THE CONSTANT BATTLE

VETERAN PSYCHOLOGY:

IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNSELING

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THE CONSTANT BATTLE

VETERAN PSYCHOLOGY

IMPLICATION FOR COUNSELING

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I acknowledge the many veterans and mental health professionals I had the honor of conversing with to develop this paper. I spent many hours talking with veterans in group settings, about the things they found most troubling in their lives. While working as a case manager for homeless veterans I listened to many stories of adjustment difficulties. I met veterans at the Veterans Administration Hines Complex in Chicago, Illinois. As well I meet with veterans in treatment at the Clement J. Zablocki Medical Center in Woods, Wisconsin.

The veterans at Great Lakes Naval training Base in North Chicago, Illinois which houses the North Chicago Veterans Medical Center provided a great deal of insight. These veterans told many stories of estrangement from spouses and families. Many had developed substances abuse problems, while others suffered from mental health disorders. The majority of veterans I encountered were Vietnam veterans, but the number of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans is increasing every day. Every veteran I came in contact with was making a cry for help. As the veteran population increases, greater is the need for resources to address veterans’ issues.
Abstract

THE CONSTANT BATTLE: VETERAN PSYCHOLOGY: IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNSELING

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Under the Supervision of Tom Lo Guidice, PhD

A study of the experiences of regular soldiers entering and discharging from the United States Army. Attention is also given to the role of the Drill Master in training. Special attention is given to the stresses associated with combat service and ending of service and transition to civilian life. Soldiers needing services for stress disorders is also addressed. The implications for counseling and other services are discussed as implications of the literature reviewed and the story told.

The method of inquiry by the author relies on reflections of one participant experience and interviews included in the appendix narrative as well reports from traditional academic sources.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The author and supervisor of this paper decided it was appropriate to organize this work in a different fashion from most seminar papers written for the University of Wisconsin-Platteville Adult Education program. As a reader you are encouraged to read the first two chapters (introduction and review of literature) and then to read the narrative that is the appendix. The narrative is largely written in the “first person” and as you read you will understand why writing as “I” and “We” is crucial to understanding the story that evolves. After reading the narrative, then read the conclusions and implications. The appendix is developed both from the objective literature and the personal narrative. The complete work informs the readers of the special nature of helping person’s role in working with veterans.

Also, the reader should note that the references do not follow the usual model. The references contain material that is used in chapters one, two and three as well as the narrative. A decision has also been made to include a bibliography. Background reading and personal communications that informed the reader may be very useful in providing a broad backdrop for the reader interested in learning more.

Purpose of the Study

It is important to address the experiences of many different soldiers by detailing the indoctrination of drill sergeants and the lives of the civilians transformed into soldiers. The military indoctrination to the way of war, was to instill in men the mindset to kill a designated enemy on command. This thesis cannot be told without stories from veterans with adjustment stories. In
many respects this paper will touch base with history, from the aspect of current and previous wars and the effects that those wars have had upon veterans.

**Significance of the Study**

A walk, or ride through any city neighborhood will display a picture of all types of cultures, ethnic groups, religions, and races of people, all blended into one steel pot stew culture. Unlike many countries there are many freedoms Americans enjoy. But what is the essential cost of those freedoms, that many if not most Americans take for granted? After all this is a country that professes “you can be anything you want to be”. This country has various economical class structures. The extremely wealthy, the upper middle class, the middle class, and the working poor, which live from pay check to pay check, and the extremely poor considered by many as the down and out homeless people. With the exception of the officer corps the majority of America’s fighting men and women come from middle and lower class environments.

**The Problem Statement**

The question the author will attempt to answer is how we can turn the tide for soldiers suffering from depression, and a multitude of mental disorders affecting the veteran population. What is the psychological cost for those individuals designated as defenders of freedom? When a criminal commits a crime, a trial is held. A sentence of incarceration is rendered, and punishment for the crime is implemented. After the punishment is completed, the criminals are considered to have paid their debt to society. But what debt is paid to the United States Military men and women? Those people that have paid the ultimate sacrifice for the freedoms our nation enjoys?
According to (Tanielian, et.al 2008) veterans’ statistics on PTSD, Depression, TBI, and Suicide, there are over 2.3 million American veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. (Compared to 2.6 million Vietnam veterans) there are 8.2 million Vietnam Era veterans. At least 20% of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans have PTSD and or depression. 50% of the veteran population with PTSD does not seek treatment. 19% of veterans may have traumatic brain injury (TBI). Over 260,000 veterans from OIF and OEF have been diagnosed with TBI. Statistical studies indicate because of these factors the suicide rate among these veterans is very high. (Jordan 2014) found that veteran suicide numbers have increased in recent years. Almost seven out of 10 veterans who have committed suicide were over the age of 50, according to a Department of veteran Affairs study.

Limitations

The review of the steps from enlistment to discharge and the interviews conducted for the narrative reflect individual experiences. Memories are not always accurate. Impressions and perspectives are the lenses of memory as well. The “psychology presented is a form of personal psychology. Although academic sources are used the report is necessarily reflected by personal experience. It is at once the limitation of this paper to not be fully objective but also the source of insight that informs the reader.
Method of Approach

The intent is to provide a brief review of the literature and to prepare the reader for the personal narrative that is the appendix. The narrative is central to understanding the topic of this paper. The reader may find it useful to read the introduction, then the review of literature, then the narrative and finally the conclusions and implications for counseling.
CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW: FROM ENLISTMENT TO DISCHARGE

The Psychological programming

Veterans that have not been de-programed after active duty are potential societal burdens. These veterans have many stigmatic diagnosis. Veterans in general may suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) due to traumatic events experienced. It is a high probability that combat veterans are affected with PTSD, and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). These diagnosis are systematic with being in an environment with mortar, artillery, and improvised explosive devices (IED) explosions. An added dimension is separation disorder, where the deployed soldier has no control over events that happen at the soldier’s home.

Entering the Military

Why in this day and age would a person, male or female choose to become a soldier? The answer is simple; there are very little incentives not to. If you were not inspired while in high school, the chances of going to college are all but impossible. In years pass the possibility of trade school was a substantial option. But now the economy and technology have all but made factory jobs hard to come by. So the thought of earning money to further your education and military incentives for future benefits have made joining the military an attractive option.

But unlike years pass military service is not for one and all. There is no draft, and there is no such word as conscription in the United States of America Military. Although every American male that attains the age of eighteen is required to register for selective services. So what are the motivators to enlist in the military? Being young and wanting to start a family with stable employment. An opportunity to travel the world. Last but not least the notion of patriotism, for love of
God and Country. There are also monetary incentives such as enlistment bonus’s, and money for college. There is one catch to this incentive to enlist, one could possibly end up in a combat zone and find themselves in the line of fire. They could die or could become critically wounded. Their ambitions and dreams of tomorrow may never materialize.

But many young men and women do enlist. Some do it to get away from home, and some just seek a change. But the difference in our current wars and wars of the past is, there is no draft. While the draft would possibly prevent the ranks of the incarcerated to swell. As they have done over the last twenty years. Military service would also provide jobs, for those men just standing on the corner day to day.

When conscripted into the military recruits are sequestered from civilian culture. During this separation the recruits are taught the ways of military life. They are trained in hygiene, communal living, military techniques of movement, and operation of weaponry. This training process will last from six to eight weeks. At the end of the initial training period another extended training period will ensue. Through all this training the recruit also undergoes psychological training, the philosophy of why and how to kill. At the completion of training the recruit is formally accepted into the ranks of the military. Normally a parade viewed by ranking officers, and family members is held, so the new military men and women can display their new skills. The majority of recruits are 18 to 21 years of age. A few are older, a very small percentage. An even smaller percentage are younger. These recruits are considered to be at the age of malleability. They have transformed from civilian into the military culture.

As these military personal began their tours of duty, a new life away from home, they experience a world very different from where they come. Some are called to combat. While others are
stationed at various places around the globe. All of them experience military stress, which is different from civilian stress. They have been taught to perform their duty no matter what stressors they encounter. Most if not all accomplish this task with very little difficulty. After serving their country many are discharged. They return back to the society they came from. But they are not the same person that left. Many have unseen injuries.

Why some young men and women choose to enlist and others do not is a million dollar question. What matters is their willingness, to give of themselves so America can enjoy the benefits of freedom. Of course this reference is made of the young men and women that enter into the armed forces. Some enter into the service to get away from something. Some may feel a patriotic sense of duty. Still others may have no place to go. But from the time this nation was born to the present, young men and women have answered the call for freedom, by enlisting in the armed forces. The imprint of military life for most, never goes away. When entering back into civilian culture veterans fine it hard to negotiate the civilian lifestyle. Some end up in prison, others become the homeless beggars on the street corner, and others flood the mental health wards of hospitals throughout the country.

**Operant conditioning**

Grossman (1995) has identified methods by which civilians are transformed into soldiers. Also indicated is this method of conditioning is unlike war periods previously used. He cites the work of B.F. Skinner. Behaviors such as marksmenship and grenade throwing are rewarded with medals and weekend passes. Behaviors that are not in line with military culture are punished, with extra duty, and remedial physical training.
B.F. Skinner distinguished between two different types of behaviors: **respondent behaviors** and **operant behaviors**. Respondent behaviors are those that occur automatically and reflexively, such as pulling your hand back from a hot stove or jerking your leg when the doctor taps on your knee. You don’t have to learn these behaviors, they simply occur automatically and involuntarily. Operant behavior, on the other hand, are those under our conscious control. Some may occur spontaneously and others purposely, but it is the consequences of these actions that then influence whether or not they occur again in the future. Our actions on the environment and the consequences of those action make up an important part of the learning process. Skinner used the term **operant** to refer to any "active behavior that operates upon the environment to generate consequences" (1953). In other words, Skinner's theory explained how we acquire the range of learned behaviors we exhibit each and every day. His theory was heavily influenced by the work of psychologist Edward Thorndike who had proposed what he called the law of effect. According to this principle, actions that are followed by desirable outcomes are more likely to be repeated while those followed by undesirable outcomes are less likely to be repeated. (Grossman 1995 p.313)

When soldier’s return home and are eventually discharged so begins the veteran’s battle with life. Symptoms of (PTSD) can reveal themselves many years after discharge. When those symptoms are exposed the veteran’s life plummets into disarray. Veterans that have given so much of themselves, now find themselves in prison. Many veterans are homeless, and substances abusers. Various studies have identified veterans suffering from depression, and seek suicide as a remedy. Families of veterans are in a disrupted state due to domestic violence. Many of these life battles could be avoided if the veterans were given a de-programing facility.
Suicide among Veterans in the General Population

Our veteran population faces a suicide rate that exceeds that of the general population several studies suggest an increased risk of suicide among veterans seeking services from the Veterans Administration (VA). Thompson et al. performed a cause-of-death search of 1,075 veterans from VA case rolls who died in 1998 and then chart reviews to characterize those patients who had completed suicide. These authors reported substantially increased suicide rates among male veterans, between two and three times those of the general population. They attributed this excess of suicides to the high proportion of behavioral health patients within the VA system. Prior diagnoses represented among this group of patient suicides included depression (31.6%), psychotic disorder (15.8%), and substance abuse (15.8%). The authors noted a difference between elderly and nonelderly suicides: none of the former had any listed psychiatric diagnoses in their charts, and they were less likely to have engaged mental health services, while over half of the nonelderly suicides carried a psychiatric diagnosis. (Wortzel, Binswanger, Anderson, & Adler, 2009)

According to (Leland 2010) from 1964 to 1973, 8,744,000 veterans were in the ranks of the military during the Vietnam Conflict. Of those veterans that were in the military during Vietnam there were 47,434 battle deaths. From 1990 to 1991, The Persian Gulf War 2,225,000 veterans served, of those there were 147 battle deaths. These men and women are the bulk of veterans being treated at V.A. hospitals across the country. But there are increasing numbers of veterans that served in Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation Iraqi freedom.

The plight of the veterans afflicted with mental health diagnosis can be considered detrimental to society, when acts are committed that places the population in danger. Veterans have
been stigmatized. They’ve been labeled with names such as crazy, alcoholics, and dope attics. Seldom is the question asked, why are these veterans in the state they’re in. Their plight began not on the day they were discharged, but on the day they joined the military. The transformation process is intensive, and it’s impossible to disregard after discharge. The number of veterans being treated at V.A. hospitals is staggering. The treatment of mental health patients is at an all-time high. The question to be addressed, is why our nation has not created an acclimation facility for veterans.

What is not realized when encountering a veteran, is the veteran has sacrificed life emotions to become a soldier. The overall concept of military service is death, yours or your enemy as a possible outcome. A soldier has been trained to be vigilant at all times. Training is not so easily forgotten when placed in a civilian environment. Civilians view death as a phenomenon that happens to other people. Veterans view death as soon it’ll be my turn. Veterans experience camaraderie. They are apart of a team. When dismissed from service they no longer have a team. This leaves the veteran in a state of loneliness, and isolation. Veterans have been trained to persevere despite the circumstances. Our nation has traveled a long and extensive journey from the French Indian war to Operation Enduring Freedom and operation Iraqi freedom. But our veterans continue to fight long after leaving the battle field.

A typical day for homeless veterans across the country is spend at the veteran’s hospital. Some are attending groups, such as drug and alcohol treatment. The V.A. has many treatment programs, they also provide housing for homeless veterans in domiciliary shelters. There are groups for mental health issues that focus on depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disor-
der. There are groups for issues such as domestic violence and suicide prevention. The V.A. offers a wide array of counselors, psychologist, and psychiatrist. They also offer a physical health program for veterans, which is beyond compare to most civilian health treatment facilities. Although many veterans utilize the programs and V.A. facilities, countless numbers of veterans refuse to connect with the V.A. those veterans have developed a phobia against government bureaucracy. So many veterans refuse treatment of any type, they’ve developed a distrust for the government. In Vietnam, veterans were given medication such as tranquilizers to cope with the rigors of war. Many veterans returned with addictions of not only street drugs such as heroin but to those prescribed drugs as well. The addictive behavior of veterans can be traced to field hospitals in Vietnam. No longer issued the tranquilizers many veterans resorted to self-medication practices to compensate for army issued medication. (Grossman 1995).

Now the country is left with treating former soldiers, many of which were issued pharmaceuticals to enable them to continue fight. Psychiatrist’s issue an abundance of psychotropic drugs. Drugs for depression, anxiety, Bi-polar disorder, and post trauma disorders. It seems that if we provide more medication the problem will fix itself. But one of the major side effects of these of psychotropic drugs is suicide ideation. One fines that more of our veterans are choosing suicide over life, both young and old. The problem facing the country is how to fix this veteran problem? The President and congress recently pass the suicide prevention bill, which set the stage for more mental health professionals. That may be the answer, however the problem began not after discharge from military service. The problem with veterans began during the initial training phase, with the training methods used. Imagine a scenario such as this basic programming of a soldier.
The designation for an infantry soldier is 11-bravo, all combat arms have a numerical designation from 11 to 19. *11-Bravo*: Military service computer. Basic mother board installed at Fort Leonard Wood, Parris Island, and other military programing facilites. Subroutines installed for specialized combat modes at Fort Benning, Little Creek, and other specialized military programing facilities. Set to run basic and specialized offensive combat files on command. Activated Republic of South Vietnam 1966-1974. Alternate, nonfunctional hacker programs not designed for this computer were emplaced in some 11-Bravos at destination. Surplused after one year run time South East Asia. *Warning! some 11-bravos have not been deactivated and remain combat operational!* If your family has come into possession of an 11-Bravo that refuses to run on standard civilian mode, take it to the nearest Veterans Center immediately for reprogramming. (Gilliland & James 1995)

Of critical importance is bringing light to the indoctrination process by examining military culture and the difference between the soldier and the civilian. On any given day throughout the country military recruiters visit high schools with promises of a fulfilling life, a life of travel and adventure. Facing employment needs for life after high school many young men and women find the prospect of military life as exciting. With the dismal job market many seek employment security the military offers. There are still others in need of finances to pay for college after the military. The recruitment process seeks young malleable prospects to fill military ranks. The reasons why individuals enlist vary, but the military machine seeks young men and women. Those that are not mature enough to doubt the effects of the indoctrination process.
According to (Grossman 1995, p.265) the combatants in all wars are frightfully young, but the American combatants in Vietnam were significantly younger than in any war in American history. Most were drafted at eighteen and experienced combat during one of the most malleable and vulnerable stages of their lives. This was America’s first “teenage war,” with the average combatant having not seen his twentieth birthday, and these combatants were without the leavening of mature, older soldiers that has always been there in past wars.

A soldier is trained to act without thought, and in some instances kill without remorse. As of this writing many veterans are choosing suicide as a means to an end instead of coping with life as a civilian. Our society must ask how we can fix this problem. There is no such thing as re-acclimation concerning the recovery of being a veteran vs. returning to civilian life. Once a military person always a military person. The problem is instant activation or reaction vs. a relaxed civilian mentality or attitude.

A soldier is on guard 24 hours a day every day. A soldier is hyper vigilant or on the lookout for trouble at all times. He or she is trained to react to a hostile situation at all times. After a sometime 20 week training period it is very unlikely that a soldier will return to civilian society and react as many civilians do. A soldier is taught to persevere and overcome. But this type of training can take its toll on the body, and as time continues eventually that soldier’s body and mind will experience battle fatigue more commonly referred to as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. A problem in the field of mental health field is defining this soldier burnout, and developing a methodology for successful recovery for a return to normal behavior.

When training new recruits it is essential to remove all civilian ideation. The importance of developing the individual into a team member is paramount to an effective military. In the movie
Full Metal Jacket the portrayal of the drill instructor is very accurate, but very misinterpreted. The training method used is called operant conditioning. (Grossman 1995), identified training methods used to train recruits as being different from previous wars.

**The Drill Instructor**

The Drill Sergeant Creed of the United States Army. “I am a Drill Sergeant. I will assist each individual in their efforts to become a highly motivated, well disciplined, physically and mentally fit soldier, capable of defeating any enemy on today’s modern battlefield. I will instill pride in all I train. Pride in self, in the Army and in Country. I will insist that each soldier meets and maintains the Army standards of military bearing and courtesy, consistent with the highest traditions of the U.S. Army. I will lead by example, never requiring a Soldier her attempt any task I would not do myself. But first, last, and always, I am an American Soldier- Sworn to defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, both foreign and domestic. I am a Drill Sergeant.” (Author Unknown)

There are certain men and women, one out of every ten thousand, which believe, and are willing to die for the aforementioned creed. To better understand the kind of men and women that become Drill Sergeants. We must travel back in time to the first American Drill Sergeant that actually was not a noncommissioned officer. He was the army’s first Inspector General Baron Friedrich Von Steuben. Hired by General George Washington, with the aid of French Ambassador Benjamin Franklin. The Baron traveled to Valley Forge in 1778 and found an untrained, undisciplined band of ragtag men which were under the belief that they were an army.
After serving with Frederick the Great, the Baron had vast knowledge of an army of cohesion and discipline as in the European theater. So the Barons job was cut out for him, he had to make an army from the ranks of the unsophisticated, undisciplined farmers and settlers. He set about doing this by selecting 150 men from the ranks, and training them day in and day out in the ways of assembly, unified movements from one location to another, and instilling confidence concerning the use of their weapons. After working with these men there was a transformation in their character, their morale, and their camaraderie. He sent these men to train the remaining troops quartered at Valley Forge. While doing this he wrote the first military training manual The Blue Book. This book is still in use today, but today it’s better known as Army Field Manual 22-5 Drill and Ceremony (FM 22-5 1941).

It is a Drill Sergeants job to know this book verbatim, and be able to recite and execute any movement in any chapter on command. But even more important a drill sergeant must be an effective teacher. It is his/her job to train and make ready our troops for combat. The drill sergeant works with recruits from sun up to sundown. The position requires the sergeant to wake the recruits in the morning and put them to bed at night. There have been many portrayals of drill sergeants in the movies. But portrayal of the real life experience cannot be imitated. The drill sergeant is loyal to God, country and soldiers.

There are seven core values instilled in new military recruits. The first is loyalty, loyalty to the nation, the military and the unit. The second is Duty, the third is selfless service. The fourth is courage: overcoming fears of bodily harm, and doing your duty (physical courage) and overcoming fears of other than bodily harm (moral Courage) while doing what ought to be done. The fifth core value is candor: being frank, open, honest, and sincere with your soldiers, seniors, and
peers. The sixth core value is competence: proficiency in required professional knowledge, judgment, and skills. The seventh is commitment: dedication to carry out all unit missions and to serve the values of the unit, the military, and the country. The soldiering profession is nothing new to the world. There have been armies since time began. There has been killing throughout recorded history. In one of the greatest books ever written (The Bible), the first chapter Genesis, outlines in detail how Cain killed his brother Able.

Just as it took up to 24 weeks to transform them from civilian to soldier, it should take just as long to retrain the soldier to civilian. Because society has failed to provide that training, there is an alarming number of veterans finding it difficult to acclimate back into the world of civilians. Illnesses such as Post traumatic Stress Disorder, Traumatic Brain Injury, chronic Alcohol and Drug addiction, domestic violence, suicide, and homelessness are rampant among veterans. Although the advancement in treatment facilities has greatly improved since the time of the civil war. The plight of veterans is very grave. Many factors contribute to the increasing numbers of lost veterans. The atrocity of war and deployment are the main culprits. When society becomes more sensitive to the needs of veterans the ranks of lost veterans will decrease.

Unlike previous wars with the civil war being the exception, the troops have had a precise time in which they were in harm’s way, usually twelve to thirteen months. Today soldiers fine themselves deployed four and five times. Since our Army is considered a professional organization, this is considered a volunteer military force. These volunteers have been deployed to often and for too long. In Vietnam a tour of duty was thirteen months for Marines, and twelve months for United States Army Soldiers. Some men stayed in Vietnam, or went back by personal choice.
Because of this present day deployment dilemma our young soldiers are coming back with psychological problems unseen since the time of war began. Our fighting men are returning home and committing suicide. They are killing themselves, and they have lost all hope for living.

One view is that soldiers have been programmed to be killing machines, but some have forgotten to de-program them to be productive human beings. They suffer from wounds not visible to the naked eye. Their wounds are psychological, and as of yet there is growing recognition that the system has not developed a cure. Traumatic Head Wounds and Post Traumatic Stress disorder are not imaginary injuries. The question is how do we prepare our fighting men to leave the war behind? The problem to be addressed is, why is the return to civilian life so difficult for many veterans and why have they found suicide as the ultimate answer. Through countless research and studies our nation has failed to provide a procedure that will return our former soldiers into the productive citizens they once were. As war has evolved over the centuries the treatment of our warriors has stayed the same. Warriors are treated as outcast upon their return home. An example of this would be the case of a civil war veteran being treated for what is considered Post traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). During the era of the Civil War the treatment process was simple, just place the soldier in an insane asylum, and keep them separated from society. (Handley-Cousins, 2014).

Today that same wounded warrior can usually be found in soup lines, homeless shelters, or living on the streets. For whatever reason treatment of their war wounds is not and has not been efficient enough to reconcile the sacrifices they have made to our country. War is a state of usually open and declared armed hostile conflict between states or nations. War is fought by our most physically fit, well trained and in most cases young men and women. These are our most
malleable citizens; they are easily persuaded of their own invincibility. We label these young men and women as patriots. They are the defenders of our freedom, and without them our nation could not survive. The problem is that once they have fought the good fight, won the last battle, or given the ultimate sacrifice for their country, our country does very little to enhance their welfare. In every leadership armed forces field instruction manual (FM), the art of leadership is described as accomplishment of the mission with as little conflict as possible, and preservation of the welfare of the team members. The teams consist of the men and women that are forged together that make up the components for that team. All members of the team have assigned duties and a specific function.

For some unknown reason many of our soldiers upon release from the service are no longer members of the team. They simply fade away into loneliness, joblessness, homelessness, and due to their state in life they become substance abusers and a great majority become involved in our penal system. They become a part of the incarcerated population. They can no longer negotiate positively this civilian atmosphere and environment. The regimentation of a life of incarceration is easily adaptable for many veterans, due to the consistency in daily interactions. Just as in combat, while in jail or prison the veteran is on guard for the unexpected. There are many institutions that provide services for these veterans. But they lack the needed resources to be effective. The poverty stricken veteran population continues to increase.

**Discharge**

There are several ways in which a soldier can become a veteran. All of those specific ways are determined by the type of discharge the soldier receives. There are several types of discharges a soldier can receive prior to becoming a civilian. Those discharges are categorized as an
Honorable discharge, A Discharge under Honorable conditions, A Bad Conduct Discharge, and a Dishonorable Discharge. A military discharge can and often does determine the type of job eligibility the ex-soldier is fit for. Each discharge carries certain types of benefits the now veteran is eligible to receive. From home loans to burial ceremonies. A dishonorable discharge affords no benefits except burial services. Upon being discharged from the military a soldier is given a document labeled DD214, which is the nomenclature for the Department of Defense form 214. Discharge document. This is the most important document a soldier is ever given. This document determines how an individual climbs the ladder to success or failure. A Bad Conduct Discharge usually removes you from the civilian job market. (Separation Documents *Army Regulation 635–8, 2014)

During an interview with a Korean War veteran, the writer asked what the difference was for veterans returning from war. The veteran’s explanation for the veterans of today and the many psychological problems that they face is simple. When a soldier returned from war then, he was not alone. He went on to explain that when his unit came home after the war, they all came together. They rode a troop ship, and during the ride home they talked about their experiences of combat. By talking to each other they had an opportunity to let out their feelings with soldiers that had shared some of these same experiences.

Today’s soldier is not afforded the same opportunity. When his or her tour of duty is over, he or she is placed on a vehicle be it an airplane, helicopter, or truck, with a group of strangers, from different units. They are put in a position where they don’t know the person they’re sitting next to. So they hold in their feelings, their emotions, and fears. When they make it back to the states they are assigned to a muster out station, in most cases coming from anywhere across the
Atlantic Ocean, they are assigned to Fort Dix New Jersey. They receive a one or two day de-
briefing given their discharge papers, and on their way to back where they came from. But they
are not the same person they were when they left. This is the point in their lives that becomes a
defining moment, a place where Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, becomes apparent. They have
no one to share their experiences and traumatic events.

The result is excessive drinking or illegal drug usage. In most cases this is to forget the
trauma they just left. Another issue facing soldiers of today is domestic violence. The statistics
are staggering concerning the number of domestic violence cases within the military, and divorce
rates of returning veterans.” The increasing number of veterans with posttraumatic stress disor-
der (PTSD) raises the risk of domestic violence and its consequences on families and children in
communities across the United States,” says Mathieu Hovmand an expert on veteran mental
health and an assistant professor of social work at Washington University in St. Louis.
(Hovmand, & Hovmand 2008)

The research of (Hovmand 2008) includes an estimation that there are 23,816,000 veterans.
Some survivors of WWII and the Korean War, but now there is an increasing number of veterans
from the current Iraq and Afghanistan Wars, not to mention an overwhelming number of veter-
ans from the Vietnam War. Services for these veterans are becoming limited, and overwhelming.
According to research veterans with PTSD are more prone to engage in intimate partner violence
and are usually somehow connected to the legal system.
History of Survival

Humankind has instinctively made adaptations for the preservation of human life. It is this ability to adapt that has brought mankind to its present state. In order to preserve our way of life and the freedoms which encompass our way of life, we must have a security force that will protect our traditions, culture and heritage whenever and whenever the world requires a physical combative response. Because of this our nation has created its own force of trained killers. Normal people that will kill on demand and kill for the sake of love of country. This has been a long standing tradition since our nation’s inception, and will continue until our culture has vanished from the face of the earth. For many of my readers this topic is not considered as one traverses daily lives. But there is a chronological process to the establishment and demise of our ultimate warriors. Several veterans have shared their personal experiences, when they joined the military. Life after military service, and the struggles of daily survival in a supposedly peaceful environment.
CHAPTER THREE CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

After military service veterans find themselves in a state of discombobulation. The veterans that experience combat trauma have to live with the atrocities of war, and they find themselves seeking relief. That sleep is not physical, it’s psychological. Veterans without war experience but found themselves stationed in hostile environments such as South Korea, experience separation trauma. The effects of veteran trauma last a lifetime. As long as veterans endure the residuals of military service the living time bomb walks our streets.

One proposal is establishment of a separation camp. A camp that is housed in one of our countries vacant military post. Two months prior to discharge a soldier is assigned to the camp. The uniform is civilian clothing. If married the soldiers family can accompany him/her to the camp. While stationed at the camp the soldier engages life as a civilian. He would pay bills apply for jobs, join social organizations, and learn how to be a family oriented person. Counseling would be made available, and any psychological treatment would be readily available. This would enable the soon to be veteran an opportunity to slowly acclimate back into civilian culture. By the time most soldiers are ready to end time in service, they have developed habits such as drinking. At this camp they would undergo AODA assessments, and given treatment if necessary. It took more than a few weeks to create a soldier, it should take more than a discharge paper (DD214) to reverse the process.

An inmate released from prison is afforded the opportunity to reintegrate back into society by way of a halfway house or minimum security facility. A facility of this nature is designed for a transition period from prison to society. The convict is not thrust upon society with no support. A bed is given as well as support in finding employment. The ex-con can reunite with family, and
have access to various community organizations to slowly work him/herself back into mainstream culture. That same philosophy should be incorporated for veterans being released from active duty.

A recent promising action by the United States Congress is the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans passed by the Congress and signed by the President in February 2015. The Clay Hunt Act was named after marine Cpl. Clay Hunt. After serving two tours of duty in Afghanistan Hunt left the Marine Corps in 2009. He struggled with depression, panic attacks, and PTSD. He had a military disability compensation rating at 30%. Shortly after his discharge his marriage ended. He tried to find work, but was unsuccessful.

His life mirrored many veterans after multiple deployments. In 2011 in Houston Texas, Clay Hunt age 28, locked himself in his apartment and turned a gun on himself. (Lamothe 2014). According to Hunt’s mother Susan Selke, the V.A. system did not adequately address Clay’s mental health needs. She and another veteran’s mother Valerie Pallotta asked the Senate to put an end to the bureaucracy that veterans deal with when seeking treatment. Her son Joshua R. Pallotta committed suicide September 23rd 2014. An estimated 22 veterans commit suicide every day. (Lamothe 2014).

The Clay Hunt Act allows The Secretary of The Veterans Affairs to establish a pilot program to assist veterans transitioning from serving on active duty and improve the access of veterans to mental health services. Establish community outreach teams to assists veterans transitioning into communities. Develop a community oriented peer support network with peer support counselors. Which is readily available to veterans including pursuant to Veterans Integrated Service Network, while working with State and local governments and appropriate entities. Establishes a veteran’s transition advisory group to facilitate outreach activities.
The bill also establishes a collaboration on suicide prevention efforts between the Department of Veterans Affairs and non-profit mental health organizations. The bill establishes a repayment of educational loans for Psychiatrists of veteran’s health administration. (Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention Act. 2015, January 30).
APPENDIX

The Narrative

The United States of America is considered the greatest melting pot on earth. A walk, or ride through our cities neighborhoods and you see we are one colossal culture. We take for granted many of the freedoms we enjoy. But what is the essential cost of those freedoms, that many if not all Americans take for granted? After all this is a country that professes “you can be anything you want to be”. But all Americans consider this country as the greatest country on the planet.

Although many have written about the thought process, of a civilian turned soldier, and the soldier returning to civilian life. None can explain the mindset of a soldier during the Revolutionary War to the conflicts and wars there after. But as this paper proceeds from the Revolutionary War to our current wars, We as a nation have learned that freedom is not free, there is a cost for freedom, The residuals of that cost can be seen in prisons, homeless shelters, and the many men and women that have gone into isolation from the freedom they established.

The overall concept of the military experience is the knowledge that death is an inevitable battlefield outcome, and can happen at any anytime. A soldier must remain consious of this at all times. Only to return to an environment that views death as a phenominon that happens to other people.

Veterans develop camaraderie with their brothers in uniform. When ending time in service veterans feel lost and isolated. Like any profession being a soldier has it’s highs and lows. But the military man or woman, is trained to continue to march without emotions, despite the circumstances, or outcomes of any situtation. Our nation has traveled a long and extensive
journey since the French Indian war, to our current wars in Iraq, and Afghanistan, although many things about war have changed, most of which has stayed the same. The war is fought by soldiers, they end up wounded, and or dead. Sometime it’s easy to forget that soldier was someone’s son or daughter, mother, or father, cousin, or nephew we forget that soldier was apart of a family outside of the military.

**When warriors return**

Veterans that were drafted produced some very interesting outlooks towards military service. What was most interesting about interviews with veterans from a military background was the fact that these veterans found adjustment to civilian life and normalcy much easier than those veterans from non-exposed or educated to the concept of military life. In many cases patriotic families expected their next generation to serve in the military in any capacity. Whereas non-patriotic families would advocate non-involvement in any military activity. This mentality gravely affected the psychological conditioning of veterans’ re-acclimation to civilian life.

In the black community the returning veteran was greeted with slogans such as “I wouldn’t fight in the white man’s army”. Or a black man has no place in the white man’s military. Last but not least now you’re not in the army, everybody out here is a general. Meaning the individual determines their own destiny. The problem is the veteran finds him/herself without a mission. The military has trained the soldier to handle any situation, except the expectations of the civilian world. The veteran is virtually lost in the world he at one time called home. His family’s mindset hasn’t changed, their way of viewing this returning veteran is negative. The boy or girl that left yesterday to join the military is the same person that came back home. They have no idea of the man or women that soldier has become.
As I began this research I didn’t have a clue as to a topic or subject matter, but the more I recalled my military career the more unanswered questions came into view. One of the most powerful questions has to do with the military family as a whole, the soldier, his spouse, their children, and the couple’s friendships. How deep does the indoctrination go, and does that psychological reinforcement greatly contribute to the breakup of the military family.

As I researched this paper it became apparent to me that the beginning of this research should begin with the start of the Armies of the United States. How, when, and why they started, and what the psychological mindset was for the early soldiers in United States History.

The beginnings of the United States Army is unlike any in the world. The very first soldiers were merely young boys that got guns from their fathers or village elders to hunt for food. Because this was untamed territory there was always the threat of attacks by native americans, so forts were created for fighting off invaders. These young boys as well as the men of the specific villages had gun ports from which to fire their weapons. These were not professional soldiers, just settlers trying to survive to the next day. Unlike their counterparts in Europe the United States had no professional Army. There was no aristocratic leadership. The chain of command was the village elders.

In Europe the art of war was established by and with rules of war. The soldiers were most often lower class men, from jails and poverty stricken status. The officers were from prominent families that had wealth. According to those rules gentleman did not kill other gentleman. The armies would face each other, and at the end of day the fighting would retire until the next day, the evening was relaxation time. The Americas changed the way and how war was fought.
First of all being 3000 miles away from England had an important impact on the inhabitants of the Americas, secondly the native Americans had a long history of not fighting in the conventional European style of warfare. Their tactics were based on killing without being killed. So they attacked at night, and fought from behind cover and concealment. The American former farmer had to adapt or die. But in learning how to fight this enemy, a different war strategy was created, the art of guerilla warfare. Which in part was the reason the colonies defeated the mighty British Army during the Revolutionary War. Along with the aide of French advisors. It is my intention to describe the thought process, of a civilian turned soldier, and the soldier returning to civilian life.

**First Veteran Interview**

We will begin with a veteran named Joe Kline from Antigo Wisconsin, and how he began his first days in the military. When he got off the plane from Milwaukee, Wisconsin to Saint Louis, Missouri he was loaded on a bus, destination Fort Leonard Wood Missouri. It was close to twelve midnight when he arrived in Saint Louis. Arriving at the Fort Leonard Wood reception station about three o'clock in the morning. As he got off the bus with some fifty recruits from all over the country, they were greeted by a very small but extremely direct drill sergeant.

He was a short man with a very loud voice; he barked orders such as “line up, face left or right’. Stand up straight. And eyes straight to the front. Joe stated fear was the emotion shared by all of the new recruits, because they didn’t know what to expect or how to react. It was his next order that was most interesting; he made them all focus their attention on a box located by the door of the assembly room. He said any and all weapons and drug paraphernalia were considered to be contraband, and should be deposited into the box. He had a pocket knife so he went to deposit
it into the box. When he looked into the box he couldn’t believe his eyes. He said he saw revolvers, knives, razor blades, drug pipes, and all types of makeshift weapons. He stated it was at that point in his life, which could be considered as one of his defining moments.

That was when he became serious about life. No more high school fun or the silly girlfriend dates. This reality was one he had never encountered before or since. Next they were marched over to the supply building, were they were given their new army underwear, and socks. The little sergeant told them too report for morning formation in their new army clothes. Because they got in so late, first call was about eight the next morning. That morning about two hundred men reported for morning formation in their brand new underwear, tee shirts, and olive green socks. Needless to say their first impression with their assigned drill sergeant, was very interesting because he was amazed that that many men would fail to dress themselves prior to coming outside.

After he ordered them to go put some clothes on in the next two minutes, they were loaded onto a cattle truck. Very tightly he added, they road to the main post, ordered to exit the truck, and get in line. This was the beginning of his transformation into the soldierly mindset vs. the mindset of a civilian. Remember he ordered them to get dress and return in two minutes, which they did. They were total strangers when they met, but now they were becoming one mind set. After their first trip to the barbershop they couldn’t recognize each other, in a matter of moments their individuality was gone. They were no longer Slim from New York, or Cool from Chicago. They all looked the same black and white together. Although very clandestine the process of psychological indoctrination had begun.

It began from the time they left the bus and continued until the final week of basic training. The process of changing ways in which civilians view and react to the world was being replaced
by the ways in which a soldier views and reacts the world. The beginning of his lessons to kill
the enemy had begun. He said he was taught a slogan that day, a slogan that stayed with him
throughout his military career, “fuck communism”. To tell the truth many of the new recruits had
no idea what communism was. There may have been a few recruits that actually understood the
ideology of communism at the time. But the communist were our enemy, and our hate for them
started the minute new recruits took off their civilian cloths and put on army green clothes. As
you read this, keep in mind that the majority of Joe’s drill sergeants were veterans that had just
survived the war in Vietnam.

He stated basic training was very physical. Running from five in the morning until days end.
When morning assembly was sounded at five a.m. the recruits would assemble in formation on
the parade ground. From there they would march to the track, and start running in formation
sometime they would run five miles. After running they would line up for calisthenics. After
physical training (PT) they were given five minutes to wash. They would assemble again and
march to breakfast. Prior to entrance to the mess hall each recruit had to climb the horizontal lad-
der. If you didn’t make it the first time, you had to go to the end of the line. No one ate until eve-
ryone crossed the ladders.

After breakfast everyday was spend training. We would learn the core values of the military.
Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal courage. Then we would
learn weaponry such as marksmanship with the M-16, grenade tossing, the M-203 grenade
launcher, and the light antitank weapon (LAW). We spend a lot of time in the class room, but
many days were spent in the field in pup tents. We also spent a lot of time with bayonet training
and hand to hand combat.

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Basic training was very rigorous, but during the middle weeks of training we learned to appreciate our drill instructors. At first they were always hollering and challenging. They never smiled or shared a kind word of encouragement. We used to think they were the meanest people on earth. But over time we came to understand the seriousness of what they were doing. They were teaching us how to survive in the most challenging circumstances. In many instances many of us wanted to emulate our drill sergeant. He stated he went on to Jump school because his drill instructor challenged him to become airborne. Airborne soldiers are considered the elite, the best of the best.

Joe explained that he only stayed in the military for three years after basic training. He was assigned to an infantry battalion in Fort Benning Georgia. He always remembered his drill sergeants, and he always had a great deal of respect for them.

Second Veteran Interview

After the interview with Joe, I met Jim Martin from Chicago Illinois, a maintenance man at Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC); he was also a twenty year retired veteran. He spoke about his first duty assignment after basic training. He was stationed in The Federal Republic of Germany from 1975 to 1978. He was assigned to The 3rd Armor Division, 3rd Brigade 33rd Armor Battalion, in the Combat Support Company. He was 19 years old and a trained killer. His Military Occupational Specialty (Mos.) more importantly his specialized weapons’ training was as a Redeye Gunner. The Redeye Weapon System was a shoulder fired surface to air missile. It was created to shoot down hostile aircraft in the battle zone.
One of his many other assignments was guarding the border between East Germany and West Germany. His company’s assembly area was a border town named Bad Herzfeld which was located on the border between East and West Germany in an area known as The Fulda Gap. The gap was located between two mountain ranges for at least 100 miles, and was an integral component of the Iron Curtain. Outside Of Berlin the curtain was a series of barred wired fences, and mine fields that extended from the northern border of East and West Germany to their southern border. On one day in particular while looking through his binoculars he saw an East German soldier looking back at him with his binoculars. They waived to each other, as in a jester of friendship. He smile and he thought the East German did the same. A few seconds later he saw a man come face to face with that soldier, and slap him in the mouth.

At that point in his life the event was of no importance, because after all the man didn’t slap him. But as he grew older he never forgot that incident. He wondered why a man, who he assumed was a ranking officer, first Sergeant, or platoon sergeant, slapped the soldier as he did. Then one day it donned on him, when he thought about the way that soldier was treated. They were adversaries and there could come a day in which they might have to kill each other. They were in no position to form any type of bond. The question could arise one day, can I kill my friend? He could not afford to be dead to fine the answer.

This incident had him remembering his days in basic training. Sure there was the physical aspect of training, but the training that was most intense was the psychological programming. They were drilled day in and day out, night after night, that they hated Communism. They had a slogan they would say during every march or run. They would repeat after their drill sergeant who was calling Jody cadence. (Lineberry 2002) He would sing out the song while they ran, and at the
end of the song he would say Fuck Communism! The full complement of men would repeat after the sergeant. The irony of that statement was that most of the men, 80% of the company didn’t have a clue as to what Communism was.

After the incident on the border he never saw that guard from the east again, and he never waived to another guard. He did write a poem, and although he couldn’t recall the poem in its entirety he never forget the catch phrase,” He’s the guy that will load and stow the bullet with my name”. That one incident has lead me to ask a major question in my life concerning veterans. Is the psychological indoctrination more intense than the physical training while in basic training? I understand that a psychological wound takes longer to heal than a physical wound. This raises the question does the human brain ever recover from psychological programming?

**Third interview**

While walking the lake front of Lake Michigan I saw this young man looking out at the water waves. He seemed fixated on the movement of the waves as they reached the shore. I approached the young man and inquired was he alright, or did he need medical assistance? His response was much unexpected. He stated he just needed somebody to talk too. He went on to explain that he had just returned from Iraq. He was an automatic weapons gunner in the 101st Air Assault Division stationed at Fort Campbell Tennessee. He stated he was having a problem adjusting to this civilian atmosphere. He explained that no one seemed to understand what he had been through, and it seemed like nobody cared. When I suggested he go to the Veterans Administration for counseling. He stated he’d already done that, and they awarded him 100% percent service connected disability. But he had thoughts of killing himself, because he was tired of carrying what he’d done, and what he had seen in his head. He said they give him pills, but he can’t sleep. The
veteran stated he was taking Sertraline, Bupropion, and Aripiprazole every day for mental health. He was also prescribed Trazodone to help him sleep they told him he was suffering from PTSD, and depression.

He told me his unit stayed in the field longer than any other unit in Iraq. One day after returning from a field mission. His close friend told him he had to go, said bye and put his pistol in his mouth, and pulled the trigger. The next thing he felt was brain matter on his face and uniform. He told me the friend had had enough. Enough killing and mutilation, enough cruelty, enough lack of concern for human life. It seemed to him that the more they went out the easier the killing got. As I looked at the young man’s hip, I saw a holster with a pistol in it attached to his belt. When I enquired about the gun, he told me he felt naked without it. He couldn’t leave the house without it. When he went to different places his weapon was close at hand. There are several thousand men and women like him walking our streets every day. I asked the veteran how he has adjusted to being back in the world. He stated it’s hard very hard. Many of his comrades went to jail shortly after their discharge. Some thought of prison like being in combat. Always on alert, and prepared for battle. They found life easier in jail.

The Black Veterans

The Historian is both discover and creator. To the uniqueness of his role we have a clue in the very word “history,” which means both the course of the past and the legible account of the past. The historian is always trying to reduce, or remove, that ambiguity. If he is successful, he leads his readers to take or –mistake- his account for what was really there. (Boorstin, 1987 p.3)
The majority of ground combat is executed by the infantry soldier. His origins were usually from the lower economic stratosphere. There is a perception that the Vietnam War killed more African Americans than white soldiers. That perception was and is entirely untruthful. Of the 52,475 soldiers killed in Vietnam 7,250 were African Americans, (Leland 2010). But because the war was so politicized, any and every cause was a reason to protest, and claim an injustice; in this case it was racism and the belief that the war exterminated too many African Americans.

Vietnam was the first time all American troops black and white legally fought side by side with in the same unit. Throughout history black soldiers were considered cowards and usually held jobs as non-combatants. History no matter how written, will sometime produce a truthful account of events. As was the case with every war this country has fought. Black soldiers proved themselves a very dominant force to be reckoned with.

A truthful account of Teddy Roosevelt and the Rough Rider’s victory at San Juan Hill will explain why San Juan Hill was so easily taken. The truth is that the all black tenth cavalry captured the block house and San Juan Hill. Frank Knox (he would be secretary of the navy during World War II,) found himself fighting with the tenth cavalry when he was separated from his Rough Rider Unit. Knox later wrote: I joined a troop of the 10th cavalry and for the first time in my life I fought shoulder to shoulder with negro troops, and in justice to the colored race I must say that I never saw braver men anywhere. Some of those who rushed up the hill will live in my memory forever. By the time the rough riders made it up the hill the 10th all black cavalry unit had already taken the hill, but until recently were never given credit for their participation in the battle. (Buckley 2001. p.146)
The purpose of the above paragraph is to highlight the dismal plight military life on veterans of color. Black soldiers were victims of racial prejudice throughout their military career. Considered lazy and useless on the battlefield. After Vietnam, black veterans were seldom diagnosed with having PTSD. It was considered a normal life occurrence for black veterans. The notion that if a black veteran had nightmares, it was in all probability a result of his childhood.

The residuals of those prejudicial beliefs can be seen at most V.A. hospitals throughout the country. The Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) program has an abundance of black veterans in menial jobs such as grounds keepers, or cleaning crews. Most of these veterans can’t find civilian employment, and they’re fighting addictions. Many of these veterans have been diagnosed with mental health disorders. The CWT program is an excellent compensatory tool, because it reintegrates veterans back into the work mentality. However there is no supported evidence of veterans leaving the program and becoming gainfully employed.
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