

Film tells story of sexual assault epidemic in the military

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Great documentary films often do more than tell a story; they bring about change. [*The Invisible War*](#), an examination of the epidemic of sexual assault in the military, is such a film, says the film's producer, Amy Ziering. The New Orleans community will have the opportunity to hear from Ziering at a free screening at the Prytania Theater uptown on Thursday (Oct. 10) at 7:30 pm.



Lieutenant Elle Helmer, U.S. Marine Corps, visits the Vietnam War Memorial, from *The Invisible War*, a Cinedigm/Docurama Films release.

A 2012 nominee for an Academy Award in the documentary feature category, the film paints a startling picture of the extent of the problem. Today, a female soldier in combat zones is more likely to be raped by a fellow soldier than killed by enemy fire. The U.S. Department of Defense estimates there were a staggering 22,800 violent sex crimes in the military in 2011.

Twenty percent of all active-duty women soldiers are sexually assaulted. Women soldiers aged 18 to 21 accounted for more than half of the victims. *The New York Times* has noted that the film “has been credited with both persuading more women to come forward to report abuse and with forcing the military to deal more openly

with the problem.”

Sally J. Kenney, director of the [Newcomb College Institute](#), was moved by the documentary, and wanted to bring its story to the larger community as part of the Newcomb Film Series.

“This film is the most important and disturbing film I have ever seen. It will change the way we think about sexual assault and the failure of institutions forever,” Kenney says.

The event is co-sponsored by The Ridenhour Prizes for Courageous Truth Telling and the [Fertel Foundation](#). *The Invisible War* won last year's Ridenhour Documentary Film Prize. The annual Ridenhour Prizes recognize acts of truth-telling that protect the public interest, promote social justice or illuminate a more just vision of society.

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