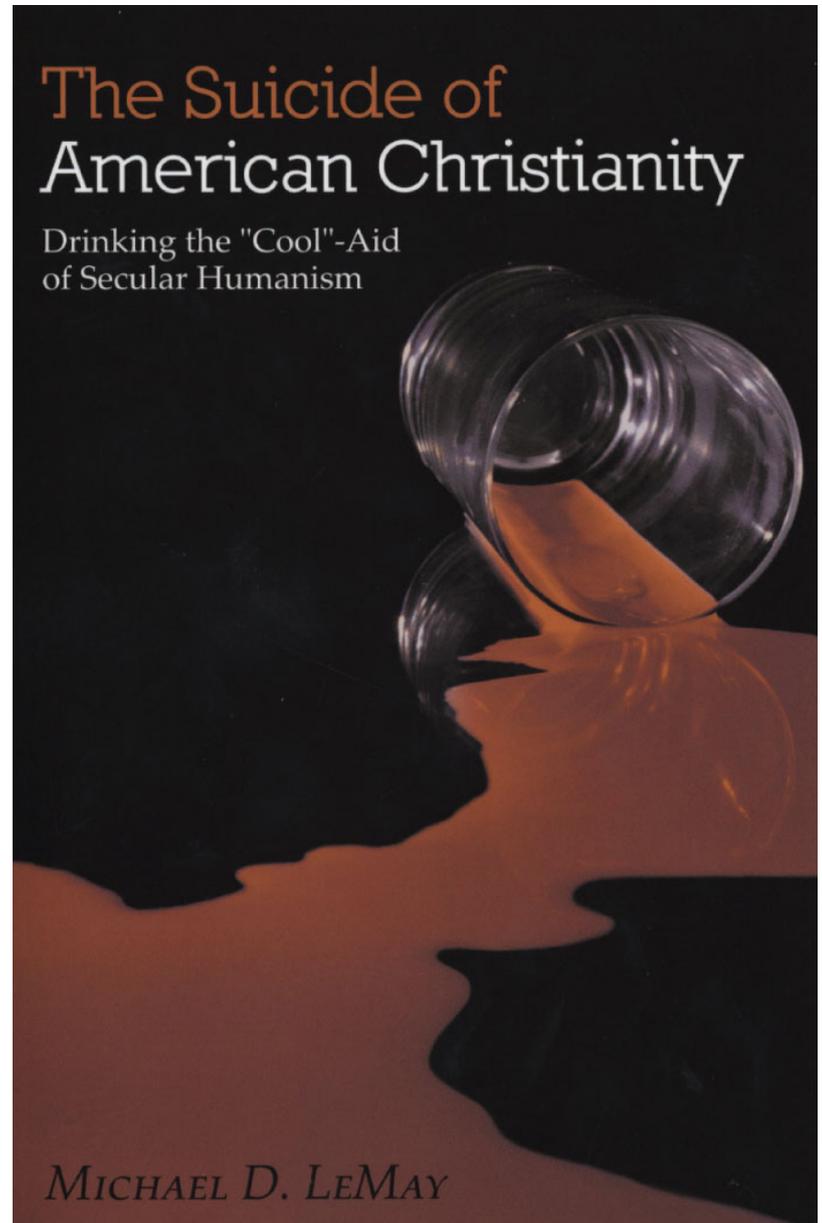
Published in the January 9, 2017 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 33, No. 01

## Emasculating the Military

***Pussycats — Why the Rest Keeps Beating the West and What Can Be Done About It***, by Martin van Creveld, Mevasseret Zion, Israel: DLVC Enterprises, 2016, 240 pages.

The policy changes that often come in the aftermath of a presidential election provide a context for reevaluating some of the principles that guide those who govern, and they allow for a comparison with the principles enunciated in the U.S. Constitution. The ever-growing propensity of both Republican and Democrat administrations to embroil these United States in foreign conflicts that have the character of undeclared wars has continued even as the percentage of the citizenry willing to enlist in the armed forces has fallen to historically low levels (for example, currently .4 percent of the American population is active-duty military personnel). The percentage of adults willing to serve in the military continues to rapidly decline even as the Department of Defense budget continues to soar, and the success of U.S. strategy has become more and more dubious, even as the military appears to many observers as an organization that is being transformed by feminists and homosexual activists into a social experiment aimed at changing our society, rather than fighting against the enemies of the American Republic.

In a new book, *Pussycats — Why the Rest Keeps Beating the West and What Can Be Done About It*, Israeli military historian Martin van Creveld examines the current plight of Western militaries in the context of the historical expectations for fighting forces. As van Creveld observes, “As society becomes more peaceful — in the absence of major war, never in history have Westerners been less likely to die a violent death — people, men in particular, tend to become less willing to take risks, are less robust, and are less resilient. Both in law and in practice, countless problems that used to be settled by the antagonists themselves now require the intervention of social services, police, the courts, or some combination of all three.” One result has been that a smaller and smaller portion of the population is





Written by [Staff](#) on January 9, 2017

Published in the January 9, 2017 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 33, No. 01

---

willing to assume the risks attendant with defending the country, and the government has turned to mercenary forces (“contractors”) and relies less and less on recruits. In van Creveld’s words:

Another very important innovation pointing in the same direction is the growing number, size, and importance of private military corporations. In other words, of mercenaries, or “mercs” as they are sometimes called. At the time of the 1991 Gulf War one in fifty US troops was a mercenary. Not long after, during the wars in the former Yugoslavia, the number of mercenaries involved was estimated at about one in ten of all troops. When the so-called “Coalition of the Willing” invaded Iraq in 2003 they formed the second largest force after the US military. Between 2000 and 2005 alone US spending on them doubled from \$134 to \$270 billion. Relative to the size of the country and that of its armed forces, developments in Britain have been even more dramatic.

The result is that fewer citizens are actually enlisted in the armed forces, while those who are paid to wage war are handsomely remunerated. Meanwhile, those who continue to serve in the actual military find themselves transformed into subjects in an ongoing experiment in societal transformation, including the implementation of a feminist agenda that has a direct impact on the ability of the military to wage war. As van Creveld observes, a host of studies has demonstrated the biological fact that the female body is not suited to the particular stresses that warfare places on the human body. The result is that female soldiers are not prepared for the rigors of combat — a fact that, while of seemingly little concern for the American political elite, is not lost on our potential opponents. In van Creveld’s assessment: “Currently Western countries are embarked on a social experiment that has no precedent in history. I am referring to the feminization of the armed forces.... The feminization of the forces appears to be a near-exclusive Western phenomenon. To be sure, some non-Western forces also have some female soldiers or, much more often, images of female soldiers. That even applies to a few Muslim countries. However, they do not seem to take them very seriously.”

Van Creveld notes that the “rules” of society have changed; thus, for example, even the simple acknowledgement of a difference in individual abilities must be denied on an ideological basis. The categorical differences between the sexes are therefore utterly denied. The importance of “self-esteem” has been declared so critical in the educational process that instructors, in van Creveld’s words, “punish high achievers, foster illusions, and encourage mediocrity.” When such “encouragement of mediocrity” is brought into the military, what is compromised is the security of the entire nation. The physical training that is a vital component of preparing soldiers for combat actually heightens the differences between male and female soldiers; as van Creveld observes, “Thanks to the ‘superior ability of men to add muscle to their bodies,’ intensive training, far from diminishing the physical differences between the sexes, tends to increase them still further.” Furthermore, the imposition of a feminist agenda has led to what he calls a “de-militarized military” in which the “militarist” traditions that naturally adhere to military culture are “demonized” in such a way that “one would almost think that preparing to defend one’s country, and being proud of doing so, is a crime.”

Van Creveld’s thorough assessment of the process of feminization is worthy of careful consideration. However, it is his evaluation of the historical origins of “Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder” (PTSD) that is the most valuable portion of *Pussycats*. Given the sensitivities that surround any discussion of the health and well-being of a nation’s veterans, van Creveld’s analysis boldly evaluates PTSD from a perspective that is well-informed by a lifetime of study of the history of armed conflict. In van Creveld’s view, PTSD is a strictly modern, and largely Western, phenomenon:



Written by [Staff](#) on January 9, 2017

Published in the January 9, 2017 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 33, No. 01

---

In sum, the evidence for PTSD before the American Civil War ... is weak to nonexistent. To be sure, here and there contemporaries registered complaints that, in retrospect, bore a superficial similarity to it. However, they were neither limited to soldiers nor necessarily understood as the outcome of participation in combat. Nor did people understand them as mental diseases. And no wonder, since that idea itself only made its appearance during the second half of the nineteenth century when psychiatry emerged as a separate discipline.

Van Creveld acknowledges that there are many people who believe that the brutal reality of warfare is the cause of PTSD, but in his assessment, what is known of the experiences of soldiers across a span of millennia belies such a notion:

Nothing is less likely than the idea that men have some kind of built-in reluctance to kill opponents whose face they can see, and that doing so is [a] major cause of PTSD. Had that been true, then almost the whole of military history, when weapons were edged and soldiers fought hand to hand, would have been impossible. But it is not. Little if anything of the kind is to be found in the Iliad, or in the Peloponnesian War, fought mostly with the aid of spears some two meters long; or in the Viking sagas, which tell us not only of dead warriors but of the wolves and birds that devour their cadavers; or in the Renaissance military memoirs, written at a time when the most important weapon was the pike....

Is it really war that is generating PTSD? Or is it present-day society's *idée fixe* that war is bad both in itself and for the soul of those who participate in it, so that over enough time anybody who does so *must* break down? And does not this idea itself help explain why PTSD has become as much of a problem as it is? The suggestion that all returning soldiers be screened for the symptoms, not just once but on a recurrent annual basis, points to the second and third answers. So does the fact that, starting in 2010, no American combat veteran can be discharged without being examined for PTSD first.

In other words, the cure may be driving the disease. If not in all cases, then at any rate in many.

As van Creveld observes, the emergence of PTSD seems linked to the rise of pacifism: "PTSD and conscientious objection rose at the same time and formed two sides of the same coin." According to his research, one simply does not find any significant occurrence of "combat fatigue," "shell-shock," or PTSD before the American Civil War, and the dramatic expansion of the phenomenon is extremely recent in origin.

The role of the military in Western civilization seems to be in a state of profound confusion at present. Martin van Creveld's thoughtful assessment is of great assistance in replacing much of that confusion with clarity. The need is for the military to be returned to its original function: the defense of the Republic, by the threat and use of physical force, against all enemies foreign and domestic. The transformation of the armed forces into the playground of an ideological commissariat advancing the feminist and homosexual cultural agendas has twisted the self-understanding of the military, threatening the ability of various branches to engage in their fundamental purpose.



## Subscribe to the New American

Get exclusive digital access to the most informative, non-partisan truthful news source for patriotic Americans!

Discover a refreshing blend of time-honored values, principles and insightful perspectives within the pages of "The New American" magazine. Delve into a world where tradition is the foundation, and exploration knows no bounds.

From politics and finance to foreign affairs, environment, culture, and technology, we bring you an unparalleled array of topics that matter most.



[Subscribe](#)

### What's Included?

- 24 Issues Per Year
- Optional Print Edition
- Digital Edition Access
- Exclusive Subscriber Content
- Audio provided for all articles
- Unlimited access to past issues
- Coming Soon! Ad FREE
- 60-Day money back guarantee!
- Cancel anytime.