

They Don't Receive Purple Hearts



A Guide to an Understanding and Resolution of
the Invisible Wound of War Known as Moral Injury

Written by: Joseph M. Palmer

Edited by: James H. Mukoyama, Jr.

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Invisible Wound of War Known as Moral Injury

JOSEPH M. PALMER

This book is not intended as a substitute for therapeutic or medical advice. The reader should regularly consult a medical professional in matters relating to their health and particularly with respect to any symptom that may require diagnosis or medical attention of any kind.

Note to Readers:

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Military Outreach USA has relied on research, studies, and personal interviews to develop this publication.

Every attempt has been made to accurately cite those sources or individuals who contributed to the information contained.

It was not possible to use or include all of the resource information identified for inclusion in this publication. That information, however, is extremely valuable and added to a deeper understanding of moral injury.



"The award known as the Purple Heart has a history that reaches back to the waning days of the American Revolution. The Continental Congress had forbidden General George Washington from granting commissions and promotions in rank to recognize merit. Yet Washington wanted to honor merit, particularly among the enlisted soldiers. On August 7, 1782, his general orders established the Badge of Military Merit:

"... The General ever desirous to cherish virtuous ambition in his soldiers, as well as to foster and encourage every species of Military merit directs whenever any singularly meritorious action is performed, the author of it shall be permitted to wear on his facings, over his left breast, the figure of a heart in purple cloth or silk edged with narrow lace or binding."

This award was open only to enlisted men and granted them the distinction of being permitted to pass all guards and sentinels as could commissioned officers. The names of the recipients were to have been kept in a "Book of Merit" (which has never been recovered). At the present time there are three known recipients of the Badge of Military Merit: Sergeant Elijah Churchill, 2nd Continental Dragoons; Sergeant William Brown, 5th and Sergeant Daniel Bissel, 2nd Connecticut Continental Line Infantry.

Washington stated that the award was to be a permanent one, but once the Revolution ended, the Badge of Merit was all but forgotten until the 20th century.

General John J. "Blackjack" Pershing suggested a need for an award for merit in 1918, but it was not until 1932 that the Purple Heart was created in recognition of Washington's ideals and for the bicentennial of his birth. General Order No.3 announced the establishment of the award.

On May 28, 1932, 138 World War I veterans were conferred their Purple Hearts at Temple Hill, in New Windsor, NY. Temple Hill was the site of the New Windsor Cantonment, which was the final encampment of the Continental Army in the winter of 1782-1783. Today, the National Purple Heart Foundation continues the tradition begun here in 1932, of honoring veterans who have earned the Purple Heart.

The Purple Heart has undergone many changes with respect to the criteria for being awarded. At first, the Purple Heart was exclusively awarded to Army and Army Air Corps personnel and could not be awarded posthumously to the next of kin. In 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt signed an executive order allowing the Navy to award the Purple Heart to Sailors, Marines, and Coast Guard personnel. Also in that year, the Purple Heart was made available for posthumous award to any member of the military killed on or after December 7, 1941.

Originally the Purple Heart was awarded for meritorious service. Being wounded was one portion of consideration for merit. With the creation of the Legion of Merit in 1942, the award of the Purple Heart for meritorious service became unnecessary and was therefore discontinued. The Purple Heart, per regulation is awarded in the name of the President of the United States to any member of the Armed Forces of the United States who, while serving under competent authority in any capacity with one of the U.S. Armed Services after April 5, 1917 has been wounded, killed, or has died after being wounded (thepurpleheart.com).

Moral injury, often called an invisible wound of war, is an injury that affects the spirit and soul of a person. It is like a bullet wound that if left untreated will continue to bleed, ultimately affecting the entire body, until, in the worst of cases, death results. As with any wound, a basic understanding of how to treat it is necessary. Consider this publication an opportunity to learn about some of the causes of moral injury and potential treatments for a moral wound.

Moral injury, spiritual injury, or as the Marines refer to it, inner conflict, is in the simplest of terms, a personal harm stemming from a violation of one's moral code. It can, though not always, occur by doing or seeing something that is traumatic. It can occur to anyone, at any time, in any profession. In this publication attention is given to those who serve or have served in the military.

While some address moral injury as being the consequence of a traumatic event, Military Outreach USA believes that it is much more complicated and is the result of the total military experience...from recruit training to the battlefield and afterwards. Military Outreach USA contends that while moral injury can be the result of a singular traumatic event that there are also other contributors that accumulate over time leading to a moral injury. Those are the physical and moral distresses that can eventually bring an individual to the breaking point with the consequence resulting in a moral injury.

In each chapter, topics or issues are addressed that contribute to or provide an understanding of moral injury. Each chapter stands alone in either providing a historical perspective or in addressing contributors to moral injury. Attention is provided to what other militaries, such as Israel's Defense Forces (IDF) does through their training to reduce the risks of moral injury. The Soviet incursion into Afghanistan is explored to provide a background to U.S. forces experiences in that country. One chapter deals with the use of drones and the legal, ethical and moral problems that arise from their continued use. In sum, the contributors to moral injury are addressed with possible suggestions and approaches to resolution.

During Military Outreach USA's research conducted for this publication it was noted that the medical community, particularly in the field of moral psychology, is increasing its efforts in research concerning emotions and/or the psychological effects of moral injury. While Military Outreach USA applauds this research it does not address the immediate problem of one who is suffering from a moral injury.

While the research continues, there are organizations in every city or town in the nation that are currently available to serve those who suffer from a moral injury. These are the nation's community of houses of worship and caring organizations. It is the responsibility of those caring houses of worship and organizations to learn about and then help heal the invisible wound of war known as moral injury.

As moral injury is a wound to the spirit and soul, attention must be given to houses of worship as the place for healing. Perhaps it is the psalmist who speaks for those who suffer from moral injury when he cries out:

"My soul is full of troubles and my life draws near to Scheol [the world of the dead]...Thou has put me in the depths of the pit, in the regions of the dark and deep." (Ps. 88:3 and 6 ESV)

There are no medals or ribbons for those who suffer from the invisible wound of war. There is only the torment and struggle carried within the darkness of the soul. It is a house of worship through which one who suffers can begin to see the light.

In his book, *Out of the Night: The Spiritual Journey of Vietnam Vets*, William Mahedy refers to the ancient prayer of St. Francis, a prayer tailored for one who suffers from moral injury:

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace;
where there is hatred, let me sow love; where
there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith; where
there is despair, hope; where there
is darkness, light; and where there
is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,
grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be
understood, as to understand;
to be loved, as to love;
for it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

St. Francis of Assisi - 13th century

Working in conjunction with providers, such as the Veterans Administration, this community of houses of worship and caring organizations can help heal the moral or spiritual wounds from which those who have served this nation suffer.

The focus of this publication is to provide to organizations or individuals who seek to serve those in the Military Community (defined as veterans, active duty military, National Guard, reserves, and their families) with information centered on the subject of moral injury.

Those who suffer from a moral injury receive no Purple Heart for their wound.

They need, however, as with any wound, to be healed.

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Military Culture

“From this day to the ending of the world, But
we in it shall be remembered-
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
For he today that sheds his blood with me Shall
be my brother; be he ne’er so vile,
This day shall gentle his condition;
And gentlemen in England now-a-bed
Shall think themselves accurs’d they were not here,
And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks
That fought with us upon Saint Crispin’s day.”
— William Shakespeare, Henry V

While all citizens hold beliefs and values that bring a nation together, it is the military that must take action to protect the nation. In dealing with any topic related to moral or psychological issues that can affect those in the military community it is necessary to first understand military culture. The ability to understand and appreciate the military culture and to tailor reactions to individuals based on that understanding and appreciation is imperative for anyone working with Service members. Just as any individual receiving care, Service members, Veterans, and their family members should feel understood and respected as well as have their problems readily identified and addressed in an effective, safe, and timely manner.

Understanding the influence of military culture upon health-related behaviors will help in appropriately planning treatments or services to help the Service member or Veteran reach their personal, career, and military mission priorities.

Military Culture

Training



Recruit training varies by nation according to the national requirement and can be voluntary (volunteer military) or mandatory (conscription). Currently 100 such nations as the United Kingdom and United States have voluntary service. In voluntary service an individual chooses to join and thereby agrees to be subjected to the process of building an organization where each life depends on the person next to them. This voluntary status has changed the culture of U.S. military service.

Recruit training is oriented to the particular service. Army and Marine recruits are nearly always trained in basic marksmanship with individually assigned weapons, field maintenance of weapons, physical fitness training, first aid, and basic survival techniques. Navy and Coast Guard training usually focuses on water survival training, physical fitness, basic seamanship, and such skills as shipboard firefighting, basic engineering, and signals. Air Force training usually includes physical fitness training, military and classroom instructions, and field training in basic marksmanship and first aid.

In all training, standard uniforms are issued and recruits typically have their hair cut or shaved in order to meet grooming standards and homogenize their appearances. Recruits are generally given a service number. Recruit training must merge divergent trainees often from different levels of culture and society into a useful team.

Recruit training will include provision for the basic needs of the recruit - food, shelter, clothing - and these will meet certain unit standards and unit requirements, such as 'mobility' for an infantry unit. A recruit therefore will be 'issued' basic provisions or equipment according to the requirements of the unit and taught responsible management of these provisions.

Recruit training has changed over the years as tactics of war have changed. Infantry units no longer attack in mass formations; however, to move units around a base, formations are useful and practical. A combat soldier on the ground who may call-in artillery and/or air strikes must be more intelligent and cognizant of their decisions than ever before. Advances in technology place a heavier burden on a clear mind and conscience as the "time to react" becomes less and less.

Recruits are typically instructed in "drill": to stand, march, and respond to orders. Historically, drills are derived from 18th-century military tactics wherein soldiers in a fire line performed precise and coordinated movements to load and fire muskets. Although these particular tactics are now mostly obsolete, drilling trains the recruit to act unhesitatingly in the face of real combat situations.

A new war requires new training: Asymmetric warfare is war between belligerents whose relative military power differs significantly, or whose strategy or tactics differ significantly.

Code of Ethics

From the time a recruit takes their oath of military service they will learn about their Service's code of ethics. While every Service has their own Code reflecting on the particular mission of that Service there is commonality in such values as honor, service and sacrifice.

When reviewing a code of ethics and, as will be discussed, the warrior code, a historical point of reference is required. From the early Middle Ages the code of the knight...or chivalry...can be used as the basis of the modern code of ethics and warrior code when referring to the military.

This code of chivalry has changed over the centuries but some of the major points were that the knight was bound to defend his lord or liege, care for his lands and his people and in the later centuries this code of chivalry was expanded to include conduct in courts and public functions. A knight was expected to protect those of lesser rank than him and to hold himself to the highest standards of combat and knowledge in religion and writing, music and leadership.

The chivalrous knight was loyal, brave, and courageous. It must be noted that many knights, however, failed to meet all these high standards, particularly in their treatment of the lower classes.

The Medieval Code of Chivalry

This code of chivalry as documented in the 'Song of Roland' in the in the early 11th century period of William the Conqueror. The 'Song of Roland' described the 8th Century Knights and the battles of the emperor Charlemagne and has been described as the Charlemagne's Code of Chivalry. Some of the duties of the knights are described as follows:

- To serve in valor and faith
- To protect the weak and defenseless
- To live by honor and for glory
- To fight for the welfare of all
- To guard the honor of fellow knights
- To keep faith
- At all times to speak the truth
- To persevere to the end in any enterprise begun
- Never to turn the back upon a foe

The demise of the knight is attributable to technology and this moved in stages. The first stage of decline was the invention of the crossbow and later the arbalest (a very powerful crossbow). These weapons could be wielded by someone with very little training and they were powerful enough to pierce the best armor of a knight.

This meant that a knight who had trained all his life in the art of combat could be brought down in a matter of a few seconds by a person with an arbalest and very little training. The arbalest was declared a dishonorable weapon but it was still used. This technological development was probably enough alone to bring about the fall of the knight but the decline was completed with the development of gunpowder. As firearms came into use it was clear that the knight stood no chance for no armor could protect against a bullet (knight-medieval.com).

The history of knights and the significance of the code of chivalry are relevant in other chapters in this publication. The similarities in the code of chivalry to those of modern military organizations are striking.

Current Code of Ethics (Conduct)

No organization, whatever the size or mission, can function without a basic Code of Ethics. The military is no different. Every Western nation has a Military Code of Ethics (Conduct) for those in uniform. Following is the basic code for the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD).

Standards of Conduct, provides guidance to military personnel on standards of conduct and ethics. Violations of the punitive provisions by military personnel can result in prosecution under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). Violations of the punitive provisions by civilian personnel may result in disciplinary action without regard to the issue of criminal liability. Military members and civilian employees who violate these standards, even if such violations do not constitute criminal misconduct, are subject to administrative actions, such as reprimands. The use of the term "DoD Employee" in this article includes civilian employees and military members.

Ethics are standards by which one should act based on values. Values are core beliefs such as duty, honor, and integrity that motivate attitudes and actions. Not all values are ethical values (integrity is; happiness is not). Ethical values relate to what is right and wrong and thus take precedence over non-ethical values when making ethical decisions. DoD employees should carefully consider ethical values when making decisions as part of official duties. Primary ethical values include:

Honesty. Being truthful, straightforward, and candid are aspects of honesty.

Truthfulness is required. Deceptions are usually easily uncovered. Lies erode credibility and undermine public confidence. Untruths told for seemingly altruistic reasons (to prevent hurt feelings, to promote good will, etc.) are nonetheless resented by the recipients.

Straightforwardness adds frankness to truthfulness and is usually necessary to promote public confidence and to ensure effective, efficient conduct of operations. Truths presented in such a way as to lead recipients to confusion, misinterpretation, or inaccurate conclusions are not productive. Such indirect deceptions can promote ill-will and erode openness, especially when there is an expectation of frankness.

Integrity. Being faithful to one's convictions is part of integrity. Following principles, acting with honor, maintaining independent judgment, and performing duties with impartiality help to maintain integrity and avoid conflicts of interest and hypocrisy.

Loyalty. Fidelity, faithfulness, allegiance, and devotion are all synonyms for loyalty. Loyalty is the bond that holds the nation and the Federal Government together and the balm against dissension and conflict. It is not blind obedience or unquestioning acceptance of the status quo. Loyalty requires careful balancing among various interests, values, and institutions in the interest of harmony and cohesion.

Accountability. DoD employees are required to accept responsibility for their decisions and the resulting consequences. This includes avoiding even the appearance of impropriety. Accountability promotes careful, well-thought-out decision-making and limits thoughtless action.

Fairness. Open-mindedness and impartiality are important aspects of fairness. DoD employees must be committed to justice in the performance of their official duties. Decisions must not be arbitrary, capricious, or biased. Individuals must be treated equally and with tolerance.

Caring. Compassion is an essential element of good government. Courtesy and kindness, both to those we serve and to those we work with, help to ensure individuals are not treated solely as a means to an end. Caring for others is the counterbalance against the temptation to pursue the mission at any cost.

Respect. To treat people with dignity, to honor privacy, and to allow self-determination are critical in a government of diverse people. Lack of respect leads to a breakdown of loyalty and honesty within a government and brings chaos to the international community.

Promisekeeping. No government can function for long if its commitments are not kept. DoD employees are obligated to keep their promises in order to promote trust and cooperation. Because of the importance of promise keeping, DoD employees must only make commitments within their authority.

This Code of Ethics calls upon some of the basic instincts of a modern society. It relies on the moral and cultural values of its citizens to support the Code. In the case of the military, failure to abide by the Code can lead to a breakdown of unit cohesiveness which can result in such events as the My Lai Massacre, Abu Grab or a similar event.

The Warrior Code

Recruits, as civilians, were raised on a set of guidelines which created within them a moral code. Whether the guidelines for that code were centered on a religious belief using the Ten Commandments or civil law, the recruit came into military service with a “civilian moral code”. Part of that code, whether in religious or civil law, states that one shall not commit murder.

Military culture dictates that this code be changed. From the time a recruit sets foot onto the ground where their military training will begin, the process of conversion begins. **Their civilian code is transformed into a warrior code.**

The warrior code is the thread through which all else flows in the culture of the military. Without it there can be no bonding, no cohesiveness, and no ultimate act of sacrifice. Service members who live the warrior code:

put the mission first (task cohesion), refuse to accept defeat, never quit, never leave a fallen comrade behind. They have absolute faith in themselves and their team because they have common beliefs and values. (www.army.mil/values)

All who serve or have served in the military respond to, in today’s terminology, the “warrior’s code.” In the U.S. military it is the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) and Rules of Engagement (ROE) that provide the legal definitions of what warriors can and cannot do if they wish to continue to be regarded as warriors, rather than murderers or cowards.

For the warrior who adheres to such an informal code or to more formal rules of engagement, certain actions are unthinkable, even in the most dire or extreme circumstances.

Unless the warrior receives constant and proper moral and ethical training the risk exists that the warrior code can be violated. This training, as mentioned, begins the moment military service begins.

Warrior creeds have existed in one form or another for centuries to guide the actions of warriors on and off the battlefield. The creed is an inspirational daily reminder of the “reason they train and fight” and will sacrifice for their fellow warriors.

In understanding the Warrior Code and the subsequent bonding that occurs within the military we can then begin to understand how a violation of either...the breaking of the Code or the breaking of the unit bond... can lead to a moral injury.

This transformation from the “civilian code” to the “warrior code” is what may also create perhaps the greatest moral injury, the sacrificing of one’s **unwillingness to kill to that of a willingness to kill when ordered**. The service member will always carry in their mind the thought of killing or having witnessed or participated in a moral transgression. That thought will stay with them throughout their lives.

The Warrior Code can shield a service member from an emotional scar of war by providing justification for any given action. For example, when a sentry kills a woman or child that may (or may not) be carrying a weapon or explosive. As American military, we don’t kill women and children. It is in those types of situations when one’s civilian code conflicts with a Warrior Code.

Creating Discipline-Drilling

Modern militaries have learned that a service member often must make critical decisions on behalf of his unit and nation. Drill also enables the modern warrior to maintain proper position relative to his peers and thereby maintain the shape of his or her formation (arrowhead, line abreast, etc.) while moving over uneven terrain or in the dark of night. Drill serves a role in leadership training. Combat situations include not only commands to engage and put one's life in danger, but also commands to disengage when military necessity so demands. Drill is essential for military function because without the ideally instantaneous response to command that drill conditions, a military unit would likely disintegrate under the stress of combat and degenerate into a mere armed mob .

According to Finnish Army regulations, the close-order drill serves four functions:

- is essential for the esprit de corps and cohesion for battlefield conditions
- gets the recruits used to instinctive obedience and following orders
- enables large units to be marched and moved in an orderly manner
- creates the basis for action in the battlefield

Some aspects of basic training are psychological. The transformation from a civilian thought process to a disciplined military mind is a well-documented process for all Services. Instructors know that recruits who cannot reliably follow orders and instructions in routine matters will likely be unreliable in a combat situation wherein they may experience a strong urge to disobey orders or flee and thereby jeopardize themselves, their comrades, and the mission (prezi.com).

Military personnel in a combat unit will experience a unique level of 'agreement' among participants, termed unit cohesion, that cannot be equaled in any other human organization because each unit member's life may depend on the actions of the recruit to their right or left.

Special Forces (SEALS, Green Berets, and USAF Pararescue) and commando units training incorporates unit cohesion concept and practices as a vital component of their training programs.

Unit Cohesion

The process of transforming civilians into military personnel is a form of conditioning that encourages inductees to partially submerge their individuality for the good of their unit. This conditioning is essential for military function because combat requires people to endure stress and perform actions that are simply absent in normal life.

Military units are therefore incomparable to civilian organizations (perhaps excluding first responders) because each participant is in mortal danger and often depends on the others.

The bonding that takes place in a unit is as strong, if not stronger, than what the service member may have ever experienced. It may even be stronger than that of their immediate family. For what was started in basic training and carried forward in all future training is the development of unit cohesiveness, bonding and reliance. One member of the unit will rely on the other, in many cases for each other's lives. This reliance transcends the unit as well. A pilot relies on the mechanic to ensure the plane will fly properly.

An infantry unit at a remote base relies on the supply depot soldier to keep them stocked with an adequate amount of food, clothing and ammunition. This sense of reliance permeates every job within the military...all creating a bond and sense of family.

Cohesion has long been a central tenet in military writings. Our understanding of cohesion has matured over time as it has been the subject of critical evaluation. In the years immediately after World War II, Marshall (1947), Shils and Janowitz (1948), and Stouffer et al. (1949) argued that social cohesion within the soldier's primary group is essential to military effectiveness. Shils and Janowitz offered the following (1948, p. 281):

It appears that a soldier's ability to resist is a function of the capacity of his immediate primary group (his squad or section) to avoid social disintegration. When the individual's immediate group, and its supporting formations, met his basic organic needs, offered him affection and esteem from both officers and comrades, supplied him with a sense of power and adequately regulated his relations with authority, the element of self-concern in battle, which would lead to disruption of the effective functioning of his primary group, was minimized.

Task Cohesion vs Social Cohesion

- Task cohesion is the shared commitment among members to achieving a goal that requires the collective efforts of the group. A group with high task cohesion is composed of members who share a common goal and who are motivated to coordinate their efforts as a team to achieve that goal.
- Social cohesion is the extent to which group members like each other, prefer to spend their social time together, enjoy each other's company, and feel emotionally close to one another.

Cohesion exists in a unit when the day-to-day goals of the individual soldier, of the small group with which he identifies, and of unit leaders, are congruent—with each giving his primary loyalty to the group so that it trains and fights as a unit with all members willing to risk death and achieve a common objective (Henderson, 1985, p. 4).

The empirical literature since 1993 provides ample evidence to support the distinction between task cohesion (i.e., the shared commitment among members to achieving a goal that requires the collective efforts of the group) and social cohesion (i.e., the nature and quality of the emotional bonds of friendship, liking, caring, and closeness among group members). Although there have been some contrary views (Schaub, 2010; Wong et al., 2003), the empirical literature since 1993 on unit cohesion and its correlates provides considerable support for the conclusions that interpersonal liking is not essential to effective unit performance—what is important is a shared commitment to the unit's task-related goals.

Richard Gabriel observes that "in military writings on unit cohesion, one consistently finds the assertion that the bonds combat soldiers form with one another are stronger than the bonds most men have with their wives (Grossman, *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society*).

Morale and Esprit de Corps

Unit cohesion can be considered a contributor to unit or personal morale. Manning reviews various definitions of the terms morale and esprit de corps and suggests that morale is best thought of as "the enthusiasm and persistence with which a member of a group engages in the prescribed activities of the group" (Manning, 1994, *Unit Cohesion and Military Performance*). He suggests that esprit de corps is the counterpart to cohesion at the level of the organization rather than at the level of the primary unit and that cohesion and esprit de corps are each contributors to one's morale.

In the theater of operations . . . the presence of the enemy, and his capacity to injure and kill, give the dominant emotional tone to the combat outfit. . . . The impersonal threat of injury from the enemy, affecting all alike, produces a high degree of cohesion so that personal attachments throughout the unit become intensified. Friendships are easily made by those who might never have been compatible at home, and are cemented under fire. Out of the mutually shared hardships and dangers are born an altruism and generosity that transcend ordinary individual selfish interests.

So sweeping is this trend that the usual prejudices and divergences of background and outlook, which produce social distinction and dissension in civil life, have little meaning to the group in combat. Religious, racial, class, schooling or sectional differences lose their power to divide the men. What effect they have is rather to lend spice to a relationship which is now based principally on the need for mutual aid in the presence of enemy action. Such powerful forces as anti-Semitism, anti-Catholics or differences between Northerners and Southerners are not likely to disturb interpersonal relationships in a combat crew. . . . Their association is not limited to working hours but includes their social activities. . . . The most vital relationship is not the purely social. It is the feeling that the men have for each other as members of combat teams and toward the leaders of those teams, that constitutes the essence of their relationship. (Grinker and Spiegel's *Men Under Stress* 21-22)

Defining the Enemy

After WW2 a non-scientific study was conducted by S.L.A. Marshall where he concluded from his interviews that less than 25% of American soldiers/marines ever fired their weapon at the enemy. This alarming figure, whether accurate or not, caused those in command to be concerned about the willingness of their units to engage the enemy. The question that arose was, "What commander could afford to have almost 75% of their unit hesitant to fire their weapon?" Figures from the Korean War indicate a level of 55% who fired their weapons and Vietnam 90%. This high rate of fire is, in varying degrees attributed to Marshall's work. Whether the percentages in Marshall's book, "Men Against Fire" are accurate or not they did affect the future training of all U.S. military members. One such change in rifle ranges was the changing of the use of a "bull's-eye" target to that of a human silhouette.

Further, throughout the various levels of training that a soldier receives it is imperative that the enemy is defined and described. In past wars/conflicts U.S. enemies have been defined in derogatory terms such as gook, nip, Jap, kraut or commie. The reason for this is simple in that the soldier must not think they are killing a father or brother, mother or sister, but rather something that is somewhat sub-human. They must not hesitate in the pulling of a trigger or the pushing of a button. A hesitant decision to pull a trigger may cause unwanted casualties within the unit.

As discussed by Col. Benzi Gruber of the Israeli Defense Force (IDF), the average reaction time given for an Israeli soldier, from the time of identifying a threat to pulling the trigger is 8 seconds. In that time the decision to take a life or not must be made. Their training must override the moral values found in the civilian code with which they entered the military.

The face of war, which once could be viewed as large land or sea battles between nation states has changed from the 1940's and early 1950's. Beginning in and since Vietnam the combatants and landscape of war has changed. No longer is the enemy always in a uniform fighting in organized units. Rather, they wear civilian garb and launch small strikes, often within in an urban environment.

In other cases the enemy will use women and children as human shields or launch their attacks from a school or hospital. What was once an identifiable enemy has changed and the definition of the enemy has become distorted. This has created a dilemma for military trainers, leaders or individual soldiers.

Some military training now includes moral and ethics courses, coupled with dilemma scenarios to provide guidance. These sessions may help reduce the risk of non-combatant death or injury.

Depending on the duties of the service member, training on topics concerning resolving a moral dilemma in the combat area are provided.

An interview with a U.S. Air Force Forward Air Controller (FAC) revealed that prior to going into a combat zone that up to six months of training would be given dealing with what were legitimate targets and at what stage air strikes could be requested.

In another interview with a U.S. Marine assigned to artillery the training was similar to that of the Air Force in that consideration was given to the morality of the targeting. In some cases only a person at the command level could authorize firing, for example, into an urban environment.

It should be noted that the moral decision making process in both interviews also takes into consideration the political ramifications of killing civilians, other collateral damage and the potential for success.

Summation

The military culture, like any other professional culture, has its own sets of rules and codes. What makes the military culture different, however, is that it teaches, trains, encourages, and rewards the killing of other human beings. The individual who is volunteering to serve their country will be indoctrinated immediately into a culture where the self is largely irrelevant – an often cited example are the crew-cut haircuts given to all recruits – as commanders emphasize the greater good at every opportunity. It is driven into the new recruit as an absolute truth.

The concept of the greater good is no mere abstraction; soldiers must be able to blindly – literally trust their comrades in arms just as the latter must trust them. Otherwise, a combat unit will be unable to effectively perform its mission. Esprit de corps is not a mere phrase; it is the absolute guideline. Combat soldiers must be closer than brothers; they are brothers-in-arms ready, willing, and able to kill and be killed in order to protect each other so as to guarantee mission accomplishment. It is truly a concept of the greater good.

The greater good, implicitly and explicitly, includes the killing of the enemy, defined by the state as threatening the welfare and safety of that particular nation. A soldier must be prepared to make what is called the ultimate sacrifice – his own life. To reach the psychological state, whereby young men and women are indeed ready to die for what someone else has defined as the greater good, then the training process must be thorough, rapid, and overwhelming. The commander cannot allow himself the luxury of combat soldiers unwilling to pay this price; otherwise he will lead mutiny ridden units on the verge of desertion. Accordingly, the military demands total commitment to unit and mission.

There are, however, at least two overriding principles that must be addressed: the soldier must be taught how to identify the enemy and simultaneously distinguish combatants from noncombatants. In addition, the soldier must understand the issues of morality are not less significant than what action must be taken when the gun jams. Morality in armed conflict needs to be one of the tools in the soldier's/commander's toolbox. Without internalizing these fundamental concepts, the soldier is sent into today's battle unprepared. A soldier who goes into battle unprepared is a disaster waiting to happen.

When a "civilian" finishes with their basic training they are no longer "recruits". They are, no matter the branch of service, trained members of a professional military organization whose main mission is the defense of the nation. It is not an uncommon remark to hear at a graduation ceremony from basic training a proud parent say, "I don't recognize them anymore!"

They have changed physically, mentally and morally. Throughout the balance of their military career those changes will be re-enforced with more and continuous training.

Moral Injury: A Historical Perspective

There are libraries replete with volumes describing every historical war from the beginning of time, but what is seldom if ever mentioned in those writings are the affect that war had on the combatants.

The stressors of what modern psychologists now call causes of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder or Traumatic Brain Injury lay in the history of past wars. From those wars are also found the treatments for Moral Injury.

From the Old Testament, **Numbers 31:13-24**, we have reference to the warrior code and purification rituals. In this interpretation of scripture by Matthew Henry (1652-1714) we are told of how the Israelites had to “purify” themselves before entering their camp after battle. It is important to note that Moses and all the leaders of the community went out to meet them (v.13).

With the triumphant return of the army of Israel from the war with Midian, Moses prescribes the need for **purification** not only of the body but of possessions as well.

I. They were met with great respect, (v. 13.) Moses himself, notwithstanding his age and gravity, walked out of the camp to congratulate them on their victory, and to grace the solemnity of their triumphs. Public successes should be publicly acknowledged, to the glory of God, and the encouragement of those that have jeopardized their lives in their country's cause.

II. They were obliged to purify themselves, according to the ceremony of the law, and camp seven days, till their purification was accomplished.(v.19.)

1. They had imbrued [stained]their hands in blood, by which though they had not contracted any moral guilt, the war being just and lawful, yet they were brought under a ceremonial uncleanness, which rendered them unfit to come near the tabernacle till they were purified. Thus God would preserve in their minds a dread and detestation of murder. David must not build the temple because he had been a man of war, and had shed blood, (1 Chr. 28:3.)

2. They have touched dead bodies, by which they were polluted, and that required they should be purified with the water of separation, (v. 19, 20.)

They must likewise purify the spoil they had taken, the captives (v.19) and all the goods, (v. 20-23.) These things had been used by Midianites, and, having now come into the possession of Israelites, should be sanctified to the service of that holy nation and the honor of their holy God.

Source: Henry, Matthew. "Commentary Numbers 31." Web. 6 May 2009.

<http://www.blueletterbible.org/Bible.cfm?b=Num&c=31&t=KJV>

The significance of Numbers 31 is that more than 2500 years ago the need to care for returning warriors was recognized, though in a different way, and purification of the body was a ritual used to cleanse the body of war and guilt.

This process occurred throughout subsequent centuries in most nations and tribes around the world.

In her book, *Code of the Warrior: Exploring Warrior Values Past and Present*, Dr. Shannon E. French reviews various ancient cultures and the effects of war on the warrior.

In reviewing such works as the *Iliad* we learn of the shame that Achilles feels after desecrating the body of Hector by dragging the body around the walls of Troy. The shame that Achilles feels cannot be seen by his fellow Greeks but remains with him till his death. Even in the earliest of Greek writings the suppressed guilt and shame of a warrior is identified and mentioned. Homer describes in his other writings more about moral shame and injury (21).

Moving forward one cannot exclude the rule of the Roman Empire over the then known world. Much has been made about the ruthlessness of the Roman soldier. While the Roman soldier was ruthless in battle they had a warrior code that provided the cohesiveness and strength for the Roman Legion. All their duties were performed with the same discipline, the same safety precautions, and the same method of encampment. Roman soldiers never ate alone, they ate together. Trumpets would signal the hours of sleep, guard duty and when to wake. There was absolute obedience to their officers. All this training and discipline led to “unit bonding” so that they were an army that was well behaved in peacetime and which moved as a single body in battle. But the Roman leaders knew of the pains of war and how the loss of a comrade would affect the legionnaire. French describes how the soldiers would be bathed by Vestal Virgins to wash away the impurities of battle and war. This concept of purification is seen in other cultures throughout history. (63)

As Bernard J. Verkamp explains in his book, *The Moral Treatment of Returning Warriors in Early Medieval and Modern Times*, in the early Middle Ages, Christian knights returning from war were required to do penance for acts committed during wartime that were seen as “sinful” (including injuring and killing other humans), even if the war had been judged to be a just war by the Church.

The penance and reconciliation performed by the returning knights was important for their reintegration into the community from which they left. Even in the earliest days of the church it was thus recognized that moral injury needed to be addressed, albeit not by that term.

As Verkamp explains:

The Christian community of the first millennium generally assumed that warriors returning from battle would or should be feeling guilty and ashamed for all the wartime killing they had done. Far from having such feelings dismissed as insignificant or irrelevant, returning warriors were encouraged to seek resolution of them through rituals of purification, expiation, and reconciliation. To accommodate these latter needs, religious authorities of the period not infrequently imposed various and sundry penances on the returning warriors, depending on the kind of war they had been engaged in, the number of their killings, and the intention with which they had been carried out (11).

Dr. French also notes the importance of ritual in reviewing Native American tribes. Almost without exception Native American tribes had a rite of passage for their young to the position of warrior. These tribes also recognized the need to heal the returning warrior before they could be assimilated back into the tribe after a battle. By entering a sweat lodge the warrior would cleanse himself of the wounds of battle and be purified so that he could return to the tribe—his community. By today's terms, they were able to successfully reintegrate into the community.



Native American sweat lodge Source: Windoverfire.com

There are countless examples of how the warrior code existed in every culture. Whether it is the ancient samurai, Chinese monk warrior, or citizen soldier of today, in these and other cultures a common theme runs throughout. That being the warrior has a warrior code by which they function and a purification process or ritual by which those coming from battle would become participants.

The accounts of ancient warriors need to be understood as we discuss moral injury and its effects on the warrior. Moral injury is not unique to our current warriors—it has been with us for centuries.

Perhaps one of the best examples of a warrior and moral injury is found in the story of St. Francis of Assisi. Francis tried his hand at being a soldier when, at age 20, he was part of a military expedition against a neighboring state [city]. He was taken prisoner and spent a year as a captive [POW]. The experiences on the battlefield seemed to have marked him for the rest of his life. War in his time was not combat at a distance but rather hand to hand. He saw many of his friends killed or maimed in battle. Throughout his life he carried with him the demons of his imprisonment and battles. He struggled with the horrors of the battles until his death. And what could be called as the “ultimate service project” he spent his life in service to God and the church. It was his effort at reconciliation.

Ignatius Loyola was born in the family castle in the Basque region of Spain, the youngest of 13 children. When he was old enough, he became a page, and then a soldier of Spain to fight against the French. A cannon ball and a series of bad operations ended his military career in 1521. While St. Ignatius recovered, he read the lives of the saints, and decided to dedicate himself to becoming a soldier of the Catholic Faith. Soon after he experienced visions, but a year later suffered a trial of fears and scruples, driving him almost to despair. Out of this experience he wrote his famous Spiritual Exercises. It is often tempting to perform analysis in perspective almost 600 years after the death of Ignatius but the case can be made he suffered from at least PTSD and his writings were a therapy in his recovery.

In the modern era beginning with the U.S. Civil War until now the experiences of the warrior have not changed all that much except for the means by which a war is fought. From the use of knights on horseback to armored columns to drone aircraft the methods of conducting warfare has changed.

What have not changed are the effects on those who have fought the wars.

Summation

Moral injury, as will be further discussed in this document, is the resulting negative consequence within oneself stemming from a violation of one's moral code. The historical examples shown in this section illustrate that moral injury is not new and has been with mankind since Biblical times.

Warriors, past and present, have suffered from moral injury, though perhaps not by that name. The underlying cause could be the failure to act, survivor's guilt or any other emotion or condition described in current writings on the subject.

As this document is reviewed, consideration must be given to that which is being experienced today as having been experienced in the past. Those who fought in WW2, Korea, Vietnam and current conflicts are all at risk of suffering from this invisible wound of war.

The code of the warrior can provide strength but it can also expose weaknesses. Ancient cultures knew this and were able to address, in most cases, the moral wounds of their warriors through rituals and ceremony. In today's society it is through training in morals and ethics that our warriors are developed. By having a well-defined policy addressing those topics the risk of sustaining a moral injury can be greatly reduced.

When it does occur there needs to be, as in the past, an available support system in place.

IDF Experience

Perhaps no other modern military force has dealt with more continuing threats to their internal and external security concerns than the State of Israel. Over the decades the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), which was officially established on May 31, 1948, has developed numerous and evolving programs dealing with the issues of morals, ethics and moral injury.

It is important to understand the history of the IDF and the wars in which it has fought to gain insight into their Code of Ethics from which their training in moral values has evolved. In this section an extended review of the IDF, their Code of Ethics and practices are discussed. Much of this section is taken directly from information provided in IDF literature and resource materials.

By understanding this military force, a realization to the “dilemmas” that some face will lay the foundation for a deeper comprehension of issues affecting those who suffer from the invisible wounds of war.

History of the IDF

Immediately after it gained independence, Israel was invaded by the armies of Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq, sparking the War of Independence (May 1948-July 1949). Through effective organization, the IDF was able to overcome the manpower and supply advantages held by its Arab enemies.

In the early years of statehood, Israel was beset by security problems, as its Arab neighbors frequently violated the 1949 armistice agreements. Israeli and Israel-bound ships were prevented from traversing the Suez Canal; the Straits of Tiran were blockaded; terrorists constantly infiltrated into Israel from neighboring Arab countries to carry out attacks; and the Egyptian military increased its presence in the Sinai Peninsula.

- In October 1956, Egypt, Jordan and Syria signed a tripartite military alliance, increasing the imminent military threat facing Israel. On October 29, 1956, Israel launched an eight-day campaign (the Sinai Campaign) during which the IDF took control of the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula.
- In May 1967, Egypt increased its military presence in the Sinai Peninsula, expelled the UN forces on the Israel-Egypt border, closed the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping and signed a defense pact with Jordan.
- Over the course of six days, the IDF took control of the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip from Egypt, the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) from Jordan and the Golan Heights from Syria.
- Shortly after the conclusion of the Six-Day War, Egypt initiated the War of Attrition against Israel, with sporadic actions along the Suez Canal that escalated into intense, localized clashes that caused many casualties on both sides between 1967 and 1970.

- On October 6, 1973, which was Yom Kippur (the holiest day of the Jewish year), Egypt and Syria launched a coordinated surprise attack against Israel, with Egyptian forces crossing the Suez Canal and Syrian forces entering the Golan Heights.
- In 1979, Israel and Egypt signed a peace agreement. Under the terms of the agreement, Israel fully withdrew from the Sinai Peninsula.
- Repeated attacks on Israel's northern towns by the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), which was based in southern Lebanon after being expelled from Jordan in 1970, led to the outbreak of Operation Peace for Galilee in 1982.
- In December 1987, the First Intifada (uprising) broke out in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip.
- In 1993, Israel and the PLO signed the Oslo Accords, leading to years of peace negotiations.
- Israel and Jordan signed a peace agreement in 1994.
- In September 2000, Palestinians launched the Second Intifada (uprising).
- In March 2002, following a Hamas suicide bombing at a Passover seder at a Netanya hotel in which 30 people were killed, the IDF carried out Operation Defensive Shield to eliminate Palestinian terrorist infrastructure in the West Bank.
- In 2004, Israel decided to disengage from the Gaza Strip. All Israeli citizens and military personnel in Gaza were evacuated in August 2005.
- On July 12, 2006, Hezbollah terrorists launched an attack on IDF soldiers patrolling the Israel-Lebanon border within Israeli territory. The attack instigated the Second Lebanon War.
- Following years of rocket fire aimed at southern Israeli towns by terrorists in the Gaza Strip, the IDF launched Operation Cast Lead on December 27, 2008.

With war being almost a constant part of their existence the IDF has had to adjust their military training from larger land battles to that of local, village or city actions. The “enemy” is no longer a nation’s land force in an identifiable uniform, but rather men, women and children who can be a threat. They could be a suicide bomber or a knife wielding terrorist on a bus.

IDF Code of Ethics

Upon entry into the IDF every recruit is given a Ethical Code Pamphlet in which the following is included:

IDF Mission

To defend the existence, territorial integrity and sovereignty of the state of Israel. To protect the inhabitants of Israel and to combat all forms of terrorism which threaten the daily life.

Ethics

The IDF Spirit:

The Israel Defense Forces are the state of Israel's military force. The IDF is subordinate to the directions of the democratic civilian authorities and the laws of the state.

The goal of the IDF is to protect the existence of the State of Israel and her independence, and to thwart all enemy efforts to disrupt the normal way of life in Israel. IDF soldiers are obligated to fight, to dedicate all their strength and even sacrifice their lives in order to protect the State of Israel, her citizens and residents. IDF soldiers will operate according to the IDF values and orders, while adhering to the laws of the state and norms of human dignity, and honoring the values of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state.

Spirit of the IDF – Definition and Origins

The Spirit of the IDF is the identity card of the IDF values, which should stand as the foundation of all of the activities of every IDF soldier, on regular or reserve duty. The Spirit of the IDF and the guidelines of operation resulting from it are the ethical code of the IDF. The Spirit of the IDF will be applied by the IDF, its soldiers, its officers, its units and corps to shape their mode of action. They will behave, educate and evaluate themselves and others according to the Spirit of the IDF.

The Spirit of the IDF draws on four sources:

- The tradition of the IDF and its military heritage as the Israel Defense Forces;
- The tradition of the State of Israel, its democratic principles, laws and institutions;
- The tradition of the Jewish People throughout their history;
- Universal moral values based on the value and dignity of human life. Basic

Values:

Defense of the State, its Citizens and its Residents – The IDF's goal is to defend the existence of the State of Israel, its independence and the security of the citizens and residents of the state.

Love of the Homeland and Loyalty to the Country – At the core of service in the IDF stand the love of the homeland and the commitment and devotion to the State of Israel-a democratic state that serves as a national home for the Jewish People-its citizens and residents.

Human Dignity – The IDF and its soldiers are obligated to protect human dignity. Every human being is of value regardless of his or her origin, religion, nationality, gender, status or position.

Core Values:

Tenacity of Purpose in Performing Missions and Drive to Victory – The IDF servicemen and women will fight and conduct themselves with courage in the face of all dangers and obstacles; They will persevere in their missions resolutely and thoughtfully even to the point of endangering their lives.

Responsibility – The IDF serviceman or woman will see themselves as active participants in the defense of the state, its citizens and residents. They will carry out their duties at all times with initiative, involvement and diligence with common sense and within the framework of their authority, while prepared to bear responsibility for their conduct.

Credibility – The IDF servicemen and women shall present things objectively, completely and precisely, in planning, performing and reporting. They will act in such a manner that their peers and commanders can rely upon them in performing their tasks.

Personal Example – The IDF servicemen and women will comport themselves as required of them, and will demand of themselves as they demand of others, out of recognition of their ability and responsibility within the military and without to serve as a deserving role model.

Human Life – The IDF servicemen and women will act in a judicious and safe manner in all they do, out of recognition of the supreme value of human life. During combat they will endanger themselves and their comrades only to the extent required to carry out their mission.

Purity of Arms – The IDF servicemen and women will use their weapons and force only for the purpose of their mission, only to the necessary extent and will maintain their humanity even during combat. IDF soldiers will not use their weapons and force to harm human beings who are not combatants or prisoners of war, and will do all in their power to avoid causing harm to their lives, bodies, dignity and property.

Professionalism – The IDF servicemen and women will acquire the professional knowledge and skills required to perform their tasks, and will implement them while striving continuously to perfect their personal and collective achievements.

Discipline – The IDF servicemen and women will strive to the best of their ability to fully and successfully complete all that is required of them according to orders and their spirit. IDF soldiers will be meticulous in giving only lawful orders, and shall refrain from obeying blatantly illegal orders.

Comradeship – The IDF servicemen and women will act out of fraternity and devotion to their comrades, and will always go to their assistance when they need their help or depend on them, despite any danger or difficulty, even to the point of risking their lives.

Sense of Mission – The IDF soldiers view their service in the IDF as a mission; they will be ready to give their all in order to defend the state, its citizens and residents. This is due to the fact that they are representatives of the IDF who act on the basis and in the framework of the authority given to them in accordance with IDF orders.

From the above it can be discerned that the IDF has made an effort at creating the awareness among its members to their own particular warrior code.

Once this awareness has been established the IDF member is trained in the various situations they may encounter through “scenario simulations”.

Training

The concern is how the contemporary army prepares itself for today's war, which is fundamentally different from yesterday's war. That difference relates to the core question of who is the soldier fighting? Who is the enemy? Contemporary armed conflict does not and will not take place on the vast battlefields of the past; rather, it will occur in the back alleys of Groznyy, Nablus and Mosul.

The soldier will not be facing another soldier wearing a uniform with insignia, carrying his weapon openly, and serving in a unit with a clear chain of command. In the contemporary combat arena, the combat is far more complicated, complex, and ambiguous than in traditional warfare for two primary reasons. Increasingly, combat will occur in urban centers and not on a battlefield, and civilians will be very much present.

In contemporary armed conflict, the soldier placed in the zone of combat (loosely defined as the parameters are ill-defined) will often-times encounter an individual wearing civilian clothes— jeans and a tee-shirt are standard attire— without clear certainty as to whether that individual is friend, foe, or perhaps neither. The attire of the foe in contemporary armed conflict is in many ways an effective metaphor for explaining the fundamental change in warfare—from the traditional to the modern.

In modern combat, the soldier's world is a much more ambiguous, complicated one precisely because the combatant standing opposite is at best wearing faded blue jeans...as are all those around him.

It may be argued that the equation has been turned on its head—if in traditional warfare non-combatants were in the minority in the combat arena, today combatants (whose status will be discussed) are in the minority. What complicates the contemporary soldier's mission enormously is that the omnipresent civilians are generally non-participants, meaning non-combatants.

These civilians are in many cases women and children; what may be said about them, with a fair degree of certainty, is that they are innocent civilians and therefore are defined as protected individuals according to the Geneva Convention.

What complicates the modern soldier's task significantly is that the person standing next to an innocent civilian may perhaps be a terrorist, but will be similarly dressed and will look the same as the other person. Not only that, but as the soldier looks to his left and right, he will see an "arena" fundamentally different than he would have seen twenty years ago—the virtual certainty of knowing who is the enemy is no longer present as there are no uniforms-- BUT he knows that somewhere in that crowd of people (who speak a language he does not understand and have cultural mores alien to his) are those intent on immediately killing him. The reality, from the perspective of the soldier, is that in that crowd are indeed individuals who are intent on killing him and his comrades; the problem is that those individuals are largely unseen, until it is literally and figuratively too late. The phrase "unseen shadows in dark alleys" only partially explains the nature of this new combat; it must be added that when the soldier finally confronts an individual in one of those dark alleys—it will generally be very difficult to absolutely ascertain whether that individual is friend or foe.

The effect on the soldier of this reality is critical—he is in doubt as to who is the enemy. A soldier in doubt is a scared soldier—a scared soldier armed to the teeth and trained to kill the enemy. In modern combat the soldier does not necessarily know who the enemy is and therefore the training of the today's soldier must—and the must cannot be sufficiently emphasized—be fundamentally different than in the past. Commanders who do not understand both this transformation and its attendant responsibilities will not only be remiss in their obligations to their soldiers, they will also be placing their nation and its leaders in situations with potentially enormous political damage, internally and externally.

How different nations prepare their soldiers for this new reality should be a fundamental focus. In contemporary combat—when the soldier is confronted with an individual, a civilian, in most circumstances the soldier will not know instinctively whether that person is friend or foe.

A soldier's training is in many ways the teaching of instinctive reactions. It is better to kill than be killed. "Reaction time is valued and it is better to be the initiator and take the fight to the enemy" is associated with traditional warfare when the soldier instinctively and clearly knew who the enemy was. The challenge facing commanders and military educators today is how, on the one hand, to teach a soldier to respond instinctively and immediately, and yet and the word YET cannot be sufficiently emphasized, on the other hand to ascertain that the civilian is a foe and not a friend. In the split second that the soldier must make that distinction—one of the critical international law requirements—between a combatant and the innocent civilian, the civilian clearly enjoys the advantage since the soldier is mandated to ascertain to which population group that individual belongs. That split-second may seem like a life-time for the soldier. If the soldier has been properly trained, not only operationally, but also regarding issues of morality, he will know how to run through a mental check-list that while far more complicated than in the past, is absolutely critical to contemporary armed conflict.

The civilian—or at least the person dressed like a civilian—may actually be a terrorist; or he may truly be an innocent civilian who desires nothing more than to return home safely to his family.

The dilemma facing the soldier who must decide to which population group that individual belongs is literally overwhelming. A wrong decision has potentially dramatic ramifications, not only for those immediately involved, but the trickle-down effects going far beyond the immediate confrontation.

How the soldier prepares himself/herself, how his commanders prepare him/her for that dilemma, and ultimately how they conduct themselves is the principal focus of their training. While other armies (the US, Canada, and England for example) are engaged in the training of soldiers on issues of morality and conflict, some are of the opinion that the IDF model is most relevant to the issues raised in current conflicts. IDF training may be the most advanced and developed model around. That does not mean that IDF soldiers will not in the future commit acts that violate both standards of morality and the law.

In all probability, mistakes will occur because an 18 year old, no matter how well trained and sensitized, is still only an 18 year old. That 18 year old has been placed by their government in a situation that may be described as no-win given the risk of making the wrong decision. If a terrorist is allowed through a checkpoint then many can lose their lives and the soldier will suffer. If the person at the checkpoint is not a terrorist and mortally confronted then a single error in judgment could lead to a Palestinian uprising. More on this subject will be addressed in a review of the scenario training IDF receive.

The issue of how IDF soldiers should conduct themselves vis-à-vis the Palestinian civilian population in the face of Palestinian terrorism has become a widespread issue discussed amongst IDF commanders. The issue has been actively addressed at all command levels. This is not to suggest that previously the IDF was an immoral army; it is only to note that in the past few years, the issue of morality in armed conflict became an important issue amongst commanders.

Scenario Training

The IDF has created a number of training situations accompanied with videos to place the trainee in as real a life situation as possible. The following is an excerpt scenario from past training sessions:

1. Two soldiers driving in a jeep in the West Bank (topographically identifiable) come across a pile of rocks that may well be booby-trapped; may they order a local inhabitant to remove the pile?

They are then asked a series of questions:

Is it forbidden to force a local resident to help move an obstacle?

THE ANSWER: It is forbidden to use a local resident or an enemy soldier to clear an obstacle when there is suspicion that it is booby-trapped.

If there is suspicion that the obstacle is booby-trapped, is it permissible to have a local resident help out so that the unit won't be endangered?

THE ANSWER: Use of civilians as hostages or as human shields is strictly forbidden.

Should the unit not wait for the bomb squad since time is of the essence and the force is in danger?

THE ANSWER: Clearing an obstacle that is suspected of being booby-trapped shall be performed as circumstances permit and pursuant to existing combat doctrines.

If you witnessed a local resident placing the stones in the road, may that same resident be used to remove the stones?

THE ANSWER: An individual who has been seen placing the stones may be used to remove the stones.

The value of this scenario training helps provide the IDF member with decision making tools needed in reacting to most situations. By providing situations that the IDF member could encounter and then providing him/her with a set of criteria they can use in the field can eliminate precious decision making seconds in a dangerous situation that may call for immediate reaction and use of force.

Blown Raid Scenario

You are serving within a commando unit in the West Bank, south of Hebron.

Today's mission calls for your unit to infiltrate a small village where a suspected terrorist who is known to have created explosives for suicide bombings lives. The intelligence services have done extensive research on this particular terrorist and have concluded that his arrest is critical for preserving the safety and security of Israeli citizens.

Before sunrise, your unit begins heading by foot to this hilltop village. On your trek up to the top of the hill, you notice a shepherd from the village grazing in the field with his flock of sheep.

You notify your commander that the shepherd has seen you approaching the village and may alert the residents.

If the shepherd does indeed warn the village, your mission is compromised and continuing would likely lead you into an ambush. On the other hand, capturing this terrorist is of vital importance and if he does know that the army has found him he will likely flee to a different place.

What do you do?

- A. **Capture and arrest the shepherd.** You plan to release him after the mission is completed.
- B. **Ignore the shepherd.** You are convinced that he won't warn the village and compromise the mission.
- C. **Capture the shepherd and bring him** with you on the mission. You can use him to quickly locate the terrorist.
- D. **Abort the mission.** Just the prospect of walking into a trap and possibly losing soldiers is not worth the risk.

Does the above sound familiar? If you have read, heard of, or seen the movie Lone Survivor, you will know that this is virtually the same scenario that a Navy SEAL team encountered in Afghanistan.

At least in the movie version there was much discussion about what to do with the shepherds that they had encountered. Some considered killing them, others suggested tying them to trees until the mission was over (the cold and exposure would have killed them) or let them go. The decision was made to let them go according to existing Rules of Engagement.

The result of that decision was the eventual loss of three members of the original SEAL team and the deaths of 16 from a failed rescue team effort.

Military Outreach USA makes no judgment on the decisions of those involved in this operation. No matter what level of training one receives no scenario can provide the realism of "being there."

However, by placing service members in the decision making process through scenario training the opportunity for a better outcome will typically be enhanced.

Summation

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter there is perhaps no other modern nation that has fought more wars in such a short timeframe or has more threats on its border than the State of Israel.

Other military services can learn from the IDF experience and evolution of military training that is used to meet threats from armies, groups or individuals. Coupled with this training has been the continuing evolution of an ethical and moral training program designed to provide the members of the IDF with real life training scenarios that can be utilized when deployed or assigned to checkpoints.

The firm belief in their Code of Ethics and values of the IDF has created a strong warrior code in IDF members. The code creates bonds and a sense of honor within all IDF members. This is critical in a military force that consists of conscripts, reserves and active duty members.

There will never be a guarantee that training will eliminate the risk of developing PTSD or moral injury. What can be gleaned from the training programs of the IDF is that if moral and ethical training is provided then the risk for development of these issues is greatly reduced. This is witnessed by the considerable lower rate of PTSD experienced as a percent of population in the IDF as opposed to other military forces. (Zohar, J., et.al Risk Factors for the Development of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder following Combat Trauma). It can also be hypothesized that the scenario training provided by the IDF creates a sense of "I have done or seen this before" and so when action is required the IDF member will react as a result of training and not because of a poor decision making process.

Even with training and support programs all is not 100% well in the IDF. There have been cases of suicide and atrocities reported. However, what is a key similarity among IDF members and their foreign counterparts is the observation that many who perhaps suffer from PTSD do not seek treatment.

The warrior code (always be strong, show no weakness), even among IDF members, may ensure that treatment for PTSD and moral injury will not be sought by the warrior.

It is a common thread that exists in all military environments.

Drones



“Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell face down on the ground (1 Samuel 17:49)”

The concept of remote killing is not new in history but it has become more recognized with the technological development of modern drones. In the Old Testament we are told of how David felled Goliath with a stone and a sling. As technology improved so did weaponry. There are countless examples of new “standoff” weapons being developed and used throughout history. Whether they were bows and arrows, catapults, cannons, missiles or piloted drones, the concept of remote warfare is not a modern phenomenon.

What is new is the accuracy of weapons and the distance from the target of the “trigger puller”. This distance from target has created a set of problems that are only now being recognized. We will address those problems in this section with the realization that what is being provided just touches the surface of the usage of Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS).

Legal Issue

There are many concerns within the legal community related to the use of drones. Many of the topics being discussed can be encapsulated in the understanding of the term legitimate target. The determination of what is a legitimate target is solely and purely made by the nation who is doing the targeting. Osama bin Laden was considered by the U.S. and many of its allies to be a legitimate target. However, in the targeting (albeit not a drone strike) of bin Laden the sovereignty of Pakistan was violated.

Anwar al Awlaki, a U.S. citizen who the government said was a senior talent-recruiter and motivator who was involved in planning terrorist operations for the Islamist militant group al- Qaeda, was killed in a drone strike in Yemen. Another person killed in that strike was American, Samir Khan, who was not identified as a legitimate target. The justification for conducting a “targeted kill” of an American citizen on foreign soil was, along others given, that it was not feasible to capture him (<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/24/us/justice-department-found-it-lawful-to-target-anwar-al-awlaki.html>).

In his book, *Legitimate Target*, Amos Guiora offers a Ten-Point Criteria Based Checklist to follow when considering a targeted killing:

1. What have been the local community reactions to previous targeted killings?
2. What has been the international community's reaction to previous targeted killings?
3. Does recent terrorist activity/lack of terrorist activity justify implementing the policy?
4. Are there current political circumstances that preclude conducting a targeted killing?
5. What are the predicted/expected reactions to a proposed targeted killing?
6. What are the predicted/expected consequences if an otherwise legitimate targeted killing is not conducted?
7. What are the expected/predicted geo-political ramifications of a particular killing?
8. Do recent legislative or judicial decisions impact executive branch decision-making with respect to the targeted killing policy?
9. What weight is ascribed to sovereignty considerations?
10. Is domestic public pressure a consideration particularly in the aftermath of a terrorist attack?

It should also be noted that this criteria, while appropriate for drones is also applicable to military/civilian assassinations and covert ground operations.

Guiora notes that a legitimate target should be one that represents a current or future threat. He offers as an example that might be considered "revenge retaliation" as the result of the terrorist attack during the 1972 Munich Olympics where 11 Israelis were killed. Within days of the terrorist attack Golda Meir, the Israeli Prime Minister, ordered the Mossad (the Israeli Security Agency) to kill those who had either planned or carried out the attack. Clearly this defined the target for the Mossad. However, many PLO operatives who were not involved in the attack were killed. Finally, the operation was suspended when the Mossad killed an innocent Moroccan waiter in Norway. It can be surmised that the broad targeting of PLO operatives was not legitimate and in many cases, territorial sovereignty was violated.

In the case of the SEAL operation against Osama bin Laden the determination can be made that the U.S. violated at least some of the criteria offered; particularly concerning the sovereignty of Pakistan. The same violation of sovereignty can be ascribed to drone strikes in Afghanistan, Yemen, Somalia, as well as Pakistan.

Another key point to review is whether or not the killing of a target is the only choice available. Could, for example, the target have been captured? In the case of Awlaki the determination was made that it was not feasible to capture him so killing was the only alternative. After his death the U.S. had to justify the killing with one of the reasons being, as stated earlier, that it was not feasible to capture him.

The question still is being discussed about the legality of the targeting and killing of a U.S. citizen without due process of law as guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution.

Further, a prominent criticism of U.S. targeted killings and of drone strikes in particular, is over the issue of collateral civilian deaths. Some official Pakistani sources claim that 700 innocents were killed in 2009 alone, while U.S. government sources claim that fewer than 30 civilians were killed from May 2008 to May 2010. Violence in Pakistan has risen sharply since the drone campaign began, according to the U.S. National Counterterrorism Center. As a result of continued drone strikes on its territory, in April 2012, the Pakistani parliament voted unanimously to demand an end to U.S. drone strikes on its territory.

In determining the legalities of legitimate targeted killing the answer will not rest with the individual who must carry out the operation but rather with those who determine the policy. If a policy complies with the 10 criteria established by Guiora then the moral basis can be established for an action. It is when no firm, or worse, when a changing policy, is established that moral dilemmas will arise.

The Myth of the Warrior

In ancient tales of heroism the hero is either the offspring of or commissioned by divine powers (Achilles or Hercules), and so is imbued with more noble and powerful qualities than weaker mortals. They were memorialized in writings that are still read today. Throughout history the hero warrior has played a prominent role in their respective culture. From knights fighting in a Crusade to Sgt. York in WW1 or Audie Murphy in WW2 all have had their actions magnified to above that of weaker men. These warriors, whether it was Achilles or Audie Murphy, had exhibited physical courage when confronting the enemy on the battlefield.

The physical courage of the warrior has been and continues to be exemplified. In almost every nation there are days honoring specific events in history that focus on a particular military event or honor those who serve or have served (Pearl Harbor Day, Veterans' Day, Memorial Day or Armed Forces Day). Feats of physical courage are portrayed in theater and the arts. Who have not heard of the courage of Navy SEALs or the Army's Green Berets? The images created in movies, literature, and even the statues in a park, have created a heroic warrior...larger than life...a warrior who exhibits martial courage.

The warrior is our hero who is called upon when we are in danger.

As discussed in the section concerning Military Culture, the warrior is mostly, if not always on the battlefield facing a common threat with others in their unit. They are at risk of being wounded or killed as a result of their mission. Knowing that risk, they still carry on with the mission exhibiting a physical or martial courage.

Is that martial courage required by a drone team sitting in an air conditioned console room, operating thousands of miles away from their target? Many would argue not as was exhibited by the outcries of various veteran organizations over the planned presentation of a medal for drone operators that would have been rated higher than the Bronze Star or Purple Heart. (The medal was never developed.) Their argument was that drone operators did not exhibit the same martial courage as one who served on the battlefield.

As Robert Sparrow writes in the, Routledge Handbook of Military Ethics, warfighters operate with a set of explicit and implicit understandings within the warrior code. “A ‘good warrior’ is a person who cultivates and exercises a distinctive set of martial (physical) virtues.” He also identifies the need for moral courage. “Moral courage consists in the willingness to confront and overcome [the] fear of making difficult moral decisions and the personal costs that may flow from doing what is right rather than what is expected, customary, or prudential. Good warriors require moral courage in order to do what is right in the difficult moral circumstances of war and especially to resist the social and institutional pressures that are brought to bear on them as members of military organizations.”

The warrior is sent off to meet the enemy in person...in combat on a foreign battlefield...not in cyberspace.

Piloting drones while sitting in a dark room somewhere in the U.S. can seem a lot like playing a video game. Looking at a screen, the drone crew focus in on a target, stalks him/her/them, presses a button and a missile hones in—and the “target” disappears in a cloud of dust. The pilot(s) and “sensor(s) operators” (those who watch the targets and press the triggers) while not physically on the battlefield are not immune to the psychological harm that occurs to those who have experienced direct combat. In fact, it has become clearer that drone crews often can or do suffer from PTSD and moral injury.

A major line of supportive moral argument of “drone strikes” is that they do not endanger the life of a drone crew and are more precise and thus diminish the moral dilemmas associated with aerial warfare, e.g. related to strategic bombing (Schaffer 1988). This position is true to the point of the crew being removed from the immediate physical danger of the battlefield.

However, being physically removed from the battlefield does not eliminate the actual or potential risk of developing psychological problems. As discussed in the next heading, Psychological Effects, the drone crew will experience the same type of “kill” sensation as the lone sniper. That experience can often time result in psychologically devastating trauma. Thus, even being situated thousands of miles away from the actual scene of combat the drone crew exposes itself to mental and moral injury.

In fact, while martial courage may not be exhibited in the “pressing of a button” it can be argued that moral courage may be the greater requirement to be a warrior flying a drone.

The current view of a warrior is being redefined. Martial and moral courage are inseparable parts of the warrior code. However, in the changing world of warfare, a greater emphasis may need to be placed on moral courage as a measurement of how we define a warrior.

It may be impossible, however, to build a statue to moral courage.

Moral Courage

Jesse Kirkpatrick argues that drone operators may also be called upon to exercise moral courage in the course of their duties. They may need to exercise moral courage that could risk their reputation, financial security, career, psychological health, personal relationships...” in order to do what is right. There are two different cases where it can be argued that moral courage is or might be required of drone operators: a) when they obey orders to kill; and, b) when they disobey orders which they believed to be illegal or immoral (Drones and the Martial Virtue of Courage).

Kirkpatrick suggests that it takes significant moral courage to take a human life and that there seems little difference between drone operators and those physically present in battle when it comes to moral courage. The idea that killing requires moral courage relies crucially upon a belief in an innate human reluctance to kill (Hauerwas).

The notion that it takes moral courage to launch a missile at – and kill – a person thousands of miles away, which one has only ever seen in images on a computer monitor, is precisely what is exhibited in moral courage.

By the same token, the decision not to launch a missile requires moral courage as well. The best example of this type of moral courage is exhibited in the 1957 Stanley Kubrick movie, *Paths of Glory*. In one of the scenes an artillery commander is given the order to fire upon his own troops. He does not carry out this order at the risk of being charged with disobeying an order or cowardness in the face of the enemy (<http://www.imdb.com>).

A more current example might be if the drone operator receives permission to launch a missile into a group of people and he or she fails to do so knowing that innocent civilians will be killed.

Psychological Effects

Before discussing the psychological effects of a drone strike it is important to know the procedure that most drone operations entail. In many cases the drone will linger above a single house/target area for weeks. The operators will watch the target eating, playing with their children, or meeting with their neighbors. This is contrary to the often evoked assumption that drone technology may, because of distance to target, result in a decoupling of action and effect.

Drone operators actually see what or who they are attacking and the effect(s) of that attack. This is because battle assessment is also an essential part of their job. After a strike the drone may loiter for hours observing the damage.

It is during this “loiter time” that they evaluate the strike and “perform a body count”. It is in the performance of this function that the crew can see the remains of who they killed.

The drone’s camera feed thus becomes the main source for PTSD. The image bridges the physical distance. It is not just the operative medium through which war is literally waged, but it is also the medium through which war comes back to haunt the operators (Svea Braeunert: Visualizing War. The Power of Emotions in Politics. 2014.)

Note: Drones typically operate using two types of camera, one a color or B&W HD Daytime and the other an infrared/thermo-imaging camera. The daytime camera is reported to be able to read a license plate from two miles away (AF.mil).

In 2011 the U.S. Air Force conducted a survey that showed that 46% of Reaper and Predator drone pilots and 48% of Global Hawk sensor operators (surveillance UAS) suffered from ‘high operational stress’. A smaller but significant number of operators had ‘clinical distress’: anxiety, depression or stress severe enough to affect an operator’s job performance or family life (Bumiller). UAS operators also experienced physical exhaustion, and have been referred to as the most fatigued flight crews in the military (Trimble, 2008, Reuters).

There are reports of UAS crews suffering from post-traumatic stress induced by constant exposure to high-resolution images of real-time killing and the after-action inventory of body parts (Lindlaw, 2008). A study by the U.S. Armed Forces Health Surveillance found that, among UAS pilots, the incidence of stress disorders is similar to those who pilot manned aircraft (Otto, 2013; Ortega, 2013).

These reports confirm, in part, the GQ article, Oct 13, 2013, Confessions of an American Drone Operator, written by Matthew Power, about former Air Force drone sensor operator Brandon Bryant and his time in the U.S. Military. As one of the first operators to speak out about his experiences with the drone program, Bryant paints a frightening portrait of death-dealing from a distance and a psychological trauma brought by his nearly 6 years of service as a drone operator and the estimated 1,626 human targets he and his crew killed. Upon his release from the Air Force, Bryant was diagnosed with PTSD.

As a result of the stress placed on drone operators the U.S. Air Force has had to implement programs to keep operators in the service. The Air Force also plans to utilize the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve to fly more UAS missions, and the service is asking manned aircraft pilots currently flying UASs to delay their return to manned aircraft. There is even consideration to using enlisted personnel, as opposed to officers who have received fixed wing training and are currently assigned to flying drones (AFTimes: 1/16/15).

Note: Drones are operated by every service in the DoD as well as by the Department of Homeland Security and the CIA. The issue of drone surveillance is also under review by a number of major communities within the U.S.

There is also psychological damage to those who are monitored by drones. As reported in the September 2, 2014 issue of the YemenTimes, “Mohammed Rashad, an independent psychotherapist based in Sana’a, Yemen, has met with people hit by drone strikes in Dhamar governorate and in Sanhan and Khawlan districts on the outskirts of Sana’a.

“The agony left after the deaths are short-lived and can be overcome with time. However, the psychological damages are not something you can get rid of immediately. In most cases, victims need treatment.” Two months ago Rashad prescribed pills for a patient suffering from insomnia, one of the key consequences of the drone strikes that took place in Wesab district in Dhamar governorate last year.

“It’s not only the people who lose their relatives that remain affected, but even ordinary locals suffer from the consequences. Children are especially hard-hit by psychological troubles like insomnia, nightmares, and a feeling of being isolated,” Rashad said. Sameeh Al-Wesabi, 35, from Wesab district in Dhamar, is one such case. His village has been targeted by drones, which resulted in the killing of five people in April 2013.

Al-Wesabi’s entire family remains terrified, but the options for moving elsewhere are close to none. “Once my family members hear the drones or even ordinary planes hover, they become terrified and go down to a small trench we dug in the yard of our house,” Al-Wesabi said, describing a technique the family uses to flee from the possible danger of drones.”

Summation

In this section some of the issues and ramifications associated with a drone program have been identified. There is much research that yet needs to be done pertaining to the psychological effects of drone operation on those who are responsible for directing strikes. However, the initial results indicate that operators will suffer a high rate of stress related injuries ranging from PTSD to moral injury.

It is also incumbent upon national leadership to develop policies that not only comply with military requirements but also sustain the moral authority of the United States. With the establishment of such defined policies that “national moral authority” can be engrained into training, Rules of Engagement, and scenarios training for the nation’s military.

The use of drones is much more than the pushing of a button to kill a terrorist. The use of drones in violation of a nation’s territorial sovereignty cannot be ignored. While the initial good of disposing of a legitimate target may be accomplished the end results may be the creation of new terrorists or sympathizers because of those strikes. The resulting collateral damage that occurs with the death of innocent civilians can over time also create added sympathy for the terrorist organization. The results of drone strikes in Yemen and Pakistan are an example of the dilemma faced by not only the United States, but any other nation that uses drones and targeted killing programs.

Further, the stress of the sounds of a drone engine over a civilian population has created new psychological pressures not dissimilar to those civilians in Europe who experienced and suffered from the bombings of their cities (Allied or Axis).

There can be no doubt that the use of drones and special operations raids have put fewer Americans in harm’s way and provide a low-cost alternative to expensive and cumbersome conventional forces. This is especially relevant given the likely cuts in the U.S. defense budget. However, the long term effects of psychological and moral injury to individuals who must fly and ultimately launch a strike cannot be ignored. Drones are not a video game. As discussed, they are real time killing with immediate feedback of images from the strike.

As opposed to their fellow warriors who are physically present on the battlefield, drone crew members go to their homes at the end of their shift. The resulting stress created on the family of a drone crew cannot be ignored. In many cases, because of the classified nature of an operation, the service member may not even be allowed to speak of the activities taken part in during the day/night. If a kill was completed during the shift, how can the operator share that with a spouse? The strain, by the very nature of the operator coming home every day, on the family structure may in some cases be greater than that realized by family members of deployed forces. It is incumbent upon the services to ensure support groups are available not only for the drone operators but for their families as well.

Finally, the use of drones has created a new class of warrior that breaks the myth of the warrior as exemplified by John Wayne storming the beaches of Iwo Jima or Normandy. The drone crews, while not under direct threat of physical danger do in fact exhibit a moral courage that must be repeated time and time again. Unless the morality of their actions is justified in a coherent national policy they will continue to be exposed to the psychological risks encountered by those on the battlefield. As described in the section concerning Moral Dilemmas that occurs later in this document, when proper training is applied, the risks for psychological and moral injury can be greatly reduced.

In the end, targeted killing, legitimate or otherwise, from a legal perspective is an issue that will require continuous monitoring and development.

Afghanistan: The Russian Experience

When at the end of our service we took off from Kandahar and landed in Sandan, and when later the plane crossed the border of the USSR, when our feet touched the soil in Tashkent, it was the happiest moment in my life. A veteran of the Soviet Afghanistan War.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan had many costs. The most obvious of those are the large numbers of Soviets and Afghans killed over the course of the conflict. Although the official figures claim that approximately 15,000 Soviet soldiers lost their lives, the actual figures of Soviet dead are closer to 26,000 men. An additional 400,000 Soviets suffered from disease or non-combat injuries, including infectious hepatitis, malaria, and typhus. 1.3 million Afghans also died during the course of the war due to illness, bombardment, or at the hands of Soviet troops or mujahedeen.

In addition to the obvious effect of death and destruction, the war in Afghanistan had far-reaching consequences for the Soviet Union. Not only did the war lead to increased drug use by veterans and others in Soviet society, it created the image of a lost generation of Soviet youth, led to new openness about Soviet policies and history, and radically altered Soviet ideas regarding the Soviet Union's proper foreign policy. One significant aspect of this is the early 1990's Soviet refusal to intervene against Romania's dictatorship at the request of the first Bush administration, or to join coalition forces in the first Persian Gulf War in 1991. The most important immediate national or international result of the war for the Soviet Union was for Soviet citizens to question the legitimacy of Soviet foreign policy and the Communist regime.

However, this interpretation ignores the importance of the Soviet war in Afghanistan for individual citizens and soldiers. When they returned from Afghanistan, the Soviet veteran found it difficult to reintegrate into society, mothers found it difficult to deal with the loss of their children, and Post-traumatic Stress Disorder became recognized in the Soviet Union for the first time. Some soldiers remained in Afghanistan or defected to the West to escape the trauma of service, or capture by insurgents.

Between 1979 and 1983 Soviet soldiers were not eligible for benefits as veterans because the government did not acknowledge it publicly as a war. Instead, Soviet forces were defending Afghanistan from bandits or mercenaries. Unless they were disabled, official policy defined Soviet veterans from this period merely as "ex-service" personnel". Only after 1983, were they recognized as veterans. However, local bureaucrats frequently refused to honor the benefits this status inferred.

As early as 1987, veterans of the war formed a national organization to insist on proper monuments and benefits. The Soviet veterans complained that they did not receive the benefits extended to veterans of previous Soviet wars, like easier admission to universities, access to telephones, access to privileged stores, and priority for vacation requests. Soviet veterans also called for an end to discrimination against disabled soldiers.

Other veterans groups also struggled to gain access to psychiatric care and proper prosthetic devices for those who lost limbs during their service.

Mourning the loss of children is always difficult for mothers, but for Soviet women whose children died in Afghanistan it was particularly difficult. Soviet authorities would not allow families to view their children's remains, sealing their zinc coffins. One mother mourned this particularly, saying that:

"They brought in the coffin. I collapsed over it. I wanted to lay him out but they wouldn't allow us to open the coffin to see him, touch him... Did they find a uniform to fit him? 'My little sunshine, my little sunshine.' Now I just want to be in the coffin with him. I go to the cemetery, throw myself on the gravestone and cuddle him. My little sunshine..."

Others were glad that the coffins remained closed, preserving the memories of their living sons. Other mothers grew angry with the military officers escorting remains home, yelling at them that she did not "need their military honors" and that she would "bury him my own way". (Mil- historicus.blogspot.com)

Svetlana Pavlukova harnessed the pain of losing one of her sons in action, by establishing a local chapter of the Committee of the Soldiers' Mothers in Altai, Siberia. This organization not only sought information about the war, but also engaged in memorial activities to help manage members' grief. The Committee engaged in varied activities, including working for the release of Prisoners of War, defending deserters from prosecution, and antiwar activism. In the case of the Altai organization, the emphasis was not on policy, but memory – in addition to monuments, it published memory books and coordinated funerals of soldiers killed in Chechnya. Despite these efforts, many mothers had no option but to visit small memorials like the small Moscow museum devoted to the Soviet war in Afghanistan.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, which entered consciousness in the United States after the Vietnam War ended in 1973, slowly entered the Soviet parlance after the end of the Soviet War in Afghanistan. Recognition and treatment of PTSD in the Soviet Union was slow enough that Soviet veteran Vladislav Tamarov, author of *Afghanistan: Soviet Vietnam*, remarked upon the quality of American care when he visited American Vietnam veterans in Manhattan in 1989. Tamarov and other Soviet veterans hoped to learn more about PTSD, but also to prevent a future generation of scarred warriors. Conferences between veterans of Afghanistan and Vietnam veterans provided former Soviet soldiers with their first opportunities to receive treatment for their PTSD.

The Soviet soldier also faced unique problems in dealing with their understanding of the war in Afghanistan due to the propaganda campaign that distorted the nature of their mission from the beginning – they went to war believing that they would be facing bandits or building schools and hospitals, not engaging in a decade of combat against dedicated insurgents. A study of Lithuanian veterans found that up to 86% of those who faced combat had a difficult time readjusting to civilian life, with 16% of them still experiencing the symptoms of PTSD years after the end of their service. (Mil- historicus.blogspot.com)

Compared to fighters in other wars, the situation of the Soviet Afghanistan War veteran is special in that the meaning imparted to the war was distorted from the beginning. Soldiers returning from a war are usually loved and respected. Society's favorable attitude helps in giving a sense to the difficult experiences of the war, and reduces the intensity of the symptoms accompanying the trauma. In this particular case, the public was not looking forward to the return of soldiers who had fought in Afghanistan. It was in no hurry to recognize their sacrifice or to help them. Rather, it was the other way round. Everything was kept secret.

No information was given about the killed and wounded. Disabled soldiers did not receive any assistance. After the collapse of the USSR, the war was recognized as a major political mistake, and the politicians' attitude was absorbed by the public. The response to the war and participants in it was negative.

When Lithuania regained its independence, Afghanistan War veterans were seen as a part of the legacy of the Soviet Union beyond Lithuania's concern. In 1997, the consequences of the Soviet and Nazi occupations were reassessed, and a law on the legal status of people injured by the occupations of 1939 to 1990 was passed. This law does not mention the participants in the Afghanistan War; they were not recognized as injured.

From the point of view of its meaning, the experience of Soviet veterans is similar to that of participants in the Vietnam War. Soldiers returning from Vietnam met with antiwar demonstrations, with accusing and hostile banners and slogans (Goodwin, 1987), although, unlike Afghanistan War veterans, they succeeded in gaining recognition and assistance.

Numerous clinical tests were carried out and medical aid provided, and the public learned of their [Vietnam] experience. Classen and Koopman (1993) determined that, compared to fighters in other wars, post-traumatic disorders were more prevalent among soldiers who fought in Vietnam. This was supposedly influenced by the unpopularity of the war and the hostility of the public towards the soldiers during the war and in its final stages. This once again points to the importance of imparting meaning to experience and its links to post-traumatic symptoms.

Although many years have passed since the end of the Soviet War in Afghanistan, Soviet and Lithuanian citizens who fought in Afghanistan have so far not been recognized as victims, either from a legal or a psychological point of view.

What influences do the continuing negation of the consequences of the war and the delayed realization of their experience have on the mental health of the veterans, on their relationships and on their lives? That question remains unanswered.

Summation

The Soviet experience in Afghanistan was as complex as it was varied. As in all wars, the Soviet veterans experienced extremes of boredom and terror, injuries and disease. They engaged in acts of extreme charity and brutality toward each other and Afghans with startlingly rapid changes in demeanor and behavior. While the vast majority of Soviet soldiers in Afghanistan were conscripts, their ranks were intermingled with volunteers. Despite Soviet propaganda showing the world the ethnic integration of Soviet forces, almost all of the combatants were Russians or other Slavs, while Central Asian minorities performed manual labor.

Soviet soldiers quickly found that the vast majority of Afghans did not view them as saviors or guardians, but as armed intruders, resulting in tragedy for both sides. Fear, anger, and confusion led to extraordinary atrocities on Afghan civilians by Soviet soldiers, who did not understand either Afghanistan's culture, or the war they were fighting. The fact that they were misled about their mission in Afghanistan simply exacerbated the problem.

The result was horrific for both Soviets and Afghans. While 26,000 Soviet soldiers died in combat and another 400,000 were victims of disease, as many as 1.3 million Afghans perished during the conflict. Soviet survivors continue to carry the emotional and physical scars of their time in Afghanistan.

The experiences of the Soviets in Afghanistan are often eerily compared to those of veterans who served in Vietnam. The value of this section is not to provide a history of the Soviet experience but rather to provide a background to the similarities of U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

Those similarities of U.S. Vietnam veterans' and Soviet Afghanistan veterans include:

- Treatment of the warrior
- Effects of the war(s) on the veteran
- The need for treatment
- Recognition of services

The emotions of fear, anger, confusion and betrayal, as exhibited by Soviet soldiers, have been exhibited in Vietnam veterans. These emotions, when not recognized by friends, relatives, caregivers or others can eventually lead to the development of PTSD and moral injury.

As a result of Vietnam, the U.S. committed itself to developing programs for its service personnel and veterans that would provide family support, mental health services and transitioning programs. These programs have reduced but not eliminated the risks associated with military service.

For many Vietnam and Soviet veterans, the lingering effects of their wars remain.

Mental Disorder-A Historical Journey

It is impossible to adequately address moral injury without considering, in brief, the history of the many mental issues that occur as a result of military service.

As described in the review of ancient cultures the issue of moral injury was recognized and in one manner or another it was dealt with by rituals of purification (inclusive of penance and reconciliation). Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is defined by the American Psychiatric Association as an anxiety (emotional) disorder which stems from a particular incident evoking significant stress. PTSD can be found among survivors of the Holocaust, of car accidents, of sexual assaults, and of other traumatic experiences such as combat. The fact is, PTSD is a new name for an old story.

War has always had a severe psychological impact on people in immediate and lasting ways. PTSD has a history that is as significant as the malady itself. It's been with us now for thousands of years, as incidents in history prove. (Adapted from the Encyclopedia of Psychology)

The Evolution of PTSD: Many Names

As described by Charlie Jane Anders in the article "From Irritable Heart to Shellshock: How PTSD Became a Disease", one can trace the history of PTSD from the 17th Century to today.

Nostalgia

This is the diagnosis given to Swiss soldiers in 1678 by Dr. Johannes Hofer. In 1761, Austrian physician Josef Leopold Auenbrugger wrote about the widely diagnosed condition of nostalgia in his book *Inventum Novum*, writing that soldiers "become sad, taciturn, listless, solitary, musing, and full of sighs and moans. Finally, these cease to pay attention and become indifferent to everything which the maintenance of life requires of them. This disease is called nostalgia."

French physicians in the Napoleonic wars believed soldiers were more likely to suffer nostalgia if they had come from a rural, rather than urban, background. They prescribed such cures as listening to music, regular exercise, and "useful instruction."

Homesickness

Around the same time, German soldiers were calling the same condition *heimweh*, and the French called it "*maladie du pays*" — both terms basically mean "homesickness."

Estar Roto

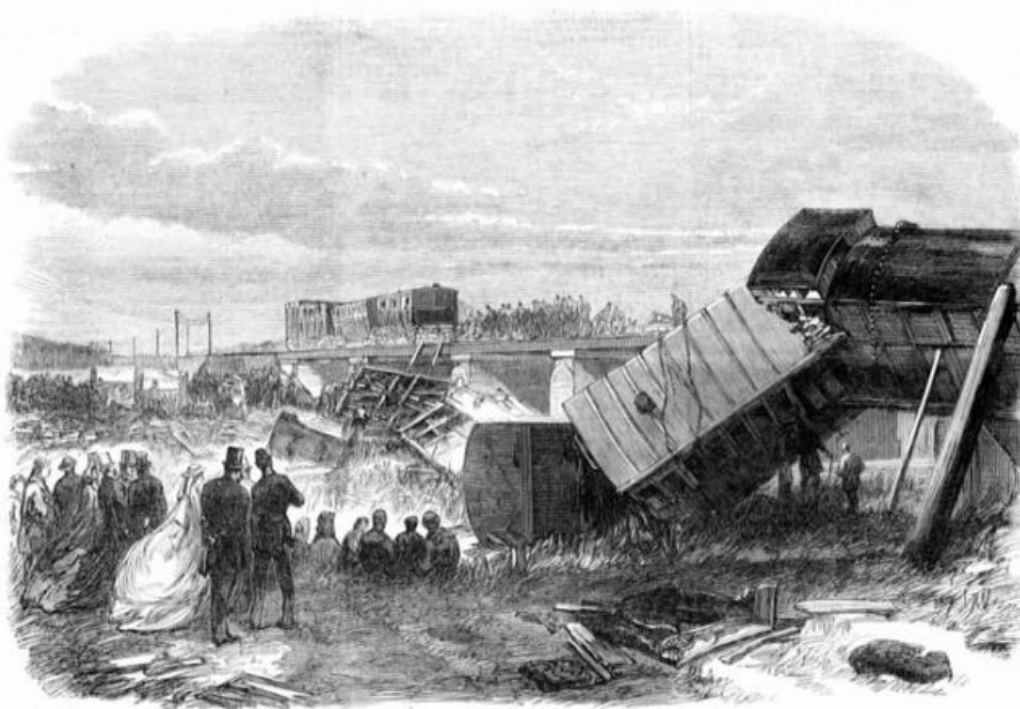
Spanish physicians came up with this term for PTSD, which means "to be broken."

Soldier's Heart

Internal medicine doctor Jacob Mendez da Costa studied Civil War veterans in the United States, and discovered that many of them suffered from chest-thumping (tachycardia), anxiety, and shortness of breath. He called this syndrome "Soldier's Heart" or "Irritable Heart." But it also came to be called "Da Costa Syndrome."

Neurasthenia/Hysteria

These classic Victorian descriptions for anybody who suffered from excessive neurosis or nervousness included many symptoms that would now be considered signs of PTSD, judging from James Beard's definitive text on neurasthenia, published in 1890.



Compensation Sickness or Railway Spine

As railroad travel became much more common in the late 19th century, so did railroad accidents — and psychologists started noticing a lot of cases of trauma among survivors of those accidents. Psychologist CTJ Rigler coined the term "compensation neurosis" to describe these cases — with the "compensation" part referring to a new law that allowed people to sue for compensation for emotional suffering. Rigler believed people were more likely to report their traumatic symptoms — or possibly exaggerate them — if they were going to get paid. Victims of railway accidents were also referred to as having "Railway Spine," as if their spinal cords had suffered a concussion that caused them to be more nervous or traumatized afterwards.

Shell Shock

Dating from World War I, "shell shock" is probably the most famous term for PTSD. By December 1914, up to 10 percent of officers were suffering from shell shock, and 40 percent of casualties from the Battle of the Somme were shell-shocked.

Combat Exhaustion

"Shell shock" became "combat exhaustion" during World War II and the Korean War. People also called it "combat fatigue." The Army studied the problem, and decided that "unit cohesion" was a crucial factor in surviving this syndrome, and replacement soldiers were more prone to it because they were new to their units.

Stress Response Syndrome

This is the name "battle fatigue" was given in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-I) in 1952. It is the condition that Vietnam War veterans were diagnosed with. In the DSM-II this syndrome was filed with diagnoses in a new category called "situational disorders."

After the Vietnam War, countless veterans were diagnosed with "stress response syndrome" but the VA declared that if the problem lasted more than six months after the soldiers returned home, then it obviously was a pre-existing condition and had nothing to do with their wartime service. And thus, it was no longer covered for treatment by the VA.

It wasn't until DSM-III in 1980 and ICD-10 in 1992 that the clinical guidelines started to acknowledge that these problems could be chronic. And that this problem could be an "anxiety disorder" rather than a short-term adjustment. This change came in the wake of researchers working with a large number of Vietnam veterans. Like World War II, the Vietnam War was a huge boost to PTSD research, and psychologists could find a large number of people suffering from the same symptoms within the same city, so sources of ready data existed.

A big proponent of reclassifying PTSD as an anxiety disorder, rather than an adjustment disorder, was Boston University's David H. Barlow. He theorized that when people who have psychological and physiological vulnerability get exposed to a stressful event, they develop the belief that these stressful events are unpredictable and uncontrollable — and they will become fearful about the repetition of this stress. This leads to a cycle of "chronic over arousal" and "anxious apprehension." These, in turn, lead to people being excessively vigilant, with shortened attention spans, and the way people process information gets distorted.

In short, they have major stress as a result of a trauma they've experienced. Hence, PTSD." (Anders, Charlie Jane, "From Irritable Heart to Shellshock: How PTSD Became a Disease")

What Are the Differences Between PTS and PTSD?



It's easy to confuse post-traumatic stress (PTS) and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). In addition to sharing similar names, there's considerable overlap in symptoms between the two conditions. Both PTS and PTSD are associated with feeling fearful and/or nervous, avoiding the activity or place associated with the traumatic event, and nightmares. However, there are significant differences in symptom intensity, duration, and treatment.

Post-traumatic Stress

"PTS is a common, normal, and often adaptive response to experiencing a traumatic or stressful event. Common occurrences, like car accidents, can trigger PTS as well as more unusual events like military combat or kidnapping. Almost everyone who experiences a scary situation will show at least a few signs of post-traumatic stress. That's because our brains are hard-wired to tell our bodies to tense our muscles, breathe faster, and pump more blood when we're under intense stress. This is the "fight-or-flight" response that prepares your body to deal with a threat or challenge in the environment by pumping more blood and oxygen to your muscles, and it shuts down non-critical functions like digestion. This fight-or-flight response is a normal reflex during and sometimes even after a traumatic event, which is why PTS is considered a normal reaction and not a mental illness.

PTS Symptoms and Behaviors

In experiencing post-traumatic stress, the heart may race, hands shake, and one may sweat or feel afraid and nervous. After the stressful event, one might avoid or be leery of engaging in that activity again, may have a bad dream about the event just experienced, or may feel nervous in a situation that reminds him or her of the unpleasant event.

Although they can be momentarily intense, symptoms of PTS usually subside a few days after the event and won't cause any prolonged meaningful interference with your life. One positive outcome of experiencing PTS may be that one may behave more carefully in a potentially dangerous situation in the future.

PTS Treatment

Since post-traumatic stress is not a mental disorder, treatment is not required as the symptoms will likely improve or subside on their own within a month. However, one should talk to a healthcare provider if they feel troubled by their symptoms — if they're interfering with their work, school, or relationships or if engaging in reckless behavior such as drinking or using drugs to cope with symptoms.

Overall Key Points

- PTS symptoms are common after deployment and may improve or resolve within a month. PTSD symptoms are more severe, persistent, can interfere with daily functioning, and can last for more than a month.
- Most people with PTS do not develop PTSD. You can develop PTSD without first having PTS.
- PTS requires no medical intervention, unless symptoms are severe. However, you may benefit from psychological healthcare support to prevent symptoms from worsening.
- PTSD is a medically-diagnosed condition and should be treated by a clinician.”
(brainline.org)

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

PTSD is a clinically-diagnosed condition listed in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, the recognized authority on mental illness diagnoses. The fifth revision, released May 2013, includes the latest diagnostic criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder.

Anyone who has experienced or witnessed a situation that involves the possibility of death or serious injury, or who learns that a close family member or friend has experienced a traumatic event, can develop post-traumatic stress disorder, although most people don't. It's still not completely understood why some people who are exposed to traumatic situations develop PTSD while others don't.

PTSD Symptoms and Behaviors

Common symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder include reliving a traumatic event through nightmares, flashbacks, or constantly thinking about it. One might avoid situations or people that remind them of the event, have only negative thoughts or emotions, and constantly feel jittery, nervous, or "on edge." Although some of these symptoms sound similar to PTS, the difference is the duration and intensity. Symptoms that continue for more than one month, are severe, and interfere with daily functioning are characteristic of PTSD.

Behaviors that indicate professional intervention is needed may include drinking or smoking more than usual as attempts to reduce anxiety or anger, and aggressive driving. Service members who have experienced combat can be especially nervous driving under overpasses and past litter on the roadside — behavior learned in Iraq and Afghanistan where insurgents hide improvised explosive devices in garbage and use overpasses to shoot at vehicles. Other behaviors that indicate that help may be needed can include being wary of crowds, showing reluctance to go to movie theaters, crowded stores, or nightclubs, and avoiding news that addresses overseas combat or getting angry at the reports.

PTSD Treatments

Certain medications and therapies are widely accepted by healthcare providers as effective treatments for post-traumatic stress disorder. Sertraline and Paroxetine are two medications Food and Drug Administration approved for treatment. Trauma-focused psychotherapy techniques such as prolonged exposure therapy and cognitive processing therapy have also been proven to be effective and widely used.

Traumatic Brain Injury

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) is generally the result of a sudden, violent blow or jolt to the head. The brain is launched into a collision course with the inside of the skull, resulting in possible bruising of the brain, tearing of nerve fibers and bleeding.

Problems with TBI vary depending on the location and severity of the injury to the brain and may include the following:

- Trouble concentrating when there are distractions (e.g., carrying on a conversation in a noisy restaurant or working on a few tasks at once);
- Slower processing or "taking in" of new information. Longer messages may have to be "chunked," or broken down into smaller pieces. The person may have to repeat/rehearse messages to make sure he or she has processed the crucial information. Communication partners may have to slow down their rate of speech;
- Problems with recent memory. New learning can be difficult. Long-term memory for events and things that occurred before the injury, however, is generally unaffected (e.g., the person will remember names of friends and family);
- Executive functioning problems. The person may have trouble starting tasks and setting goals to complete them. Planning and organizing a task is an effort, and it is difficult to self-evaluate work. Individuals often seem disorganized and need the assistance of families and friends. They also may have difficulty solving problems, and they may react impulsively (without thinking first) to situations (American Speech Language Association).

TBI Treatment

The treatment plan generally involves rehabilitation efforts to teach patients how to cope with their specific injury-related symptoms.

Depending on the severity of the TBI, a rehabilitation team may consist of:

- Physical Therapists who help patients regain their coordination, flexibility, and range of motion, and to address pain and stiffness
- Occupational Therapists who help patients relearn how to perform the simple activities of daily living
- Neuropsychologists, whose testing of patients' functional abilities helps the health care team identify specific areas of cognitive functioning that require specific rehabilitative efforts, and then measure progress toward addressing deficits
- Psychiatrists, who help patients to better manage their cognitive, emotional and behavioral symptoms

Brain injury rehabilitation assists in reaching maximum levels of independence. Care strategies are based on the severity of brain injury. The more severe brain injuries may require a variety of approaches to care. Additional factors in dealing with TBI include patient care coordination; provider, patient and family education; and emerging medical technologies that enhance TBI care.

Each brain injury and its recovery are different, and the brain has a remarkable way to adjust after injury. It is critical to know the symptoms of TBI and to seek treatment before there is a chance for additional, more serious complications to occur.

Military Sexual Trauma

Military sexual trauma (MST) is the term that the Department of Veterans Affairs uses to refer to sexual assault or repeated, threatening sexual harassment that occurred while the Veteran was in the military. It includes any sexual activity where someone is involved against his or her will – he or she may have been pressured into sexual activities (for example, with threats of negative consequences for refusing to be sexually cooperative or with implied faster promotions or better treatment in exchange for sex), may have been unable to consent to sexual activities (for example, when intoxicated), or may have been physically forced into sexual activities.

Other experiences that fall into the category of MST include unwanted sexual touching or grabbing; threatening, offensive remarks about a person's body or sexual activities; and/or threatening or unwelcome sexual advances.

MST is an experience, not a diagnosis or a condition in and of itself. Because of this, Veterans may react in a wide variety of ways to experiencing MST. Problems may not surface until months or years after the MST, and sometimes not until after a Veteran has left military service. For some Veterans, experiences of MST may continue to affect their mental and physical health, work, relationships, and everyday life even many years later.

Sexual assault is more likely to result in symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) than are most other types of trauma, including combat. Also, the experience of MST can differ from the experience of other traumas, and even from the experience of sexual trauma in the civilian world.

The Bond is Broken

Going through a sexual assault is bad enough. Then to have this happen to me in my job as a soldier; it was really difficult because what happened to the unit support? Your fellow soldiers are supposed to have your back (MST patient quote, VA).

As described in the section concerning Military Culture and the Code of the Warrior, one of the threads that bind military personnel together is the trust and faith of and in the members of a unit. It is the knowledge that "I have your back!" that builds unit cohesion. When a sexual assault occurs the perpetrator and victim are typically from the same unit and know each other. In many cases the perpetrator will be a higher ranking non-commissioned officer or commissioned officer.

What makes the sexual assault different in the military from a comparable event in civilian life is the breaking of the bond that exists within the unit. In its simplest terms, sexual assault is like incest. The family bond has been broken.

Factors that may be unique to MST include:

- One may have had to continue to live and work with your perpetrator, and even rely on him or her for essential things like food, health care, or watching your back on patrol;
- One may have been worried about damaging the team spirit of your unit if your perpetrator was in the same unit;
- One may have been worried about appearing weak or vulnerable, and thoughts that others would not respect you;
- One may have thought that if others found out, it would end your career or your chances for promotion.

For these and other reasons, the experience of MST can put Service members in some no-win situations and be emotionally difficult for them to resolve as Veterans (va.gov).

As is often the case in a sexual assault case, the victim can often be made to feel to be the guilty party. It is important to understand the relationship between this feeling of guilt and shame when working with a victim of MST as those feelings can and often do result in a moral injury.

Summation

Military Outreach USA provides the information in this section as a reference to the overall presentation concerning moral injury. One should only view this information in the context presented and if symptoms are recognized then treatment should be sought through the Veterans Administration or another medical provider.

Issues such as PTSD are not new and they have been identified in the past, albeit under different names. New and better treatments over the years have increased the rate of recovery among patients who exhibit symptoms and who have sought treatment. As mentioned in a previous section, many do not seek treatment. This again is partially as a result of one's adherence to the warrior code: never give up, never give in.

The contributing effects of these issues, and their relationship to moral injury, have not been addressed in this section. While some would include such issues as emotional responses in this section we have chosen to treat them as separate contributors to moral injury.

In any case, it needs to be stressed that moral injury can be present without any of the issues mentioned in this section.



An **emotion** is a complex psychological state that involves three distinct components: a subjective experience, a physiological response, and a behavioral or expressive response (Hockenbury & Hockenbury, 2007).

This section will focus only on those who serve in the military. However, the transference of the topics reviewed here can easily be applied to other professions.

When the UCMJ/ROE and warrior code are merged there should never then be a problem arising from a conflict of the two. Should the military ever rely 100% on robotics then this might be the case, however, it is humans who make up the military and with humans come emotionally based decisions.

This chart provides a simplified guide to what is moral and or ethical.

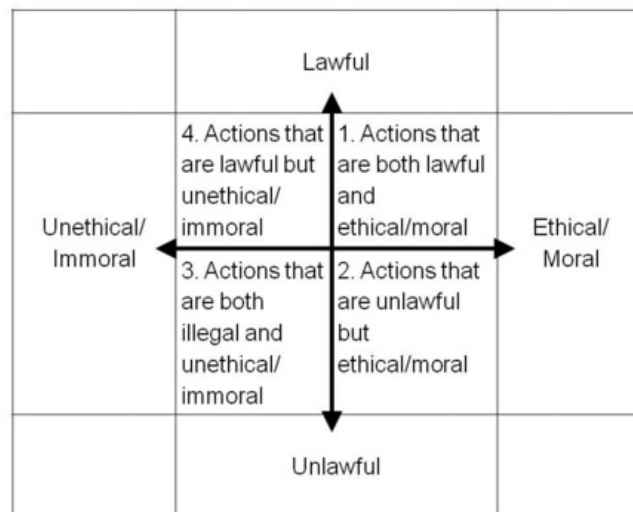


Chart Source:
<http://www.dailykos.com/story/2013/08/13/123>

Quadrant 1: Actions that are both lawful and ethical/moral. Examples: Launching a missile from a drone on a known, legitimate target.

Quadrant 2: Actions that are unlawful but nevertheless ethical/moral. Examples: Exposing classified information to warn of official wrongdoing or to save lives (unless such exposure also costs lives).

Quadrant 3: Actions that are both illegal and unethical/immoral. Examples: Torturing prisoners of war, killing innocent civilians.

Quadrant 4: Actions that are legal but may be viewed as unethical/immoral. Examples: Burning a village in enemy territory.

Quadrants 1 and 3 may appear to be easily identifiable while Quadrants 2 and 4 are subjects that perhaps exemplify the conflict between ethics and morals.

In any of the examples offered the risk exists that psychological problems may develop at a later date. It is that risk which can be addressed through proper and consistent training of those in military service.

Morals and Ethics



In the section dealing with drones, moral courage was discussed and related to how the drone operator(s) may have to make a decision between what, at the time, is a lawful or legal order and what is morally right. An assumption is made that the ethical code of the military ensures that when a legal order is given that morality has also been taken into the equation so that the order results in an honorable and morally acceptable action/result.

History has many examples of orders that, while some considered legal, were beyond a doubt morally wrong. In the case of Nazi leaders, certain SS units, or concentration camp guards during WW2 there is no doubt that they were morally wrong in their actions. However, and not in defense of their actions, what they did followed their national, political and military directives. Historians often theorize about the legality of the Nuremburg and Tokyo Trials conducted by the victors after the end of WW2. Had the Axis Powers won, would Allied commanders have faced trial?

The Need for Moral & Ethical Leadership

With the ever increasing use of technology by the military a battlefield commander may be hundreds, if not thousands of miles, away from their command. This remoteness reduces the commander to relying on their subordinates to provide them with the information necessary to make proper decisions; particularly of those decisions that need to receive political approvals. For example, some reports suggest that Osama bin Laden could have been killed as early as 1998 but political actions pre-empted those opportunities. Whether or not he would have been killed does not negate the point that efforts of the military were either overridden or ignored by civilian policy makers.

More tacit examples as to how the lack of moral certainty in an operation can affect those who had to fight the war are documented in almost every field operation conducted during the Vietnam War. On countless occasions U.S forces would be helicoptered into an area, fight the enemy, and then be helicoptered out again. Perhaps no greater examples of this fight and leave process was exhibited in the fight for Hamburger Hill in May 1969. The name also pays homage to a similar fight during the Korean War known as the Battle of Pork Chop Hill. In the fighting, US and ARVN forces suffered 70 killed and 372 wounded. Total enemy casualties are unknown, but 630 bodies were found on the hill after the battle. Heavily covered by the press, the necessity of the fighting on Hill 937 was questioned by the public and stirred controversy in Washington.

This was worsened by the 101st's abandonment of the hill on June 5. As a result of this public and political pressure, General Creighton Abrams altered US strategy in Vietnam from one of "maximum pressure" to "protective reaction" in an effort to lower casualties. (<http://militaryhistory.about.com>) The abandonment of Hamburger Hill, the eventual total withdrawal from Vietnam, its resulting fall and treatment of returning service personnel left many veterans feeling betrayed by their military and political leadership. (<http://www.deltacollege.edu/org/deltawinds/DWOnline01/cominghome.html>) Without the prerequisite moral certainty provided by military and/or political leadership it could not be expected for its forces to function and conduct themselves in accordance with military codes of ethics. As stated in Dr. Shay's studies of Vietnam Veterans, betrayal by political/military leadership is at the root cause of many Vietnam era veterans suffering from PTSD and moral injury.

Recent conflicts/missions have added complexities to military missions. Current and anticipated future missions have been characterized as "not really war" at all: but rather as unconventional, asymmetric conflicts with shadowy, elusive and ill-defined enemies and morally ambiguous objectives that are more akin to ongoing attempts to combat organized crime, or stop gang warfare, or identify and arrest drug dealers and human traffickers than they are to armies defending their nation against enemy states in conventional war. Insurgents rarely wear uniforms, retreat into the safety of local populations, and often adhere to a set of moral values that are not only inconsistent with, but in fact often deliberately contrary to the ethical standards that Western societies value. They do this in order to provoke disproportionate retaliation from Western forces. There are also cultural differences with the wider local population, creating additional cultural stress for military members who have an increasing level of contact with local populations. Ethnic cleansing and atrocities among local warring factions have become commonplace and restrictive rules of engagement have meant that intervening militaries can do little more than bear witness to the carnage around them. Finally, service members are often called upon to assume combat, humanitarian, and stabilization roles all in the same mission.

Such added complexity and ambiguities mean that military personnel are called upon to make moral decisions under some of the most challenging of conditions: 1) when the right thing to do is not immediately clear, 2) when two or more important principles or values support different actions, 3) when some harm will result, regardless of the actions taken. (Defense Ethics Program, Dept. of National Defense, 2012 [Canada])

As a result of the Israeli Second Lebanon War in 2006, a commission was instituted to review the events leading up to and including decisions made during the war. The Winograd Commission Report was more than 500 pages in length and reviewed in depth political and military decision making processes. In their summary report it was stated:

when we imposed responsibility on a system, an echelon or a unit, we did not imply that the responsibility was only or mainly of those who headed it at the time of the war. Often, such responsibility stemmed from a variety of factors outside the control of those at the head.

In addition, a significant part of the responsibility for the failures and flaws we have found lies with those who had been in charge of preparedness and readiness in the years before the war (<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org>).

Moral Leadership

Of the three dimensions of leadership, moral, physical, and intellectual, the most difficult dimension to nurture is moral development. The physical attributes of leadership, courage, bearing, endurance, and even appearance, can be cultivated through disciplined training. The intellectual aspect of leadership can be cultivated through intensive study of human nature, crisis management, leadership and managerial technique, philosophy, logic, and so on.

The moral aspect of leadership, personally understanding, embracing, and inculcating ethical conduct in others is far more difficult to developing leaders and can be far more time-consuming. In spite of decades of highly publicized moral/ethical failures on the part of military members, the DoD has not achieved a satisfactory method for addressing the moral development of service men and women (The Four Stages of Moral Development in Military Leaders, USNA, Joseph Thomas).

If ethics is a system of moral values and morals are principles of right and wrong behavior, then moral development is the quest to learn right from wrong.

In his address presented to the Joint Services Conference on Professional Ethics in January, 2000, CPT. Pete Kilner stated that military leaders have an obligation to justify killing to the men and women in their command.

He mentions that the methods which the military currently uses to train and execute combat operations enable service members to kill the enemy effectively, but they leave them liable to post combat psychological trauma caused by guilt. This is a leadership issue. He argues that combat training should be augmented by explaining to soldiers the moral justification for killing in combat, in order to reduce post combat guilt. Service members deserve to understand whom they can kill morally and why those actions are indeed moral. To paraphrase Stanley Hauerwas, perhaps the greatest moral injury is the sacrificing of one's unwillingness to kill to that of willing to kill when ordered.

Service members, of any military, are conditioned to act without considering the moral repercussions of their action; they are enabled to kill without making a conscious decision to do so. In and of itself, such training is appropriate and morally permissible. A commander cannot lead a unit that is constantly trying to determine if an action is moral or not. Battles are won by killing the enemy, so military leaders should strive to produce the most efficient killers. The problem, however, are those service members who kill reflexively in combat will likely one day reconsider their actions reflectively? If they are unable to justify to themselves effectively killing another human being, they will likely, and understandably, suffer enormous guilt.

This guilt manifests itself as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and has damaged the lives of tens of thousands of men and women who performed their duty in combat.

Training can only transform moral values and suppress emotional responses, it cannot eliminate them. The role of leadership is to present the most effective training, not the acceptance of killing, but rather an understanding of the need to kill. As suggested by training of IDF service members, the risk for PTSD and moral injury can be greatly reduced when leadership can justify an action.

Emotions

Emotions, as defined, require three distinct components: a subjective experience, a physiological response, and a behavioral or expressive response. Lists of negatively balanced moral emotions commonly include guilt, shame, anger, disgust, and contempt; whereas positive moral emotions include compassion, elevation, gratitude, and pride.

Unless otherwise noted, descriptions of the following various emotions are taken from *The Role of Moral Emotions in Military Trauma* (Nov. 2014), by Jacob Farnsworth et al and *Moral Emotions and Moral Behavior* (<http://psych.annualreviews.org> Sept. 2006).

Though perhaps not defined as an emotion, Appetitive Aggression is an important topic that bears mentioning in a discussion surrounding moral injury.

APPETITIVE BEHAVIOR

A definition of appetitive behavior will aid in understanding appetitive aggression.

appetitive behavior

Activity that increases the likelihood of satisfying a specific need, as restless searching for food by a hungry predator (<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/appetitive+behavior>)

In studies conducted on WW2 German veterans, former child soldiers in Northern Uganda and former Colombian combatants, Roland Weierstall and others have developed an appetitive aggression scale. Their findings suggest that former soldiers who report combat related aggression to be appetitive are more resilient to development of PTSD. The results confirm a model that suggests that in an environment dominated by organized violence, exposure to dramatic stressors increases appetitive aggression and furthers violent behavior, thus driving a cycle of violence. The increasing appetitive aggression on the other hand seems to relate to a smaller vulnerability for trauma related mental illness, although there seems to be no alternate resilience. They therefore predict that mental illness will be the likely consequence for those entrapped in the cycle of violence [when that cycle ends].

The constant violence of combat and need to be ever vigilant keeps a combatant at a high level of awareness. The “adrenaline rush” created during combat needs to be repeated. When removed from that environment there is often the need to recreate that “rush”. In some cases returning service members will seek to re-capture that feeling in activities that are dangerous to themselves or others. “Popping a wheelie” on a motorcycle going 100 miles an hour down an interstate highway is but one example. Many combatants will seek to return to battle as mercenaries. Eventually, however, the constant “high of combat” cannot be repeated and the traumatic experiences will appear as PTSD and/or moral injury.

The influence of combat experience on traumatization, as well as demobilization, differs remarkably between those combatants demobilized individually and those who are members of a group that was demobilized. This has important implications for the implementation of reintegration programs and therapeutic interventions.

During WW2 American forces returned to the States as units on troop ships. The passage normally lasted weeks. In that time these service members had the opportunity to “decompress” from their combat experiences while being with those with whom they served.

Compare their return to more recently returning service members who, in combat perhaps two days before departure, came back to the U.S. on jet planes and landed within days of leaving combat. Those men and women did not have the opportunity to “decompress” and transition back into society.

Guilt

The emotion of guilt centers on a negative evaluation of a specific behavior and is associated with tension, remorse, and regret over the perceived infraction. Research suggests that guilt is primarily elicited by real or imagined violations that are perceived to threaten one’s personal or communal relationship with the harmed party.

If a service person deserts they are in violation of military law. Their guilt may be resolved if they return for punishment.

Shame

In contrast to guilt, shame has been consistently associated with a wide variety of psychological symptoms. Whereas guilt focuses outwardly on a specific behavior, shame involves a negative global evaluation of the core self that is accompanied by feelings of worthlessness, powerlessness, and feeling vulnerable and exposed. Accordingly, whereas guilt can promote greater empathy and socially reparative actions, shame typically activates social hiding behaviors and decreases empathy due to the increased preoccupation with one’s own stress and emotional discomfort. Furthermore, shame has been associated with substance abuse, anger, and aggression, whereas guilt often discourages these types of problematic behaviors.

Staying with the case of a deserter who is never brought to justice for their crime, they may feel shame and view themselves as a coward or traitor to their nation. In this example, the service member now suffers from guilt and shame.

Embarrassment

The most common causes of embarrassment are situations in which a person behaves in a clumsy, absent-minded, or hapless way (tripping in front of a crowd, forgetting someone's name, unintended bodily induced noises). Other common embarrassment inducing situations include awkward social interactions and conspicuous actions, i.e. during the period generally. Events causing embarrassment seem to signal that something is amiss, thus some aspects of the self or one's behavior needs to be carefully monitored, hidden, or changed.

As with shame and guilt, there are individual differences in the degree to which people are prone to experience embarrassment. Research has shown that embarrassment is associated with neuroticism, high levels of negative affect, self-consciousness, and a share of negative evaluation from others. To the extent that embarrassment prone individuals are highly aware of and concerned with social rules and standards, they are especially vulnerable to the influence of peer pressure.

Pride

Mascolo and Fischer (1995) define pride "as an emotion generated by appraisals that one is responsible for a socially valued outcome or for being a socially valued person."

From their perspective, pride serves to enhance people's self-worth and, perhaps more importantly, to encourage future behavior that conforms to social standards of worth or merit.

As discussed in a following section dealing with Moral Injury: Approaches to Resolution, pride represents the flip side of guilt and shame. It is a critical emotion that needs to be restored in an individual suffering from moral injury.

Disgust

Disgust has two components, bodily and moral. Bodily disgust is typically associated with feelings of revulsion and offense and its core action tendency is rejection and expelling of the toxic substance. An example, eating food that tastes or smells bad causes one to vomit. Moral disgust is likewise evoked by acts perceived to contaminate one's sense of moral purity. An example of moral disgust can be the witnessing of the sexual abuse of a child or, in some cultures, the stoning of a woman for perceived religious violations. Moral disgust may be evoked in combatants by exposure to severe poverty or personally disturbing cultural practices and beliefs that conflict with service members' backgrounds, values/beliefs, and cultural expectations.

While there are few studies relating to disgust it can be a major contributor to PTSD and moral injury.

Contempt

Contempt is a negative emotion that regards people, groups or actions as inferior or worthless. People feel contempt when they judge that someone or something else as beneath them (www.emotionwisegroup.org). It is suggested that contempt reflects a blend of anger and disgust. While there are no studies regarding contempt and military related trauma, there is strong theoretical and clinical reason to suggest that contempt may play a role in moral injury and PTSD in military populations. For example, dehumanization of enemy combatants and their perceived ethnic groups, perceptions of leadership as incompetent or indifferent to service member safety, or betrayal by trusted civilians have been proposed as causes of moral injury and would very likely entail some degree of contempt (Drescher et al 2011).

People generally feel contemptuous when others breach social norms or commit acts that are judged as being morally wrong. Feelings of contempt arise when someone cuts in line, cheats on a test, or steals from a friend; these actions are generally regarded as unacceptable behavior.

Elevation

Moral elevation is a specific emotion or state that individuals sometimes experience after they witness or hear about a virtuous act—an act in which someone showed unexpected compassion, forgiveness, understanding, and altruism. After individuals experience this state, they become more altruistic and helpful (<http://www.psych-it.com.au>).

Gratitude

Gratitude is classified as a moral effect, not because the experience and expression of gratitude is in and of itself moral, but because feelings of gratitude a) result from moral behavior of the benefactor and b) and engenders subsequent moral motivation on the part of the recipients. A grateful people are often motivated to respond pro-socially, both to the benefactor and toward others not involved in the gratitude of eliciting act. Moreover, expressions of gratitude serve as a moral reinforcer, encouraging benefactors helping behavior in the future. Gratitude not only benefits benefactors and relationships. Those who benefit most from the experience and expression of gratitude are grateful people themselves. In a series of experimental studies, feelings of gratitude enhanced psychological resilience, physical health, and the quality of daily life. In fact both dispositional and situation specific episodes of gratitude have been linked to psychological well-being and adaptive behavior and nonclinical samples.

Examples of gratitude on a national basis are the Marshall Plan, the Berlin Airlift, and humanitarian aid to nations following natural disasters.

Empathy & Sympathy

In contrast to the other moral emotions discussed, empathy is not a discrete emotion. Rather it is an emotional process that has substantial implications for moral behavior. Current conceptualizations of empathy integrate both effective and cognitive components.

Feshbach (1975), for example, defines empathy “as a shared emotional response between an observer and a stimulus person”. She suggests that empathetic responsiveness requires three interrelated skills or capacities: 1) the cognitive ability to take another person’s perspective, 2) the cognitive ability to accurately recognize and discriminate other persons affected experience, and 3) the effective ability to personally experience a range of emotions.

There is a distinction between empathy and sympathy. Sympathy involves feelings of concern for the emotional state of another, but does not necessarily involve the vicarious expression or experience of the other person’s feelings or emotions. Thus, one may feel concern for an angered individual without being vicariously angered oneself.

Empathy and its close cousin sympathy have been cited as central to the human moral effective system for at least three reasons. First, empathetic reactions to others’ distress often elicit feelings of concern for the distressed other. Second, empathetic concern often prompts behavior aimed at helping the distressed other. Third, feelings of empathy are apt to inhibit aggression and other behaviors that are harmful to others.

My Lai and Haditha Massacres

In American military and political history there are examples of violations of ethics and morals conducted by various individuals or units. Such events as the Plains Indian Wars, the relocation of American citizens of Japanese or German heritage during WW2 or the massacres at My Lai or Haditha are examples of political or military decisions that ultimately violated ethical and/or moral standards. In events such as the relocation of American citizens it was a decision of political leadership.

For My Lai and Haditha it was the decisions of military personnel who either misinterpreted orders or let emotions override their military training.

To gain an understanding of the situations leading up to and including the events surrounding the My Lai and Haditha Massacres it is necessary to review what occurred. While an encapsulated version could have been presented it is best to review the events at length.

My Lai

In Vietnam the orders given that resulted in the My Lai massacre, at the time, were considered legal but the resulting action was certainly immoral. More than 500 South Vietnamese men, women and children were killed (murdered) in that action. A discussion then follows with the events leading up to and surrounding the Haditha Massacre in Iraq in 2005. The similarity between the two events, separated by nearly 40 years is striking.

What drove a company of American soldiers -- ordinary young men from around the country -- to commit the worst atrocity in American military history? Were they "just following orders" as some later declared? Or, did they break under the pressure of a vicious war in which the line between enemy soldier and civilian had been intentionally blurred?

"On the morning of March 16, 1968, a company of American soldiers entered the village of My Lai, located in Quang Ngai Province in central Vietnam. Frustrated by their inability to directly engage the enemy and emotionally devastated by the ongoing casualties their unit had sustained, the men had been told that this was their chance to finally meet the Viet Cong head on. By the end of the day, they had shot and killed between 300 and 507 unarmed and unresisting men, women and children, none of them apparently members of the enemy forces. Most of the survivors hid under the dead bodies of their families and neighbors.

The incident, subsequently known as the My Lai Massacre, would only come to light more than a year later, when shocking photos of the atrocities were splashed across the pages of national newsmagazines and the evening newscasts, further eroding public support for the war in Vietnam.

The approximately 140 young men who made up Charlie Company, First Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, 11th Infantry Brigade, 23rd Infantry Americal Division, represented a cross-section of America: from the East, West, North and South, they were black and white, Mexican American and Mormon. Under the leadership of Captain Ernest Medina, they became a tight knit group. Early training for the unit included a stint in Hawaii, where the young soldiers were trained in jungle warfare. But this simulated training did little to prepare the men for the horrors of Vietnam. Once overseas, Charlie Company was detailed to Task Force Barker, operating in the Northern Province of Quang Ngai, known to the Army as Pinkville and one of the bloodiest areas of conflict in all of Vietnam. Sent out on search and destroy missions, they suddenly started to lose men, one after another — horrific bloody deaths from snipers' bullets, mines, and booby traps that would instantly dismember a man without the slightest warning.

Demoralizing and psychologically unsettling, this strange and terrifying form of combat continued day after day, for nearly two months, with soldiers unable to even see their enemies, or distinguish friend from foe in the villages they walked through every day.

On March 15, Charlie Company was told that they were going to finally face the 48th Vietcong infantry battalion head on the following day. The brigade commander charged his officers to be aggressive with the enemy, and Captain Medina fired up the troops. This was it. This would be their chance to finally avenge the deaths of their fallen comrades.

According to sworn testimony, Captain Medina told the soldiers that there would be no civilians, or "innocents" in the village on March 16, and anyone who was present was an enemy or enemy sympathizer. But that information was based on faulty intelligence; the Vietcong were 150 miles away on the other side of the Province.

Lieutenant William Calley, the leader of the 1st Platoon of Charlie Company, told his men to enter My Lai firing, but when the initial smoke cleared, they saw only unarmed elderly men, women and children emerging from their houses in terror. A few minutes later the shooting started.

For almost 16 months after the incident at My Lai, the American public remained unaware of what had happened until reporter Seymour Hersh broke the story in 30 U.S. newspapers. He based his story on conversations with Ron Ridenhour, a former member of Charlie Company (though not present at My Lai) who had sent letters to various government officials urging them to investigate “something rather dark and bloody” that had happened in Vietnam. At first ignored, his letters eventually resulted in Lieutenant Calley being charged with murder in September 1969.

A week after Hersh’s story, My Lai was covered in Time and Newsweek, and the Cleveland Plain Dealer published the now-infamous, still tragic photos of the bloody lifeless bodies by the side of the road. The images raised serious questions about what was really going on in Vietnam.

The U.S. Army commissioned an investigation, eventually charging over 20 men of wrongdoing. The commission concluded that there had been widespread failures of leadership, discipline and morale. On March 29, 1971, Lieutenant William Calley was convicted of premeditated murder and sentenced to life in prison, causing a firestorm of public outcry. Anti-war Americans saw Calley as a scapegoat for a corrupt military; those in favor saw him as a dedicated soldier who had only been carrying out orders.

Public sentiment overwhelmed the White House, and President Nixon ordered Calley released and confined to his quarters pending a review of his conviction. In total, he ended up serving four and a half months in a military prison. Captain Medina was acquitted, having denied that he gave any orders for the massacre. None of the other military men initially charged were ever convicted.

My Lai had a lasting impact on a war-weary American public. Demands for withdrawal from Vietnam continued to grow, while others questioned the idea of blind loyalty to military leadership, the effectiveness of a military draft for finding suitable recruits, and the wisdom of a war whose success was measured on the nightly news by body counts. Today, the My Lai Massacre is still considered the worst case of an American war atrocity” (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience>).

Haditha

Note: The description of what occurred at Haditha has been edited to remove political commentary.

”On November 19, 2005, in Haditha, during Kilo Company’s, part of the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, third tour of duty in Iraq, a land mine planted by insurgents exploded beneath a Humvee, killing a 20-year-old Marine. What happened next—the slaughter of 24 Iraqi men, women, and children—was not entirely an aberration. These actions were rooted in the very conduct of the war.

The November 19, 2005, incident sparked bitter controversy here in the United States. Early media reports and a preliminary military investigation portrayed the incident as a premeditated murder spree in retribution for the death of Lance Corporal Miguel Terrazas, who was killed by an IED. Democratic Representative Frank Murtha, himself a retired Marine Reserve colonel, called the incident "cold-blooded murder" and accused military brass of "covering up" the incident.

Eight marines were charged in December 2006 for the incident but a formal Article 32 investigation -- a hearing to determine whether a court martial is appropriate -- found that there was no grand plan to murder innocents or for execution-style killings. Rather, a group of angry, exhausted and frightened Marines simply did not care whether the people they were killing were combatants. Charges were eventually dropped against six defendants. A seventh, First Lieutenant Andrew Grayson, who was charged with covering up the incident after the fact, was acquitted. That left only Wunderlich, the immediate leader of the men who killed the victims, who was charged with negligent homicide.

A December 2011 New York Times investigation, based on some 400 pages of interrogations -- many classified and which had for some reason been left behind in an Iraqi junkyard when American troops departed the country -- only added fuel to the outrage. They portrayed a culture where the killing of civilians became routine, described as "a cost of doing business" by Marine Major General Steve Johnson, the commander of American forces in Anbar Province at the time.

So much so that the initial reports of 24 civilians killed by his Marines was considered neither surprising nor cause for investigation by higher-ups, who shrugged it off as another day in the war.

Brian Rooney, the attorney for Lieutenant Colonel Jeffrey Chessani, the highest-ranking Marine charged in the case declared before his charges were dropped stated, "If it's a grey area, fog-of-war, you can't put yourself in a Marine's situation where he's legitimately trying to do the best he can." The same sentiments were prevalent during the war in Vietnam, when many back home viewed incidents like the My Lai massacre as terrible but understandable.

The Iraq War, even more so than Vietnam, pitted American forces against unconventional combatants who at times gladly used civilians -- including women and children -- to carry out attacks. James Mattis, the then four-star head of Central Command and the then two-star commander of I Marine Expeditionary Force, noted in dismissing the charges against two of the accused that the country was "fighting a shadowy enemy who hides among the innocent people, does not comply with any aspect of the law of war, and routinely targets and intentionally draws fire toward civilians."

Even so, it's hard to write off the killing of a 76-year-old man in a wheelchair or the calm execution of six children huddled in a room as "the fog of war."

But this wasn't ultimately a case of Marines protecting their own and disregarding the lives of slain Iraqis. While some commanders in Iraq were indeed callous about the attack early in the investigation, there was eventually a real investigation and the filing of formal charges against eight of the leaders and perpetrators.

Even though there is now a pretty good idea of what happened that day, it's incredibly hard to prove it in court without the active cooperation of reliable witnesses. The Associated Press reports, "The prosecution was also hampered by squad mates who acknowledged they had lied to investigators initially and later testified in exchange for having their cases dropped, bringing into question their credibility." And the few Iraqi survivors declined to testify, fearing for their safety.

While Wuterich admits to telling his men to "shoot first and ask questions later," he claims "the intent wasn't that they would shoot civilians, it was that they would not hesitate in the face of the enemy."

Sergeant Sanick Dela Cruz testified that Wuterich shot people at close range and told him, "if anyone asks, the Iraqis were running away from the car and the Iraqi army shot them." Cruz himself admitted to taking part in the killings -- and urinated on the skull of one of the dead Iraqis -- but was given immunity in exchange for his testimony could surely have diminished his credibility.

Awis Fahmi Hussein, who survived the attacks, lamented, "I was expecting that the American judiciary would sentence this person to life in prison and that he would appear and confess in front of the whole world that he committed this crime, so that America could show itself as democratic and fair."

Unsatisfying as it seems, a democratic outcome is exactly what we got. In an authoritarian society -- probably even in today's post-Saddam Iraq -- governments will happily sentence citizens to jail to slake the public thirst for justice. In a liberal democracy, however, we put a very high burden on the state in taking away the liberty of a citizen accused of a crime"

(<http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/01/why-we-should-be-glad-the-haditha-massacre-marine-got-no-jail-time/251993/>).

The Results

My Lai and Haditha bear witness to the fact that even with highly trained military personnel, disastrous results given poor leadership or decision making processes can and will occur. Also observable is that the emotional response to the loss of fellow comrade(s) played an integral part in each event. In either event this physical loss, that being the deaths of unit members, played upon the emotions of those engaged. Those emotions overrode their ethical codes and training that each unit had received.

Most, if not all the emotions described in this section occurred during My Lai and Haditha. In sum, all elements came into play to create a perfect storm which resulted in the deaths of more than 525 civilians. An emotional breakdown in unit cohesion resulted in a breakdown of ethical training (warrior code) and finally in a moral breakdown with the wanton killing of innocent non-combatants.

Summation

The relevance of providing and reviewing the various definitions and examples dealing with ethics, morals and emotions in this section has a direct relationship to understanding moral injury. It is recognized that the topics described in this section are far more complex than what has been offered and in some cases require continued research. However, it is necessary to have an awareness and basic understanding of them to grasp how they affect PTSD and moral injury.

As reviewed in the Military Culture chapter, recruits are immersed into a new moral system. This immersion usually involves intensive socialization and indoctrination for the purpose of reorienting a recruit's moral emotions and judgments to the social context of their military branch. Training drills, rituals and ideologies (e.g. *semper fi*) form individual and collective military identities, which enhance both small and large group cohesion and ultimately survival in combat.

However, some personal moralities are based on religious beliefs and are considered to be a higher calling, and thus to take precedence, on occasion, over military directives. Whether actual or perceived, such moralities can also prohibit compartmentalization of one's interpersonal and vocational spheres. Instead integrity and authenticity are required in all rules in life, often requiring a religious presence and expression. Thus, in the event of a clash between a service member's personal morality and their understanding of responsibility under the code of ethics or directives, they cannot in good conscience simply jettison the personal ethic to support that of the military. Thus, through moral justification of actions, a service member's personal religious belief can be merged with military directives with the end result being a morally based service member.

Further, within a highly cohesive moral system of a combat unit, condemning moral emotions toward the enemy can increase the likelihood that the enemy combatants or civilians perceived as being associated with enemy combatants will be the target of abusive violence. Threats to or losses sustained within the fighting unit may prompt strong, often condemning moral emotions such as anger, disgust, or contempt that increase the probability of abusive violence. Despite the strong moral guidance provided by military Rules of Engagement or ethical training, it has been recognized that various influences or emotions can nevertheless contribute to moral disengagement where opposing forces are dehumanized and excluded from moral consideration. This was evident at My Lai and Haditha. Again, the need for a morally justified, well-disciplined and trained military is not only valued but required.

General Erwin Rommel once said, “the best form of ‘welfare’ for troops is first class training.” Given the current conflicts with which the military must encounter it can be added that the best form of ‘welfare’ for troops is first class ethical and moral training (<http://www.armystudyguide.com>).

By having an understanding of how emotions and moral values affect the individual service member, their unit, and family, then reaching an understanding of what can cause a moral injury will also be understood.

Moral Dilemmas

A **moral dilemma** is defined as a conflict in which you have to choose between two or more actions and have **moral** reasons for choosing each action.
(education-portal.com/.../moral-dilemma-definition-examples-quiz.html)

Individuals/groups are confronted with making decisions every day. How they make their decisions are based on life experiences, training, and the cultural environment in which they function. Their actions, as a result of their decision, are either acceptable or not, based on the results of those decisions, by the society, business or political structure in which they live.

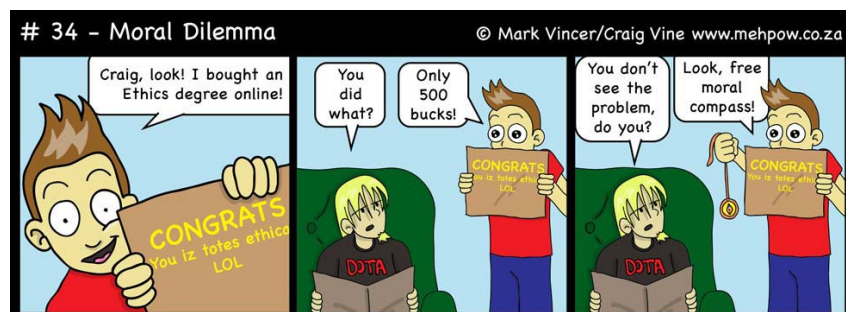
In professions such as the military or law enforcement, the moral dilemma to take a life can occur at any time. That decision, in some cases, must be made instantaneously. Through proper training those decisions, though perhaps in violation of a personal moral code, will be justified in the ethical code of the profession. The section of Military Culture reviewed how discipline and the establishment of a warrior code within the individual will assist in overcoming a moral dilemma.

Moral dilemmas can and do occur in other professions. A trauma nurse (or combat medic) in evaluating wounded in a triage setting must decide who receives immediate treatment and who does not. She/he must rely on their training and experience to make the immediate decision as to who will be the first to receive treatment.

Dilemma Situations

“[The following] moral dilemmas are thought experiments which ask you to imagine a difficult situation and decide what you think the morally correct course of action would be. There are no truly ‘right’ answers to these questions, as they often ask you to compare two different moral imperatives and choose which one you feel is most important.

For example, if one accepts that it is morally correct to never torture a living creature, and that it is morally correct to save a human’s life if you have the ability to do so, how do you decide what to do if you can only save a human’s life by torturing someone else?” (<http://psychopixi.com/misc/25-moral-dilemmas/>)

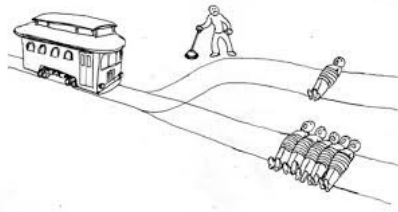


The Runaway Trolley

The classic example of a moral dilemma is the runaway trolley/train. A runaway trolley is heading down the tracks toward five people, tied to the tracks, who will be killed if the trolley proceeds on its present course. You are by the switch that can change the direction of the trolley. However, in re-directing the trolley it will go onto a track killing another person tied to that track.

If you do nothing the trolley will proceed, causing the death of five people. The only way to save their lives is to switch the trolley onto the other track, ensuring the death of the other individual.

Do you switch the trolley? What if the lone individual on the track is a loved one?



The Concentration Camp

You are a prisoner in a concentration camp. A sadistic guard is about to hang your son who tried to escape and wants you to pull the chair from underneath him. He says that if you don't he will not only kill your son but some other innocent prisoners as well. You don't have any doubt that he means what he says.

What should you do?

The Submarine Crew

You are on a nuclear powered missile carrying submarine traveling under a large iceberg. An onboard explosion has damaged the boat, killing and injuring several crewmembers.

Additionally, it has collapsed the only access corridor between the upper and lower parts of the boat. The upper section where you are and most of the others are located, does not have enough oxygen remaining for all to survive until the boat can surface. Only one remaining crewmember, your best friend who you have been with since you enlisted, is located in the lower section, where there is enough oxygen.

There is an emergency access hatch between the upper and lower sections of the boat. If released by an emergency switch, it will fall to the deck and allow oxygen to reach the area where you and the others are. However, the hatch will crush your friend below, since he was knocked unconscious and is lying beneath it. You and the rest of the crew are almost out of air though, and they and you will all die if you don't act.

Should/could you release the hatch and kill your best friend to save yourself and the other crew members?

The Terrorist Bomber

A terrorist who has threatened to explode several bombs in crowded areas has been apprehended. Unfortunately, he has already planted the bombs and they are scheduled to go off in a short time. It is possible that hundreds, perhaps thousands of people may die. The authorities cannot make him divulge the location of the bombs by conventional methods. He refuses to say anything and requests a lawyer to protect his Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination. In exasperation, some high-level official suggests torture. This would be illegal, but the official is sure that it will make him tell the truth in time for you to find and diffuse the bombs.

What should you do?

What if you know that the bomber can withstand torture himself, but would talk if you were to torture his innocent wife instead?

The Bali Drugs Charge

You are on holiday in Bali with your wife and 18-year-old son. You have been there for a week and are ready to head home. All three of you are at the airport getting ready to board your plane, when an armed officer comes around with a sniffer dog. You have all your bags on a cart, and a dog sniffs at both your wife's and your bag, and passes over them, however when he gets to your son's bag, he begins to get a bit more active.

You look over at your son and he's looking a little nervous. You know he smoked a little marijuana in his time, but generally, he's a good kid, and you certainly didn't think he'd actually be stupid enough to bring it back on the plane with him. At first you feel angry that he would do such a thing and start planning your responsibility lecture, but then you realize that you are in Bali, and they have a zero tolerance policy on drugs, meaning your son could be jailed for life, or worse, executed, if he does have some illicit materials in his bag.

You look at your wife and realize she has come to the same conclusion and has gone pale with fear.

The armed officer accompanying the dog is beginning to look sterner with every sniff the dog takes and looks directly at you and ask you to open the bag.

You do, and as the officer begins to take things out of the bag, you see to your horror that there's a small quantity of marijuana stashed in with your son's belongings.

The officer looks at you and asks, "Whose bag is this?"

You realize you have to answer, but the answer won't be easy. You see your wife in the corner of your eye, and she is about to step forward and claim it as her own.

What should you do?

In the dilemmas of the Trolley, Concentration Camp and Submarine Crew the action of a single individual will result in the saving of many lives by the killing of another. The Terrorist Bomber dilemma presents a conflict between deciding to maintain what might be ethically and morally correct or doing what is contrary but perhaps saving thousands of lives. The Bali Drugs Charges call upon the sacrificing of oneself for a loved one...albeit of one who has broken a law.

In reviewing these dilemmas one could think of alternative “what if’s” or try and create different options in resolving the dilemma, but in reality, the time factor in the decision making process may or will not allow for such a luxury.

Moral Dilemmas in the Military

In the course of a battle, firefights or an encounter with a single terrorist suspect, those in the military are faced with constant and ever changing moral dilemmas.

- Does a medic treat his/her buddy who may not survive or forgo treatment of others who will live with his/her immediate medical care?
- Does a drone crew launch a missile knowing full well that there will be non-combatant deaths?
- Does an artillery battery fire into an urban center to protect a single squad that might be overrun knowing that perhaps many innocent civilians will die in the barrage?
- Does a lone sentry fire on a woman or child who does not stop approaching him/her when commanded to do so?

These are but a sampling of what an 18-24 year old service member will encounter and then have to decide what action they should take. They must, as the adage goes, choose between the lesser of the two evils. Decision making, however, does not often occur in a vacuum. The decision making process has been codified in training manuals, Rules of Engagement, and directives from all levels of both military and political leadership.

From a historical perspective it would not have been uncommon for a Marine fighting in the Pacific during WW2 to have heard his squad leader and perhaps higher ranking officers state in all certainty, “That the only good Jap was a dead Jap!” That singular phrase gave the moral authority to not take prisoners or to kill as many of the enemy as possible. Today, in the current asymmetrical war being fought, this modus operandi would never be condoned nor tolerated.

Yet, breakdowns such as Haditha have occurred.

The evolution of training of higher ranking non-commissioned officers and officers has resulted in lengthy discourse on the morals and ethics of battlefield conduct. This need to address moral dilemmas was addressed by Jonathan Shay in his statement to the Ft. Leavenworth Ethics Symposium conducted in November 2010 when he said:

“...the veterans’ message [to current military leaders] that three things keep you sane in the insanity of war: Cohesion, Leadership, and Training to protect those we send into harm’s way for our sake.”

Summation

Moral dilemmas are encountered virtually every day in all walks of life and professions.

Some may be no more threatening than whether to go to work or to call in sick and go to the home opener of your favorite baseball team. However, even in that simple moral dilemma the end result can generate adverse results. Perhaps by “skipping work that day” a decision that required your input was not made and your company lost a large contract? That lost contract meant that employees had to be laid off or fired. Was the game worth it? How much shame or guilt was created as a result of that decision? Now imagine if that decision resulted in someone committing suicide because they lost their job?

In the military, the results can be far more serious as a decision made can result in someone living or dying. Decisions are often made in a matter of seconds in the heat of an operation or receiving incoming fire. Though it may violate one’s personal code, through realistic scenario training and discipline, the decision made will hopefully be the correct one. No matter what the outcome, however, there is the risk that PTSD or moral injury can develop. This risk can be reduced through moral and ethics training.

Reflect again on this shortened version of the previously presented during IDF training. You have 8 seconds to make your decision.

Blown Raid Scenario

You are serving within a commando unit in the West Bank, south of Hebron. Today's mission calls for your unit to infiltrate a small village where a suspected terrorist who is known to have created explosives for suicide bombings lives. The intelligence services have done extensive research on this particular terrorist and have concluded that his arrest is critical for preserving the safety and security of Israeli citizens.

Before sunrise, your unit begins heading by foot to this hilltop village. On your trek up to the top of the hill, you notice a shepherd from the village grazing in the field with his flock of sheep.

You notify your commander that the shepherd has seen you approaching the village and may alert the residents. You ask if you should continue the mission and he replies that as the commander in the field it is “your call.”

If the shepherd does indeed warn the village, your mission is compromised and continuing would likely lead you into an ambush. On the other hand, capturing this terrorist is of vital importance and if he does know that the army has found him he will likely flee to a different place.

What do you do? Your time is up!

Kill the shepherd. It is the only way your mission will succeed and your unit be kept safe.

Ignore the shepherd. You are convinced that he won't warn the village and compromise the mission.

Capture the shepherd and bring him with you on the mission. You can use him to quickly locate the terrorist.

Abort the mission. Just the prospect of walking into a trap and possibly losing soldiers is not worth the risk.

Physical and Moral Distress

dis·tress (dĭ-strēs')n.

1. Mental or physical suffering or anguish.
 2. Severe strain resulting from exhaustion or trauma.
- (The American Heritage® Medical Dictionary Copyright © 2007, 2004 by Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.)

The above definition sets the basis for an understanding of the differences between Physical and Moral Distress and how, when combined, can result in unwanted actions.

Physical Stress (Fatigue)

Fatigue is physical and/or mental exhaustion that can be triggered by stress, medication, overwork, or mental and physical illness or disease.

Everyone experiences fatigue occasionally. It is the body's way of signaling its need for rest and sleep. But when fatigue becomes a persistent feeling of tiredness or exhaustion that goes beyond normal sleepiness, it is usually a sign that something more serious is amiss.

Physically, fatigue is characterized by a profound lack of energy, feelings of muscle weakness, and slowed movements or central nervous system reactions. Fatigue can also trigger serious mental exhaustion. Persistent fatigue can cause a lack of mental clarity (or feeling of mental "fuzziness"), difficulty concentrating, and in some cases, memory loss (<http://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/fatigue>).

Stress (physical and mental) results from stimuli such as overwork, anxiety, fear, worry, illness, injury or trauma. It also follows major life events such as job or marital changes, financial difficulties, the death of a family member and so on. Even positive events like an awards presentation or a wedding act as powerful stressors, since something is usually given up in return for getting something better.

In addition to dealing with stressful situations outside the job, you face a high-pressure environment every day. As you work long hours, juggle various tasks and deal with multiple personal interactions and other issues, you may feel that it's impossible to take time to rest, exercise, sleep or eat properly. The demands of your job cause stress; ignoring your body's basic needs adds to it. If this continues without relief, you experience fatigue, exhaustion, depression, burnout, illness, pain, and suppression and degeneration of the immune system. You may also exhibit irritability and disruptive behavior, which interferes with your team's effectiveness and can create disciplinary problems for you.

When the mind perceives a stressful event, the body automatically begins the biological "fight or flight" stress response: releasing adrenaline, tensing muscles, boosting heart rate, constricting blood vessels, slowing the digestive system, causing "tunnel vision" and so on.

Without proper rest, exercise and nutrition to counteract these effects, the body continues producing the stress response until it is fatigued or exhausted.

When you are fatigued, you have a limited attention span and little energy to function effectively. Some common effects of fatigue include physical weakness, mental sluggishness, forgetfulness, restlessness, euphoria, slow reflexes and reaction time, and microsleeping (“nodding off” for a few seconds at a time). Fatigue severely undermines your performance.

(<http://www.saferhealthcare.com/high-reliability-topics/stress-and-fatigue/>)

Moral Distress

Moral distress occurs in all professions and in all walks of life.

As discussed, **ethics** and **morals** both relate to “right” and “wrong” conduct. However, **ethics** refer to the series of rules provided to an individual by an external source, e.g. their profession or religion. **Morals** refer to an individual’s own principles regarding right and wrong.

Moral distress occurs when one knows the ethically or professional prescribed action to take but in doing so violates their moral code. While this term has not been applied as yet to those with military service it has been studied and applied to those in the field of nursing though it is important to understand that moral distress is not solely a nursing problem.

Nurses are often confronted with the dilemma of determining and then doing what is right either from an ethical or a moral perspective. Fortunately they have training and guidance from their supervisors and administrators as to what course of action is open to them. In the case of a nurse, they will usually have the time to make a conscious decision as to what course of action they will take. In the case of a warrior there may not be that “luxury of time”.

In a combat situation there may not be the time to “think about” the action one is about to partake. A study of soldiers during the early period of the Iraq war showed that they soon began to question the process of “kicking in a door” to a home and only finding a family. These “minor moral wounds or distresses” soon got to a point where some could no longer justify the policy of their commanders. Eventually, the policy was changed.

A very close clinical relationship to moral distress is Post Traumatic Stress (PTS) where there is an incident or conflict that is experienced and not permanently inhibiting. However, if there are enough distresses that go unresolved the consequence can result in moral injury.

Moral distress is like Pandora’s Box, full of many demons or incidents that remain captured and unreleased...until a traumatic event occurs!

One professional example of ethics conflicting with morals is the work of a defense attorney. A lawyer’s moral code may be that murder is reprehensible and that murderers should be punished, but their ethical code as a professional lawyer, require defending the client to the best of their abilities, even if knowing that the client is guilty.

The lawyer or service member, confronted with moral distresses, must find resolution to their conflicts or ultimately their moral distresses will be elevated to a moral injury.

Combat Stress

Combat stress (sometimes called combat and operational stress or combat and operational stress reaction) is a common response to the mental and emotional effort service members experience when facing tough and dangerous situations. Simply put, combat stress is similar to the muscle fatigue some have experienced after a tough physical workout. The way your brain handles combat stress can be compared to the way your body may handle a physical workout; it all depends on your level of fitness/training.

Combat stress is not an illness and may be experienced by any service member during both peace and war, due to stressful situations during training, humanitarian missions, government support missions and other assignments. (www.realwarriors.net/go/239)

Recognizing Combat Stress

Signs and symptoms of combat stress are sometimes difficult to detect. Combat stress can cause problems with the way a service member thinks and responds to their emotions. A service member may experience changes in his or her behavior, and sometimes the symptoms may manifest themselves in visible form. Individuals respond differently to combat stress and display different symptoms. Some common symptoms of combat stress are discussed below:

In trying to think out what is a proper decision the service member may have problems concentrating, he or she may experience confusion in processing information. They may also experience short-term memory loss. As exhibited in other non-military professions, physical symptoms of combat stress include problems sleeping, exhaustion, problems with eating or digestion, headaches, blurry vision and more. (www.va.gov)

Symptoms may be noticeable immediately following a stressful event, but could take several days, months, or even years to manifest themselves. Oftentimes, service members (or their family members) first notice symptoms soon after returning home. Symptoms that continue for weeks or months become increasingly worse or could include violent and self-destructive behavior which calls for immediate medical evaluation and assistance. (afterdeployment.dcoe.mil)

Note: the US Department of Defense offers a number of confidential tools and programs for service members and their families to identify symptoms that may result from combat stress. Having or experiencing problems after return from a deployment is common. Unfortunately, less than half of the service members having difficulty after deployment seek services.

For members of the National Guard and Reserve the symptoms of combat stress may be more difficult to recognize. This is because they do not have a military post or base to which they are assigned after deployment. Upon return, they simply arrive at their armory and return home the same day.

Summation

It may be assumed that given the training and guidelines which many professions provide that their employees will be able to make the “right decision all the time”. However, when an individual is physically and/or morally distressed the decisions they make will not always be correct.

When someone experiences fatigue, they can’t concentrate, causing them to easily lose situational awareness (the constant state of knowing what’s going on in your immediate environment), why it is happening and what is likely to happen next. In the case of a service member, the failure to maintain situational awareness can result in injury or loss of life to those in the unit or to non-combatants. Also, fatigue causes more stress resulting in lack of attention to details, poor decision-making and unintentional errors.

- Everyone knows that they should not drive a vehicle when tired but that inner self may say, “Skip this rest stop and go to the next one. It’s only 45 miles away.” In that 45 miles you may nod off for just a second, but in doing so cause an accident that may kill or injure others.
- A nurse may know he/she needs rest but will take an extra shift for a friend. As a result of his/her fatigue a patient may not get their proper dosage of medicine. If working in an operating room a more serious mistake could occur.
- Imagine the combat readiness of a service member, who has been trekking through the mountains of Afghanistan for 8 hours with a 65 pound pack on his back, and must now set up a Forward Observation post to be immediately prepared to call in air strikes close to a friendly village.

Fatigue, when combined with moral distress (uncertainty), is a deadly mix. It has been described in the Military Culture section how the warrior code is engrained in every service member. In a combat, life or death situation, multiple choice answers are not always available...either a target needs to be engaged or not...there are no what if’s.

When the service member, in a combat situation, is physically and mentally prepared, answers can be arrived at in a logical sequence with a resulting proper decision. When, however, the service member is tired and mentally stressed from events of that or another day, their decision making process can result in serious errors and perhaps unwanted consequences.

Additionally, the collective attitudes of those who fight are often affected by unit fatigue and mental distress as was evidenced in My Lai and Haditha. A common attitude among many who served in Vietnam was “kill ‘em all and let God sort ‘em out.” This reflected as much the weariness of those who were in Vietnam as to the breakdown of their moral values towards the Vietnamese.

Physical and moral stresses are precursors to PTSD and moral injury. They can be addressed before reaching the stage of PTSD and moral injury by providing recuperation time, rest and moral support. Unfortunately, these are not often, given the needs of a military operation, afforded to those in a combat situation.

Moral Injury

In the past few years different definitions of moral injury have evolved. As defined by Dr. Jonathan Shay in his address to the Ft. Leavenworth Ethics Symposium (Nov. 2010) he described it as:

“...the sum total of the psychological, social, and physiological consequences that a person undergoes, **when all three** of the following are present:

1. Betrayal of what's right (the code of what is praiseworthy and blameworthy, part of the culture)
2. By someone who holds legitimate authority (legitimacy and authority are phenomena of the social system)
3. In a high stakes situation (what's at stake clearly has links to the culture and social system, but must be in the mind of the person suffering the injury). The stakes never get higher than in war, whether one's own death or maiming, or often even more important, the death or maiming of beloved comrades.”

He also provided another meaning/definition:

“The other meaning/definition is advanced by retired Navy Capt. Psychiatrist Bill Nash, Dr(s). Shira Maguen and Brett Litz of the National Center for PTSD. They describe moral injury as the consequence of having to do [or done] something that violates one's deepest ethical [moral] commitments.”

A service member may encounter complex ethical or moral changes during deployments, special missions, or in the course of their duty. They may be required to act in ways that go against their moral beliefs or witness behaviors by others that make them feel uncomfortable.

Those in the military profession have one main duty, that being to defend their nation against all foreign and domestic enemies. Wars that the United States have engaged in have typically been fought following a historical path of theories and documents starting with the Just War Doctrine.

It is from these theories and documents that the moral basis for going to and conducting a war are explained and justified. They create the moral basis for a nation to enter, and for its citizenry to support and fight, a war.

Note: The following discussion of Just War Doctrine is limited in scope and by no means should be considered all encompassing. It remains a topic studied in academia and military circles.

Military Outreach USA considers it to be one of the earliest doctrines on the conduct and justification of war which are still accepted today.

Just War Doctrine and the Codification of Rules of War

In the fifth century, St. Augustine helped articulate a theory that granted more legitimacy to warfare and became the foundation for modern military philosophy. The Just War Doctrine, expanded and refined by subsequent scholars including St. Thomas Aquinas, acknowledge that resorting to war may sometimes be necessary to obtain justice and to protect peace. Inherent in this theory are criteria and conditions regarding the legitimate use of force. These conditions include the exercise of discrimination and proportionality, and the prohibition against targeting noncombatants.

All citizens and all governments are obliged to work for the avoidance of war. Despite this admonition of the Church, it sometimes becomes necessary to use force to obtain the end of justice. This is the right, and the duty, of those who have responsibilities for others, such as civil leaders and police forces. While individuals may renounce all violence those who must preserve justice may not do so, though it should be the last resort, "once all peace efforts have failed."

As with all moral acts the use of force to obtain justice must comply with three conditions to be morally good. First, the act must be good in itself. The use of force to obtain justice is morally licit in itself. Second, it must be done with a good intention, which as noted earlier must be to correct vice, to restore justice or to restrain evil, and not to inflict evil for its own sake. Thirdly, it must be appropriate in the circumstances. An act which may otherwise be good and well-motivated can be sinful by reason of imprudent judgment and execution.

In this regard Just War Doctrine gives certain conditions for the legitimate exercise of force, all of which must be met:

1. the damage inflicted by the aggressor on the nation or community of nations must be lasting, grave, and certain;
2. all other means of putting an end to it must have been shown to be impractical or ineffective;
3. there must be serious prospects of success;
4. the use of arms must not produce evils and disorders graver than the evil to be eliminated. The power of modern means of destruction weighs very heavily in evaluating this condition

The responsibility for determining whether these conditions are met belongs to "the prudential judgment of those who have responsibility for the common good." The Church's role consists in enunciating clearly the principles, in forming the consciences of men and in insisting on the moral exercise of just war.

The [Roman Catholic] Church greatly respects those who have dedicated their lives to the defense of their nation. If they carry out their duty honorably, they truly contribute to the common good of the nation and the maintenance of peace. However, the Church cautions combatants that not everything is licit in war.

Actions which are forbidden, and which constitute morally unlawful orders that may not be followed, include:

- Attacks against, and mistreatment of, non-combatants, wounded soldiers, and prisoners;
 - Genocide, whether of a people, nation or ethnic minorities;
 - Indiscriminate destruction of whole cities or vast areas with their inhabitants.
- ("Just War Doctrine" Catholic Answers)

The Treaty of Westphalia (1648) established a modern framework for warfare. Perhaps the most important developments that came from this period, as it relates current issues, with the evolution of war being brought into a public, state-sponsored enterprise. Uniforms became standardized and soldiers became increasingly professionally trained. The transition of war into a public enterprise increased transparency regarding norms and expectations of behavior and conduct.

The codification of war and how it is conducted progressed through the centuries.

In 1863, Francis Lieber drafted the Instructions for the Government of Armies of the United States in the Field, subsequently known as a Lieber Code. According to Article 22 of the Lieber code:

Public war is a state of armed hostility between sovereign nations or governments. It is a law and requisite of civilized existence that men live in political, continuous societies, forming organized units, called states or nations, whose constituent share, enjoy, and suffer, to dance in retrograde together, in peace and in war. What came from this period, as relates to current issues, was the evolution of war into a public, state-sponsored enterprise. Uniforms became standardized and soldiers became increasingly professionally trained. The transition of war into a public enterprise increased transparency regarding norms and expectations of behavior and conduct. (The Lieber Code of 1863, <http://civalwarhome.com/liebercode.htm>)

In 1868 the St. Petersburg Declaration stated that only legitimate objective states should endeavor to accomplish during war is to weaken the military force of the enemy. (http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/decpeter.asp)

The Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907 established important restrictions regarding battlefield conduct which are still in effect today. Key among them is that a combatant must meet four conditions:

- a) operate under the command of a superior officer
- b) wear a fixed, distinctive emblem that is recognizable at a distance
- c) carry arms openly
- d) behave in accordance with the laws and customs of war

The Hague rules also prohibit attacking undefended towns, villages, habitations or buildings, and also prohibit killing or wounding individuals not belonging to the hostile nation army. (The Hague Convention Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land)

The Geneva Conventions were drafted in the aftermath of World War II. The conventions directly address the protection of the civilian population by clearly defining rights and obligations of both combatants and civilians.

According to Article 43 of the first protocol addition to the Geneva conventions, members of the Armed Forces of the party to a conflict are combatants, suggesting they have the right to participate directly in hostilities. (<https://www.icrc.org/ihl/INTRO/470>)

In 1978, Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions introduced the concept of direct participation – a new class of combatants. “The additional protocol asserts, civilians shall enjoy the protection afforded by this portion of the protocol, a lesson for such times as they take direct part in hostilities.

Civilians who take direct part in hostilities are not lawful belligerents under the Geneva conventions, nor are they afforded the protections laid out in the various international treaties governing conflict(s)”. (http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/other_treaties/text.jsp?file_id=197647)

Article 2(34) of the U.N. Charter states, all members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations. Nevertheless, Article 51 states:

“Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a member of the United Nations...”

Given acceptance of the Just War Doctrine and subsequent treaties, conventions, and the UN Charter, military leaders (under political leadership) have established the moral authority, indeed the obligation, to defend their nation and by going to war if necessary.

This same moral authority is used to establish a leadership structure within the military and is an integral contributor to the warrior code. Without this moral authority, wars cannot be entered into with the full support of the citizenry or those who must fight it.

Terrorism, guerilla warfare, collateral damage, wars without borders or defined battle lines, electronic and remote killing all may challenge the moral or ethical codes that have been reviewed. As such, the code of the warrior becomes more and more difficult to understand and follow.

The change from a conventional to asymmetrical warfare model has modified or eliminated many of the “rules for conduct” described by past conventions. The element of moral responsibility has remained.

Moral Injury in the Act of War

In asymmetrical warfare:

- The civilian population shall not be the target of attacks.
- Civilians shall enjoy protections unless they take part in attacks.
- Indiscriminate attacks on the civilian population are prohibited.
- Attacks shall be limited to military targets.
- Cultural objects shall be protected.
- Objects indispensable to a population's survival shall be protected.
- The natural environment shall be protected. According to the fourth Hague convention, the right to use weapons is not unlimited – weapons that cause unnecessary suffering are prohibited.
(https://www.ausa.org/SiteCollectionDocuments/ILW%20Web-ExclusivePubs/Land%20Warfare%20Papers/LWP_58.pdf)

On paper, these are all admirable, moral and/or ethical goals that form an excellent basis from which to establish rules of engagement. However, in actuality, it is increasingly difficult for a commander or individual service member to adhere to or implement these rules given the nature of an enemy who in one moment is engaged in combat and the next part of the non-combatant civilian population. Organized military forces are no longer engaging large land forces but rather fight in urban areas where it is difficult if not impossible to discern who is a combatant and who is not.

It is this difficulty, coupled with all the other effects that one would realize in a conventional warfare (such as artillery barrages, mortar attacks, air strikes, hand to hand combat, etc.) setting which makes the risk of moral injury greater than perhaps in any other conflict in our history. The service member must function, and make decisions based on strong moral and ethical training even when fighting in an area without a defined line or identifiable enemy. Couple with this the fatigue and emotional stressors previously addressed in other sections and the opportunity is ripe for an incident, justifiable or not, to plant the seed of moral injury.

Murder and killing, and there is a difference between them, is defined by the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) and by the Rules of Engagement (ROE). As discussed in the section on Emotions, Morals, Ethics, My Lai or Haditha can only be described as murder...no matter the judicial rulings. However, if those same units that committed the murders were involved in a firefight in another village where the enemy had a position, and women and children died as a result of battle, those deaths would be termed collateral damage. While in both engagements lives were taken, one action is acceptable by society and the military while the other is offensive and a violation of the law. Whether a killing is justified or not the risk of suffering from a moral injury has been created.

Further, those that witness death or handle body parts or operate triage centers can also suffer from moral injury. The likelihood that a service member will witness non-combatant deaths or injuries is far greater in asymmetrical warfare than in conventional warfare, if for no other reason than in the latter non-combatants historically leave the area before major battles are fought. Such is not the case in urban areas. In referencing the section on Drones, the evidence substantiates that PTSD and moral injury can be a result occurring from those operations.

Even in the case of the service member who was justified in killing a combatant, the perception of having committed an unjustifiable killing can occur if it violates a deeply held personal moral code. Sometimes the moral injury will manifest itself many years after the event. Thus, even the perception of having committed a moral code violation can cause a moral injury to that person.

The direct act of killing is not the only cause of moral injury. As an example, flyers who conducted bombing missions during WW2 and did not see the destruction their missions resulted in have had little problems in adjusting to civilian life. Those pilots that then visited areas they bombed reflected on the killing of innocent noncombatants. It can be hypothesized that those airmen who loaded bombs on B-52's during the Vietnam War may, many years later, reflect on the death and destruction to noncombatants as a result of their actions; no matter how far removed they may have been from the actual event.

For many Vietnam veterans the sense of betrayal as explained by Shay, [the] betrayal of what's right by someone who holds legitimate authority in a high stakes situation, helps to explain why so many veterans of that War came home disillusioned. They not only felt betrayed by their political leaders they, in some cases, felt betrayed by their military leaders. With that sense of betrayal their moral authority disappeared.

Conscience or Moral Code

"Always let your conscience be your guide" (Jiminy Cricket, from the movie Pinocchio, 1940).

Conscience may be defined as nothing more or less than the human mind itself uttering its judgments upon matters that pertain not to speculation but to action and more particularly to action that is imminent action to be performed here and now and not at some future time.

Rev. James Gillis stated, "But let no one think that since a man is justified if he acts in accordance with conscience, he is therefore excused from the duty of enlightening his conscience." (web: "The Argument for Conscience.")

Cardinal Newman cited authorities in Catholic moral theology that "conscience must always be obeyed whether it is a true conscience or an erroneous conscience and whether the error is the fault of the person thus erring or not." "If," they add, "a man is to blame for being in error, which he might have escaped had he been more in earnest, for that error he is answerable to God, but still he must act according to that error while he is in it, if in full sincerity he thinks the error to be truth." In other words, a bad action becomes good in the mind of the person, and a good action with a bad conscience becomes bad. (web:newmanreader.org (246))

For example we read that Robin Hood stole from the rich to give to the poor. He counted that a virtue. It was therefore no sin to him. A head hunter in the wilds of Borneo, who is raised on his tribe's mores and culture, considers it no crime to creep through the jungle, catch a man from a neighboring tribe unawares, lop off his head and carry it home as a trophy. He knows no better. In his mind he commits no sin.

An ancient Spartan or a Roman philosopher, who, tired of life, deliberately fell upon his sword, or the modern Japanese who commits hara-kiri, is not guilty of sin if, forming his conscience on the moral code of his country or on his religion, he thinks his action virtuous.

If Oliver Cromwell, the English politician of the 17th century, was such a fanatic as to imagine God had chosen him to obliterate the Irish off the face of the earth, the butcheries he committed in Ireland were not considered by him to be murder.

And finally, if Pontius Pilate, in condemning Jesus Christ to death was conscious of no wrong, he felt no commission of a crime. Christ Himself alludes to the absence of guilt when he states in John (16:2) "...in fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God."

"Deep within his conscience man discovers a law which he has not laid upon himself but which he must obey. Its voice, ever calling him to love and to do what is good and to avoid evil, sounds in his heart at the right moment. . . . For man has in his heart a law inscribed by God. . . . His conscience is man's most secret core and his sanctuary. There he is alone with God whose voice echoes in his depths."

(vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p3s1c1a6.htm)

In any discussion of moral injury the relevance of conscience must be considered. Conscience can be overridden or suppressed by circumstance or emotional condition. While one knows it is wrong to steal, stealing can be justified if it is to feed one's starving family. In the case of a military service member the "rush of battle" may cause conscience to be "blanked out" as the fight continues. It may be only after the battle is over that one's conscience will play on the mind and begin to cause guilt or shame. This can be the beginning of a moral injury.

By accepting that conscience is in fact based on one's moral code we can now begin to see how it interacts and can perhaps conflict with the Code of the Warrior.

Summation

The decisions a service member makes in the course of performing their duty is based on the ethical and moral training that they received from the time they entered recruit training until the time they leave military service.

In prior sections dealing with Military Culture, Emotions, Morals and Ethics, it has been reviewed how a service member is ingrained with the warrior code. How this warrior code provides them with the moral justification to perform whatever mission they are assigned.

This section on Moral Injury has provided a brief synopsis of the moral justification beginning with the Just War Doctrine to the UN Charter. Key among those theories and documents is that for a nation to go to war it must display moral justification and in describing that moral justification receive the support of its citizenry. WW2 represents one of the best examples of a morally justified war while Vietnam, by some standards, epitomizes the opposite (though perhaps not at the beginning). Vietnam provides vivid evidence of what can occur when there is a real or perceived breakdown in moral authority. Decades after that war, veterans still suffer from the effects of moral injury.

In today's asymmetrical warfare, where the combatants are many times an undefinable enemy (not dissimilar to Vietnam), the importance of moral and ethical training becomes more evident. That training, as shown in the section on the IDF, that can greatly reduce or remove the threat of a moral injury occurring.

It is when the service member, either immediately or even months or years after the event, perceives that action to be a violation of their personal moral code that moral injury may entail.

While in some, moral injury is associated with PTSD or another psychological disorder, it is more a violation of the spirit and a wound to one's conscience and a disrupter of one's moral compass. It is an injury that cannot be dealt with by receiving a prescription or medical counseling.

The next section, Approaches to Resolution, deals with methods that can be used in dealing with moral injury.

Approaches to Resolution

In his book, *The Moral Treatment of Returning Warriors in Early Medieval and Modern Times*, Professor Bernard J. Verkamp confronts the reader with the contrast between societal responses to returning warriors in Early Medieval and Modern Times.

The following quotes present the backdrop for this study devoted exclusively to a systematic analysis of how soldiers returning from battle have been, or should be, treated morally.

“... the Christian community of the first millennium generally assumed that warriors returning from battle would or should be feeling guilty or ashamed for all the wartime killing they had done.” The community “encouraged [warriors] to seek resolution [of said feelings] through rituals of purification, expiation, and reconciliation.”

“... the moral needs of soldiers returning from Vietnam, for example, were often overlooked by American society.”

What has been shown from the Vietnam experience was those who suffer from moral injury need a support system providing them forgiveness and the opportunity to rebuild their self-esteem, sense of worth and purpose. Further, providing service to others is a key component of the healing process of moral injury. These two elements in approaching moral injury are critical to successful reintegration of the veteran back into their community. There is only one institution that can provide:

- Forgiveness and support
- Service opportunities

and that is a house of worship.

Behavioral Health Interventions

Because there is sufficient evidence that morally injurious events produce adverse outcomes, developing treatments that target moral injury is an important next step. Research investigating a new intervention for military personnel and Veterans that targets moral injury, life-threat trauma, and traumatic loss is underway (Gray et al., in press; Steenkamp et al., 2011). The treatment, Adaptive Disclosure, consists of eight 90-minute sessions, each of which includes imaginal exposure to a core haunting combat experience and uncovering beliefs and meanings in this emotionally evocative context. In cases where traumatic loss or moral injury are present, patients also engage in experiential exercises that entail either a charged imaginal conversation with the deceased or a compassionate and forgiving moral authority in the context of moral injury.

In an open trial, Adaptive Disclosure resulted in reductions in PTSD symptoms, depression symptoms, and negative posttraumatic appraisals, and increased post-traumatic growth (Gray et al., in press).

During the 5th Session in Adaptive Disclosure

“In service of promoting new growth-promoting and hope-inducing learning, our treatment model employs a modification of an empty-chair dialogue in imagination with a caring and benevolent moral authority. The goal is to have patients verbalize what they did or saw, how it has affected them, and what they think should happen to them (or others) over their life course as a result, to someone who does not want them to suffer excessively and who feels that forgiveness and reparation is possible.

Patients are guided through an imaginary conversation with another person who they have great respect for and who can weigh in as a relevant and generous moral authority. The requirement is that the service member or veteran thinks of someone who has always had his or her back and who has been and will be in his or her corner no matter what. If the patient cannot think of someone, he or she is asked to dialogue with a service member or veteran who he or she cares about. In this context, the patient is asked to provide guidance and recommendations for moving forward to someone who is convinced that he or she is irredeemable and deserves to suffer.

In the first phase, the goal is to get the patients to disclose the transgression, articulate their attributions and how they have been feeling about themselves since the experience, and what they think should happen to them in their life course as a result (their plans and goals in light of their moral injury). To enhance engagement and the intensity of the exchange, patients are also encouraged to share their remorse and sorrow and what they would like to do to make amends if they could.

After the patient sits with the emotions arising from this exercise, the therapist asks him or her to verbalize what the moral authority figure would say to him/her after hearing all of this. If necessary, the therapist is instructed to introduce content that is forgiveness-related, tailored to the specifics of the case. At the end, the therapist elicits feedback about the experience, by asking questions such as “What was that like for you?” and “What are you going to take from this?” This process may need to be repeated during multiple sessions.”” (Source: Litz et al 2009)

Military Outreach USA makes no determination as to the validity of Adaptive Disclosure as a method of treating PTSD or for any other related disorder. We do question, as stated in Session 5, the empty chair and patient concept where one has a “...imaginary conversation with another person who they have great respect for and who can weigh in as a relevant and generous moral authority.”

As Paul Fritts concludes in his paper related to Adaptive Disclosure, "...a therapist is usually not also a priest, and a chaplain is usually not also a behavioral scientist. For the sake of healing morally injured Soldiers, science and faith need each other. Thus, [he] argues by modifying the Adaptive Disclosure therapeutic frame to include a chaplain equipped to exploit the healing power of ritual, pastoral care language, and the community of the face, sustained recovery from moral injury in combat veterans is more likely because therapist and chaplain collaborate more effectively for the purpose of healing than either can accomplish alone." (30)

It is also critical in this treatment process that the individual have a social support system outside of the VA Health Care system.

Forgiveness

All major religions have forms of confession. "Confession" is an acknowledgement of wrongdoing and seeking of forgiveness. In Judaism, for example, it's called Teshuva or "repentance", apology, return, going back to who you are meant to be. Teshuva is the gesture of returning to God, of letting go of your arrogance, your waywardness, your sinfulness and going back to your ultimate Source. It represents the possibility that even the most degenerate sinner can be reunited with God. Teshuva is the dominant theme during the ten days between Rosh Hashanah (the Jewish New Year, a day of awakening) and Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement and asking forgiveness).

In Islam, there must be an acknowledgement of wrongdoing, a spirit of repentance, and the person must ask God for forgiveness and trust that it is given. Repentance for sin is part of what Muslims are expressing during their month-long fast of Ramadan. (Web)

In Catholicism there is the sacrament or Penance/Reconciliation when sins are confessed and forgiven. Throughout Christianity, forgiveness of sins is evident in virtually every denomination.

In reviewing moral injury, it is imperative that forgiveness be one of, if not the primary element when considering any healing approach. Forgiveness is the first step to healing.

In Catholicism, for instance, a priest will forgive a sin and then provide a penance, usually prayer. There may be times when a physical penance may be given, such as restoration of stolen goods or repair of damage to property. (<http://www.catholic.org/prayers/confession.php>)

As in Catholicism and other religions, there is a forgiveness given (whether by self in prayer to God or by a priest or pastor) that lifts the burden of sin from the confessor.

If "moral injury" is a "sin" (transgression against the word of God) then the first step of healing has been completed...forgiveness.

Reconciliation

With the knowledge that the guilt of sin/moral injury has been forgiven, the need to overcome shame must occur to further the healing process. As discussed in the chapter on Emotions, Morals and Ethics, whereas guilt focuses outwardly on a specific behavior, shame involves a negative evaluation of the core self that is accompanied by feelings of worthlessness, powerlessness, and feeling vulnerable and exposed. The cure for shame is a restoration of self-worth and honor, elements found in the Code of the Warrior. This reconciliation can be accomplished through service projects.

Service Projects

Service projects recreate within the veteran or service member a sense of purpose. They restore a sense of pride in accomplishment and serving the overall community. Service projects help to re-establish a social network and community for those recovering from the wound of moral injury. They help re-install the social and task cohesions that were experienced in the military, when the unit becomes one's family.

Every house of worship in the nation has a ministry in which one who seeks reconciliation through service can be a part of. Following are just a few examples of ministries in which a veteran would be well suited to serve:

Prison ministry: Outreach to the incarcerated and their family members. Many veterans are incarcerated and need contact with fellow veterans.

Caring ministry: Often called peer-to-peer support, a caring ministry can be invaluable in helping veterans reach others who are victims of the invisible wounds of war.

Military ministry: Outreach to those who serve in the armed forces and their family members. Veterans seek to serve fellow veterans and are excellent in peer-to-peer support groups.

Disability ministry: While all houses of worship are called to minister to those in physical need, serving those affected by disability provides life-changing help to those often neglected by others. Having many fellow service members' disabled gives a veteran a unique perspective in working with the disabled.

Youth and young adult ministries: Teenagers and college-age students represent a strategic ministry opportunity and in turn can serve as ministers and missionaries to others. Youth need moral role models. Veterans can provide a moral figure to emulate.

Senior adult ministries: All houses of worship are called to care for their older members, yet there are many components of this ministry that can be developed. In-home visitation, hospital visitation, holiday outreach activities, and much more can benefit those who often feel isolated or alone.

Arts-related ministries: Many artists involved in music, painting, dance, etc., feel a special connection with other artists that is often not found within the local church. Many will work with veterans in providing help to overcome the invisible wounds of war.

Workplace outreach: Since most adults spend the majority of their weekday hours at work, outreach in the marketplace offers connections to people the church might otherwise miss.

Food Pantries: Many houses of worship participate in providing basic essential food items for the poor, either through in-house food pantries or in conjunction with established operations either through their denomination or community organizations.

Homeless Outreach: Homeless shelter programs provide hospitality, food, and overnight emergency shelter to the homeless with many of these men and women being former service members.

Hospice and Palliative Care: Veterans in the final stages of life often welcome opportunities to share their military stories and experiences that have been suppressed for decades. Veterans will open up to other veterans because they feel that the listener will truly understand. This is a healing opportunity, not only for the patient, but for the patient volunteer.

No matter the service project or ministry it must be sustainable and continuing. Through participation in and the rejoining of community the victim of moral injury can overcome their invisible wound of war and rejoin society healed, forgiven and ready to serve.

Support Services

The house of worship or ministry does not have to work alone. By utilizing the resources of the Veterans Administration, Veteran Service Organizations and state or county agencies, a house of worship will be able to fully develop a “support services” resource area with free printed materials dealing with many of the issues faced by our Military Community. Beyond the utilization of agencies is the equally importance of working with VA and military chaplains. In approaching moral injury, these men and women have direct contact with those who are either in military service or are part of the veteran population. Not only do they hear the stories, many have been on overseas deployments and have experienced the same events as those for whom they now serve. They will prove an invaluable aide in helping to heal those who suffer.

Rituals of Healing

It has been shown that throughout history cultures and religions have recognized the need to provide “rituals” for their warriors to help them overcome experiences of combat and to transition back into the community.

Accordingly, Military Outreach USA provides a number of tools in its Just Reach One Program that assist clergy, lay ministries, and community service organizations. Examples of suggestions and methods of implementation found in Just Reach One include:

1. **Understand military culture.** You cannot know where to go if you have no understanding of where they have been. An extensive explanation of military culture is provided.
2. **Never prejudice.** Accept the individual for who they are, not for who they were.
3. **Learn to listen.** Effective, empathetic listening will allow you to learn what is really at the heart of their problem. Examples of effective listening are provided.
4. **Be empathetic.** While you may have no direct military service you can be empathetic in listening
5. **Be aware.** The situation may arise where referral to outside agencies is required. Know your VA Chaplain, VA facilities or related care facilities in the area. Contact information to key individuals, agencies, and programs are provided.

While it may not practical to re-create all ancient rituals there is proof that many are therapeutic in the treatment of moral injury.

Native American Rituals



War is hard on service members. They see death and destruction. They see comrades injured or killed – and sometimes they must kill others. Some endure the horrors of being a prisoner of war. Returning to a normal life after these kinds of experiences can be very difficult. American Indian cultures have special traditions that help their warriors return home.

Alfred Gibson (Navajo), spiritual leader and medicine man, helps Native veterans heal from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) through the “enemy way” ceremony with the support of the Veterans Administration. While these therapies have been used by Native American people for generations, over the past few years, the Veterans Administration has witnessed the power and value of the culturally sensitive process.

Gibson told the U.S. National Library of Medicine, “When soldiers go overseas, we give them warrior ceremonies to armor and protect them against the battle; when the soldier returns; we have to remove that armor, to help him reconnect with his home.”

(<http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2014/05/26/healing-post-traumatic-stress-disorder-native-medicine-155032>)

American Indian communities remember their veterans’ sacrifices forever. Veterans are always respected and honored. Sometimes they are remembered in special songs that are sung in their honor.

Native people often go to veterans for advice because they have strong mental abilities as a result of their many experiences. Depending on the community, veterans are given special prominence at different kinds of tribal events.

For example, at powwows veterans always lead the grand entry of dancers. They carry the American Indian Eagle Staff, the flag of the United States, their tribal flag, and other important banners. Veterans are recognized and honored on special occasions with ceremonies and dances that relate their sacrifices to the community. For example, the Comanche Gourd Dance honors veterans. Sometimes a family member or a friend might hold a special dance or ceremony to honor a veteran. These are the lasting traditions that show respect to veterans for what they have done for the people. (Native Words/Native Warriors. Web)

In non-Native American Indian settings the aforementioned can be recognized in parades, honor dinners, welcome home receptions and more.

Ritual Route Markers for Reconciliation: Insights from South Africa

It has been more than 20 years of freedom and democracy in South Africa, after more than forty years of apartheid and centuries of colonialism. Perhaps no other population of a nation has had to make such a collective act of reconciliation than South Africa. In an article written by C. Wepener, a thorough discussion of how churches within South Africa have and are using rituals to help in the reconciliation process is reviewed. His article is available on the Military Outreach USA Resource Library, but in short, it describes how tribal or cultural rituals can be incorporated into church rituals to the benefit of nation reconciliation. Of particular interest is the importance of communion:

“Individual and communal confession and remission of sins is important. There is a real need for confession. This will also have a healing effect in the therapeutic sense on people. And in all these actions it is important that none of these, for example enjoying a meal together, will be an individualistic action between only two persons, but will always incorporate the community (of faith)...

Bearing all the aforementioned in mind as ritual route markers for reconciliation, it should be remembered that true remorse, culminating in reconciliation, comes from an experience of grace “...for it is not the threat of punishment that awakens genuine shame and guilt, but the generous offer and gift of forgiveness” (De Gruchy, 2002:192). And forgiveness is manna, you can ask for it, but you cannot buy it (Demasure & Depoortere, 2003:160-161).

This manna awakens people to live out acts of reparation which is nothing but lived gratitude. Within the current South African context in which there is still a huge division between rich and poor, partly so because of our apartheid past, reparation is a reality or ritual action that is becoming more and more important and needs our urgent attention.

Bishop Tutu often tells the story of someone who steals his pen, and then comes back to him saying that he is sorry he stole the pen, but does not give it back. Reconciliation rituals must actively take confession, remorse and forgiveness further to include reparation. Pens must be given back and ritual action should accompany this process. In the African perspective the umjikelo or money-slamming ritual is one ritual example that can be enculturated for this purpose. Thus the feast of reconciliation does not become a feast of forgiving and forgetting, but of forgiving and reparation.”

(https://www.academia.edu/5081384/Ritual_route_markers_for_reconciliation_insights_from_a_South_African_exploration)

While Wepener’s article deals with a national problem that is the result of years of apartheid it also serves as witness to the need of forgiving, forgetting, and healing through reparations (which often are not monetary in nature). The values of service projects are but one example of how an individual can fulfill the need to complete the healing process.

Spiritual Rituals

Spiritual exercises can be used throughout the year. For example, those of the Christian faith can consider planning a series of spiritual exercises and events that correspond with the church calendar and national calendar; i.e. such as the birthday of the service.

- New Year’s Eve/Day.....Sponsor alcohol-free evening/gathering
- Lent.....Bring help, healing and reconciliation through worship
- Good Friday.....Identify and connect experiences of one’s suffering to the suffering of others
- Easter.....Celebrate rebirth
- Memorial Day.....Share the burden of those who have gone to war and share their grief
- Independence Day.....Provide an opportunity for fun, food and sharing
- All Saints Day.....Remind us of our unity with those who have died in faith
- Veterans Day.....Facilitate the healing of veterans as the congregation honors them
- Advent.....Experience peace and reconciliation as family members forgive and heal
- Christmas.....Celebrate the opportunity for birth and healing

Advent or Lent may be an appropriate time for a heart-cleansing program to identify and heal a moral injury. It can be a time to let go of past wounds and find comfort and offer forgiveness. These exercises and events should be intended to provide a means for healing and restoration.

For those in the Jewish religion relating to scripture, such as Numbers 31, or combining with the Day of Atonement those who may be suffering from moral injury are excellent times to continue the healing process.

Spiritual exercises can take many forms. On the worship closest to July 4th or Veterans Day invite veterans of different generations to lead in a processional as they enter services. ("Welcome Them Home" p. 80)

Other rituals or exercises that can be used could be to have the victim of moral injury write down all their transgressions on pieces of paper. With a moral authority present, those papers, and symbolically the transgressions, are burned for all eternity.

Another symbolic ritual that can be performed is for the victim to collect rocks representing their various transgressions and then to hurl them, in the presence of a moral authority, into a river or lake, representing that they are gone never to surface again.

A ritual, more associated with baptism, but every bit as powerful in other religions would be the washing away of the "sin" with water. As shown in Chapter 2, Moral Injury: A Historical Perspective, it was related how the ancient Romans would use bathing as a means of purification after battle or how in Numbers 31, the Israelites had to purify themselves and their weapons before returning to their community. Water, throughout history, has been used a means of purification.

Such rituals as re-baptism is a ritual that can be used in welcoming back a victim of moral injury. The washing of hands, as the instrument of what may have caused a transgression; in the presence of a moral authority, can be a strong emotional ritual that will help in the healing process.

In these examples, all included the presence of a moral authority (priest, rabbi, pastor, imam) who can then help explain why those transgressions, symbolically and spiritually, are gone.

Creative Arts

Note: The following activities, taken from Training-Manual-by-Medica-Mondiale-Exercises-for- relaxing-energizing-and-connecting need to be conducted in coordination with an approved therapy provider trained in their application and use.

Creative arts therapy work is based on the assumption that creative, artistic, imaginative and self-expressive activities are emotionally healing and promote positive growth and development.

This assumption is well-founded in concepts and observations of psychologists, educators and specialists in human development. Drawing, painting, art-making, writing and dramatic play are all naturally healing; they are particularly helpful to individuals who have experienced extraordinary difficulties and whose sense of the stability and rightness of their world and their social structures has been severely damaged. Playful, engaging and imaginative processes within the context of safe and supportive relationships with peers offer people an effective opportunity to connect with others, build self-confidence and discover and develop their own strengths.

The use of bodywork, movement or dance in a therapeutic setting is rooted in a deep understanding of how the body and mind interact in health and in illness. Because there is a strong connection between the mind and body, when a person engages physically, she will have greater access to her emotions. Counseling that involves a person engaging physically in an activity gently encourages them to connect with feelings surrounding trauma, confusion and pain that may be held within their body.

As a person comes into contact with these feelings, they do so from a non-rational/non-intellectual place and steps into the realm of intuition and emotion. This can facilitate emotional release, which can then be processed and integrated either physically or verbally.

Art Therapy

The basic methods of art therapy can be applied to a wide range of psychological and emotional needs. When a person sits quietly looking at a blank sheet of paper and a set of colored pencils or paints, they are pulled into an internal world of feelings, concerns, wishes, and fears. Every choice they make—color, placement, crayon or chalk, pressure on the paper, controlled vs. free flowing line, etc.—expresses personally significant issues and challenges. As the person draws, they are externalizing and giving form to these concerns. The very act of creating a drawing or painting gives direction to inner tensions and may be extended to a more full-fledged process of healing, growth, and problem resolution.

Drama Therapy

While art activities orient an individual towards their internal and private world, dramatic activities encourage energizing and spontaneous interaction with others. Dramatic enactment is similar to the dramatic play of children. It involves role playing, the creation of plots and their resolution, expression of feeling, and spontaneous dialogue.

By engaging not as oneself but as an imagined or assigned other, the person can safely experience a wide range of feelings, attitudes, and actions that they may not have access to within the scope of their own identity. Since everyone knows that the action has no serious consequences, there is room to safely experiment and take risks. In the drama person can produce alternative and more desirable - even healing - outcomes for prior experiences that may have remained unresolved or been traumatic. The person may discover solutions to certain dilemmas and feel generally released and empowered.

(<http://protectionline.org/files/2012/08/Training-Manual-by-Medica-Mondiale-Exercises-for-relaxing-energizing-and-connecting.pdf>)

Memorials as Remembrance and Reconciliation

To those who served in Vietnam, their families and the countless thousands of those who did not, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial has been a source of solace, remembrance and reconciliation.

Unlike national memorials from prior wars, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial lists the names of those who were killed or died from wounds while serving in Vietnam. It provides a place where veterans go to reflect on their past, their comrades and to remember those who have died. They meet other veterans, many of whom they do not know, but what stirs within them again is their sense of unit cohesion and mission...they are in fact with their brothers and sisters.

Since 1982, veterans have been leaving dog tags, tape decks, boots, and bottles of beer, cigarettes and other memorabilia from their service in the war underneath the panel where a fallen comrade's name is inscribed. Family members' leave pictures of children, now fully grown. More than 400,000 items have been left...all saved. (Chicago Tribune, March 6, 2015) This single memorial has been to many a place to remember, seek forgiveness and reconcile with their past.

In virtually every community that has lost a citizen to war there is a memorial. Some are historical, as the U.S.S. Arizona lying at rest in Pearl Harbor, while others as simple as a plaque on a wall at an area high school paying witness to a fallen graduate. In foreign lands there are cemeteries for those who fell in WW1 or WW2 which are visited yearly by surviving veterans.

As with past wars, those from the current and future conflicts will need their place of healing. Whether it is a national monument or a memorial in a local park, no matter the type, they will serve to be a place of healing and reconciliation.

What About the "Unchurched"?

A person suffering from moral injury who is not of faith may never go into a house of worship for healing, and yet, that is where their need can be met. Every ministry and religious leader must be willing to accept those who seek forgiveness for a transgression that caused moral injury.

Veterans are prone to talk to veterans and service people to other service people. The reasons, as have been discussed in other chapters, are centered on the common bond that all who have worn the uniform of the nation experience. As in any close-knit organization, there is a sense of trust between those who have served, even if it is decades after that military service has ended.

As a result of this continued sense of bonding, it may not be uncommon for a member of your house of worship to recommend to, perhaps even to an atheist friend, that they visit your house of worship to discuss their moral injury.

Summation

The medical community is beginning to investigate and develop theories about moral injury. New discussions concerning emotions and how they play upon the individual are being reviewed and investigated. However, moral injury is not a new phenomenon. It has been in existence for thousands of years, perhaps under a different name, but in any case it is moral injury. While moral injury may be part of a psychological problem the individual must deal with; it in many cases stands by itself.

While moral psychologists develop medical theories as to the treatment of moral injury it still must be recognized that it is through a house of worship that moral injury can be treated and cured.

Moral injury is in fact a spiritual injury. It is thus incumbent upon our nation's houses of worship to understand the causes of moral injury and then to develop a program within their house of worship for healing.

This chapter offers a number of suggestions as to methods of helping those who suffer from this invisible wound of war. By incorporation of rituals, therapies and service projects as methods to heal moral injury a house of worship will be able to serve not only the military community but all within their community.

Conclusion

As defined in the simplest of terms, moral injury is a transgression or violation of one's personal moral code. Moral injury can occur in any person, no matter the profession or status in society. However, this publication deals with the particular profession of those who serve or have served within the military of the United States of America.

The purpose of this publication was not to be the end all of discussions concerning moral injury. Contrarily, it has been generated to create more awareness and discussion of the topic. Coupled with moral injury are other psychological traumas, such as PTSD or MST, that have also been addressed. While moral injury can in and of itself be a separate invisible wound of war it is often coupled with psychological trauma. Throughout every chapter it can be discerned that the issues facing the current military service person are far more complicated than ever before and it will remain so for the foreseeable future.

Those that make political and military decisions must now center on moral and ethical criteria that can have effects beyond a local battlefield. Those decisions can also have long lasting psychological or moral effects on those who serve.

For example, the use of drones has magnified over recent years and there is every indication that their use will multiply over the coming years. It has been discussed how not only do the use of drones create legal issues for a nation but their use has also created psychological problems for their operators. As evidenced in the USAF report drone operators are exhibiting the same stressors as those involved in direct combat operations; only at a much higher percentage level. While the use of drones does in fact reduce the risk of physical injury or death to a pilot, it has not reduced the legal issues or psychological stress on those who operate them. Will drones increase the chances of accidentally infringing upon the sovereignty of other states such as Pakistan? Could their use provoke reactionary measures that would not have otherwise occurred? Will these systems introduce a responsibility that offers their operators, the military or politicians plausible deniability? It may be that the ethical, economic and military benefit, supersedes any potential problems, but once the technological genie is out of the bottle, no amount of policymaking or legislating will put it back in. Could, in the future, an American president launch drone strikes on Mexico if it is perceived that a drug cartel is an imminent threat to the U.S.?

Further, conventional war fighting has changed to asymmetrical warfare. This requires an entirely new method of training service personnel. A discussion of how the IDF trains and prepares their men and women for combat situations was discussed at length. Through their experiences it was shown that the utilization of scenario-based, moral and ethical training could reduce the risk of PTSD and moral injury within their Armed Forces.

Additionally, as morals and ethics are a recurring part of IDF training there is the continuing opportunity to maintain that low risk of one suffering from PTSD or moral injury.

However, no matter the level of training, there will always be a percentage of those who serve that will be affected by an invisible wound of war. Whether manifested in PTSD, MST or moral injury they are wounds that require care and treatment above that which can be provided by a government agency.

The government, particularly the Departments of Defense (DOD) and Veterans Affairs (VA), is not resourced (lack of chaplains) sufficiently to address the moral problems of the veteran or service member. Nor is government the solution to a moral condition needing resolution.

However, there is a house of worship in every community in our nation that can be the center of a new paradigm; a comprehensive approach, working in concert with the local VA, veteran service organizations, community outreach programs, and other houses of worship --- in other words, a Military Caring Network --- to serve those service members, veterans, and family members who are serving or have served us. The simple fact is that after a veteran or a service member leaves a medical facility they need to be welcomed into a caring community--a supportive social network--that understands and is prepared to welcome them. What better place than a military caring house of worship?

This publication has focused on moral, emotional, and ethical definitions as well as presenting some of the dilemmas that a service person must contemplate. In creating a common thread between military training and the need for high moral and ethical values it has been demonstrated that the U.S. military has evolved from the errors of Vietnam. Have errors been eliminated? The direct answer is no, but continuing improvement in training provides assurance that once an error is recognized they will be addressed.

However, there is a disturbing trend occurring in the military that needs to be mentioned.

In a paper presented by Don Snider and Alexander Shine, in April 2014, to the Strategic Studies Institute and U.S. Army War College, titled *The Soldiers Morality, Religion, and Our Professional Ethic: Does the Army's Culture Facilitate Integration, Character Development, and Trust in the Profession?*, make the case that the military culture is becoming increasingly hostile toward religious expression which will eventually cause a number of good service people of all ranks to leave the military. A service member seriously committed to his or her personal morality, whether grounded in a religious faith or not, is prone more than he or she would otherwise be to live up to the high ethical ideals of the military profession not in spite of, but because of his or her personal convictions. For those who ground their convictions in the tenants of the major religions, virtually all emphasize the values of altruism/selfless service, truth telling, integrity, respect for others, personal ability, moral and physical courage. Dimensionally, these are some of the personal virtues valuable, indeed necessary, in the military profession.

Would not a military commander rather have a person of high moral value in their unit than one who is not? Religion is a tremendous source of strength, inspiration, wisdom, peace, and purpose for many people and religious speech is a vital component of the practice of religion. The secularization of the military cannot improve the moral values of those who serve, but rather diminish their capabilities and character.

It could be hypothesized that those of lower moral value or without religious convictions, no matter the level of training received, can be future participants in another My Lai or Haditha.

Morals and ethical conduct, as has been shown, are not separable nor do they operate in a vacuum. When there is an absence of either, the risks for human tragedy are multiplied. On the individual level, the end result of a moral violation could be suicide. This is not an acceptable risk.

In ancient Sparta a mother would say to her son, "Come back carrying your shield or on it." If a warrior came back without his shield, it meant he had laid it down in order to break ranks and run from battle. He was supposed to use his shield to protect the man next to him in formation, so to abandon his shield was not only to be a coward but also to break faith with his comrades. To be carried on it would mean he was either wounded or killed in battle, returning with his body and his honor intact. He had held true to his "warrior code".

The warrior's code--the morals and ethics that make it-- is the shield that guards the warriors' humanity.

It is when one begins to reflect and bring into conflict with their personal moral code the actions they either took part in or witnessed while serving in the military that moral injury can occur. It is then that their suppressed guilt or shame can rise to the surface and result in moral injury.

Whether it is a WW2 veteran in hospice care remembering his fallen comrades, a Vietnam Veteran trying to decide if tomorrow is another day worth living or a veteran from Iraq or Afghanistan living with the memory of the woman or child they had to kill, moral injury affects them all.

For more than 2000 years nations and cultures have faced and found ways to serve those who returned from war. It is now the task of every house of worship to continue what the ancients began. Examples of rituals and how they can be used have been presented in this publication but they are by no means the only ones that a house of worship can implement.

For many veterans and service members, their wars will never end. The dark demons of a Pandora's Box that have been buried in their mind and soul will eventually rise to haunt and cause them pain. Military Outreach USA believes that it is only through the faith-based community that those who suffer from moral injury will find relief. It is a house of worship that can close the lid on that box of demons. These wounded warriors, of all eras, deserve no less.

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Joseph Palmer is the Executive Director for Military Outreach USA. He graduated from Southern Connecticut State University in 1974 with a degree in Political Science. He served in the United States Air Force from 1966 to 1972 as a Security Police K-9 handler with service in Okinawa, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Francis E. Warren Missile Base, Cheyenne, WY. He is active in developing programs for veterans and is an All-American VFW Post Commander as well as having attained the prestigious honor being an All-American VFW District Commander. He also has conducted numerous national webinars and presentations centering on issues affecting the veteran and military community. His papers include: Moral Injury: A Guide for Clergy and Lay Ministers as well as the working guide, Community Covenant with Veterans and Military Families.

Military Outreach USA is a 501 (c) (3) not for profit faith based organization with the mission to establish a national network of military caring houses of worship and organizations to serve those in our military community.

This military community is comprised of active duty, National Guard, Reserves, veterans, and their families.

To learn more about Military Outreach USA visit:

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Military Outreach USA

3020 Milwaukee Avenue

Northbrook, IL 60062

Phone: 877.734.4244

www.militaryoutreachusa.org