

A nation of veterans

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Résumé ou extrait : A Nation of Veterans examines how the United States created the world's most generous system of veterans' benefits. Though we often see former service members as an especially deserving group, the book shows that veterans had to wage a fierce political battle to obtain and then defend their advantages against criticism from liberals and conservatives alike. They succeeded in securing their privileged status in public policy only by rallying behind powerful interest groups, including the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Disabled American Veterans, and the American Legion. In the process, veterans formed one of the most powerful movements of the early and mid-twentieth century, though one that we still know comparatively little about. In examining how the veterans' movement inscribed martial citizenship onto American law, politics, and culture, A Nation of Veterans offers a new history of the U.S. welfare state that highlights its longstanding connection with warfare. It shows how a predominantly white and male group such as military veterans was at the center of social policy debates in the interwar and postwar period and how women and veterans of color were often discriminated against or denied access to their benefits. It moves beyond the traditional focus on the 1944 G.I. Bill to examine other important benefits like pensions, civil service preference, and hospitals. The book also examines multiple generations of veterans, by shedding light on how former service members from both world wars as well as Korea and the Cold War interacted with each other. This more complete picture of veterans' politics helps us understand the deep roots of the military welfare state in the United States

today.

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