The Invisible Enemy: The Effects of Polio on the American War Effort during World War II, 1941-1945

Jacob Owen Bryant, East Tennessee State University

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Stephen G. Fritz

Committee Members
Henry J. Antkiewicz, Emmett M. Essin III

Abstract
This thesis looks at the social, political, and military effects of epidemic polio on America's war effort during World War II. The primary sources consulted include newspapers, military medical reports, photographs, memoirs, speeches, and archival collections. It looks at the effects of polio on the home front, more specifically how epidemics and the rising rates of polio were a detriment to the civilian war effort. It also focuses on the American military's preparation for and response to polio outbreaks among troops both at home and abroad. Finally, it discusses the experiences of the servicemen who contracted polio during the war. This work fills a major hole in the historiography of the disease and highlights the overlapping interests of the public, the medical community, and the military during a time of war.

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