

Courage or Complicity?

How Veterans Are Responding to the Assault on Democracy

Steve Early and Suzanne Gordon

For generations, America has thanked its veterans for their service but then forgotten promises made to them.

That's why some former soldiers have always ended up on the barricades or picket lines, demanding justice for themselves or fellow workers back home. From Revolutionary War volunteers who later joined Shays's Rebellion to World War I soldiers who staged a multiracial march on Washington to Vietnam War-era GIs who helped end the war they served in, such rank-and-file voices are hard to ignore.

In this timely collection of essays, reviews, and firsthand reporting, Steve Early and Suzanne Gordon trace that dissident legacy to the present day. They chronicle the critical role that disillusioned post-9/11 veterans now play in challenging MAGA Republicans and corporate Democrats over privatized healthcare, big money in politics, and ballooning Pentagon budgets. Inside these pages are stories of courage and complicity: veterans fighting to defend public healthcare from corporate takeover; resisting anti-union attacks; and opposing the use of federal troops for domestic policing and mass deportations. Their struggle is part of a broader fight for rights, dignity, and a better life for all poor and working-class Americans.

Courage or Complicity? is a searing indictment of political betrayal and a big salute to vets organizing against it. This book reveals the frontline battles shaping the future of American democracy.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Steve Early has been active in the Communications Workers of America for forty-five years, first as an International Union Representative and now as a News Guild/CWA member. He has worked with Labor Notes, Teamsters for a Democratic Union, Association for Union Democracy, Jobs with Justice, and Labor for Bernie. Early is the author or coauthor of five previous books: *Our Veterans: Winners, Losers, Friends, and Enemies on the New Terrain of Veterans Affairs*; *Refinery Town: Big Oil, Big Money, and the Remaking of An American City*; *The Civil Wars in U.S. Labor*; *Save Our Unions*; and *Embedded with Organized Labor*. He lives in Richmond, CA.

Suzanne Gordon is an award-winning journalist and author who belongs to the News Guild/CWA. She has written for *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Atlantic*, *The Nation*, *The Boston Globe*, and many others. She is the cofounder of the Veterans Healthcare Policy Institute and serves as a Senior Policy Analyst. She is the author, editor, or coauthor of twenty books, including previous works on veterans' and healthcare-related issues including *Wounds of War: How the VA Delivers Health, Healing, and Hope to the Nation's Veterans* and *From Silence to Voice: What Nurses Know and Must Communicate to the Public*. She received a Special Recognition Award from the Disabled American Veterans for her writing about veteran issues. For more information on her speaking, writing, and workshop facilitation, see suzannegordon.com. She lives in Richmond, CA.

ACCOLADES

"In a nation much devoted to hero worship of veterans, too little attention is paid to actual life in the military and its aftermath. Steve Early and Suzanne Gordon offer the most comprehensive and honest accounting of what my fellow veterans have experienced post-9/11 and the challenges we face today. Their new book is sweeping, authoritative, and bold. As more Americans stand up against the politicians and corporations falsely claiming to be on our side, the authors show how military veterans can join the charge against them."

—Matthew Hoh, former marine captain and State Department officer, Iraq War combat veteran

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—MATTHEW HOH, FORMER MARINE CAPTAIN

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SUBJECT CATEGORY

Activism & Social Justice / Health Care /
Military Policy

PRICE

\$24.95

ISBN

979-8-88744-020-0

PAGE COUNT

256

SIZE

6 x 9

FORMAT

Paperback

PUBLICATION DATE

08/11/2026

US DISTRIBUTION

Publishers Group West

1-866-400-5351

www.pgw.com • ips@ingramcontent.com

CANADA DISTRIBUTION

Publishers Group Canada

1-800-663-5714

customerservice@raincoast.com

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UK DISTRIBUTION

Turnaround Publisher Services Ltd

020-8829-3000 • orders@turnaround-uk.com

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P.O. Box 23912 • Oakland, CA 94623

www.pmpress.org • info@pmpress.org

510-703-0327

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