

Anne C. Armstrong

We Hold These Truths to Be Self-Evident

The National Guard and the Categorical Imperative

SERIES IN AMERICAN HISTORY

About the author

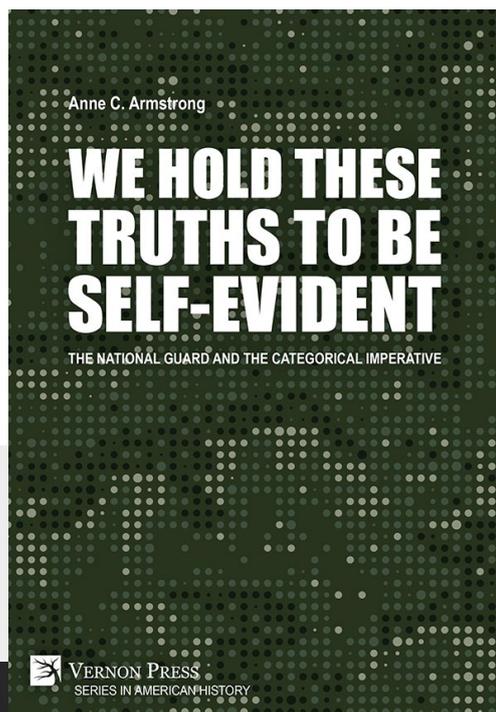
A native of Washington, DC, **Dr. Armstrong** received her Juris Doctorate in 1996 at the Catholic University of America and her interdisciplinary Doctorate of Liberal Studies in History and Philosophy in 2019 at Georgetown University. After a 21-year career as an Air Force and Air National Guard jet pilot, she is currently the lead historian for the National Guard Association of the United States in Washington, DC.

Anne Armstrong, from her position at the National Guard Library, has rescued the philosophical background of the National Guard from obscurity. From my own perspective as the great grandson of General Charles Dick, one of the founders of the National Guard, I commend the Vernon Press for publishing this masterful survey of the Kantian imperative and the Guard's eighteenth-century origins. General Dick was a firm believer in the necessity of a national guard as represented historically by the Garde Nationale of General Lafayette and of the early militias of George Washington. The relationship of these popular militias with the eighteenth-century thought of Immanuel Kant is a subject unexplored until now. Dr. Armstrong has applied her own rigorous thinking to the subject and produced a book that will be of great interest to military historians, followers and members of the Guard and historians of philosophy.

Charles Tharp
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Summary

In this monograph, Dr. Armstrong argues that a nation founded in Enlightenment theory can rely on Kant's categorical imperative as a rationale for voluntary service in one's local National Guard. Since the 19th century, a Utilitarian argument has been the favored rationale, but in *We Hold These Truths to Be Self-Evident: The National Guard and the Categorical Imperative* Dr. Armstrong contends that there is also a normative rationale. The author traces Guard history from its inception in 1636 to the present day and applies Kant's unchanging categorical imperative to volunteer service in the militias. She highlights that this is an ideal that is not always met by frail human beings but that the categorical imperative is always there, lurking in the historical record. With a thorough analysis of Kant's reasoning, the theory is chronologically applied to volunteer service in the National Guard through the perspective of the leadership of each particular era. This book is ideal for the study of American history, Enlightenment philosophy, and political science. It will appeal to scholars and academics as well as officers in Professional Military Education (PME), service academies and War Colleges, and the National Defense University.



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