VETERAN ROLE SALIENCE: A STUDY OF STUDENT VETERAN REINTEGRATION IN THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

by

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Abstract

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by

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The research question that informed this dissertation was: in what ways do military identities impede or enhance student veteran engagement in higher education institutions? This research was designed with a mixed methods approach; a 40 question survey instrument (N=300) constituted the quantitative portion of the study; 20 in-depth interviews and one semester of ethnography with several student veteran clubs constituted the qualitative portion of the study. All data collection was conducted in the City University of New York (CUNY) with student veterans attending 4-year and community colleges.

My findings confirmed a correlation between military occupational specialties and the differential quality of relationships student veterans experience with nonveteran students, faculty, administrators, and amongst themselves. This research also discovered a number of issues CUNY could address at an administrative level in order to facilitate the academic success of these particular nontraditional students. Some of these issues were: the tendency toward marginalization of female student veterans in student veteran clubs and campus spaces, the need to take affirmative measures to encourage student veteran and nonveteran student communication to the benefit of both groups, and the need to develop a standard system to assess military service for college credit.

Acknowledgements

Five years ago a colleague, professional mentor, and fellow combat veteran, Mitt Parsons, told me that the years he spent in graduate school, post-Vietnam, were the best and most memorable of his life. With my head still “in the shit”—dealing with my war demons, enduring low pay and a nagging superego, ever urging me to be “productive”—I thought Mitt had lost his mind, or at least developed a grass-is-greener complex with the “good ole’ days.” It took a few years to set in but now at the twilight of my own graduate career, I refer to the years I’ve spent studying at the CUNY Graduate Center as the best of my life as well. Admittedly, I echo much of what Mitt explained to me, as I recall graduate school as a time when I: asked questions and explored answers freely; lost myself in investigation and research (sometimes literally); traveled the world widely for education and pure enjoyment; developed friendships with some of the most intelligent and interesting people I’ve had the occasion to meet; and, last but certainly not least of all, met my beautiful wife. Coming from very humble beginnings (a reference I use more humbly than most), it is unsurprising how graduate school could have been enjoyable to me, as it expanded the potential and, more importantly, *my perception* of the potential of my life beyond my imagination. And where would I be but for the people along the way that made the journey such a good ride?

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instrumental in my data collection. Without the former Director of CUNY Veteran Affairs, Wilfred Cotto, and the current Acting Director, Stephen Clark, I would not have been able to conduct my research in CUNY successfully. My dissertation research included the most widely administered survey of CUNY student veterans to date, thanks in large part to the efforts of Veterans Affairs Coordinators, namely: Ann Treadaway, Peggy Barnett, Welby Alcantara, and Charles Uwa. No small thanks goes to the student veterans they helped recruit for the research. These participants bravely offered up their stories, many of them viewing their participation as an extension of their military service and hoping their fellow student veterans would benefit.

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Dedicated to Demon Company of the 101st Cavalry and

Sergeant David M. Fisher (KIA Dec 1, 2004 Baghdad, Iraq)

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Chapter One

Demography of Post-911 Veterans

In 2011 21.6 million Americans were military veterans. At least half, 10.4 million, of this population was composed of World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam era veterans. Nearly a quarter (5 million) of the total veteran population can be considered Gulf War I and II era veterans. The final quarter of the veteran population is constituted by former service members who did not serve during any of the defined periods of conflict (i.e. WWII, Korean War, Vietnam War, and Gulf War I and II). This period ranges from the end of the Korean War to the beginning of the Vietnam War, and the end of the Vietnam War to the beginning of Gulf War I. As of 2012 2.4 million veterans, or nearly half of 1% of the national population, served during the Gulf War II, or the Post 911, period (BLS 2012b).

The immense changes the American military has experienced since the advent of the All Volunteer Force (1973) and over a decade of sustained war has affected the class background and educational level of military recruits in ways which are at times contrary to popular thought. In some respects one may conclude that the Post 9-11 military is comprised of higher quality individuals than American society generally; a larger portion of the military has high school diplomas than the nation as a whole (Pew Research Center 2011); and five years of income data from 2005 to 2010 show that the vast majority of military recruits come from the eight middle deciles of the American income distribution (National Priorities Project 2010). The income deciles that constituted the greatest number of military recruits were the two middle deciles. And it follows that in all five years the bottom and top deciles of the American income distribution

(i.e. the richest and the poorest Americans) contributed the smallest amount of military recruits. However, despite these trends the majority of the enlisted military comes from homes that live beneath the national median household income (National Priorities Project 2010).

Overall the veteran population of the United States of America is disproportionately male (92%). Although in recent years the number of females serving in the U.S. military has risen to record levels, the vast gender gap in the veteran population is a function of the almost solely male military that served during earlier wars. The end of the draft in 1973 initiated a huge change in the demography of military ranks. As the nation sought to recruit able and competent individuals for service, and service for men became voluntary, the military also began to allow greater service opportunities to women. During World War II many women were permitted to serve in non-combat positions, and they continued to serve in this capacity in the conflicts that ensued after WWII but in much fewer numbers until the end of the draft. As of September 30th, 2010 8.1% of all living veterans were female.

The veteran population of the USA is also disproportionately white (78%). Although African Americans have served in every major war in U.S. history, they comprise nearly 12% of the veteran population of the nation. Hispanics and Asians comprise approximately 6% and 1.3% of the nation's veterans respectively (Ruggles et al. 2010).

The subset of the nation's veteran population that is of primary importance to this study is the Post 911 or Gulf War II generation. These veterans are defined as those who have served in the

U.S. military on or after September 2001, are now discharged from service, and remain living[1]. The demography of this group of veterans is quite different from the larger veteran population. For instance, women comprise 17% of Gulf War veterans compared to 8.1% of the nation's total veteran population, and only 3% of WWII, Korean War, and Vietnam era veterans. African Americans comprise nearly 17% of Gulf War veterans as well, compared to 12% of the total veteran population. Hispanics and Asians also constitute a larger portion of Gulf War veterans compared to total living veterans: 10% and 2.3% respectively compared to 6% and 1.3% of total veterans (Ruggles et al., 2010).

Aside from the increasing presence of women and minorities in the Post 911 veteran population this subset of veterans is also unique in terms of other characteristics, such as its marital status. 52% of all Post 911 veterans above the age of 21 are in marriages with both spouses present, and19% of all Post 911 veterans are divorced, separated, or married to a spouse who is not present. Twenty eight percent of Post 911 veterans have never been married (Ruggles et al., 2010). In 1973, near the end of the Vietnam War, only 40% of veterans were married (Pew Research Center, 2011). This is an example of a cohort of veterans at the end of a conflict that had a much lower rate of marriage than the Post 911 generation. This may mean that Post 911 veterans have a greater tendency toward marriage than the generation before them. Additionally Post 911 veterans are much more likely to marry than individuals of comparable age in the civilian population (Pew Research Center, 2011).

[1] Because of the manner in which data on veterans is entered by the Veterans Administration it is not possible to differentiate between Gulf War I and Gulf War II veterans in the VA's dataset, therefore when analyzing Gulf War II (Post 911) veterans, the data set will also include Gulf War I veterans. Currently the period of time Gulf War I and II encompass is from 1990 to 2012.

Segal and Segal (2006) note that the new military continues to incentivize child-rearing and marriage among service-members. This is evidenced by the increased level of pay given to all service-members with dependents (a spouse and/or children). Segal also notes that by developing this incentive structure the military has not only attracted more individuals needing to make a living to provide for their families but also has encouraged more service-members already in the ranks to have families.

Post 911 veterans are generally older than earlier generations of veterans during their time in the theatre of action. Although two thirds of active duty service-members are age 30 and younger, it remains true that the age of service members has "significantly increased" since the draft ended (Pew Research Center 2011). The military's professional image and its incentives for heads of household have attracted older recruits, however another factor contributing to the increased age of service-members in the period between 2008 and the present is certainly the failing economy. Many have experienced layoffs in occupations that span the field of American employment, blue collar to white collar. Since the initial collapse in 2008 regeneration of the economy has been slow to come, consequently new hires and rehiring of laid-off individuals has also lagged. Before the economic collapse, in 2005 Congress raised the Army enlistment age from 35 to 42. This move allowed older recruits who had suffered from lay-offs the option of joining the military to reduce economic hardship for themselves and their families. Naturally some of this surplus labor-force trickled into the ranks of the military. Scholars have acknowledged a similar trend in WWII veterans, who welcomed the military draft and even enlistment after experiencing the Great Depression in order to escape deprived family situations (Elder 1987) and/or attain access to opportunities they otherwise may not have had (Browning et al. 1973). Furthermore a

recent study found that enlisted-persons and women are far more likely to join the service for lack of civilian employment (Pew Research Center 2011).

There is some cause for concern over the attraction of military service to increasingly older individuals. Elder (1987) has acknowledged, given his research on a sample of WWII veterans, that military service benefits older recruits much less so than younger recruits. He argues that not only do older recruits benefit less from service but that they also assume greater costs upon joining the service at a later age. These costs include, but are not limited to, career disruption and increased family strains. Elder's evidence suggests that the trend of older individuals serving in the military may result in poorer educational and economic achievement levels for the Post 911 generation.

Post 911 veterans differ from earlier veterans in their receipt of service-connected disability. Service connected disability has many functions for injured veterans: 1) veterans may receive monthly compensation based upon their disability rating (ranging from 0%-100% by increments of 10); 2) veterans will have their medications paid for by Veterans Administration even if a veteran receives a rating of 0%; 3) service connection gives injured veterans priority over non-service-connected veterans in access to VA hospital treatment and services; 4) service connection gives a veteran legal documentation of a disability they incurred while in service. Gulf War I and II veterans report having a service-connected disability at nearly twice the rate of total veterans, 26% compared 14% (BLS 2012b). Some of the changes that may affect this

statistic are: there were more era veterans[2] of past wars than there are of the present wars; a higher portion of veterans that served in the Gulf War theatres of action were exposed to combat than the veterans of past wars[3]; there is much greater capacity to save lives on the battle field in the present wars than there was in past wars, therefore more injured veterans survive; the US military and Department of Veterans Affairs has invested some resources during the present conflicts toward encouraging veterans to use the VA healthcare system and overcoming stigma of certain types of injuries[4].

Veterans of the Post 911 era admit to having more difficulty readjusting to civilian life. Post 911 veterans report these difficulties at a rate of 44%; veterans of earlier wars reported this difficulty at only 25% (Pew Research Center, 2011). Notwithstanding the popularity of the images of civilian hostility towards military action and veterans during the Vietnam Era, Post 911 veterans report much more difficulty with readjustment. This feature of the Post 911 generation may also be affected by some of the new developments of this era. For instance by effectively combating the stigma of conditions like Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) it is possible that more veterans may have become willing to admit they are suffering increased difficulty in readjusting to civilian life. Currently about 4-in-10 Post 911 veterans say they believe they have PTSD, even if they were not formally diagnosed with the condition. This statistic alone indicates that the stigma of the condition has decreased considerably since the

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[2] Era veterans are veterans that served in the military during a period of conflict but did not serve in the theater of action.
[3] This is a characteristic of asymmetrical warfare, warfare without front and rear demarcations. Because there is a possibility to experience violence anywhere in theater, all troops must be prepared to experience the violence of war.
[4] There is an ongoing campaign to decrease stigma directed toward veterans and service-members suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and/or Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).

Vietnam Era. PTSD is the most common psychiatric condition veterans receive service-connected disability and treatment for (600,000 veterans per year) (Murdoch et al., 2003).

There may also be a changing cultural effect contributing to the increased reporting of difficulty with adjustment and belief in PTSD. It is well known now that many stories of WWII veterans were unheard because the veterans themselves did not share their accounts of the war and the trauma they incurred with their families, wives, and children. For the WWII generation, silence regarding experiences on the battlefield was a fact of life. Some scholars believe this was due to the fervent support for the war that deterred veterans from voicing any opposition or anything that seemed to oppose the images of WWII veterans as heroes. Others acknowledge the existence of an austere masculinity that was defined by 'sucking it up and locking it away.' Additionally there was insurmountable stigma against combatants who experienced psychological trauma in war. Any indication of psychological trauma was to the detriment of the combatant. During the Vietnam era this stigma still existed and in some ways progressed. While stigma against combatants with PTSD has perpetuated into Post 911 generation it is actively addressed by non-profit and government organizations alike. This may also account for the increased admittance of PTSD in Post 911 veterans.

Notwithstanding the increased reporting of PTSD among Post 911 veterans, several studies have found that in subsets of the veteran population cases of PTSD remain underreported and these veterans are therefore denied appropriate services. Fewer female veterans are diagnosed with PTSD than male veterans, which in turn affects the rate at which female veterans attain service-connected disability. Studies have found that this relationship is mediated by differential combat

exposure between male and female veterans. Male service members experience combat at a much greater rate than female service members. This, however, does not provide sufficient explanation for the lack of PTSD diagnosis in female veterans given the prevalence of non-combat related trauma in the female veteran population (Willer and Grossman 1995). Military sexual trauma (MST) is a common experience among women who have served in the Post 911 era; this encompasses trauma sustained by way of sexual harassment and sexual assault. Studies have found that sexual assault is closely related to the development of PTSD and also other serious conditions. Sexual assault victims are much more likely to commit suicide, develop depression, anxiety, and even cancer than non-victims. It is possible that female veterans have been under-diagnosed with PTSD, and lack service-connection for reasons of PTSD, at a much lower rate, because of their inability to prove they have been sexually assaulted relative to the ability of men to prove they have experienced combat. Another explanation for this trend may be that clinicians tend to have a "combat preference" (Murdoch et al., 2003) when diagnosing veterans with PTSD, which can mean that clinicians consider trauma sustained through combat as the "prototypical presentation of this disorder" (Willer and Grossman, 1995).

African Americans are also under-diagnosed with PTSD, and they receive service-connected disability for reasons of PTSD at a much lower rate than white service-members. A study found that the negative relationship between black race and service-connection for reasons of PTSD cannot be accounted for by differences in "veterans' PTSD symptom severity; service characteristics; physical functioning; work, role, or social functioning; age; gender, education; medical comorbidities; levels of combat exposure, or sexual assault status" (Murdoch et al., 2003). Most interestingly, differential combat exposure does not account for the lack of service-

connected disability for PTSD in the African American veteran population because they are often exposed to combat at a similar, and sometimes even greater, rate than white non-Hispanic veterans.[5] These findings are alarming because of some of the effects that the lack of service-connected disability can have on veterans. Veterans who are disabled but not service-connected are more likely to become jobless, dependent on welfare (Rosenheck et al. 2000), and homeless (Rosenheck et al.,1995).

In the present economic climate, Post-911 veterans do not appear to be fairing as well as their civilian counterparts in terms of employment. In 2012 the unemployment rate in the United States was reported at 8.2%, this constitutes nearly a 1% decrease from 2011. In June 2011 the unemployment rate for Post-911 veterans was reported at 13.3%, yet the average unemployment rate for Post 911 veterans during 2011 was 12.2%. A year later, as of June 2012, the unemployment rate for Post-911 veterans was 9.5%. The decrease in the unemployment rate of Post 911 veterans between 2011 and 2012 seems extraordinary (nearly 3% overall and greater than 4% when measuring the distance between the greatest high of 2011 and low 2012) (BLS 2012b; BLS 2012c), however 2012 being a year of the presidential election it is all but expected that the unemployment rate will differ greatly from the year before.

The most disconcerting data on the unemployment rate of veterans appears when we focus on the patterns of employment of various age groups. Current trends in data show that the younger a Post-911 veteran is when returning to the civilian sector of employment, the more likely that veteran is to be unemployed. Veterans aged 18 to 24 have a much higher unemployment rate

[5] Kadushin, Charles in *Vietnam Veteran Redefined* found that African Americans were disproportionately serving on the front lines for several years of the Vietnam War.

than civilians of the same age group (29% to 17.6% respectively). The largest age group of the Post 911 generation is 25 to 34; the ages of nearly half of all veterans of the Post 911 period range from 25 to 34. Post-911 veterans within this group also experience greater difficulty in the civilian sector of employment than nonveterans. 13.4% of veterans whose ages range from 25 to 34 are currently unemployed compared to 9.5% of civilians. Veterans age 35 and above do not significantly differ from civilians in terms of their unemployment rate (BLS, March 2012; BLS, July 2012).

A study has found that Post 911 veterans of this age group while more likely to be unemployed are also more likely earn a higher wage compared to their civilian counterparts; they are also more likely to be enrolled in higher education. In fact this group of Post 911 veterans looks a lot more like WWII veterans than the generation of Vietnam Veterans before them, given their higher earning potential and the likelihood they will attend college after the service. Humensky et al. (2012) acknowledges that Post-911 veterans between ages 18-24 are more likely to be unemployed yet those who have found work are more likely to earn a higher wage, is somewhat suggestive of contradiction.

Little is known about the variables that contribute to the large difference in the unemployment rate for Post 911 veterans compared to civilians in the range of 18 to 24 years old. What we do know is that current rates of service-connected disability do not explain this large gap. The unemployment rate for all service-connected (disabled) veterans is currently 8.5%. This estimate is not very different from that of the unemployment rate for all veterans with no disability (7.9%) (BLS, March 2012). It is possible that non-service-connected veterans who are nevertheless

injured or in poor health from their time in service constitute a generous portion of this unemployed group. However, given the fact that Post-911 veterans already declare disabilities and use VA services at a much higher level than past generations of veterans, it is unlikely that the lack of service-connected disability will explain the unemployment gap. [6] Additionally it is possible that the high likelihood that Post 911 veterans ages 18-24 will attend higher education is a partly result of these veterans not being able to find adequate employment.

Some trends look hopeful for Post-911 veterans. For instance Elder (1987) found that individuals who enrolled in the military later in life were largely affected negatively by their service, in that they interrupted vital years of career development which in turn negatively affected their earning potential. To a similar effect Humensky (2012) notes that older veterans of previous eras were more likely to be unemployed, have no earnings, and have low earnings than their civilian counterparts. However, current data show that the rate of unemployment for older Post-911 veterans is not statistically different from comparable civilians (BLS March 2012). This means that the negative effect of military service on the economic situation of older veterans (35 and older) of the Post-911 generation may not be as strong as it was for prior generations. Quite possibly because of the economic turmoil the United States has experienced since 2008 Post-911, veterans of older ages are not affected negatively by serving in the military relative to their civilian peers. In a word, this generation of veterans may be experiencing less of the "while you were gone" effect than former generations of veterans.

[6] Humensky, et al. (2012) found no statistical significance between Post-911 veterans of poor health and less earnings.

Reservists

One development that is particularly interesting in the Post-911 era has been the increase in activations of Reserve component service-members. The Reserve component of the U.S. Armed Forces is constituted by the Army National Guard of the United States, the Army Reserve, the Navy Reserve, the Marine Corps Reserve, the Air National Guard of the United States, the Air Force Reserve, and the Coast Guard Reserve. The involvement of these forces in combat operations during the Post-911 era has been unprecedented in scale (Loughran et al. 2006). In 2005 it was reported that the reserve components of the U.S. Armed Forces comprised "a larger percentage of frontline fighting forces than in any war in U.S. history (about 43 percent in Iraq and 55 percent in Afghanistan)" (IGNN 2005). During the Cold War, reserve component members were activated involuntarily only four times in a span of four decades (1945-1989). In the period after the Cold War (1990 to the present) the reserve component has been activated involuntarily six times (CRS 2006).

Compared to this period after the Cold War, the rate of activation of reserve component members in the Post 911 era was astronomical; more reserve component members have served on active duty since 2001 than all of the reserve component members who served on active duty cumulatively in the Vietnam War, the Cuban Refugee Crisis, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, and the first Gulf War (Glick 2004). This increase is certainly a result of the end of the draft that took place in 1973, causing the U.S. Armed Forces to rely more heavily on reserve component members in place of the draftees who used to be inducted into the military during times of need. Prophetic as it may seem, before the War on Terror was declared after the events of September 11th, 2001 in 2000 Charles Cragin, a former Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, stated: "[t]he

role of our Reserve forces is changing in the United States. We have seen their traditional role, which was to serve as manpower replacements in the event of some cataclysmic crisis, utterly transformed. They are no longer serving as the force of last resort, but as vital contributors on a day-to-day basis around the world" (Cragin, 2000).

Because veterans of the reserve component have shared so much of the burden of service in the Post-911 military, they also share in the effects of that burden. In fact, veterans of the reserve components have some unique issues of their own in the Post 911 era. Just as suddenly as the September 11th attacks, and indeed in response to those attacks, reserve component members throughout the nation were activated in record numbers. These service-members were very abruptly taken out their communities, placing increased stress on the troops themselves, their families, and employers.

The families of reserve component service-members have been greatly affected by their activations. This development has called David Segal, a leading researcher on military families, to exclaim "There is no doubt about the resentment of reservists, their families, and their employers regarding the repeated and extended deployments they have experienced… This is the first war I can remember in which the nucleus of the antiwar movement was found not on college campuses but in reserve households" (Glick 2004). This is hardly surprising since as early in the War on Terror as 2003 the U.S. Government Accountability Office reported that 41% of reserve component service members experienced a pay-cut when they were activated (GAO 2003). This implies that deployments of these service-members caused economic hardship for their households.

Two studies of the effects of Post-911 reserve activations on civilian employers present similar data. Loughran (2006) measured the effect of deployments on local employment patterns, and found there was little long-term impact on the civilian employers of service-members. Nevertheless he acknowledged that in the short-term activations and deployments did negatively affect employers. Employers who had hired reserve component service-members experienced a decline in employee levels that took them on average four months to fill.

A government study conducted by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), focused on the national effects of reserve activation on civilian employers; it found that only 6% of U.S. businesses employ Reservists, therefore nationally few employers are affected. Nevertheless Loughran (2006) and the CBO (2005) noted that deployments of Reservists may be a much more difficult burden for smaller businesses to bear. The following statement is telling of the problem small business employers experience with Reservist activations. Per Loughran (2006), this quote appeared in a Washington Post article in 2005; it is from the manager of a plant who had to relinquish several of his employees to active duty assignments:

> We've been hit hard. Some of these are highly specialized jobs, so it is very hard to find people who can step in and replace them [activated reserves]. And no one wants to come from another company when they know that these guys will come back in a year and a half. (Loughran 2006)

In addition to concerns of employers in the private sector there has also been cause for concern from public employers. Loughran (2006) notes that many reservists and guard members are police officers. Thus a potential consequence of the numbers and frequency of activations of reserve service-members are further national security concerns.

As the CBO (2005) report acknowledged, Reservists do not constitute a large portion of the national labor force. Therefore deployments do not greatly affect national employment levels. And yet the effect of frequent deployments in support of the War on Terror has cost the veterans dearly. The largest Post-911 veterans association in the United States, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA), stated the following in 2009: "Many reservists returning from combat are not being promptly reemployed, or are not receiving the pay, pensions, health care coverage, and other benefits that they are entitled to" (Williamson and Erin 2009). What is most disconcerting about this statement is that reservists have legal protections under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). This legislation protects Reservists from losing their jobs because of involuntary deployments and from employment discrimination due to aspects of their service that some employers might find unappealing. Notwithstanding the legal protections USERRA provides, many reservists have experienced difficulty with reemployment and discrimination. In 2007, on the issue of reservist reemployment, the following figures were reported to Congress:

- "Nearly 11,000 were denied prompt reemployment."
- "More than 22,000 lost seniority and thus pay and other benefits."
- "Nearly 20,000 saw their pensions cut."
- "More than 15,000 didn't receive the training they needed to return to their former jobs."
- "Nearly 11,000 didn't get their health insurance back."

Most notably USERRA has failed to protect these service-members because of the Department of Defense's and Department of Labor's "failure to educate/reach out to returning servicemen to

inform them of their rights" (United States Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, 2007). As a result of this, in 2006 it was found that over three quarters (77%) of reservists claimed they did not seek help when they experienced problems returning to their previous employers. Additionally, of the reservists who did seek help by filing a USERRA complaint against their employers, nearly half (44%) found the Department Of Labor's handling of their complaint to be unacceptable and almost a third (29%) experienced difficulty with the complaint process (United States Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, 2007).

There are increased difficulties for reservists who are self-employed. The Congressional Budgeting Office (2005) stated in a report that reservists who are self-employed may be severely affected by being called to active duty. Although they noted that only 0.5% of all self-employed people in the United States are reservists, this statistic represents 55,000 self-employed reservists who stand to be adversely affected by deployments.

In this chapter we have reviewed current trends affecting the veteran population of the United States. Throughout this dissertation I will return to the issues that have been covered here and will provide more detail.

Chapter Two

Theory & Argument

On a random hot and dusty afternoon, after a twelve-hour combat patrol through a Baghdad suburb, four humvees stuffed with half a platoon of Army infantrymen, fourteen men to be exact, RP'ed (return point) to their FOB (forward operations base). The unit command anxiously waited for the troops by the barrels where they had perfunctorily cleared live ammunition from their weapons at the conclusion of every mission for the last twelve months. Many times they returned with significantly less ammunition than they SP'ed (start point) with; during those times they often bore heavier burdens than the spent ammunition, such as impregnated body bags—and when there were no body bags their catch would lie inert on the hood of a humvee, bouncing grotesquely back to the FOB. But on this particular day there was no contact; Baghdad, the hot, angry, and swollen blister, was quiet. The commanders that awaited the return of their subordinates did not do so for the purpose of scolding or debriefing, which was usually the case, but rather to congratulate them. "That's it fellas! You made it!" said the Lieutenant Colonel, the highest-ranking of the group and commanding officer of the entire battalion of over nine hundred soldiers. The grungy men stepped, hopped, and climbed out of the humvees, heading to the clearing barrels before engaging their commanders—all were too tired, or perhaps too reluctant, to celebrate. One SAW (squad automatic weapon) gunner felt a hard slap on the back of his IBA (individual body armor). Startled, he turned his attention to the company's XO (executive officer) who said with a voice full of pride and sincerity, "Son, you were a boy when you came here but you're a man now."

Fatigued as I was, those words stuck with me for years afterward and they have come to define the difficulty I, many of my comrades, and the twenty student veterans interviewed for this research have experienced with returning to civilian life.

The metanarrative of a boy becoming a man by way of military design and initiation is a popular American myth. In fact, the term myth does not adequately describe the process because belief in it is so strong that, for better or worse, it has become reality. Many Americans believe their boys become men by military training, and perhaps most importantly the young men, and even women, who leave home to serve in the military believe that they take on qualities of military men as well. Throughout this text Samuel Stouffer's concept of a "generalized code of masculinity" is employed to define the qualities and values of military men. While acknowledging the varying conceptions of masculinity in American communities, Stouffer maintained that the broad ideas and values of the generalized code of masculinity were most commonly: "courage, endurance and toughness, lack of squeamishness when confronted with shocking or distasteful stimuli, avoidance of display of weakness in general, reticence about emotional or idealistic matters, and sexual competency" (Stouffer et al., 1949).

Metanarrative

The metanarrative of a boy becoming a man through military design has come to my attention because of the sheer number of veterans I know personally, and those in my qualitative sample, including female veterans, who attest to the military transforming them in this way. The term metanarrative speaks to the conventional use, and uncritical acceptance, of this story. Each veteran who uses this manner of explaining their experience in the military combines their

delivery of the metanarrative with their own personal narrative. Both kinds of narratives have a function specific to them. The local narrative is in fact the veteran's own story; it contains the unique details of the individual's history: the explanation of place of origin, family and/or people in the individual's life, economic status, as well as the many things that might have impeded or expedited the individual's attainment of a desired goal. The local narrative also serves to personalize the metanarrative, which is the grand story. The metanarrative is totalizing, indiscriminate, and can be abstracted from many local narratives. Think of it as the single, cogent, and synthesized gist of many stories (Lyotard 1979).

Kelvin, for example, is a 31-year-old Marine veteran. His parents moved to Queens, New York from Haiti when he was a child and he joined the Marines at the age of 19. When asked about this time in his life he explains: "The day after graduation I was at boot camp. I was ready to leave, man… I didn't know what I wanted to do with my life and my parents didn't have any money for college… I had been working since I was sixteen at McDonalds." This is part of Kelvin's local narrative; it is unique to him. Yet when asked about his service in the Marines, during which time he was a cook, he summarizes the changes that came over him during his service in one sweep, "I went in as a little kid and came out as a man." This statement by Kelvin and many of the other student veterans I interviewed is indicative of the influence of military social structure on individuals' identities. For each of these veterans this transition represents a change in attitude, maturation, and overall self-concept foremost.

It is worth noting that the story of a boy becoming a man by military design is culturally familiar to Americans, and yet reality as articulated by U.S. law says otherwise. Boys and girls are

considered adults, men and women respectively, roughly at the age of eighteen.[7] Many rights and privileges correspond with this coming of age, and so does an increase in responsibility. Accordingly, if the authorities apprehend a young person for committing a crime at the age of eighteen, the accused will be tried as an adult. Historically no court in the United States has ever forfeited the opportunity to try an eighteen year old as an adult, however many cases exist where minors, or persons under the legal age, have also been tried as adults. This is particularly true in the case of violent crimes where the authorities, demand that the individual acted conscientiously despite their age.

This means that the metanarrative of boy becoming a man through military design has little to nothing to do with age. Rather it is constructed ideologically and the transformation that we take for granted is a symbolic one. Thus eighteen is the legal age where a boy becomes a man and a girl becomes a woman, but as for being viewed as a man or woman in terms other than the law, 'social adulthood'—if I may call it that—is on quite a different timeline.

If we view this metanarrative, in the manner that service-members/veterans and civilians use it, as symbolic of a role change in the lives of service members, a dichotomy becomes apparent. This tension is in many ways the essence of the problems that veterans experience upon reintegration to civilian life. It is defined by the different identity standards that bound the military identity in the civilian and military contexts.

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[7] Some states have different laws that bestow adulthood on teenagers earlier however invariably in the United States by the age of 18 everyone is considered an adult.

Two Different Identity Standards

Although the Afghanistan and Iraq Wars are two of the longest in U.S. history, most of the current generation of Americans have had very little contact with service-members and veterans who served during these conflicts. Aside from the presentation of the wars in the media, these wars have impinged little upon the everyday lives of Americans. After a decade of fighting in two countries over 6000 miles away, only one half of one percent of the population of the United States has known the burden of service in this generation (BLS, March 2012; Pew Research Center, 2011). Over 99% of the country has been left to gather information about these conflicts through various proxies, including news media, film, and literary representations of the wars, or—if they are lucky enough—hearing the stories of a returning veteran.

This generation does not exist in a vacuum however. Although many people will not know what it is like to serve with, befriend, or have as a relative a service-member or veteran of the War on Terror, a sizeable portion of the nation has a close relationship with a veteran of another era. This is evidenced by the Department of Veterans Affairs' projection that nearly 25%, or over 70 million, Americans are "potentially eligible for VA benefits and services because they are veterans, family members or survivors of veterans" (Institute of Medicine and National Research Council 2007). Fortunately for the VA and federal government, the great majority of these potential beneficiaries either do not know they are eligible for some form of VA benefit or they have decided against using it. A shortage of VA funds would certainly result if this were not the case.

In similar fashion to the relationship, or lack thereof, between VA benefits and potential beneficiaries, we can think of the relationship that most people and veterans share. Although veterans may be, or have been, present in their lives we cannot assume that that proximity translates much knowledge of military service. Most Americans will acquire everything they know about military service from news media, film, and literary representations of military personnel, organizational character, and operations. This is as much the fault of civilians as it is the often stoic and tightlipped service-members and veterans.

Different identity standards of the military identity are the result of this civilian-military disconnect. An identity standard can be thought of as the conventional knowledge of a particular identity that sets the reference point for the identities of that nature (Burke 2004). Therefore we can think of the disconnect between civilian and military knowledge of military service as generating two very different reference points by which military identities are measured. Given that most civilians have little knowledge of the military, the identity standard referenced by civilians, which I call the **civilian-military identity standard**, is often generated from the fantastic images of service-members exhibited in news media, film, and literary representations rather than knowledge of real service-members, their training, and their accomplishments.

Historically in the United States military films have exerted great influence over civilian conceptions of the military identity (Moskos 1970). Although the new breed of war films have kept Hollywood production crews busy with the tasks of recreating combat in the vast deserts and crumbling urban environs of Iraq, or the underdeveloped, rural, and mountainous terrain of Afghanistan, the representations of service-members and veterans have not changed much.

Consequently there has been no revision of the basic story of what it takes to become a military man. Films do not challenge the metanarrative of a boy becoming a man by military design, even if the man one has become is actually a woman for instance. The fictional story is as compelling now as it ever was.

Many young men and women wanting to assume a mature identity uncritically accept the idea that the military can remake them in the image of the powerful men they consume in media and film. This idea of manhood being a product of military service dominated American media and film in the post-WWII period. It was during this time that John Wayne became an American icon of idealized military manhood. To this day drill sergeants and other leaders of troops invoke his name—often in derogatory fashion—to expose the stylized, wrong, and indeed punishable, use of military uniform.[8] The invocation of John Wayne to provoke the current generation of service members may be somewhat anachronistic however. The John Wayne style military man may be a popular American pastime but contemporary American films tend to show a less clean cut, more rugged, and ambivalent image of the military man.

The tragic hero, or antihero, became the most common image of the military man in the post-Vietnam period. Jeffords (1988) argues that the military man as tragic hero, especially with reference to depictions of Vietnam U.S. military combatants and veterans, was an attempt to redefine white American masculinity in response to a failed war. The Vietnam War, the counter

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[8] There is an iconic image of John Wayne in military uniform without the chinstrap of his helmet fastened. This image has inspired many provocations by contemporary military leaders often in the form of a rhetorical question akin to: 'Well, you must be John Wayne?' Charles Moskos discusses the place of John Wayne in military culture in *The American Enlisted Man.* 1970 p23 and 154

culture movement that responded to it, and the civil rights movement that coincided with this historical period, liberalized and revised the definition of American masculinity by exhibiting images of men and women that presented viable opposition to the belligerent white American masculinity bolstered by the legacy of WWII. Losing the Vietnam War evidenced the less than omnipotent nature of white American masculinity. The counter culture movement produced bold images of women and men (e.g. Jane Fonda and John Kerry) who opposed mainstream ideas of US foreign policy. The civil rights movement successfully broadcast images of men and women of color fighting against a racist white masculinity, often quite literally. The synergy of these developments revolutionized ideas of American masculinity. Nevertheless, post Vietnam films attempted to take it back.

Per Jeffords (1988), post Vietnam action films (e.g. Rambo: First Blood, Part 2; Uncommon Valor; Missing in Action) tend to offer explanations as to why the Vietnam war was lost and to recapture American masculinity by reasserting the hegemony of the white male, subordinating women, and pushing minorities to the periphery. Another interesting function of these movies is to express distrust in the U.S. government, a theme common to Vietnam counterculture and to parts of the civil rights movement. The distrust that these films depict is quite different however; loss of the war is often attributed to faulty foreign policy, and feeble and corrupt politicians whose incompetence kept the combatants from doing their jobs to the greatest effect. The counterculture's protests against the war are also depicted as having weakened the military's capability.

Notwithstanding the extraordinary change that has come over the military in the post-Vietnam period, stylized images of military men on film have not changed so much. The contemporary military man of media and film fights wars on multiple fronts; a foreign theater of action constitutes one front but the other is often more familiar terrain. For example, the Jason Bourne movies[9] (Bourne Identity, Bourne Supremacy, etc.) depict a white military masculinity that is simultaneously created by the military, distrustful of, and aggressive toward the military, and aggressive toward foreign enemy combatants. This depiction of masculinity is a throwback; again it makes the white military man the nucleus of power and action. The only addition is now while the military may have made a skilled man of war out of Jason Bourne, his skills can be used to overcome even the power of the Pentagon if the need arises. Interestingly enough, the Bourne movie franchise tells an old story: join up, become a man, control your own destiny even if it conflicts with military authority (as symbolized by Bourne's prodigal nature). The narrative resists change although the military itself has changed immensely.

The Bourne franchise and many recent war movies miss the mark, and inaccurately represent military personnel in several ways. Firstly, more and more women are serving in ranks and many of these women are experiencing combat along with their male counterparts. Secondly, minorities represent a significantly large and strategically integral portion of force personnel (Armor and Curtis 2010; RAND 2009). And third, the Pentagon has gone to great lengths since the advent of the All Volunteer Force to make the military identity one that is professional,

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[9] The Bourne franchise depicts the exploits of a rogue CIA agent. However it is clearly communicated in these movies that Jason Bourne, the protagonist, had an extensive military career before he began service in the CIA. For more information about this a simple Google search will produce several blogs that are dedicated to helping interested civilians pick a branch of military service that will teach them the skills necessary to become like Bourne.

family-oriented (Segal and Segal 2006), and above all else a team-player.[10] Current service-members are better-trained and better followers than ever before.[11] The idea of the empowered, rogue, white male agent is terribly out of congruence with the functional military identity crafted by the Department of Defense.

It is, however, not solely the fault of civilian media and stylized film representations of service members that American civilians reference an identity standard for military identities that is more fiction than truth. Historically the Armed Forces has exploited many of the stereotypes and popular representations of service-members comprising the civilian-military identity standard to its benefit. Over an extensive history and through various devices the Armed Forces have elevated hypermasculine identity and linked it to military service by maintaining policies and practices that reify the distinctions between the sexes, and conceal, support, and encourage sexual and symbolic violence against women.

The singing of cadences by troops in training is one of the most overt expressions of this practice. Cadences are one of the oldest techniques used by the Armed Forces to build solidarity, and morale. As they are intended to lift spirits and strengthen unit bonds, many cadences tend to take a humorous tone but to 'the other' who is the butt of the joke they are hardly funny. Historically cadences have reflected marginally permissible attitudes toward 'others' outside of the scope of desirable military subjectivities, defined institutionally. Thus many old cadences

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[10] The Armed Forces' emphasis on unit cohesion evidences this. See National Defense Research Institute. Sexual Orientation and U.S. Military Personnel Policy: Options and Assessment. Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 1993.
[11] Characteristics of the All Volunteer Force suggest increased efficiency and unit cohesion of current service members. See: Warner, John and Asch, Beth. 2001. The Record and Prospects of the All-Volunteer Military in the United States.

were offensive to racial minorities and women. In 1980 a decision by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to include sexual harassment in its definition of gender discrimination as codified in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 precipitated the Defense Department's declaration that sexual harassment "would not be tolerated in anyway" (GAO 1994). This policy had an unintended, though necessary, effect on the content of many cadences that reflected sexist attitudes. The following is an example of a cadence that became considered sexual harassment under the law:

Up jumped a monkey from the coconut grove
Was a mean mamba jamba you could tell by his clothes
With a ripped up jammee and a black beret
This ol' monkey was here to stay
Line a hundred women up against the wall
Bet a hundred dollars he could fuck them all
Fucked ninety-eight 'til his balls turned blue
Backed off, jacked off, and fucked the other two

Francke notes that it took over a decade for some branches of service to comply. As late as 1992 one Drill Sergeant at Fort Benning contested:

> The men wanted to hear how the man is masculine over the female and that's what we sung to them and that's what maxed their PT [Physical Training] tests. The response was tremendous whether I was running soldiers five miles or walking eighty people in a line down the street singing that or 250 soldiers in a company. The dirtier the better [sic]. It got results. (Francke 2004)

The tradition of denigrating women has caused a backlash in public opinion, as the result of unequal, and cursory treatment that the services have shown toward issues important to its female members, principally Military Sexual Trauma (MST). In reference to the extensive history of this problem Francke writes "The masculine forces driving the military culture made the enforcement of sexual harassment policies impossible. The systematic denigration of feminine attributes in the making of a military man required the very harassment the directives

were supposed to eradicate" (Francke 2004). Thus the military's ability to create men out of young boys has been forged out of its institutional practice of excluding women. Acknowledging this tradition, Moskos regarded the military as the "vestige of male sanctity" (Moskos 1970).

Given this reputation within American culture, the Armed Forces have become the epicenter of American masculinity. The most extreme and overt performance of masculinity that we, as a society, expect to find is in the military. This expectation is captured in fictional depictions of service-members and it is perpetuated by the expectations that young men bring with them into the service—believing they will be fashioned after these characters. And yet despite this, American women continue to support the nation through military service in large numbers. Notably, their exclusion from becoming a man, as the metanarrative implies, has not precluded many women recruits from desiring qualities associated with military men (i.e. heroism, maturity, patriotism etc.). Their case deserves special consideration in the pages that follow.

Another way in which the Department of Defense utilizes the civilian-military identity standard to its benefit is illustrated by the short-lived "Army of One" advertisement campaign that succeeded the long running "Be All You Can Be" advertisements. In a New York Times article, just before the new ad campaign was launched, journalist James Dao (2001) noted that it was "[b]ased on research showing that young people view military life as dehumanizing." Its creation was therefore intended to lend a more individualist view to Army service. Dao describes the first commercial of the advertisement campaign:

> The commercial features a lone corporal running across the barren terrain of the Mojave Desert at dawn. At one point, a squad of soldiers runs past in the opposite direction; later, a Blackhawk helicopter flies by overhead. But the corporal never veers from his solitary path, panting under the weight of his 35-pound pack as his polished dog tags glint brilliantly in the rising sun.
>
> ‘Even though there are 1,045,690 soldiers just like me, I am my own force,’ the corporal, Richard P. Lovett, says. ‘With technology, with training, with support, who I am has become better than who I was.’
>
> ‘And I'll be the first to tell you, the might of the U.S. Army doesn't lie in numbers,’ Corporal Lovett continues. ‘It lies in me. I am an Army of one.’ (Dao 2001)

This image corresponds with fictional images of military identities more than the actual identities developed through military service. At no point in the military career of an enlisted person would that individual be carrying a full combat load, and prepared to engage the enemy *alone*. Certainly the Department of Defense’s chief concern was to use this imagery to develop an advertisement that hits home with most civilians and inspires youth to enlist who want that identity and the power and the respect, that accompany it.

The image of a soldier presented in the “Army of One” ads is more like an image of Rambo or Jason Bourne than of real soldiers in the Army, or of service-members in any branch of the Armed Forces for that matter. The identities of real service-members are generated by a meticulously planned regimen of group training and social interaction. The **de facto military identity standard**, is therefore a functional identity standard the military institution has developed and socialized service-members into. A Mertonian, rather than Parsonian, view of functional systems is best employed to explain the military identity within the military institution. For the most part these identities are functional for the military’s purposes (i.e.

meeting its organizational needs and mission imperatives) however these identities also show some signs of dysfunction. For instance the prevalence of hostility toward women in ranks is currently an issue of great concern for the Armed Forces. Military sexual trauma (MST) is a common experience of service women despite the DOD's efforts to address this issue (DOL 2011); certainly it represents the presence of dysfunction in the military social system. Hostility toward homosexuality is another known dysfunction of military identities; it undermines unit cohesion thereby creating a difficult problem for the military social structure to mitigate. These functional and dysfunctional aspects of military identities notwithstanding, these identities are still distinct from the civilian-military identity standard as fashioned by a pastiche of fantastic military themed media that influences civilian perceptions.

Far away from the images of Rambo running shirtless through the Southeast Asian jungle is the reality of a service-member's experience, who is trained to identify a symbol on the uniform that is no larger than two inches in size, at a distance great enough to allow him/her the opportunity to show due deference to an officer or non-commissioned officer of higher rank.

A far cry from reality are the rapidly repeating encounters with hostile forces depicted in Call-of-Duty, a popular Army-themed first person shooting video game, when compared to real infantry life where exhausting hours are spent watching, waiting, and searching for enemies, as well as cleaning and maintaining individual gear and squad equipment. The real experiences and sacrifices of service members are obscured by the fantasies we would prefer to consume. After all, Jason Bourne dispatching a dozen enemies in five minutes is a much more interesting story

to watch than an Army Specialist standing sentry for twelve hours on an uneventful night, which is often the case.

Tooth-to-Tail Ratio

Although combat is the holy grail of the military, the conduct of these operations is a lot more complex than civilian and media perceptions. Perhaps one of the most important concepts contributing to the conduct of successful combat operations is known as T3R (or Tooth-to-Tail Ratio). The "tooth" refers to the portion of military troops conducting combat operations. The "tail" refers to the portion of the force that is designated to performing non-combat operations; these troops are principally concerned with tasks that enable the combat troops (or teeth) to fight (McGrath 2007).

Historically, T3R trends have been subject to fluctuation due to various reasons. Table 2, borrowed from John McGrath's work, depicts these historical trends. The conventional wars of the early 20th century (i.e. WWI and WWII) were complex, large scale, military campaigns that required the largest mobilizations of combat troops in American history. However, from WWI through to the Cold War the proportion of combat troops has declined nearly consistently. This is where the idea of the long logistical tail comes from; conducting combat operations in the era of modern warfare requires daunting logistical tasks, and historically most service-members have been involved in the preparation for war rather than the actual violent engagements with the enemy.

McGrath (2007) notes that during Gulf War I through to 2005 in the Wars on Terror, which are also referred to as Gulf War II, it seemed that the ratio of fighting troops to support troops changed. However, these periods mark a large shift in contemporary military operations, defined by increased reliance on contracted labor to conduct many tasks that the military had conducted itself. Therefore the spikes in the proportion of combat troops we see in Table 2 after the Cold War is due to the military's recent pattern of outsourcing and not a real decline in the amount of logistical presence it takes to conduct combat operations.

Despite these trends there is a vast difference between the military's allocation of troops in tooth or tail positions, and the mission imperatives that force troops, irrespective of their operational functions to be exposed to combat violence. In the Counterinsurgency Manual Gen. Patreus acknowledged this when juxtaposing the responsibilities of logistical units in conventional and Counterinsurgency operations.

He wrote:

> During COIN operations, every logistic package or resupply operation becomes a mounted combat operation, or combat logistic convoy. Insurgents see attacks on resupply operations as a potential source of dramatic propaganda as well as a source of supplies and materiel. For this reason, combat logistic convoys should project a resolute ("hard and prickly") image that suggests that they will not be an easy ("soft and chewy") target. (The Patraeus Doctrine, 2009)

While the ratio of fighting troops to logistical support troops has been decreasing since its height in 1917, because of the less contained nature of combat in Counterinsurgency operations a larger proportion of the military—appropriated to conduct tail or logistical operation—has become engaged in combat, although their primary operational function remains logistical in nature.

Most importantly, the success of these operations is not due to the exploits of the types of embellished characters we see in popular military films. And yet these images have affected our thinking so much that we try to understand real service-members and veterans in terms of fictional depictions. The process of interpreting real service-members and veterans in this way begets the tension I explained between the identity standards. Veterans and service-members are caught in between these different standards and in most situations they are confined to one of three choices: 1) to tailor their images toward the civilian-military identity standard, 2) to assert their identities as formed by military service as well as they can—often to no avail, or 3) to dis-identify as a veteran altogether.

Defining Military Identity

The task of defining military identities has been tackled before. Samuel Huntington published a controversial work in 1957 titled *The Soldier and the State.* In this work Huntington sought to explain why societies find difficulty maintaining equilibrium in military-civil relations. He posited that the civilian and military spheres were two very different worlds, and in them radically different values were adhered to. The most controversial idea Huntington developed in this text was that of the "military mind." This concept he used to signify the manner of thinking and spirit of military men. The military mind held certain qualities that were directly opposed to those in civilian society, such as authoritarianism, bellicosity, intolerance, rigidity, and calculation. Huntington believed that military men valued order, hierarchy, and function over all, and were therefore inferior in imagination and intelligence (Huntington 1957).

Many intellectuals deplored Huntington's military mind concept; they did not find the stereotypes of military men, as he presented them, to be useful analytical tools for understanding the military-civil cultural divide. I too find Huntington's stereotypes deplorable; however the idea that the military and civilian spheres are radically different and espouse different values is certainly true. The premium on, and demand for, military cultural competency presently in the public and private sector evidences this fact. To articulate a similar point, Weiss and Coll (2011) explain what they identify as the four cardinal rules military service members are trained to follow: 1) Unit cohesion (or the primacy of the collective over the individual); 2) devotion to duty and to the mission; 3) stoicism (i.e., emotional restraint); 4) and the importance of adhering to the chain of command. These rules are much more useful analytically than the military mind concept, because they specify values the military institution actively trains its personnel to adhere to. Hence the present work is aligned with Weiss and Coll's view that there are certain values, and/or rules, that the military as an institution cultivates in, and imposes on, service-members because they support the function of the institution as a whole.

Role Salience

Sociologists understand that each individual can hold several roles or identities; this is a function of the highly complex structure of modern society in which each individual has to negotiate a number of social relations. An individual may act in one role at work, and another at home, and yet another in a group of his/her close friends. **Role salience** speaks to the ability of a certain role to come to the front and take precedence over all of the other roles the individual may have. Stryker (2002) explains that a role is most salient when commitment to that role is highest. Burke (2004) elaborates this point when he states "by being tied to many others through that identity

and by having a strong emotional tie to the identity, [a person] will be more likely to activate that identity." The metanarrative of a boy becoming a man by military design facilitates role salience in service-members and veterans, by prescribing the nature and magnitude of the relationship between the military institution and the subject at outset. Before individuals are even in service they have the idea, as the metanarrative effectively communicates, that they will be remade—reborn even—into an entirely different subjectivity in the military. The metanarrative also lays the foundation for civilians to develop an expectation of military role salience in veterans, by purporting that the military has made a veteran into a man—not just any man, as one could become on one's own—but rather a man in the sense that one possesses the qualities of a man tempered by military training and therefore corresponds to the civilian military identity standard.

The military identity becomes a veteran identity as service-members transition out of their roles and back into civilian life. Therefore the veteran identity refers to the expiration of a role once held at a former time, that of being a service-member; it is therefore a "hangover identity" (Ebaugh 1988), an identity that is the residual of a former identity. This identity and the corresponding actions the veteran performed in the past can have little or no connection to who the veteran is in the present. The term 'veteran' is one of the few nouns in the English language designated as a name for a person in the present as defined by actions that were completed in the past. Some curiosity is warranted as to whether pervasive role salience of veteran identities may have generated, or is the result of, this linguistic anomaly.

Nevertheless to understand the effect that the role exiting process has on the veteran identity I will make use of Role Exit Theory. Role Exit Theory emphasizes that role transition threatens

self-identity as an individual has invested in the definition of herself, and the corresponding expectations, of the previous role. Therefore when an individual is transitioning to a new role the identity of the individual is in jeopardy. Given this, role exit can be explained as an individual attempting to reconcile the identity held during his former role with the new identity afforded by the new role; or as Ebaugh (1988) explains "[t]he process of disengagement from a role that is central to one's self-identity and the reestablishment of an identity in a new role that takes into account one's ex-role constitutes…role exit." Military veterans are a special case within Role Exit theory; because the nature of their transitions from the previous role of service member emphasize the rights and obligations that are allocated for them as veterans, their military role identification grows stronger rather than recedes as with other role exits.

In my sample of 20 participants, two roles are of the greatest concern to me. These are the roles of college student and military veteran. These identities are at times at odds, and sometimes in harmony, or differentially salient in the lives of my participants. I have examined the juxtaposition of identities in three phases: before, during, and after enlistment into military service. For each phase I will identify factors that contribute to veteran role salience. Experiences before enlistment detail the ideations of military identity formation, particularly the metanarrative just discussed and how it contributed to each individual's decision to enlist. Experiences during enlistment detail the events that contributed to a military identity and what it means to the veteran. Experiences after the enlistment obligation was completed detail how that identity was understood and transformed during the reintegration period into civilian life and how the veteran identity has coped with the formation of a student identity.

Chapter Three

Before Military Service

Some of the veterans I interviewed had initially enlisted thinking they were going to become like the image of service-members they viewed in military recruiting advertisements, popular media and film, or even as such images were relayed through interactions with current and/or prior service members. Some enlisted because they believed the military would change them in a way that would be beneficial to their lives.. Some wanted to change everything about their lives, completely donning a new identity, and the military provided them the escape they sought. The common thread in most of these cases is the desire for a different identity, or even different qualities of character (i.e. discipline, maturity, focus, motivation, strength etc.), than the one the participant had prior to enlistment, and the belief that service in the military would ultimately deliver this desired end.

In this chapter I will discuss how broad ideas about military service and service-members, and phenomenological factors, contributed to each participants' decision to join the military. In this way we can acknowledge that the military is often viewed, especially by those who chose to serve, as an institution capable of producing identities of a certain type, most importantly a highly desirable type. This manner of thinking inherently facilitates role salience in service-members, and veterans in turn, in the following ways:

1. By defining the nature and intensity of the relationship between the military institution and the subject at outset;
2. By setting an expectation about the degree of role commitment;
3. By assuring service-members that they will attain certain character qualities that will

improve their lives from then on.

In the life of a single individual, entering the military is a watershed event because it marks the birth of a new identity and because it is a permanent change: once you learn to be a service-member you do not unlearn it.

A study by Pew Research Center on the attitudes of Post-911 veterans reports that the most popular reason Post-911 veterans enlisted was to serve their country (Pew Research Center 2011). This however is not always apparent to service-members themselves. Doug's experience in the Army presents a challenge to this statistic, as he discusses service to country and anecdotes of other service-members' decisions to serve:

> I really was interested in serving my country, which is funny because when you talk to people [about] 'why did you join the military,' especially [when you are] in the military, that almost never comes up. Most people are like "well I just got laid off from my job as a used-car salesman and I was down in my luck; [or] I got my girlfriend pregnant and we haven't yet married and I don't have a way to provide, so I decided to join the military. Everybody has different reasons for coming in and like maybe five, maybe ten, percent of them say "I want to serve my country". I feel like people get pulled [in] for a lot of different reasons.

The point of view represented by Doug's statement and by the Pew Research study implies that there is a disconnect between the micro and macro view of reasons for enlisting. It is possible that, given the option, veterans may choose to attribute their decision to enlist to a desire to serve the nation. Moreover, in terms of the metanarrative discussed earlier, service to the nation is perhaps the most admirable reason to serve. However, as Doug notes, in the presence of their comrades, who have also decided to serve, service-members/veterans divulge details of their local narratives that contributed to their decisions. Whatever the reason for the disconnect, it is not inherently contradictory; rather it is indicative of the myriad rationalizations one individual

can make for serving in the military. Even Doug's case is illustrative of this. Although the prospect of having extremely constrained finances while attending college made Doug lean heavily toward military service he states:

> I wouldn't have done it if I didn't want to be in the military. If I didn't have this romanticized idea of serving [my] country then I wouldn't have done it. I would have found another way to put off school. I probably would have just started working, or started traveling, or tried to pick up a job that would pay decent for a 19 year old out of high school...

Doug acknowledges that he had a 'romanticized' view of serving the country at the time he enlisted. What he fails to mention however, is that there are many ways to serve ones country; the fact that he and 88% percent of Post 911 veterans, and 95% of Pre-911 veterans, cited serving their country as the reason they enlisted is indicative of their desire to be of service in a particular way (Pew Research Center, 2011). It is indicative of their desire to assume the identity of a particular kind of public servant, one armed to protect the nation. Bobby, a Marine veteran, echoes this, "I wanted the challenge in life. The Marines certainly represented that, and I wanted to serve my country, sounds corny, but I wanted to do that."

Some veterans claim that they had always been oriented toward serving in the military, like Magnus who during elementary school in the Ukraine disassembled and reassembled AK-47's. By the time he joined the US Army he had come to believe "the military was part of [his] DNA." Many veterans who felt a strong propulsion toward military service reported having a childhood infatuation with military identities, as they observed them through media or first hand encounters with family members who were serving. Kelvin, for instance, had been in the United States for 9 years at the time he went to a Marine recruiter to enlist. He was 19 years old but was in his

senior year of high school because the educational requirements in the US caused him to lose a few years of study after he and his parents emigrated from Haiti. “Well at the time I didn’t know what I wanted to do with my life and my parents didn’t have any money for college or nothing like that. I met the recruiter and… he was kind of like a big brother.”

Kelvin’s attachment to his recruiter is another common theme among enlisting service-members. Most veterans remember this moment quite vividly as it was perhaps the first time they had a one-on-one conversation with a person who sat before them wearing all of the symbols a military identity afforded and telling them exactly what had to be done to become a service-member.

The military identity Kelvin wanted to realize was very different than the one he assumed. As he explained “he [the recruiter] was like, what do you want to do? I’m like infantry because when I was growing up I always had the picture, [a] poster of one of those guys you know.” His aspiration to be an infantryman, a troop trained in ground combat, was denied by his recruiter however. “I was working...[since the age of] sixteen at McDonalds. Those chicken nugget boxes, man if you’re lifting them wrong too much, they’ll take a toll on your back. So he [the recruiter] noticed… [that] I have back pains... He was like if you have back pains, man, you cannot do infantry.” Just like that, Kelvin’s desire about the man that he wanted to be, an identity illustrated by a Marine recruiting poster which hung in his room when he was a child, was shot down. And given that his ASVAB (the military aptitude test) score was not very competitive, his selection of military occupations was extremely constricted; he could only choose between 3 occupations. “So I had infantry, cook, or field radio operator. So I’m like let me do radio operator. ‘Well you can’t do that either man because you are going to be carrying a

big heavy bag. So your best bet is a cook' [the recruiter said]. I'm like seriously, I don't want to be a cook man but that was it." Kelvin's control over that decision was minimal. At the time that he found out that if he joined the Marines he could only be a cook he could have cut his losses and decided against joining altogether. Instead, the identity of being a Marine and the resources that identity would afford him—particularly the lure of travel and college tuition in his case—outweighed the burden of being a cook. He is certainly not the first or the last veteran to make such a compromise.

Like Kelvin, several other veterans said they had little idea of what they wanted to do, beyond wanting to learn discipline and hoping that military experience would provide them direction in life. Brock, a 28-year-old Navy veteran, for instance had many reasons to join but cited the following as primary reasons:

> I wasn't doing so hot in high school and had absolutely no direction after high school. I was always interested in maritime things and nautical things and both my grandfathers were in the Navy and it kind of just made sense…so I was like you know it would be good for me. I'll probably end up growing up a little bit, I could see the world, I could get some money for school.

Brock's belief that the military would help him with "growing up a little bit" is as clear an indication of the impact of metanarrative as Kelvin's affirmation that he "went in as a little kid and came out as a man." While quite literally becoming a man simply requires that a boy maintain proper nutrition for a number of years, the meaning of manhood that these veterans were looking for was defined by representations of military men, through media for Kelvin and in both media and family members for Brock.

Notwithstanding, the powerful images of manhood represented in media and family members, the idea that the military identity was a matter of genetic predisposition, as Magnus stated, or "just made sense," as in Brock's case given the legacy of his grandfathers, is not confined to males. Alice, a 31-year-old Army veteran, explains, "my brother is in, he just recently got out, actually. He was in the Army and he is not exactly like me, but similar in the just coasting through life. I don't know whether we're smart enough to just kind of get by without getting into too much trouble… He joined and it completely changed everything for him. So I think I just looked at it as that."

Negative experiences in college before enlistment also contributed to Alice's desire to join and assume a more disciplined identity. "I was flunking out and not doing well in college. And I felt like I needed a little bit of discipline. I worked as a bartender at a Red Lobster across from the recruiting station, so I had been in there before. And I talked to them, and it didn't look like I was going to graduate college at that point, I didn't know what else to do." As it sounds, doing poorly in school and considering military service pinned Alice between two extremes. Ultimately she took her chances with enlisting in the Army.

In my sample of veterans who are now college students many were in a similar predicament. Experiencing difficult times in academia marked the moment that many of these veterans decided they needed to make a change; they needed to reinvent themselves in hopes that their next identity would give them the qualities of discipline, focus, and drive to get the task of undergraduate study done. In this way, departing academia at a difficult time was *not* synonymous with quitting the goal of a higher education degree altogether, rather many of these

veterans felt that they were going to the military to acquire more tools (i.e. discipline, dedication, money, etc.) to help them achieve a degree later. The fact that so many veterans were flunking out of, not doing well in, or just not adjusting to college life is rather interesting. What we witness then is a number of people who are occupying roles they are either failing in or disenchanted with—the role of student—and they decide to don a new role which they believe will give them tools to help them succeed in the previous role at a later time. As is implied, many of these veterans had it in mind that they would return to college study after military service.

Marvin, a 32-year-old Army veteran, started college at SUNY Delhi. He noted it was "the number two party school of all of New York… It was only a two-year school and we got beat out [in the contest for biggest party school] by Albany State, a four-year school." Mark recognized that going to SUNY Delhi "…wasn't about college, it was about having fun, pretty much. And then the military woke me up after that." Before the military woke him up, Mark was in a dire situation, as "it was kind of difficult to get into [college], like focus into it really. So I pretty much looked at myself and I was like 'I need to do something, I might as well just go get the money for college,' so it would be easier for me to focus on school and I'll have everything I need." One study notes that receiving education benefits is the second most frequently cited reason that Post-911 veterans enlisted; it was second only to serving one's country (Pew Research Center 2011). When asked what was the primary reason he joined the Army Mark stated, " I was a wild kid…so I need[ed] to adjust… Probably to get the discipline I needed for school… The college money was like a bonus but I needed something to wake me up."

Lack of discipline to persist in college was cited by nearly all of my participants who left college to join the military. Roy, a 29-year-old Army veteran, tried his hand at college for a year.

> I just had absolutely no discipline and no real big interest… Unfortunately I didn't have a lot of options available to me so I just sort of [ran] off the second semester. I was supposed to return [to college but] instead of signing up for classes… I drove pass the college; I went to the mall; and I signed up with the recruiter. When I went home my mom said 'what classes did you sign up for?' I said 'I didn't sign up for classes, I joined the Army,' and she flipped out.

Roy realized he had made a big decision but he felt he was prepared for it, as he stated "my dad had served and I thought compared to maybe the ordinary citizen I knew a bit about it." Like Brock and Alice who were influenced by the image of a close relative that served in the military, in Roy's case when college no longer made sense the military did. And yet, Roy almost laments this decision, made hastily, without consulting his mother.

> I could have went to… Penn State, NYU. I know that seemed so far off, it was kind of a scary leap [because] I was pretty isolated out there in Arkansas… But yeah I went into the military, you know I guess it's funny, it's a contradiction but that was because I tried school; I was at the local school. I did it for a little bit and then again I started entering a slump, where my first semester was okay. It was riding high and then it was like 'oh now I am not really interested in school.' I started to suffer; I needed to change and that's why I went to the military.

Thus Roy's failing identity as a student at the local college in Arkansas made him think he was not ready for college, nevertheless he recognized that he "needed" to assume a new identity).

Similar to Kelvin, who was inspired by the image of an old Marine recruiting poster, Corey, an Army veteran and Purple Heart recipient, had a childhood fascination with images of military men. During our interview he joked that the movie Platoon, a 1986 release about a platoon of

U.S. Army Infantrymen serving in Vietnam, affected him when he was a child. He describes a scene:

> Willem Defoe's character, the good sergeant, Sergeant Elias… that scene where he says 'I saw the Viet Cong over there' and he tells the guys 'wait here' and they say 'oh could we come with you?' and he says 'no, no I move faster by myself.' In that scene he was just running through killing all the Viet Cong by himself. When I was kid I saw that and I was like 'sergeants in the Army are gods and I want to be one.'

Corey enlisted in the Army the first chance he could, right at the end of high school. However, a knee injury during a soccer game in the last few weeks of high school caused him to miss his date to ship to basic training. "My knee [had] blown up, it was all swollen and when I was doing my physical they [the medical examiners for the Army] saw my knee [and] they told me 'you can't ship like this,' so they originally postponed my ship date till January."

Because of the extra time this delay provided him, Corey decided he would enroll for some college courses in the interim. "I enrolled here [CUNY] for a semester thinking I will do a semester then join the Army and what happened was [in the] beginning of November my recruiter told me there was a spot opening up." Without hesitation Corey abandoned the student role and prepared to ship to basic training.

> I was mid way through a semester; I guess more than middle way through a semester... when I was leaving and basically I wasn't doing great in school so I talked to the professors. I was taking four classes; two of the professors told me they would fail me if I shipped off, and two of them told me 'yeah okay I'll give you a decent grade don't worry about it.'

In the end Corey wound up with the glass half full, or half empty. As he puts it, “I ended up getting like two A’s and two F’s…” The willingness with which Corey and others disengaged from their student identities and took on military identities is noteworthy..

Nickemil, a 26-year-old Air Force veteran, actually had not fallen on hard times in academia. He was doing well in college; in fact, as he explained “right after high school I went to college full time, it wasn’t affordable… [but] I had a scholarship which paid half of the tuition right there, I paid the other half through grants and loans.” Shortly however, as Nickemil explained “I [became] bored with it, I mean New York and Brooklyn was the only place I lived. I lived in the same house and same apartment for my whole life.” Nickemil’s boredom with college brought his fascination with the military clearly in focus. “My father was a Navy veteran and I have heard about a whole bunch of world trips he did while in the military.” Eventually disenchantment with college and the simplicity of his life, combined with ideas about military identity and its inherent excitement, as represented by his father and tales of his exploits, caused Nickemil to leave college and join the Air Force.

Similar to Roy, who’s mother “flipped’ when he told her he enlisted in the Army instead of registering for college courses, several other veterans found that their decision to join the military while they were attending college caused disharmony in their family and social networks. For some of these veterans, the military presented a way for them to escape their former roles in their family and circle of friends. Alvin, a 29 year-old Army veteran took this route. His ideas about manhood, while affected by media as others I have mentioned, were mainly contingent on opposition. “My whole decision to join the military was [due to] the way

my dad and my step-mom had friction… I was young and there was friction… I wanted to be my own man." This desire to want to be one's "own man" is not limited to men. Tammy a 31-year-old female Air Force veteran, acknowledged:

> I did not come from a military background. I never even thought about the military. My up-bringing goes against everything that the military is for. But I was in college and I was working full time and going to school full time. And I think I just got burnt out and it just really wasn't doing it. So I came off and went on break and the weekend before I just didn't go back... I burned myself out in one semester. So then I was at home for a month or two and [I] was like, 'I can't stay here. I just can't stay here.' [I] saw an Army commercial and decided to join the army; [I] didn't consult anybody… When I told people I was going to the army there was a lot of older people that [I] didn't even realize had this knowledge about the military… They were veterans of the Army and the Navy… They had advised me to go to the Air Force. And that was the one piece of advice that I took.

For Tammy the prospect of assuming a more disciplined identity, growing up, and serving the country did not weigh heavily on her decision, rather the idea of becoming someone different by escaping all she knew pressed the right button.

Even Magnus, the immigrant who believed "the military was part of [his] DNA," encountered a similar dilemma. He explains:

> The older generation of Russians [are] totally anti-military because they associate the military with abuse. So when I said in my senior [year of] high school I was joining the Marines, they [my parents] were like 'no fucking way.' We're not signing any waivers, you're not going anywhere. So I ended up going to college in the Bronx, which I really didn't want to do; but it just seemed like what you were supposed to do. After two years of college, I got [un]enrolled for bad GPA and discipline. And at that point I could say, 'hey not only am I going to be 20 soon, but now I need to join the Army.' But in my mind I was like, 'yeah, I'm going to be a soldier.'

Despite the poor opinion that his parents and others in his community had of military service, Magnus wanted the identity it would provide him more than anything. So much so, he claimed to be genetically predisposed to it. Although his decision would ultimately cause a cleavage in his family relations, his desire to serve in the military was of the utmost importance.
Maurice, a 24-year-old Marine veteran, was more like Tammy, in that he really just wanted to reinvent himself by changing the environment and social network he was embedded in; the military provided that opportunity. When asked what were his reasons for joining the Marines he stated, "Money [and] change of atmosphere, things needed to change… It was time to go. I just [needed to] start fresh and start new, so that's what I did; I just signed up and went out."

Understandably, some veterans were very attracted to the benefits of service. A report suggests that these veterans are a sizeable minority, in that 28% of Post 911 veterans cited "civilian jobs were hard to find" as their reason for joining the Armed Forces (Pew Research Center 2011). And yet this does not preclude them from admitting that military service offered them a chance to be a part of, or become, something greater. As I interviewed Jarvis, he narrated a difficult life story. In high school he described an existence that was marginal and not integrated into the culture of the school:

> Well, high school, it was very bad for me; because – well, being somebody who always spoke extremely articulately, and who's never been a street person, or a hood person, or ghetto, as they like to say… it was incredibly difficult being black at the same time… Both sides [black and white peers] kind of expect you to produce a level of ignorance satisfactory to them. And I couldn't really produce it and I couldn't show it, because I was raised a little better. So a lot of the black kids were not interested in being around me because they said I would talk like a white person… And the white kids – it was a very segregated school…it was educationally segregated. The white kids would have different classes…they would have higher level classes… They were just not in my classes at all... So that was part of the social aspect as to why, eventually, I just dropped out of school.

After dropping out of school, Jarvis thought it would be easier just to begin working but he then found that was equally, if not more, difficult.

> I dropped out… so I just worked, living at my mother's house. Working the bowels of retail; working the worst jobs: McDonalds; at the mall; selling clothes. I was a door-to-door sales person, selling frozen meat to people. I did good the first day and the rest [were] just terrible. And then after that I had worked at McDonalds for the last time, the third time—because I can only do six month tours at McDonalds and then I just had to move on—I was living with a roommate, which is probably when I got to the lowest point of my existence. I was working at Foot Locker while I was a dishwasher for a temp agency.

These odd jobs never worked out for Jarvis. Eventually he decided to get his GED and join the Army National Guard; he claimed to do it out of necessity more than anything else: "I just needed a job, and they were hiring at the time. That was literally my reason." Given Jarvis's situation, the military became an "employer of last resort." While this often carries a negative connation for politicians and on-lookers concerned with the social composition of the military (Berryman 1986), in Jarvis's case joining the military gave him a great opportunity.

As far as military identity formation is concerned, Jarvis seems atypical in relation to the majority of veterans in my qualitative sample. However he is not the only one; Rolanda, a 37-year-old single mother and Army veteran, was in a similar situation as Jarvis. She was not as taken by assuming the identity of a service-member as she was with the benefit package that would become available to her because of her service. "It was tuition, for them to pay for schooling. That was my main reason." However, as I discuss experiences *within* service in the next chapter we will see how both Jarvis and Rolanda come to enjoy the military identity and deepen their commitment to it.

Dean, a 35-year-old Navy medic who served as a Marine Corpsman (a medic for Marines), had a difficult time in college like many others, and he explained "in community college I didn't cut it." Dean also felt a lot of pressure from financial circumstances; he worked several jobs between community college and joining the military.

> I was only making enough money to just go to work and keep my car on the road. I wanted to go back to school, I wanted to travel, and I wanted experience, but I thought about it for about a year because as much as I wanted those things I'd taken into account the possibility that I would have to put my life at risk for my country. And if I wanted to do that, and I did, I also wanted to be a part of something that was bigger than myself.

The idea that military service connects service-members to 'something that is bigger than themselves' speaks to the transformative power that Americans believe the military has, and that the military claims for itself. As noted above, in Alice's case a failing educational pursuit, a desire for a more disciplined identity, and the appearance of service as having "changed everything" for her brother influenced her to believe that joining the Army was the right thing to do. Additionally Alice believed the identity that service in the Army would afford her was elevated above her identity before service. "I had ideas of grandeur as far as being a hero but I joined before 9/11. I definitely wasn't joining to go to war because there wasn't anything. I thought I'd be a weekend warrior, because I initially joined the Reserves. But yeah, I think I had that idea of it. Like putting myself on a pedestal or what I saw a soldier to be."

In our time, the metanarrative has ceased to be gender specific. The idea of a boy becoming a man through military training resonated with Alice's idea of who she could become by way of service in the military. Despite the fact that she was a woman, she could still see herself in the

narrative; her gender was no obstacle as the metanarrative became 'woman becomes a hero.'[12] In her case the events of September 11th, 2001 had not yet happened and there were no other known military conflicts the United States was involved in at the time; and yet, she maintained a belief that she could be seen as a hero by becoming a soldier. Alice had no idea what was in store for her during her military career; she did not have the foresight to know that in just a few short weeks after enlisting, the terrorist attacks of September 11th would transpire while she was in basic training.

As stated earlier, Post 911 veterans who joined the military before and after September 11th cited service of country as the most popular reason for joining (Pew Research Center, 2011). Like Alice many of these enlistees had particular ideas about the nature of their service to country; unlike Alice however, those who joined after September 11th were not simply influenced by the idea of being a hero in the abstract, as relayed by the metanarrative. Instead the opportunity for war drew them toward assuming this desirable identity.

Anticipatory Socialization

Paul, a 25 year-old Army veteran and community college student, joined the military when he was 17 years old, by way of the Delayed Entry Program. This program allows minors to enlist in service provided that their parents sign a waiver for them. Following the death of a friend and "mentor," who had served as a Ranger in the 82nd Airborne Reverse Battalion, Paul made the decision to join and convinced his parents to sign him up:

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[12] Considerations of the metanarrative in terms of female service members are further discussed in the chapter titled "Female service members and veterans."

> September 11th I believe was more of like a rationalization [for joining] the military [for me]. Originally even before September 11th [joining the military] was just kind of a bit of a dream… But when September 11th happened at first it was kind of like 'oh my God this is horrible, I can't believe this happened.' And then after watching, [when] we invaded Afghanistan, and even up to when we invaded Iraq… I remember [saying] 'I'm not sitting on the sidelines for this one. I'm going to do something about this no matter what it took.'

What was a dream for Paul, to be a hero, to fight in service of country, quickly became a reality given the opportunity provided by the declaration of war. Paul did a lot more than just dream about it when this opportunity arose. He explains:

> I chose to be a 19 Delta Calvary Scout with [an] Airborne [designation]. Originally I wanted to go Special Forces but the recruiters told me it was going be a long train-up cycle. And I knew that the last Iraq War ended very quickly [and] I wanted to get there as fast as possible. So I told them what kind of [job] I wanted and they said probably infantry or recon and I was actually going to go for Infantry until I talked to a couple of Vietnam vets [who] said no matter what don't ever go Infantry. So that's how I ended up in the Recon Regiment.

The military occupation Paul chose was one of the most strenuous and dangerous. The risk that this decision presented to his life he felt was worth it because he would be able to right a wrong committed against his country and his friend.

Sociologists refer to the group that an individual desires to belong to as a 'reference group' (Merton 1950). The implication for social action is clear given this term: the individual uses the behaviors considered acceptable by members of the group as a reference for their own behavior. Paul's resolve and eagerness to get into the fight is also indicative of **anticipatory socialization**—the idea that individuals who desire entrance to a reference group begin to perform the identity of a person in that reference group even before they are in fact a part of it (Merton and Rossi 1957; Ebaugh 1988). Paul had already felt connected to the reference group

by way of his mentor. One can only imagine the type of behavior Paul performed, signifying anticipatory socialization, during the course of his relationship with his mentor. Whatever those behaviors may have been, Paul had designed another plan for his future before September 11th and the death of his mentor; after those events transpired everything changed.

> I mean it [the death of my friend] sped up the process. My original plan was actually to go to college first—my father talked me into it—and then become an officer. After college [I would] think about it [joining the military] a little bit more. But I acted very rashly on emotions [when my friend died] and I wanted some revenge.

The death of Paul's mentor revealed that he had already mentally and emotionally stepped into the role of service-member well before enlisting. Paul already regarded himself as capable of correcting the injuries inflicted upon his country and his friend. For him there were no reservations about whether or not he had what it took to become a cavalry scout in the Army. His relationship with his mentor had already reinforced that he could indeed fill that role. He spoke of revenge as if it was his responsibility, as if he were already a brother in arms. We can only understand his emotions by considering him as he considered himself: by way of anticipatory socialization before enlistment, before training, before deployment to theatre, he was a soldier.

Paul was not the only participant I interviewed who was greatly influenced by the events of September 11th. Rick, a Coast Guard veteran, spoke about how difficult it was to live in New York City after September 11th:

> Just being in the New York City environment, I felt like I wanted to get away. I wanted to do something, take some kind of risk to accelerate my life. But I think the big thing was after 9/11 just being in New York City. It sort of started to feel like you were boxed in more... I didn't see many options as far as me going to

> college or making some kind of headway in life. So after 9/11 it was kind of like this is probably going to kill two birds with one stone. I'm going to get away from New York City… I'll be leaving this environment after 9/11 [where I was] just feeling stressed out on the trains, always [hearing] terrorist talk… [and I] felt like being in the military you sort of get some power, a way to fight back. I felt like if anybody is going to know what's going on it's going to be the folks in the military.

For Rick the confusion and instability of New York City life after September 11th, and the bleak prospects for his future, which he also contributed to the panic and claustrophobia of New York after the terrorists attacks, made him want to break the mold, or as he put it "take some risk to accelerate [his] life." By joining the military he thought he was joining people who would know "what was going on," people who would know how to move forward after a tragedy. Rick wanted to become one of those people.

For other prospective service-members, the events of September 11th did not conjure up jingoistic feelings, the need for revenge, or even the desire to be empowered. Rather it was the promise of experiencing something completely new, or becoming someone completely new, since events had turned all the experiences of the civilian world upside-down. Roy had signed a military contract before September 11th but his date to ship to basic training was not until October. He could have decided against it but instead he became excited by the idea of doing things he could otherwise never do. In this passage he discusses his decision to go to training despite knowing war was on the horizon:

> I wasn't like totally blind to the world of the military… Before September 11th it would have seemed kind of funny [to go] off to war or some major conflict. It seemed like a rare, remote, possibility but I knew it wasn't just about getting free checks and just riding it out. You are in the military …anything could happen… I mean [I was] still surprised by it [September 11th]. [It] wasn't like it shattered my whole reality though… Also, I think I wanted to do the harder stuff, the infantry stuff that you couldn't do on the outside. I didn't want them to teach me to work

> on the computer and then work on the outside in the computer world. Even though I never really planned to stay in [the military], I just wanted to do like Army stuff.

So far we have discussed the different impetuses for joining the military as explained by veterans from every branch of military service. Given this, it is apparent how central the concept of assuming a new identity, particularly a mature, disciplined, driven, and powerful identity has played in the decision-making of individuals enlisting in the military. The centrality of this concept had several grave implications for role salience of the veteran identity. The first I presented in terms of the metanarrative of becoming a man through military service. In the way that the metanarrative addresses the transition from childhood to manhood there are no gray areas; therefore it supports a particular paradigmatic view. Kelvin's statement "I went in as a little kid and came out as a man," is indicative of this. Kelvin was 19 when he joined the military and because of the training and experience he received in service he now considers himself a man. As a result, Kelvin has reduced all of his experience of life before the military to that of a child when in fact he was legally an adult for quite some time before he enlisted.

This interpretation has more to do with the symbolic distance between who he was before service and who he became after service than the de facto differences between the identities. The true difference between who Kelvin was and is now came from his years of military training and professional experience, not the transformation from child to man. Posing his development in this way however, illustrates the power of the metanarrative to frame the before enlistment identity and after enlistment identity as opposing one another. Thus the child, or "little kid," has become synonymous with the various pre-service identities I have described (i.e. the son at odds

with his parents; the struggling college student; the disinterested college student; the dissatisfied employee, etc). This is in stark contrast to the new set of self-meanings that the individual develops while in service. These meanings come to define what the man, the end-product is, which I will explore given my sample of student veterans in the next chapter. An important consequence of this symbolism that considers identities before and after military service as polar opposites is the idea that to be a man, to be an adult, is to have a military identity. Therefore if one is to remain a man, an adult, one has also to continue to define oneself in terms of the military identity.

The second implication for role salience of veteran identities comes into focus once we acknowledge that researchers have found that, for the most part, people avoid large changes of identity (Burke 2006). This is mainly due to the fact that large changes of identity require a lot of adjustment in the life of the individual. They can precipitate extreme changes of lifestyle, social and support networks; and often times they can be viewed as disruptive. While past research has shown that people tend to avoid change on this level (Swann 1990), the cases of military service members I have discussed contradict that wisdom. So what are we to make of the vast number of military service members and veterans who eagerly assumed a radically different new identity? Certainly one possibility is that a selection process occurs and that individuals who enter the military are self-selected individuals who desire a large identity change. Such an orientation would inherently mean that role commitment to the new identity in this group would be high because the role change, and the changes associated with it, are the desired goal. Their desire for a new identity might also indicate they were less well integrated

before they chose to change their identities, and therefore had much weaker role commitment to previous roles held before military service.

In the next chapter I examine veterans' in-service experiences that contribute to veteran role salience. Despite the enthusiasm with which many of the veterans discussed in this chapter entered the service, it becomes apparent that some were unprepared for the experiences that would come to define their service in the military.

Chapter Four

During Military Service

The terms Soldier, Marine, Airman, Sailor all conjure their own corresponding imagery and meanings. While these labels represent archetypes of service-members in each branch of military service, the lived experiences of individuals within each of these branches are as diverse as the lived experiences of service-members across branches. A Marine of a particular type may have more in common with a Soldier of a similar type than with a fellow Marine. Across branches and within them there are radically different functions and experiences of being a service-member. In the following pages I will discuss the lived experiences during military service that have come to define what being a Soldier, Marine, Airman, or Sailor means for the individuals in my qualitative sample of student veterans, while acknowledging the variability within each service.

Through social interaction identities acquire meaning to the self. It is therefore important to understand particular characteristics of military service as they contribute to the overall definition of individual's military identity, and veteran identity ultimately. Identity Theory explains that the self is defined by several identities and each identity has its own meanings and symbols (Burke 2006; Styrker and Serpe 1982; Stryker 2002). To understand the bearing this has on an individual we must develop our understanding of symbols, human-made stimuli used to invoke conventional responses from, and expediently relay meanings to, individuals. In terms of military service-members, the primary symbol used by them to communicate their military identities, and variable statuses within military social structure, is the service uniform. There are myriad articles on the uniform (insignia, rank, patches, badges, etc.) that are used to relay the

various identities of service-members within a branch. Most civilians are unaware of the distinctions residing within the broad categories of Soldier, Marine, Airmen, and Sailors. For them the general terms provide sufficient distinction.. However for the Armed Forces members, the distinctions within the same branch of service are extremely important and are a matter of extraordinary investment, careful cultivation, and meticulous appropriation of resources.

The Officer-Enlisted Distinction

The most important distinction between service-members is the distinction between officers and enlisted. This fact was amply documented by Stouffer et al., as part of the many studies conducted by the Research Branch of the War Department during WWII. Stouffer's research, a portion of which was made public in the volumes of *The American Soldier,* described how systemic inequality and the preferential treatment of officers affected enlisted morale during WWII (Stouffer 1949). Decades later, Moskos published *The American Enlisted Man* which verified the applicability of Stouffer's findings for the Vietnam generation. Moskos (1970) wrote, "The differential status enjoyed by officers and enlisted men within the military also corresponds to significant variations in social backgrounds *prior* to service entry" (p41). Moskos found that nearly half of all officers came from white-collar backgrounds and that only a quarter to one-third had blue-collar fathers. These findings were reversed for enlisted men, half of whom came from blue-collar backgrounds and only one-fifth had white-collar fathers. He also noted that in 1965 over 72% of officers were college educated compared with only 1.3% of enlisted members. Referring to these trends he wrote "[A] college degree has become a virtual requirement for officers while a high school diploma is the modal educational level for enlisted personnel" (Moskos 1970).

Updating this information does not markedly change our view of officer-enlisted social origins. Data gathered from Reserve Officer Training Course (ROTC) cadets between 2004 and 2007 show that the average officer who received a commission through ROTC is from a household with an average income of over $68,000; 40% of these cadets come from the top income quintile of American society. ROTC cadets constitute 39% of all officer accessions (Kane 2006). Cadets who received a commission through West Point, who account for 25% of new lieutenants, widen the distance between officer-enlisted socio-economic status (SES) even further. West Point cadets come from households with an average income of over $75,000. In contrast, roughly 75% of all enlisted personnel come from households with an average income just over $40,000; and the median household income of the homes from which enlisted recruits derived was over $48,000 in 2008.[13] This is considerably below the median household income for all American homes that same year (over $52,000). Although these are incomplete data, a comparison with Moskos' data from the Vietnam generation shows that the sharp distinction between the SES backgrounds of officer and enlisted members persists in the Post-911 military.

As for education, in the Post-911 military 98% of recruits had a high school diploma compared with 75% of national youth of comparable age. Moskos noted that high school was the modal level of education for enlisted service-members during Vietnam. That 98% of the Post-911 military is high school educated attests that this is the required level of education now, and there are few exceptions. Conversely, college education has become a uniform requirement for officer

[13] Generally the Department of Defense does not release information on the economic backgrounds of service-members. These data were released by the Defense Manpower Data Center to the Heritage Foundation, a conservative military watchdog NGO. The report can be found at: http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2008/08/who-serves-in-the-us-military-the-demographics-of-enlisted-troops-and-officers

accession. As a result in 2004 over 92% of military officers were college-educated, while only 11% of enlisted personnel had some college experience (Kane 2006).

These contrasts between the educational and social backgrounds of officers and enlisted members bolster the further separation that the social types experience in military service. Stouffer, and particularly Moskos' work goes a long way in describing the disparities in treatment within the military between officers and enlisted members given their institutionally defined roles. For the present research it is necessary to understand the way such disparities affect the identity formation of enlisted members, especially because most student veterans are former enlisted members, since the great majority of officers had already attained a bachelors degree prior to their service in the military.

Officers and enlisted members develop different orientations and impulses, as the military's dual structure actively cultivates distinctive orientations in service-members based on their hierarchically ordered positions. Blake and Butler defined "soldier saving" as an attitudinal orientation that the military institution cultivates in lower enlisted service-members (E1-E5) by rewarding certain behaviors that are indicative of such an orientation. The particular award Blake and Butler (1976) focused on was the Medal of Honor, the U.S. military's most prestigious award. They noticed that enlisted members (E-1 to E-5) were more likely to receive this award posthumously (81.8%), while officers (Captain and above) were more likely to receive the award while still alive (75%).

Enlisted members who received the Medal of Honor were more likely to have performed actions

that can be categorized as "soldier saving" and officers were more likely to receive the award for actions that can be considered "war winning." Grenade actions, as in actions that require one service-member to absorb the blast of an explosive device to protect others in their unit, accounted for 45% of enlisted Medal of Honor recipients. This action was not performed by any of the Medal of Honor recipients who were officers. Rather officers were more likely to receive the Medal of Honor for outstanding leadership (33.3%). Only 1% of lower enlisted men would receive the award for outstanding leadership. In this way Blake and Butler (1976) argue that the military institution actively cultivates, by way of differential award standards, service-members whose actions "exemplify particular social types which are deemed desirable by the military for the performance of its duties."

These ideas expressed by Blake and Butler are consistent with the findings of a study conducted by Stouffer's team of researchers in WWII, and published in *The American Soldier*. In this study, members of a battle hardened infantry unit that fought in Sicily and North Africa were asked to give the rank and description of a combat soldier they knew and admired. The men described markedly different attributes for a good officer and a good private.[14] Officers deserving admiration were described as exemplary due to their leadership abilities. Privates deserving admiration were described as courageous and aggressive (Stouffer 1949). While subjectively these desirable qualities may be viewed as being similar or related, the simple fact that they are framed in such a way (officers-leadership; privates-courage and aggression) is

[14] Privates are the lowest ranking enlisted members. They range from E-1 to E-3, while the full spectrum of enlisted rank ranges from E-1 to E-9. Ranks E-1 through E-5 are generally referred to as lower enlisted. College student veterans predominantly come from this group of enlisted personnel. Noncommissioned Officers (NCO's) are enlisted members rank E-5 and above, E-5 being the lowest ranking NCO.

indicative of the different behavioral expectations directed toward these two groups.

Relative to officers, the military encourages enlisted service-members, by training and awards, inclusive of the Medal of Honor, to have an "orientation, according to all observers, [that] is decisively local" (Blake and Butler 1976). Officers, on the other hand, being designated leaders in the military, are rewarded for the opposite reason. In this way the military conditions enlisted members to have a myopic or localistic view of their situation, limited to the completion of immediate tasks and objectives that will be completed even at the expense of the enlisted members themselves.

As recorded for fiscal year 2009, the enlisted to officer ratio is approximately 6:1 in the U.S. military (DOD 2011). This is a historical low, as the rate of officer accessions has been increasing beyond that of enlisted since the 1980's. Notwithstanding this trend, enlisted members greatly outnumber officers and therefore constitute a much larger part of the veteran's community: lower enlisted members (E-1 to E-5) comprise nearly 75% of the enlisted ranks (DOD 2007). Therefore it can be inferred, because most veterans are from the lower enlisted ranks, that most veterans have a lower enlisted-member's orientation.

Many of the disparities that Moskos and Stouffer witnessed between officers and enlisted members during WWII and Vietnam persist in the Post 911 generation. For the most part enlisted members consider these disparities a fact of life. In terms of power within the ranks, more often than not officers have the last word; however noncommissioned officers (NCO's), who are high-ranking enlisted persons, are the enforcers of the rules and standards set by the

officer class. Moskos (1970) noted that this structure inherently causes tension in the pecking order however in strict military fashion, with few exceptions, all acknowledge that "the regs are the regs." Nevertheless, it is to be expected that lower enlisted persons have a lot to say in criticism when "shooting the shit" about their immediate chain of command, officers and NCOs included.

Post 911 veteran, Doug, who is a former Army Specialist (E-4) simultaneously acknowledges the necessity and the difficulty that officers and NCO's pose within the structure of the present military:

> I've met really wonderful people Officers and NCO's that like really know what they're doing and thank God they stay in, because if they didn't the whole thing would just fall apart. But everybody has multiple stories, more than a couple [or a] handful of stories, about shithead Officers and shithead NCOs. And that was the thing that drove me crazy.

Comical but no less true, the presence of "shithead" officers and NCO's have driven more than one lower enlisted member "crazy."

Some lower enlisted members like Kelvin, a former marine, familiarized themselves with the regulations early in their military careers in order to avoid being exploited. Kelvin recounted: "Some of the officers wanted to treat me like a kid and I wasn't going to stand for it, so I always tried to find out what is expected of me… so I wouldn't be taken advantage of." Kelvin had an issue on a ship he was assigned to where he was reported by his immediate NCO to his commanding officer for declining to perform a task that was asked of him after his shift on "mess deck watch." Prior to this assignment, Kelvin discovered that because of another position he held on the ship, his workday was supposed to conclude at 4pm. He recounted the

intimidation he felt and the benefit of standing his ground even in the presence of officers that hugely outranked him:

> Of course I got written up. I got a Captain's Mast [for] insubordination. [During the mast] you have to be in your full dress uniform; you walk into these quarters; the lights are dim. And then you look up when your eyes adjust, there's a chair and you have like four officers surrounding the captain in the middle. [The Captain said] 'tell us what happened.' So I told him, word-for-word and then at the end of everything he looked at me and said 'If I were in your shoes I'd have done the same thing. But you cannot go around this ship disrespecting the officers.'

Given the empathy of his Commanding Officer, Kelvin got off with a verbal warning, but many lower enlisted members have suffered far worse for far less severe infractions than insubordination. The task Kelvin was asked to perform after his work hours were completed is called a work detail. Arguably, 'work details' are code for the most deplorable duties lower enlisted members are required to perform. They can last from hours to days, and can range from menial labor, such as 'police calls' (i.e. picking up trash), to more difficult logistical tasks.
In order to avoid such occupational annoyances, like "shithead" officers and NCO's, or constant inundation with work details—not to mention the low pay relative to officers, one might surmise that most lower enlisted members would take the job of an officer over their own any day. There are some enlisted members interested in making that transition and for this reason they attend college during and/or after military service. Rolanda, an Army National Guard soldier and single mother of two, attends college while serving in the National Guard for just this reason. Once Rolanda had completed basic training and Advanced Individual Training (AIT)—where she learned the skills necessary to perform her military occupation—she reported to her unit with an orientation she felts most new soldiers have, "you're thinking about your next promotion," she explained. The burning question for Rolanda became, "How do I get there?" Unfortunately

however, in her National Guard unit she found that lower level leaders were so fiercely competitive that they were unwilling to invest time in cultivating new leaders:

> [In] the rank structure no one wants you to get by them… or to get above them. So if you're going to be asking questions, asking what do I do so that I can be promoted, it's like – 'oh I don't know' or 'do such-and-such-and-such.' That's half of it or a quarter of it but no one sits down with you and tells you well this is what you need to do. This doesn't happen. You had better learn and learn quickly.

Ultimately Rolanda decided to become an officer in order to bypass the elbowing to the top that is so often the case in the enlisted ranks. Becoming an officer became her primary goal but for some veterans officer accession is part of their contingency plan. Alvin, a 29 year-old Army veteran, enjoyed his tour of duty with the Army. However, he did not feel that climbing the enlisted ranks was a fitting career for him. Now an undergraduate, he asserts: "I was thinking that [becoming an officer] is kind of my last resort. I really want to do contract work but if I can't find a job once I finish with my bachelor's degree here I'll go back in as an officer. But that's *if* I can't find a job."

The desire of enlisted troops to become officers should not be overstated. Despite the perks of being an officer in the military, many enlisted members prefer to "be in the shit" –a phrase meaning to remain on enlisted duty. Sometimes this is due to the fact that enlisted members truly enjoy the jobs they are trained to do in the enlisted capacity, in most cases, ensures that the individual will be performing this task and only this task. In this vein Bobby, a former Marine, described an assignment he could have been tasked with while in service, "It was politics and I didn't want it. That's why I didn't become an officer, because I didn't want politics. I like doing my job, fixing radios and stuff like that."

From the perspective of an American civilian, where more is better, in terms of professional responsibility and commensurate compensation, so it may be difficult to understand the mentality of enlisted service-members who are content with performing their duties, no matter how seemingly inconsequential or menial they are. This is an important aspect of enlisted culture and military culture in general. As in the civilian context of employment, occupational prestige in the military varies greatly. However, the distinct difference between military and civilian spheres is that the military cultivates the self-understanding of all of its members that effective performance of mundane tasks is essential to the overall function and goal attainment of the institution. The result of the detailed division of labor, and the ability of the military to focus the efforts of service-members exclusively to their assigned tasks, both large and small, facilitates the development of an enlisted-member orientation I refer to as **target vision.** This orientation expresses a service-member's ability to pay attention to the minutest of details of their occupations because of the lack of attention they can pay to matters of peripheral importance. I will return to the discussion of this orientation in the next chapter.

Occupational Specialties[15]

If the officer-enlisted dichotomy represents the first level of noteworthy military distinction in terms of this study, then occupational specialties represent the next level. It is upon this concept that the military has built a highly complex and detailed division of labor. Many of the veterans in my qualitative sample entered the military with some idea of what their military occupations

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[15] The categorizations of military occupations detailed in this section are mostly representative of Army and Marine occupational classifications, the Army constitutes the largest branch of service, and combined with the Marines, they constitute nearly the entire ground force of the U.S. Armed Forces that conducted ground combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan in the Post 911 era.

would be. However because of the mission imperatives of the Wars on Terror, some of these veterans' duties were subject to extreme changes. In order to capture this layer of complexity, I will compartmentalize the ideas in this section within the paradigms of conventional and Counterinsurgency (COIN) operations.

Conventional

Conventional, or symmetrical, warfare is defined as large-scale military campaigns between national military forces. In an earlier chapter I briefly discussed T3R (Tooth-to-Tail Ratio); this concept has great relevance in the paradigm of conventional war. The "tooth" refers to the portion of military troops conducting combat operations. The "tail" refers to the portion of the force that is designated to perform non-combat operations; these troops are principally concerned with tasks that enable the combat troops (or teeth) to fight (McGrath 2007).

Aside from the "Tooth-to-Tail" analogy there are several different, often confusing terms, used to refer to military units by their operational functions. Perhaps as a result of The Petraeus Doctrine (2009), penned by General Petraeus, the term "sustainment" is currently used to refer to the "tail," or the portion of the force designated for performing non-combat operations that sustain the combat forces. Another, more contemporary, variation of terminology used to refer to these different operational groups is: combat elements, logistical elements, administrative/headquarters elements, and life support elements (McGrath 2007). The benefits of using these terms are two-fold: 1) traditionally, when the strength of combat elements was calculated, the estimate often included headquarters and administrative staff who were part of combat elements but did not contribute to combat strength themselves. Thus creating a new

category for administrative/headquarters elements refined unit estimates of combat strength by separating administrative/headquarters support staff from actual combat troops. 2) In large expeditionary operations since the early 20th century, there has been a need for the military to develop camps, bases, and FOB's (forward operating bases). Life support elements are those personnel engaged in such activities as these. They also perform other tasks related to morale, welfare, and recreation (MWR). For these reasons, life support elements are distinct from logistical elements, which maintain supply chains for operations.

Finally, we come to the following terms: Combat Arms, Combat Support, and Combat Service Support. As late as 2005 government reports used these three terms to refer to units based on their operational function (CBO 2005). Notwithstanding the increased functionality of the most recent terminology, out of convenience, given troops' long standing use of, and familiarity with, the terms Combat Arms, Combat Support, and Combat Service Support this study employs these terms to refer to the differentiated operational functions of military units.

Combat Arms is comprised of all the military occupations whose main function is to conduct combat operations. This category includes, but is not limited to, the occupations of: infantry, armor, and mortar. While the military views all military occupations as conducting mission essential functions, Combat Arms hold a special place of prestige in military culture. This is due to the overall function of the military as the institution that conducts war, and the Combat Arms' position as the tip of that spear. The Combat Arms' list of occupations encompasses the specialties within the military that actively engage enemy forces, as a result there is a higher level of prestige. Until recently, women have been barred from service in those military

occupations that are categorized as Combat Arms. Before this policy change some prominent female military leaders and researchers believed that the inherent prestige of Combat Arms units, and the restriction of women from serving in these units, had the effect of reifying differences between the sexes, thereby subordinating women to men in the military and American society in general (The Invisible War 2012; Nuciari 2006). Although the paradigm has now changed, as a result of Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta lifted the ban on military women serving in combat positions in January of 2013, all of the women interviewed in this study served under the old policy.

Combat Support occupations are typically described as occupations that provide operational support to Combat Arms units in the theatre of action. This broad category of military occupations encompasses, but is not limited to, the following: engineering, intelligence, and military police. Among the many essential tasks Combat Support perform, in the paradigm of conventional war they enable the military to understand and negotiate the battlefield, as well as provide force security. Female service members have long been permitted to perform in the occupations that are categorized as Combat Support.

In the paradigm of conventional war, Combat Service Support personnel were less likely than Combat Arms and Combat Support personnel to have endured experiences in combat. Combat Service Support personnel are largely responsible for the daunting logistical operations of the military. Every branch of service has Combat Service Support positions that aid military units in meeting their logistical demands (i.e. allocation and maintenance of personnel, equipment, and

facilities). This category of military occupations encompasses a wide range of specialties including, but not limited to: transportation, finance, and medical.

In the paradigm of conventional war, service-members who serve in Combat Service Support receive weapons training relatively infrequently and are, at times, not proficient in basic war fighting skills as a result. On the other hand, individuals who serve in the military in those occupational specialties categorized as Combat Arms and Combat Support are much more oriented toward combat duty given their frequent weapons and field training and socialization. Combat Service Support personnel are often viewed as the laborers, technicians, and clerks of the military. Due to their logistical nature and the wide range of duties that the specialties listed as Combat Service Support perform, these personnel often wield a considerable amount of power in the ranks, unofficially. Accordingly any savvy service-member understands the need to have good relationships with supply room staff that disseminate issued gear, and with office clerks who handle important paperwork. Such relationships may help service-members, in certain situations, cut through red tape and avoid cumbersome administrative issues. This informal power relationship is illustrated, with some comical exaggeration, in Joseph Heller's brilliant military satire, *Catch 22,* with the character ex-P.F.C. Wintergreen. Wintergreen, a former Private First Class (E-3) who is constantly demoted for going Absent Without Leave (AWOL), but who is unusually powerful in the ranks as he decides the victor in a dispute between two generals. He is endowed with this ability solely because he serves as the Headquarters mail clerk. Heller explains:

> Wintergreen determined the outcome by throwing all communications from General Peckhem into the wastebasket. He found them too prolix. General Dreedle's views, expressed in less pretentious literary style, pleased ex-P.F.C.

> Wintergreen and were sped along by him in zealous observance of regulations."
> Heller 61

This comical portrayal of the influence of critical Combat Service Support personnel would be a serious offense in the real U.S. military, but Heller's point is well taken. The lowest enlisted member, in terms of status, can at times exercise the greatest influence depending upon their function.

Counterinsurgency

Presently, U.S. military operations are performed in the paradigm of Counterinsurgency (COIN). The most essential feature of Counterinsurgent warfare, which causes it to differ from conventional warfare, is the composition of enemy forces: insurgents instead of a cohesive, uniformed, national military. Before the Vietnam War, the U.S. military had developed its force to engage in conventional warfare exclusively. Particularly during the conventional wars of the early twentieth century, T3R, as described in the previous section, was more relevant to the conduct of military operations. In those wars, the military was able to orient its fighting force, or teeth, toward the enemy. Behind the fortified lines of combat units the military conducted logistical, or "tail," operations in relative safety—as long as combat units effectively maintained force security. In this conventional structure of military operations, by adhering to T3R, control over which military personnel would be engaged in combat operations was possible. As a result, the terms tooth (i.e. Combat Arms) and tail (i.e. Combat Support and Combat Service Support) were categories that represented not only the operational functions of the troops considered within them but also the primary duties of these individuals in the theater of action.

In the paradigm of COIN, this structure of military operations is no longer viable. COIN operations are much less contained and compartmentally ordered than conventional wars. There is no rear and no front, therefore the military cannot effectively control which service-members are subject to combat. Soldiers of any occupational specialty have to prepare for the possibility of engaging the enemy directly. In this manner, insurgent groups exercise the greatest operational discretion and due to the asymmetrical nature of direct combat engagements within the COIN paradigm, insurgent groups disproportionately decide to attack Combat Service Support units because of their limited ability to conduct offensive operations in relation to Combat Arms units (The Patraeus Doctrine 2009). Due to insurgents' preference to engage Combat Service Support units, and the resultant increased combat exposure of troops who serve in this capacity, a study notes that in the Iraq War between March 2003 and May 2005 Combat Service Support units suffered the second largest amount of fatalities (292 deaths) from enemy contact. Nevertheless, the largely offensive function of Combat Arms units caused them to suffer the overwhelming majority of fatalities (693 deaths). Combat Support units however, being those units that work most closely with Combat Arms by providing them greater operational capacity, suffered the least amount of fatalities (124 deaths) (CBO 2005).

These operational changes have had rather interesting consequences for military personnel. In the subsequent pages I will exhibit three issues resulting from the operational changes corollary to COIN, which are borne out in the data of this study:

1. In terms of the military's social hierarchy, Combat Arms units retain their place of prestige despite the increased exposure of non-combat units to combat.

In an earlier chapter I discussed the impetus for enlisting in the military, as explained by the

veterans in my qualitative sample. I noted that veterans had myriad reasons for wanting to serve in the military, the most popular of which was a desire to be in service of their nation. This however, does not imply that most service members enlisted with a desire to engage enemy combatants directly. In fact, even some of those who enlisted in occupational specialties within the Combat Arms did not have a desire to directly engage enemy combatants. Roy, a former airborne Army infantryman, stated that he did not want to do a job in the military that he could easily have done in the civilian sector of employment. Rather he was intrigued by the idea of doing "Army stuff." He explains, "That's why I went into the combat specialty; I could have went into some other ones but it just seemed like 'when else are you gonna get paid by someone to jump out of planes and you know fire guns and do stuff like that?' It just seemed so cool." Additionally Roy cited his desire to meet women as an important reason he served in a combat specialty. Serving in the infantry is a strange means to this end, as before January 2013 no women serve in the infantry of the U.S. Army. Perhaps what Roy meant is that by serving in the infantry he felt that he could attract more women, as a result of the high prestige of infantrymen. This point corroborates findings of studies conducted during WWII, pertaining to the generalized code of American masculinity and the increased prestige of fighting units, which I will examine in a later section.

Serving in Combat Arms units alongside troops like Roy, who wanted to do "Army stuff" to impress women, are certainly *some* troops who desired direct engagements with enemy combatants. As Paul, the former cavalry scout who lost a mentor and close friend in the war in Iraq, mentioned, his desire for revenge was paramount. Perhaps because of Paul's anticipatory socialization into the Combat Arms he believed he would only attain revenge by serving in the

Combat Arms. Service in the Army in another capacity (i.e. Combat Support or Combat Service Support) may not have solidified conducting combat operations as his primary operational function, nevertheless by serving in a logistical capacity he would have been subject to considerable risk. Paul was however unaware of the enhanced offensive posture of logistical units during COIN operations.

2. Research conducted during past wars has shown marked differences between the attitudes of front and rear, or tooth and tail troops, as a result of differential combat exposure and unit cohesion (i.e. Stouffer et al. 1949; Moskos 1970). These differences appear to be less pronounced in the current generation of military veterans.

In the previous chapter I mentioned Jarvis, the Army Reservist truck driver, who claimed to have enlisted only because he needed a job and the military was an employer of last resort. As a truck driver, an occupational specialty categorized as transportation within Combat Service Support, Jarvis had no idea of the risky business he had volunteered to perform. Due to their high mobility in theatre, there is sufficient reason to believe that, within COIN, transportation specialists are the most at risk of Combat Service Support troops. In the following passage Jarvis recounts a combat situation:

> We were on the way back [and] this Humvee in front of us gets hit by an IED [Improvised Explosive Device]. It was my first IED; it was crazy; it scared the hell out of me... [Then] we [my truck] got hit by one in the middle of the night... [When] this second one happened it didn't really affect me so much. I was, like, 'Oh wow that's a big explosion; that's a real big explosion.' That's what it was like, you know, my reaction. When it hit the Humvee in front of us, we stopped, pulled security in the town and on this overpass. I was pointed at the overpass down there, and I had an M203; so that was pretty cool. [I] pulled security for a few minutes, 10 minutes, 20 minutes. Yeah, you know, it was every little kid's dream. If you've grown up in the suburbs, you'd always pick up sticks and play army in the woods. And every kid's machine gun had a modified grenade launcher on it; so I was living the dream of actually having a machine gun—or semi-automatic machine gun with a grenade launcher.

Despite Jarvis' initial view of the military as an employer of last resort, and his lack of interest in the metanarrative or the cultivation of a military identity, the above passage not only demonstrates his positive response to combat exposure but also his great enthusiasm for his duties which he only discovered while in theatre; his development of attitudes closely associated with Combat Arms rather than Combat Service Support—within which he operated, and an ex post facto acknowledgement of his fulfillment of a childhood fantasy. Given the commonality of the combat experiences he recounted within the Wars on Terror, we have reason to expect similar reactions exist among Combat Service Support troops, especially those tasked with transportation duties.

Although Combat Service Support troops overall have experienced combat at an increased rate within COIN, not all of these troops have experienced these operational changes first hand. Maurice, a former Marine corporal (E-4) I interviewed, performed a Combat Service Support specialty as well. The Marines trained him in Communications, and when he was deployed to Afghanistan he explained that his unit was:

> …In charge of all the phones. We were the main phone people that were in charge of the camp, and everyone came to us with all their problems. That's why we consistently had to work all the time. And it was just about eight of us… When we first got there, there was really nothing there. We were just out in the middle of the desert.

Maurice's experiences in theatre invoke the image of Combat Service Support personnel in times of conventional war like Heller's character, ex-P.F.C. Wintergreen, discussed earlier. Although

only an E-4, his important function on this distant camp in a desert area of Afghanistan made him an authority. At times his authority created trouble for him with Marines of higher rank:

> My main thing was satellite phones but our specialty mainly was land lines, so I was the guy that got complained to a lot because I wouldn't allow anyone to call [home]; because it was my job. So people yelled at me because they thought they were in charge and I was the boss.

Yet another example of a Combat Service Support occupation that is largely unaffected by the operational changes required in COIN are those who operate as clerks, technicians, and within maintenance units. Alvin is a 29 year-old Army veteran. His case is best viewed in terms of a youth who enlisted in the military in order to acquire a trade. These individuals often choose to be trained in a specialty within Combat Service Support, because this category of military occupations seems to have higher transferability to the civilian employment sector. Alvin intended to learn to be a mechanic in the military; he felt this "wouldn't be a waste of time" because he could use the skills he learned when he left the military. Alvin had, however, no way of knowing that he would be tasked with a function outside of his occupational specialty. He spent most of his military career working on a "special detail." This assignment required him to complete work orders in a military facility. He notes, "If you had a work order to fill out, like the toilet was broken, I would fix that. I had to paint the barracks in Korea, yeah that was me." Although Alvin laments, "I didn't really do much of my job in the military that's one thing I didn't really like," in the end he chose to refocus his professional goal to correspond with the skills he did pick up in the military. Ultimately his professional trajectory shifted from becoming a civilian mechanic after military service, to "trying to get into facilities management" which he studies as an undergraduate.

3. Despite women being routinely engaged in combat in theatre during the Wars on Terror,

until January 2013 the law prohibited them from operating in exclusively combat roles.

Rebekah Havrilla, a prominent member of the Post-911 female service-member organization, Service Women's Action Network (SWAN), served in Iraq on an Explosive Ordinance Disposal (EOD) team. This occupational specialty is categorized under Combat Support, yet it was arguably one of the most dangerous occupations within the military during the Iraq War. Members of EOD teams were required to dispose of Improvised Explosive Devices (IED's) that were rigged by insurgent groups and identified by various U.S. military units patrolling the theater of action in Iraq. EOD teams also perfunctorily conducted route clearance, which is the act of sweeping roads and streets for IED's in the theatre of action. In a public meeting Rebekah once acknowledged that being a women on an EOD team was "the closest a women could come to serving in Special Forces," as it was an incredibly dangerous occupation, which typically required its members to engage in intense combat operations. However since it was not designated as Combat Arms women could serve in its ranks.[16]

Deployed vs. Garrison

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are two of the longest wars in U.S. history. Having conducted operations in these theaters of action for over a decade, many service-members have been subject to deployment and some even to multiple deployments. (Deployment is the military term for being sent into a theater of war.) As strenuous as the deployment schedule has been for some military units, there are many service members who have not been deployed at all. In 2010 it was reported that 40% of all active duty military personnel have not deployed. 30% have

[16] Statements by Rebekah Havrilla were recorded during a public event held by Service Women's Action Network,SWAN, during which Rebekah spoke on the condition of females serving within the ranks of the military.

deployed once; 18% have deployed twice; and only roughly 11% have deployed three or more times (Defense Business Board 2010).

For the 60% of military personnel who were deployed, their time spent deployed, preparing for deployment, and demobilizing after a deployment has been stressful for them and their families, to say the least. Military personnel experience increased stress at every stage of deployment. The months and weeks leading up to a deployment require many service members to spend longer hours training and preparing their units and themselves for the mission. They may also work longer hours at home preparing their families for their absence. During deployments uncertainty about deployment time frame and overall mission are often the cause of increased stress. One of the most frequently cited strains of service deployments is the large amount of time spent away from one's family. After deployments many service members experience stress when reuniting with their families.

One study has shown that some service members have identified certain benefits of being deployed. Some deployed personnel reported that their time deployed increased their confidence by showing that they can complete difficult tasks. For some it allowed them to utilize years of military training in real-world situations. For others difficult deployments caused them to exercise their ability to adapt, and it strengthened their bonds with others they served with. Increased unit cohesion may cause service members to reenlist even, although they can expect a difficult time in service ahead, given the accelerated deployment and training schedules. Last but not least, many deployed personnel reported that the pay benefits of deployment have positively affected them and their families (Hosek et al. 2006).

Interestingly many service members who had not deployed report the negative affects of working in garrison during this time of war. Garrison refers to the relatively domestic aspect of military life—the living on bases and in military communities within the United States or its strategically placed bases throughout the world. Many of the stressors that service members in garrison cited were related to deployments even though these service members were not deployed themselves. Frequently cited stressors for non-deployed personnel were: increased work hours and work weeks in order to compensate for the labor lost to deployment; the absence of pay increases commensurate with workload increases; family separation due to working longer hours; and difficulty reintegrating into units with deployed personnel because bonds between deployed personnel have become stronger often at the expense of excluding non-deployed personnel (Hosek et al. 2006).

In my qualitative sample at least one veteran reported that his relationship with non-deployed members of his unit was exacerbated by him being deployed and absent from the group. While Hosek et al. reported that non-deployed personnel often feel that they no longer fit in with military personnel returning from deployment, the opposite also seems to be true; deployed personnel have a difficult time reintegrating into units where others have not deployed. For one former Marine I interviewed, this experience was very hurtful, he recalls:

> I had to come back to my other unit, it's like they knew who I was but they forgot I existed and it kind of made some complications, because I assumed some people were my friends. Apparently I was just general population to them. I thought we were really good friends before I left and a year away must mean I don't exist no more.

When asked what he thought was the wedge that disconnected him from his fellow non-deployed Marines he responded frankly:

> Time; a lot of stuff happened. Even though people told me on the phone what happened, you don't know exactly what's going down unless you're actually there doing or experiencing the same things they're experiencing. In my mind, time just stopped and I assumed as I got back—obviously not everything would have been the same, but—most things would have been right back to where they were, but they weren't.

Indeed time was a big factor, but he also notes that his non-deployed buddies were unable to understand his personal struggles when he returned. He continues:

> I tried to sit them down and talk to them; but because they hadn't experienced it [deployment] yet, [they] didn't know where I was coming from. [They] just thought I want[ed] attention. I'm like, "No, I would like to talk to somebody," but apparently that was asking too much.

In this respect, non-deployed service-members seem hardly better than civilians in terms of understanding the struggles of returning service-members. This is a point of mere conjecture; however I am led to believe that this type of misunderstanding between deployed and non-deployed personnel, especially in the direction of non-deployed personnel rejecting a service-member returning from deployment, is more prevalent in the non-combat specialties than in combat specialties. This belief is based on the fact that service during deployments to the theatre of action for Combat Arms service-members is a point of pride, and it often corresponds with increased prestige and rank within line units; a result of having been combat-tested. On the other hand individuals in non-combat specialties have very diverse experiences in theater based on their assignments. It may be more difficult for their non-deployed counterparts to accept, and react to, their stories of danger or contact with enemy combatants when for the most part their military training is not oriented toward such situations.

Combat vs. Non-combat

The combat distinction is perhaps one of the most important characteristics of an individual's military service record. Combat service does not significantly increase a service member's privileges or have any identifiable tangible benefit, as combat and non-combat veterans are comparable in terms of the benefits they have access to during their time in the military and even afterward when they become veterans. Combat service however does affect service members in terms of prestige. The most overt expression of this is found in the military's allocation of medals and badges.

The Bronze Star, the Silver Star, and the Medal of Honor, the most prestigious medals the military awards from least to greatest, are often granted to service members for acts performed in combat situations. Most service members who have served in combat have not received any of those awards; however the military has other conspicuous ways to acknowledge their sacrifices. The Purple Heart is a medal designated for service members who have been injured during engagements with enemy combatants. Injuries during military service are common, but the most common injuries are actually received during accidents for which there are no medals (DOD 2005), while combat-related injuries are medal-worthy.

Badges are also used to distinguish service members who have served in combat from those who have not.[17] In the Army, just for service in the theatre of action, irrespective of combat experience, service members are granted combat patches. The unit that a service member served

[17] This discussion of badges is limited to the Army because it is the branch of service I am most familiar with. Conveniently, the Army also has the most extensive scientifically rigorous documentation of the effects of its combat badge program in *The American Soldier*.

with in the theater of action determines the design of a service member's combat patch. The combat patch is identical to the unit patch of the unit the service member served in-theater with, however it is worn on the right arm. The unit patch, which is worn on the left arm, indicates what unit the service-member is currently serving in.

For actual engagements with enemy combatants there are several ways the Army recognizes service members. Several studies conducted by the Research Branch of the War Department during WWII found that infantrymen, those designated by the military to conduct the majority of ground combat, had low status in the military in the early years of that war. Stouffer et al. noted that in large part this low status was due to infantry units being used as a "dumping ground for men who could pass physical standards but who need not satisfy any other test" (Stouffer et al., Adjustment p309). As a result of this informal policy it was found that Army infantry units were among those with the lowest educational level of personnel in the Army. In order to change this trend, attract more talent, and confer prestige on the military fighting man, in response to the findings of the Research Branch studies, the Army adopted a practice of awarding two badges, the Expert Infantryman's Badge (EIB) and the Combat Infantryman's Badge (CIB). These badges are now two of the most prestigious and desirable badges in the Army.

The EIB is awarded to all service members (enlisted and officer) who successfully complete a series of rigorous tests that gauge how proficient an infantryman is in terms of infantry-related tasks. This badge has nothing to do with combat service; rather it is a symbol of a skilled war fighter. The CIB, the second badge adopted by the Army after recommendation of the Research Branch, is awarded to service-members who are trained as infantrymen and have acquired

combat experience in a theatre of action. Several studies were conducted before widespread implementation of these badges took place. They found that the EIB and CIB helped recruit more talent to, and raise the prestige level of, the infantry.

During WWII the CIB seemed to be a sufficient identifier of infantrymen who sacrificed themselves in combat. Given the extraordinary change in the nature of current warfare this badge has become inadequate. The main reason the CIB lost its ability to identify service members who actively engaged enemy combatants, or were engaged by enemy combatants, in the Post 911 military is because it could only be granted to infantrymen. In the asymmetrical wars of the present combat is not relegated to infantry units alone. Notwithstanding the accelerated rate of combat experiences among Combat Service Support, discussed previously, since the early years of the War on Terror many Combat Arms and Combat Support units, such as cavalry, cavalry scouts, military police, etc. have been used as infantry or mechanized/mounted infantry to subsidize the nation's combat force (The Patraeus Doctrine 2009). Although many of these troops experienced combat comparable to infantrymen, because their military occupations were not designated as such they could not be awarded the CIB. This treatment created a stir in the ranks, which resulted in the military issuing a new combat badge comparable to the CIB, the Combat Action Badge (CAB). To be granted the CAB a service-member could be trained in any military occupation; however they must have had the experience of being engaged by and/or engaging enemy combatants in the theatre of action. In other words the CAB is equivalent to the CIB except that service-members awarded it can be of any military occupational specialty. The overall reception of the CAB within the ranks has been positive. This is fortunate because this badge has become a symbol of the sacrifice of many service-

members; especially women whom are barred from serving in the combat specialties but serve in combat nonetheless.[18]

WWII Comparison

Studies conducted on service-members during WWII offer insights on the social effects of combat on service-members. No group of researchers in US military history has done more to document the animus between rear and front line, combat and non-combat, troops than Samuel Stouffer and the Research Branch of the War Department during WWII. Although subject to some modification to adjust for the COIN paradigm, the research that Stouffer's team produced on the social effects of combat on service-members is still relevant today. A discussion of some of Stouffer's findings, and how they apply to military social relationships within COIN follows.

After the adoption of official policies of combat recognition, (e.g. CIB and EIB), in the late years of WWII Stouffer's studies of soldiers exposed a "barnyard" status hierarchy that was, to a certain extent, contingent on these policies. Contrary to their status earlier in the war, Stouffer noted that line infantrymen stood at the top of a status hierarchy that was predicated on "values commonly shared by men in our society" (Stouffer et al., Combat 305). These values he described as a "generalized code of masculinity." Stouffer acknowledged the varying conceptions of masculinity in American civilian communities but maintained that the broad ideas and values of the generalized code of masculinity were most commonly: "courage, endurance and toughness, lack of squeamishness when confronted with shocking or distasteful stimuli, avoidance of display of weakness in general, reticence about emotional or idealistic matters, and

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[18] See: Chapter titled, "Female service-members and veterans"

sexual competency" (Stouffer et al., Combat 131). Stouffer noted that different fighting units exemplified different generalities of the code, however the main thrust of all, as well as in the civilian sphere, was: "Be a man."

Given extensive qualitative and quantitative research on the ranks, Stouffer declared that combat was the ultimate test of manhood. He wrote "Combat posed a challenge for a man to prove himself to himself and others. Combat was a dare. One never knew for sure that he could take it until he had demonstrated that he had" (Stouffer et al., Combat 131). Sociologically, perhaps one of the most interesting things about combat infantrymen being at the top of the status hierarchy is that this potentially spites the wisdom of Max Weber.[19] Stouffer notes that "men in the Army at large had a high regard for the infantryman, though they had little wish to be one" (Stouffer et al., Combat 305) and 20% of the infantrymen, themselves, seemed to desire to change positions with rear duty troops, abandoning their esteemed positions as front line infantrymen (Stouffer et al., Combat).

The inability of infantrymen to change their lot, and have the military reassign them to rear duty or even grant them longer break times, greatly affected their morale and attitudes toward rear support and supply troops. The relative deprivation they experienced in terms of their hardship on the front lines and the apparent comfort and lack of danger experienced by rear troops caused many of the troops on the front lines to envy and degrade their rear counterparts. Furthermore Stouffer believed that the absence of legitimacy in the division of labor exacerbated combat

[19] In his essay titled "Class, Status, Party" Max Weber famously explains the status group and the coveted positions individuals at the top of positively privileged status groups occupy. Infantrymen are an example of a positively privileged status group that few wish to be a part of and even the members themselves may wish to leave for better fortune.

troops' attitudes toward the rear, as bad fortune was the only distinction combat troops could muster to explain their placement in the most dangerous positions in the war (Stouffer et al., Combat).

The only compensation infantrymen were given for their lot was the certainty of their superiority to, and earned respect of, those serving in the rear (Stouffer et al., Combat). Stouffer wrote, "Since for the most part he [the combat troop] could not hope realistically for a rear assignment, it suited him better to think of his unwelcome role as superior. His frank desire to serve in the rear was overlaid to some degree by feelings of pride and superiority" (Stouffer et al., Combat 305). Thus as the high status of infantrymen was predicated on the values of the generalized code of masculinity, infantrymen could be viewed as ideal men while men who served in other capacities were easily viewed as less than men in comparison. It follows that Stouffer noticed that rear echelon troops felt guilty for having the good fortune of serving in the rear. This guilt was a function of their shared belief in the values that made front line troops ideal men. In fact Stouffer maintained, "To invest combat men with prestige and to treat them with deference was a way of alleviating possible guilt feelings and reaffirming the common bond of shared values with them" (Stouffer et al., Combat 309). In this way, rear troops were complicit in their subordination to front line infantrymen.

In the European theatre the animosity toward rear troops from the front line was most intense. This was due to the fact that, in Europe, the theatre of action was largely in developed areas, so troops in the rear not only served in relative safety and comfort, but they also had access to all of the creature comforts one would expect in a European city. In the Pacific, both rear and front

line troops suffered together while living in the jungle. The difference in their living conditions were minimal; while living mainly in camps in the jungle subjected both rear and front to the threat of bombing and infiltration.

Stouffer also studied the attitudes of front and rear troops toward troops who served in the far rear; these were assigned to duty stations within the United States. The attitudes of front and rear troops toward those serving in the United States were equally poor. However the longer that front line troops served in combat, the poorer their attitudes became towards those who served in the far rear.

Stouffer et al. (Combat 131) noted that WWII marked a definitive moment in US military history when the measure of a man was directly related to his capacity in the war. During WWI community pressure to serve in the war was greater than in WWII however the emphasis was focused on simply serving in the military honorably; this alone was sufficient enough to reinforce masculine identities. In contrast, during WWII there was an increased knowledge of the military as a highly complex and differentiated organization. People began to understand the distinction between front and rear troops, combat and non-combat service-members. Given this, one's capacity in the military, and their function in the war, became directly related to their claims of masculinity. In this manner combat troops garnered the most respect and admiration as men (Stouffer et al., Combat 131).

Nearly 16 million Americans served in uniform during WWII (Gambone 2005). As is a general rule with status groups, a fact that probably contributed to the prestige of combat troops is that they were a considerable minority of America's fighting force. A minority of the Armed Forces

performed the most difficult duties of the war, and of the nation at war these individuals constituted an even smaller minority. The long logistical tail of the WWII Army required a vast number of laborers and technicians to serve in the ranks. As a result, the Army was comprised of mostly these types of service-members. Combat troops constituted roughly 1 out of every 4 soldiers. The remaining three quarters were clerks, skilled laborers, and unskilled laborers (Stouffer, Combat). In a related survey the Research Branch of the War Department during WWII discovered that nearly 27% of all enlisted men and officers reported that they had experienced combat during the war. Over half of enlisted men and officers did not experience the violence of the war; of those who did a small portion did not see combat but did experience indirect fire (Stouffer, Combat).

Although WWII service-members were a considerable minority of the entire American population they constituted nearly 9% of the population of the country at that time (Pew Research Center 2011). In the Post 911 generation only 0.5% of the nation has taken on the burden of military service to fight a two-front war, the longest of its kind in the history of the nation. If combat troops during WWII were considered an esteemed minority the same, or more, should be true considering combat troops in the present. We are however at a radically different place as a nation in terms of military competency, as the percentage of the nation serving in the War on Terror represents. Retired US Navy Admiral Mike McMullen, once Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, sorrowfully acknowledged this: "I fear they [American civilians] do not know us [military veterans]… I fear they do not comprehend the full weight of the burden we carry or the price we pay when we return from battle." For the most part, American civilians and Post 911 veterans agree with this statement, as a study showed that 84% of veterans believe that

the American public does not understand military life; civilians agreed with this statement at a rate of 72% (Pew Research Center 2011).

Clearly the principles of the citizen-soldier and the responsibility of the American public to "support our troops" have eroded, considering that despite the acknowledgement of the inequitable nature of military service in the War on Terror, 70% of people simply believe that the sacrifices service-members bear currently are simply "just part of being in the military" (Pew Research Center 2011). Such a popular view of military service can only be explained as a function of 40 years spent in the All Volunteer Force paradigm. The view of military service-members as volunteers, willing to be sacrificed in support of the nation, absolves the public from the responsibilities of contributing to the war effort.

As for the culture of masculinity that bolstered the WWII effort, as men overwhelmingly considered it their responsibility to contribute the war effort in some way, America has changed remarkably. However, in spite of the social movements during the fifties and the Vietnam Era there is little proof that American masculinity has changed much, or strayed away from the characteristics that Stouffer once noted defined American men ("courage, endurance and toughness, lack of squeamishness when confronted with shocking or distasteful stimuli, avoidance of display of weakness in general, reticence about emotional or idealistic matters, and sexual competency.") Perhaps the greatest effects of those movements in terms of the military are the progressive policies of inclusion of minorities, women, and gays within the ranks. And yet, even if masculinity has not changed much, in our age it is certainly not inherently bound to the question "What are you doing for the War?" Since the moratorium of the draft in 1973,

military service has become disconnected from the concept of public responsibility, and masculinity has followed suit.

Nevertheless, because of the permanence of the meanings, associations, and symbols of masculinity, the absence of military service as a masculine imperative during time of war has not diminished claims to masculinity by combat troops. Current media continue to exhibit the combat troop as the ideal man, the nucleus of power and action in our time. However participating in the game of war is no longer a matter of widespread social pressure, as it was during WWI and WWII. Rather it is the torch, the duty, of those who choose to take up the challenge. In this way, the self-selected few can largely be viewed as undeserving of sympathy because they chose to join. And empathy is a bridge seldom crossed by the 99.5% of the nation who have not served in the Post 911 war effort, most of whom would never conceive of volunteering to put themselves at such risk.

Stouffer's assertion during WWII that "men in the Army at large had a high regard for the infantryman, though they had little wish to be one" (Stouffer, Combat 305) is perhaps more characteristic of the nation as a whole than it is representative of troops attitudes within the Army during our time. In spite of the wide loss of civilian participation in the current military, in contrast to WWII, the voluntary nature of Post 911 service renders combat troops less likely to attribute their combat duty assignment to misfortune. A study shows that the vast majority of combat troops (98%) are proud of their service and that Post 911 veterans in general report that the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq were worth it at a higher rate than American civilians (Pew Research Center 2011). Additionally, a point of mere conjecture—since no comparable data

exists on this matter—the fact that most infantrymen *chose* to perform their jobs when they initially enlisted in the military casts doubt on the current applicability of Stouffer's finding that 20% of the WWII infantry desired to be reassigned to another military occupation. After all the current increased participation of Combat Service Support and Combat Support personnel in combat does not make the selection of military occupations look too promising for combat soldiers who would desire reassignment; they may find themselves in combat whether assigned to tooth or tail. A related matter for which there is also currently no data has to do with the morale of Combat Service Support troops, who enlisted to perform mainly logistical operations but have found themselves in combat as a result of COIN. Speculation is warranted as to whether these individuals would feel negatively about their experiences in the military as a result of having to perform very dangerous tasks that many of them were not initially aware of. Due curiosity notwithstanding, the high level of pride in military service reported by veterans of the Post-911 military is possibly indicative of even Combat Service Support personnel not feeling that increased risk of their jobs is a result of their misfortune. Thus it is possible that Jarvis, the Army Reservist truck driver and combat veteran quoted previously, represents the largely positive reaction even this group has had to combat service.

The guilt of noncombat troops for serving in relative safety in comparison to their combatant counterparts, a point which Stouffer found evidence for in WWII, is limited by the voluntary nature of service in the current All Volunteer Force and the increased share that traditionally non-combat troops have in combat. 94% of noncombat troops in the Post 9/11 generation reported they were proud of their service. Being a matter of choice, service in the All Volunteer Force is increasingly a point of pride for service-members and veterans. This pride however,

accounts for some of the difficulties veterans have during reintegration into civil society, especially those who do so via higher education, a fact we will discuss in the chapter titled "Student Veterans."

The relative contentment that combat and noncombat Post 911 veterans report with their contributions within the ranks does not mean that there is no tension between these groups. However, Stouffer's explanation of the tensions between front and rear, conventional war terminology for combat and noncombat, troops is much more complex in the Post-911 era than in the WWII era. As mentioned above in the paradigm of COIN, the designations front and rear—tooth and tail, or Combat Arms, Combat Support, and Combat Service Support—are no longer viable references to combat and noncombat troops. For this reason the present study employs a wider definition of combat and noncombat troops. Given the heterogeneity of service-members who have experienced combat in the Post-911 era, in terms of their occupational specialties and even gender, I employ the term combat troops to refer to all troops who have experienced combat engagements with enemy combatants in theatre. Thus they may be male or female and of any military occupation.

The sensitivity, or empathy, used to develop this definition of combat troops is not indicative of a substantive presence of the same within current military ranks. Combat troops, broadly defined, still use pejorative terms to refer to those who never "leave the wire," meaning those who operate inside of the secured confines of the forward operations base (FOB). The tension no longer corresponds to Stouffer's conception—between the front and rear troops; rather it is between those who operate outside of the FOB and those who operate within it. As it were, the

new front is outside of the wire and the new rear is within it. This polarizing view of the military's force defines social cleavages that cut through units of every occupational function (Combat Arms, Combat Support, and Combat Service Support). Contemporarily, military service-members whose duties require them to remain in the FOB, without venturing out into the unknown threats of the area of operations (AO) are often referred to as "Fobbers" or "Fobbits"—a perhaps not-so-charming play on the word Hobbits, which are the small, fearful, and relatively peaceful creatures created by J.R.R. Tolkien in *Lord of the Rings*. As with the WWII generation, current noncombat troops, broadly defined, more often than not are complicit in their subordination to combat troops. As Stouffer noted such deference is the mark of their belief in the same values that elevates combat troops above them. Despite the heterogeneity of combat troops with respect to occupational specialties and gender, in the Post 911 generation they are still capable of substantiating their claims to masculinity and prestige by proof of their military service records. And their capacity to conspicuously tout their achievements is perhaps even enhanced now as the formal processes for doing this have been expanded with the advent of the Combat Action Badge (CAB), as I have mentioned.

In this chapter we have reviewed how as military service begins so does the divide between the service-member and civilian society, as the start of military service marks the point at which real military identities are first generated. We have also discussed the variables that contribute to identification and stratification in the military. These distinctions are of the utmost importance because they structure the experiences, meanings, and lessons invested in the identities of service-members. Ultimately the distinctions I have mentioned will also affect what the identity of a veteran means to the individual, how salient that identity becomes, and how difficult it is for

the individual to take on subsequent roles, especially that of student.

Chapter Five

After Military Service

What is Reintegration?

In recent years increased attention has been focused on the reintegration that military veterans endure upon demobilizing and separating from the military. This is not a new problem: two of the oldest classics of Western literature ("The Iliad" and "The Odyssey") deal with the themes of the combatant in battle and the veteran returning home (Shay 1994; Shay 2003). Therefore we may think of this new generation as encountering an old—even ancient—problem. In this chapter we will explore the semantics of reintegration as it pertains to contemporary veterans of the US Armed Forces; we will define what reintegration is, identify the aspects of reintegration that contribute to veteran role salience, and view it in terms of the diverse experiences of student veterans.

While there is considerable attention paid by the media to the effects that physical, cognitive, and psychological wounds acquired during military service have on the lives of veterans, it is sometimes assumed that veterans who do not suffer from mental or physical wounds do not have issues returning to society (e.g. Tanielan and Jaycox 2008). Some researchers have discovered, however, that issues with veteran reintegration go well beyond service-related disabilities (Hosek, et al. 2006; Higate 2001). As a result a new literature (including many self-help manuals) on veteran reintegration has appeared; this addresses issues ranging from resume creation to dealing with family roles that may be unfamiliar to veterans due to their extended service deployments (e.g. Farley, 2005; Exum and Coll, 2008; Williams and Poijula, 2002; Armstrong et al., 2005; Hill, 2009; Canfield et al., 2001; Ward, 2009; Freidman and Slone, 2008;

Jacobson, 2010; Cleare, 2010; Moore and Kennedy, 2010; Cantrell and Dean, 2008; Alford, 2010; Brooks, 2008).

The process of veteran reintegration has been called many different names. Veterans, service-members, researchers, and laymen, alike, experience some ambivalence with the terminology used to signify the process I refer to here as reintegration. At times the terms homecoming, reintegration, reentry, demobilization, social reintegration, or social reentry are used interchangeably. This seems harmless enough but history, most especially military history, has shown that problems that are inadequately named are often inadequately addressed. Take the example of the condition we now call Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). It has been called many different names throughout the history of war, and since its scientific acceptance is only relatively recent (i.e. 1980), many of its former names bore a negative connotation (Scott 1990). Social researchers studying the reintegration process may use the case of PTSD for insight concerning the pitfall of title ambiguity.

In this dissertation I have chosen to refer to the process of veterans returning to civilian life as reintegration. The purpose of selecting this term rather than others is that, quite simply, the term reintegration most closely explains the process. Returning veterans to civilian life is no linear task; rather it is a multi-faceted complex process. First there is obviously the physical dimension of reintegration, as the former service members are no longer physically in the theatre of action, nor at a military installation. They have returned and are therefore physically reintegrated into the territory of the United States. Second, there is the process of social reintegration. This refers to the return of veterans to their social networks, often constituted by groups of family and

friends. Finally, there is economic reintegration; this refers to veterans returning to the civilian labor market. Most veterans will stop receiving financial support from the Armed Forces at the time of reintegration, therefore this moment also marks the time that they will begin to enter civilian sectors of employment. Given these different aspects, I favor the term reintegration to describe the process as a whole. The other terms with which reintegration is often used interchangeably (i.e. homecoming, reentry, demobilization, social reintegration, or social reentry) seem to refer to one aspect of reintegration rather than the process in its entirety.

As we have seen in an earlier chapter, many veterans were loosely integrated into their communities to begin with. For this reason, critics might contest my use of the term reintegration, as it implies integration of the second time, or third time, or beyond. This may seem to be ill suited to those veterans who were barely integrated before they left for military service. Regardless of how well, or how superficial, the initial integration of individuals in their communities of origin were, each individual had a physical environment they left behind, a social network and social relations that bounded their pre-service identities, and an economic position that could be defined by their place in the civilian labor market. No matter how loose the initial integration of the veterans in their communities of origin were, they all maintained a position within a specific physical, social, and economic context before they were extracted from these situations by service in the military. Moreover the term reintegration does not necessarily imply that these veterans will return to the same physical, social, and economic contexts they left, but rather the broader physical, social, and economic context of American civil life.

Veteran-Military Disconnect

An essential fact that is implied by reintegration is that all veterans have been separated from the military institution. The term veteran, by definition, implies that this separation has already taken place. There are many working definitions of veteran, as many institutions (i.e. government organizations, higher education institutions, for-profit and not-for-profit organizations etc.) have developed bureaucratic definitions in order to channel resources to individuals who can qualify as such under the conditions of the term. However any definition of veteran that is viable, from a policy perspective, must be defined as a person who was once in military service but is no longer in service.

Interesting sociological matters surface once we acknowledge a veteran as inherently being one who was in service of the military and no longer is. The first is drawn from Role Exit Theory. In her book Becoming an EX, Helen Ebaugh developed a theory for explaining the social reality of leaving a former identity, known as Role Exit Theory. Ebaugh (1988) draws her data from subjects who have left a wide range of roles and professions. Her work is based on the conviction that "[r]egardless of the types of roles being departed, there are underlying similarities and variables that make role exit unique as a social process." Given that veterans have left the military, an institution that has manufactured their military identities and instilled in them the proper orientations and reflexes conducive to the performance of their defined roles, we look to Role Exit Theory to understand how the abstract process of Role Exit operates in their particular case.

Disengagement is an indispensable part of the Role Exiting process. It "refers to disassociation from the rights and obligations associated with a given role." Role disengagement marks the moment when the individual has resigned from the old role and is therefore no longer entitled to the rights and privileges of that role. As a result, others in the individual's social network begin to see him as something other than who he was in the previous role and it follows that the behavior of the individual is no longer prescribed by that role, as he is no longer bound by those social obligations. Ebaugh notes that "[d]isengagement leads to disidentification in the sense that individuals who withdraw from the social expectations of given roles begin to shift their identities in a new direction," or rather "they begin to think of themselves apart from the people they were in the previous roles." Thus disengagement is an initial process that separates a person from the earlier role and this separation eventually begets **disidentification**, which is the "process of ceasing to think of oneself in the former role" (Ebaugh 4).

In the case of veterans the process of disidentification is radically changed. This is because role disengagement is quite different for veterans. Just as for an ex- police officer, or ex-priest, once the process of role disengagement has begun military service members are no longer bound by the rules that once defined their actions in the military. For former police officers this means that the obligation to wear a badge, and the right to carry a police department issued firearm, has expired. In the case of a priest he may no longer maintain the position of spiritual leader in a given community. As a result his obligation of sexual abstinence has ceased, and his right to hear confessions and prescribe penance, or penitential discipline, has also ceased. For service-members this same process of disengagement is referred to as discharge, although some branches use the term ETS (end of term of service) interchangeably. Once a service-member has reached

this point he or she is from then on considered a veteran. As in the examples of police officers and priests, veterans are no longer obligated to wear military uniforms; they are no longer obligated to show deference to superiors—indeed as veterans they have no superiors; they also relinquish the right to carry service-issued firearms. However veterans diverge from the ex-priest/police officer analogies because many of the rights and privileges due to military veterans *begin* at the point of discharge (i.e. VA health care, G.I. Bill, etc.). Thus discharge is in fact disengagement from the rights and obligations of being a military service member, but it also marks the point at which military veterans are given a whole new set of rights, for which all obligations have already been met.

As discussed in a previous chapter, many veterans initially enlisted in order to attain the rights that would become due them at the point of disengagement from the role of military service member (i.e. G.I. Bill, VA Home Loan, etc.). The rights and privileges assumed by veterans, by virtue of them holding that status, makes the disengagement process a point where the value of the military identity comes into greater focus. Instead of waning at the point of disengagement, as most ex-roles do, military identities crystallize. Consequently the process of disidentification, the result of role disengagement, is impeded, as there arises a greater incentive for veterans to define themselves in terms of their previous roles in the military.

The next matter of sociological importance implied by the term veteran, is that this term is one of the few nouns in the English language designated as a name for a person in the present as defined by actions that were completed in the past. Veteran speaks to the expired role of an individual as a military service member. As my main task in this dissertation is to explore how military role

salience is facilitated and how it affects veterans' abilities to transition to the role of student, it is of primary importance to note that even by referring to individuals as veterans we are in some way ascribing the salience of the military identity to them, as we are inherently defining these individuals in the present by an identity that they held in the past. This contributes greatly to continued salience of the military identity long after service.

The next sociological matter that the term veteran implies is that one who is defined as a veteran is always defined as a veteran. There is no transition out of the role of veteran once an individual is defined in such a manner; rather the only way out *is back in*. If the individual were to reenter the military, their status as veteran would end, otherwise it would continue perpetually. This fact again reiterates the permanence of the military identity and contributes to role salience symbolically, at the very least.

The final sociological matter is that the present identities of individual veterans are still defined by the military institution. Given that veteran refers to the past identity of the individual as a service-member, which is an identity articulated by the military, one who becomes a veteran is always beholden to the military's definition of who they are. It is a strange existential phenomenon to experience an identity like that of veteran, where one foot is in the present and the other is perpetually in the past. Especially considering that for many veterans their relationship with the Department of Defense, and any branch of service in which they served, continues to live only nominally and in memory. While their status as veterans are still defined by the military institution, and they continue to define themselves in terms of their proximity to, and history within, that institution, they are currently outside of that institution. The relationship

they experience with the military institution—an institution that gave them an identity that is potentially more pervasive than any other identity they have; an institution which can be thought to account for the structure of their overall character and various character qualities; an institution that continues to appropriate, and incentivize the appropriation of, valuable resources to their benefit—can most adequately be compared to that of parent and child. Perhaps the colloquial use of the terms "brothers in arms" is derived from this concept.

What we can conclude from the definition of veteran, and the matters of sociological importance that are implied by that definition, is that veterans are constantly encouraged to think of themselves, even objectify themselves, as such. Given the use of the loaded term, 'veteran,' to describe individuals in this population and the sociological implications of that term, as I have described, it is apparent that salience of the veteran role identity, which is by definition a hangover identity (Ebaugh 1988) of the military identity, is facilitated by, amongst other things, its own symbolism and meaning. Although veterans, by definition, are separated from the very institution that cultivated and appropriated their military identities, as a result of its salience there is a constant need for veterans to perform their identities as they individually see fit.

For some veterans, role performance of the veteran identity is as simple as wearing symbols of service on their person everyday, or on select days, especially service-related holidays, throughout the year. Some veterans find comfort in veterans' service organizations (e.g. Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, etc.) within which to perform their identities and experience some semblance of their former roles and the social network that bounded it. Some veterans manufacture networks of veterans and other

peers with whom they can perform their military identities with like-minded people. And still others, dare I say most[20], veterans find themselves estranged and have no field within which to perform their military identities. Given this, there is some cause for concern that many veterans experience isolation, and as a result they find unhealthy ways to perform their new identities.

Reencountering the Civilian-Military Identity Standard

Because of the lack of a proper field to perform military identities in, and the centrality of the military identity for some veterans, many of the symbols of veterans' military identities go amiss completely or signify relation to another identity standard altogether. This brings us back to signification of the civilian-military identity standard. As mentioned before, the civilian-military identity standard can be thought of as a complex of behaviors, character qualities, and stigmas that civilians ascribe to persons who have been in military service. Many of these qualities and stigmas have derived from popular media representations of military characters but also the military institution uses these ideas to its benefit by stimulating recruitment through the depiction of powerful identities thought to be attainable only through military service. The metanarrative discussed earlier is an expression of this as well.

All veterans who are identified as such will be exposed to the civilian-military identity standard during their reintegration when they interact with civilians who are either actively or passively attempting to interpret their veteran identities and social behavior in terms of the civilian-military identity standard. This exposure results in trichotomous veteran social behavior. In one

[20] Judging from the size of veterans' service organizations and considering that there are over 22 million veterans living in the United States, most veterans do not find peer groups to perform their military identities in.

paradigm, veteran social behavior can be thought of as purposefully deceptive. As a Goffmanian concept, deception is a dramaturgical device that allows the performer to deliver a believable presentation of a character (Goffman 1959). In the purview of veteran social behavior, within the deception paradigm veterans utilize symbols (i.e. jargon, military paraphernalia, etc.) to exhibit adherence to the complex of behaviors, stigmas, and attitudes that are ascribed to those who have been in military service. Because the mystique of service-members, veterans, and all things military—as perceived by civilians—only serves to reinforce the power of the deception paradigm, within it civilian intrigue, fear, and admiration are garnered. In fact becoming the object of civilian intrigue, fear, admiration, and ultimately respect, is the intent of veteran behavior in this paradigm.

In a second paradigm, veteran behavior that signifies adherence to the complex of behaviors, stigmas, and attitudes constituting the civilian-military identity standard can be viewed as accidental. This is given the condition that veterans intend to signify adherence to the de facto military identity standard, that is the institutional reference for real military identities, yet the symbols they employ to do so are misread by civilians, as civilians have not been socialized into the knowledge of that identity standard. In the abstract, this behavior is classifiable as **misrepresentation**. This Goffmanian concept represents the risk incurred by any role performer—the possibility of one's symbolism being misread. In terms of veteran social behavior, in the instance of misrepresentation civilians, as adhering to the civilian-military identity standard, misinterpret symbols utilized by veterans to express their identities. The resultant confusion, which is the product of social behavior in this paradigm, is unintended. However many veterans who stumble into this paradigm of interaction develop what Goffman

(1959) refers to as a "working consensus" with their civilian audience. In this case, veterans prevent open conflict in their interactions by acknowledging that their audience does not understand and neglecting to offer correction or lengthy explanation.

In a third paradigm veterans cease to think of themselves as such. Helen Ebaugh (1988) explains this state as **disidentification**. In most roles exited, disidentification is the natural result of disengagement, or having left the institutionally defined role and separated oneself from the rights and obligations of that role. As noted above, this process is changed for veterans. In their case role disidentification does not naturally follow from disengagement because disengagement never takes place in earnest. Simply put, veterans exit their roles as service-members only to assume an identity that allows them even more privileges as a result of their former identities. Because disidentification is not a natural process for veterans it is often only reached by design. Veterans must make effort to disidentify from their roles as such. There are many situational reasons why veterans may choose to disidentify but this is also performed in order to avoid the first two paradigms.

All of these concepts are related to the symbolic interactionist concept of symbolism, which is the act of appropriating stimuli to indicate meaning. Deception is a form of symbolism in which the symbols that are appropriated, by veterans in this instance, are intended to mislead the audience who share in the meaning. Misrepresentation is a form of symbolism in which a common symbol is employed to communicate meaning but it has different meanings for different parties. In the case of disidentification, all use of shared symbols of the former identity has been abandoned; in this case veterans choose to identify themselves as other than veterans.

Deception, misrepresentation, and disidentification are articulations of the ways in which veteran self-expression is constrained. While I agree with Glaser and Strauss' claim that people "cannot always be certain… that [they] know either the other's identity or [their] own in the eyes of the other" (Glaser and Strauss 670) in the case of veterans this gulf of knowledge seems to expand. This is perhaps due to the many misleading depictions, stigmas, and stereotypes of military service members that have inundated the minds of both civilians and veterans alike. In protecting themselves against civilian ignorance, or reifying it, many veterans find that it is better for others to show deference (via deception), or for them to disidentify, than to suffer an injury to their identities, and/or risk being misrepresented.

Thus a fundamental truth lies at the foundation of the paradigms I have explained; that is, in the present day most American civilians do not understand the military. They lack the most basic of military knowledge concerning overall military organizational structure, branch specialization, occupational categories, hierarchal structure, and mission. Due to this, veteran social action tends toward deception (purposefully misleading civilians to think of them in terms of the civilian-military identity standard), misrepresentation (being misunderstood despite their accurate representation of their military identities), or disidentification (abandoning representation of the military identity altogether). Notably, with the exception of misrepresentation—while the veteran still has not perceived that he/she has been misunderstood—each of these paradigms represents lies that benefit the veteran, as perpetrator. In this way veteran social behavior is perhaps symptomatic of modern society, where Simmel notes that deception is prevalent given increasing role diversity, which requires individuals to

present different aspects of themselves (Simmel 1950).

Examples of veteran social behavior categorized in these paradigms may serve best to elaborate the point. Let us recall Kelvin, the former Marine who wanted to enlist as an infantryman but because of his preexisting back pain he was denied entrance to the infantry by his recruiter. Presently Kelvin is proud of his service and has “no regrets” for having served in the Marines although his service was limited to the capacity of cook. However, Kelvin acknowledges that when civilians ask about his military service, in popular Marine fashion, he often limits his description to “I’m a former Marine.” Because of depictions of Marines in popular culture, film and recruiting advertisements included, the frame of reference most civilians have for Marines is quite different from the particular nature of his service as a cook, thus they are often mislead by this affirmation. As Kelvin is privy to this, his behavior represents the deception paradigm. Unfortunately the confusion that often ensues from the stoic manner in which he limits the description of his service, obscures his true contribution and only reifies the popular misconception that Marines are primarily combat troops, and that only combat service is worthy of admiration.

On the other hand, the misrepresentation paradigm would be represented by Kelvin attempting to issue an explanation of his service as a cook in the Marines. Such detail would most likely result in his civilian audience assuming that the hardship he experienced during service was minimal. However Kelvin has quite a different story to tell:

> Eighteen hour days, fifteen hour days, every day was Monday, that’s what we called it. There was no Sunday or Friday, none of that. Pretty intense work and there’s no easy stuff in the kitchen. That’s no joke, people was eating sweat, I’m not lying to you. Because [of] those big copper pots, it’s very hot in there. I

> didn't know if it was going on 5000 people. Aircraft carriers are huge. Lot a people got to eat, and that don't make it easy.

Kelvin's example is no exception; the challenges faced by Combat Service Support personnel are often overlooked. Given that their occupations, in times of conventional wars, rarely required them to engage enemy combatants, civilians who lack an understanding of the essential nature of Combat Service Support personnel, and the increased combat risk of their duties within COIN, do not look at their feats in the military respectfully. Kelvin, like many veterans in his position, simultaneously acknowledges and reinforces this oversight. To this effect he states: "But that's fine, I'm not getting shot at, I'm not going to complain… I don't look at my job [negatively], I mean I wasn't too happy about it; I'd rather do something else but it's a job. Everybody in the military, we all have to do something."

Finally, the third, and last, paradigm would be represented by Kelvin abandoning all identification, and corresponding explanation, of his service. He would not identify himself as a veteran, in order to avoid the dilemma presented by the first two paradigms. For most veterans who have not experienced combat trauma, these paradigms adequately represent the confusion they face when communicating their veteran identities to civilians. However veterans who have experienced combat face additional issues.

Duality of Combat Veteran Attitudes

Not all of the student veterans in my qualitative sample were campaign veterans; some of them only served stateside, or completed a tour of duty in a foreign country but were not required to serve in Iraq or Afghanistan. The reintegration of veterans to civil society is a complex,

multifaceted, process for all who serve, but for those who served in the theaters of action, issues that occur during the transition from military service to civilian life are often compounded. This is frequently due to the effects of trauma on the veterans, or even the effects of extended periods where the veterans have been disconnected from the world that once bounded their pre-service identities.

Veterans who have experienced combat trauma in the military assimilate the traumatic experience into their veteran identities. The veterans nearer to the experience of extreme combat find reintegration more difficult than those whose service experience is better described as having no combat trauma (Hosek 2006). For each veteran the effects of the traumatic experience and its corresponding meaning for the veteran identity may be different, however there are certain attitudinal commonalities across the board for those who have experienced combat trauma. Nevertheless this is further complicated by the veterans' own metabolic process, as it were.

The identities of veterans who have experienced combat trauma can be understood in terms of two archetypes. I do not claim that either of these archetypes exists in pure form in any one combat veteran; however they usefully explain the ambivalent and lukewarm orientation of combat veterans toward civilians. It may be that combat trauma has splintered the veteran identity into a duality, both sides of which can reside in one veteran but come to the surface on different occasions.

Many combat veterans attest to a pendulum-like swing of their emotions from day-to-day. Such mercuriality is not always indicative of a PTSD diagnosis, as there is a definitive complex of acute symptoms that constitute PTSD (DSM 1994). The presence of some symptoms of PTSD and absence of others often disqualifies combat veterans for PTSD diagnosis. Although these veterans may be diagnosed with related conditions, such as Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), major depression, or anxiety, their interpretation of their experiences and the effects of these experiences on their identities should not be ignored. Moreover, whether a veteran is suffering from PTSD, TBI, major depression, anxiety, or a related condition, medical treatment and compensation for these conditions are important but that addresses only part of the issue. The qualitative content and meaning of their experiences have profound effects on their veteran identities, and institutions that consume these veterans after service would be remiss and ill served to ignore this fact. Thus regardless of diagnosis, the qualitative content and corresponding meanings of traumatic experiences should be examined, as they relate to veteran identity formation.

In my qualitative sample of student veterans several were combat veterans. Of these few were service-connected for reasons of PTSD, most were treated for PTSD or related conditions, and all contributed to the composition of the archetypes I will shortly describe. The first archetype is admittedly egotistical; it desires exceptionalism and deference; it objectifies itself and bolsters the objectification of the veteran identity. The second is humbled by accelerated life experience; it steers away from the rugged terrain of masculinity in search of introspection, community, and harmony.

The first archetype is patterned after the civilian-military identity standard; it is also the combat veteran articulation of the deception paradigm. In this archetype, veterans who experienced combat feel that they now fit the mold of the battle-hardened veteran; they have become real-life versions of the tragic heroes depicted in military fiction. In this way their experiences in combat serve to bolster their masculine identities, toward the point of confirming hyper masculinity. They are often jingoistic; their service is a point of unadulterated pride; they are the quintessential American man, whether man or woman; they are the guardians of American civilian privilege which they perceive themselves as being completely and utterly deserving of for having risked everything for it. Civilians should be so grateful, and yet it is often a matter of frustration for these veterans that civilians are not as grateful as expected.

This archetype conjures up the image of Rambo, a fictional Army veteran of the Vietnam War, played by Sylvester Stallone. Rambo was so troubled by his reintegration and the ungratefulness of American civilians that he turned all of his lethal training on them, in the 1982 film *Rambo: First Blood*. This depiction of Rambo has had a profound effect on the psyche of many combat veterans.

After an exchange with a Vietnam veteran, during which he commiserated about the lack of civilian respect for veterans, a combat veteran said the following:

> …The vets of our [Post 911] generation, we might be ignored but we're not spit on the way these [Vietnam generation] guys were. I just don't know how a lot of these guys didn't come back and pull a Rambo. You know what I mean?

Most importantly this archetype which closely relates to the depiction of Rambo, and corresponds with the civilian-military identity standard, is contingent on one precondition; that is

the perceived lack of respect and reverence for the experiences and sacrifices of combat veterans in the theatre of action. It is through this archetype that we can begin to understand the enmity with which some combat veterans view civilians. Foremost this archetype wants the appreciation and deference of civilians; it desires to be seen as having the potential to be civilization's greatest ally or worst enemy. In this way this archetype conjures not only Rambo but also Jason Bourne, and many other fictional depictions fashioned in its image. These characters, which represent extraordinary militaristic talent and power, appear to only be bridled by personal restraint.

Paul, the former Army Airborne Cavalry Scout, confirms certain fears toward veterans, which are indicative of this archetype as the combat veteran articulation of the deception paradigm. He explains the distinction between veterans and civilians:

> The military taught me civilians are stupid! The military taught me civilians are an obstacle and you're going to have to work on them. You have to use tact and that's where it has paid off. I mean you can't just like yell at a civilian; you can't tell somebody to do push-ups; you can wave your gun at them if that works... There was a game that I used to compare this to, its called Weebelows or something like that. And basically it is these little green things and you just put signs [up and] they have to go a certain way. If they don't they'll die basically. That's basically the military's take on civilians. It's just this inanimate thing that does whatever the hell you tell them to do as long as you do it with enough force they'll do what you say. That's one way and another way is actually talk to them and find out what's going on, how can you make it better and in the most polite professional humanly way possible, even if they're screaming in your ears.

There are several things Paul communicates in this statement. One is that the lessons he has learned about civilians were communicated to him directly during military service. As we have discussed in a previous section, the ideas within the deception paradigm (and civilian-military identity standard) are not just the product of civilian fear, or depictions of veterans and service-

members in media, but they are also generated and reified by the military, toward its own institutional benefit.

From Paul's statement we also understand that the difference between civilians and veterans, is that one group has power over the other even if they choose not to exercise that power overtly. Paul suggests that the power of veterans and service members is not only symbolic it is the potential for violence vis-à-vis civilians. He communicates that there are two ways veterans/service-members can exercise the power given to them by the military over civilians: that is by an overt show of force—"wav[ing] your gun at them"—or through stoicism—talking to them professionally and politely despite how frantic they may be. Interestingly the first method of power exhibition Paul notes is an example of a service-member-civilian interaction. In the veteran context, however, only the second exhibition of power is applicable; and yet he notes that it is just as effective.

This behavior is classifiable as deception because it is used to express a fundamental disconnect between veterans/service-members and civilians by way of affect. Within this paradigm veterans and military service members are delivering a believable performance of their identities as such by tempering their responses, as they exhibit a cool and removed self to civilians. This presentation reifies the distinction between the two groups and thereby allows veterans to protect their identities from injury in some situations, and expresses their moral and physical authority in others. Later we will see how Paul and other veterans use deception to their benefit, and detriment, within higher education institutions.

In the second archetype describing the dual nature of combat veteran attitudes, veterans seem to have metabolized their experiences of combat quite differently; this archetype can be the combat veteran articulation of the misrepresentation, or disidentification, paradigm. Its embodiment is more human and somewhat less centered on the ego. Within it can lay combat veterans' admission of the desirability of normalcy. Sometimes veterans within this paradigm experience guilt and critically analyze the complex nature of their service experiences; this tendency may result in veterans disidentifying as such. Others times veterans may stem such feelings by humbly rejecting the hyper-masculinity attributed to them, and dismissing the inherently political dynamics of war, finding comfort in the self-assurance that they indeed "did the job" and that they were "just following orders." Their desire to be a viable member of community, then and now, upholds this retrospective view. For some of these veterans their experiences are so conflicting that they view it as an otherwise unsightly blemish on their humanity; after having wandered so far away from what it means to be a member of the human community, they find it difficult to return.

Ebaugh notes that for some of her interviewees "The ways in which people labeled [role] exiters and their reactions to knowledge of an individual's past identity was a major area of adjustment for interviewees" (Ebaugh 168). This holds true in the case of veterans, as exiters of the military service-member role identity. Importantly in the misrepresentation paradigm veterans seem to be most affected by civilian perception of who they are, this is often injurious to veterans' identity. Tammy provides an example of misrepresentation below. Although she is not a combat veteran she experienced significant trauma in the military due to her assignment, which was to ship the corpses of deceased service-members back to the U.S. Tammy was ordered not

to disclose this assignment to her fellow service members to protect her, and them, from further trauma by inquiring about the specifics of her duties. Exemplifying interaction in the misrepresentation paradigm, Tammy explains an exchange with a man she began dating after she left the military:

> A guy I was dating in France, I told him I was in the Air Force. And you know most people back home when you tell them that they're like 'oh you're in the better branch." But when I told him he said 'you're in the worst one. You all drop bombs on people.' He really understood the breakdown and I was like 'Wow.' Most people don't understand how the military works and how everyone has a mission. They don't understand what the Air Force does. The Air Force is this image: a pretty base, pilots, and their suits. But it's kind of the coldest one. You can take out a whole city…
>
> Throughout the relationship he and I shared ideologies to a certain degree but I got the feeling that whenever the government or military did something [negative] he was [blaming me] like 'It's all of you! It's you! It's you!' And I was like 'first of all don't associate me with that.' It made me think of the concept that everyone has of people in the military: that they agree with everything that is done by the military. I don't believe that personally. I don't support that and don't make me feel like that, like I'm the one who is doing it. That period [the military service period] of my life was really rough and I think that it has made me develop a lot of guilt or just different ways of avoiding telling people [that I served]. I could tell that he looked down on me because I was in the military, like I was crap. Most people just looked at me like they couldn't believe I was in the military but they still looked at me like I was me.

It is quite obvious given Tammy's statements here that she has struggled with, and continues to struggle with, an existential conflict due to her service in the military. She represents misrepresentation so thoroughly as she notes that she is usually able to avoid her deep sense of guilt when she reveals her past service in the Air Force to Americans, as they often do not understand that the Air Force, despite its professional appearance, is the "coldest" or most destructive of military branches. That her boyfriend understood this intuitively was worth admiration but also frightening for her. Perhaps because of her past service he assumed she agreed with U.S. foreign policy and so he blamed her for contributing to the violence perpetrated

by the U.S. military throughout the world. The misrepresentation that Tammy experienced in this situation is due to her inability to be seen as she sees herself. Her reluctance in revealing her veteran status, often to the point of disidentification, is the result of fearing misrepresentation; a fear that is not misplaced, as perhaps only the mind of George Herbert Mead could extricate her deep existential conflict where the "me" her boyfriend perceived was *not* the "I" that she is.

The following is another example of misrepresentation. This quote has been taken from Jarvis, an Army Reservist truck driver and combat veteran whose transformation, which became most evident after service, will be explored extensively in this section:

> When they [civilians] come up to me [and] say 'thank you for your service,' it's a little embarrassing. [So] I came up with some cheesy slogan to throw back at them. It's usually pretty awkward; it's very strange. I don't know how to really take that. So [when they say] 'thank you for your service,' 'thank you for your support'—that's how I will deal with it now.
>
> But it's just political (Kool-Aid) because it's imperialism; I'm just a tool for imperialism. But most of them– especially the ones that come up to me and say that – they're not thinking that. And it's also like I shouldn't tell them that because I don't want to take their image of me away from them. Because they kind of envision me like: 'wow he's such a good character' and 'he's a good person' and 'he puts his life on the line so we can all be free.' So I don't tell them something that would definitely tarnish that image that they have, and also tarnish the image of the Army. I allow them to maintain that. I mean, I help them maintain that lie by just playing along with how they feel rather than just throwing out what I really feel, which would take away from them. So you know, I guess, I appease them with a response similar to what they gave me.

It is well documented that veterans who have experienced trauma find their reintegration more difficult and complex (Hosek et al. 2006), as they feel further removed from civilian normalcy. The archetypes above do not attempt to represent a typology of combat veteran identities, per se; rather they represent combat veteran attitudes as a result of the identity splitting quality of combat. All of the combat veterans I have interviewed, and many that I have known

personally—myself included, displayed attitudes aligned with both archetypes. At times they may seem more aligned with one or the other, nevertheless these archetypes represent a range of attitudes that describe the conflicted nature of the identities of those who have experienced and /or perpetrated violence in service of the nation. The following passage is also taken from Jarvis, who discovered that he enjoyed being a soldier although he initially enlisted reluctantly. This passage reflects the gamut of combat veteran attitudes, as explained by the archetypes detailed above:

> Well, from understanding a little bit of history; our empire is just like every other empire that came into power or has become a world super power… I was a tool in imperialism, as far as I can conceive it. What were we doing more than just spreading out? In order for any empire to survive it has to expand and it has to conquer other places and other nations and smaller—lesser developed—nations… So again as history repeats itself with the United States in Iraq… To keep them destabilized, and to keep some kind of control over them, you have to use imperialism to extort them of their resources, which was their oil…I mean, I didn't know that at the time, but now after going to school and piecing together history and stuff like that; it's like it's just repeating itself. I was no more than a tool of imperialism. Was I fighting for democracy? No. Was I fighting to stop terrorists? No. You know, that's just political Kool-Aid for the people who run up to you—as soon as they see you in uniform, they say thank you for your service. And it's also a good way to get laid.
>
> Am I still proud that I served my country? Absolutely. I have "U.S. SOLDIER" tattooed across my stomach, the equivalent to "THUG LIFE." But that's something that I have – that's a title that I have that no one can take from me no matter what. So what better place to keep it than on my body?

This passage articulates, quite clearly, the duality of combat veteran attitudes. If it seems like this passage came from two different combat veterans that is because, as the archetypes described above represent, the attitudes described herein appear to be contradictory. Let us analyze this passage in terms of the two archetypes.

In the first part of the passage Jarvis' statements seem to correspond with the second archetype—the one related to the misrepresentation paradigm, within which combat veterans are inclined to critically analyze their service in the military. This project often results in veterans developing a critique of their military identities. Tammy's statement, quoted earlier, clearly relates that she perceives her role in the Air Force as a passive participant to the destruction perpetrated. Jarvis' conception is similar; his critique amounts to him identifying himself as "no more than a tool of imperialism." Although his affect is not captured in the quote, as he made this claim during our interview he appeared visibly angered by it; as if he disapproved of this role and was mislead by the military—a point he makes clear when he states, "I didn't know that at the time…"

Conversely, in the second part of the passage he reveals attitudes in proximity to the first archetype—the one in which combat veterans reify and celebrate the distinctions between themselves and civilians, and use behaviors associated with the deception paradigm to attain veteran privilege and civilian deference. Jarvis acknowledges the privileges of increased sexual attention from women and civilian appreciation— or at least the appearance of it. Jarvis' large tattoo across his abdomen, which reads "U.S. SOLDIER," is an articulation of behavior within the deception paradigm, as it represents a boastful identification of him as such. Additionally an examination of this tattoo renders two possible sociological explanations, which both correspond to the first archetype and behavior within the deception paradigm, thereby.

As Jarvis mentioned, he was inspired to get this tattoo by the late rapper Tupac Shakur's tattoo, "THUG LIFE," which was placed in the same location on the rapper's person. "THUG LIFE" is arguably the most popular phrase to come out of Tupac's 1990's gangster rap legacy.

Contemporary rappers and various other music artists have expropriated this phrase and/or tattoo concept. Current use of “THUG LIFE” does not commonly correspond with what Tupac claimed to have intended by it. The late rapper once stated the tattoo represented the lack of attention given to the cultivation of urban youth. He presented the tattoo as an acronym, symbolizing: “The Hate You Give Little Infants Fucks Everyone.” In spite of this explanation, presently the phrase “THUG LIFE” is most often used as a celebration of a particular lifestyle, defined largely by risk, violence, and criminality. Having acknowledged the incredible risk, violence, and criminality of his service in Iraq—as his admission of having been “a tool of imperialism” suggests some claim of the criminal nature of U.S. foreign policy, Jarvis expropriates the tattoo concept but replaces the phrase, “THUG LIFE,” with another that may be, for some at least, equally as unsettling—“U.S. SOLDIER.”

The second possible explanation of Jarvis’s tattoo is best understood in terms of another rapper’s expropriation of this tattoo concept. With a nod to Tupac, Nas, an equally famous rapper, has borrowed the location and grand size of the tattoo but he has replaced the phrase with “GOD’s SON.” He claims that this is a reminder of his primary identity as God’s son or a son of God. It is possible, that in similar fashion, Jarvis tattooed “U.S. SOLDIER” across his abdomen as a reference to his most salient role identity, which he states “no one can take away from me, no matter what.” Regardless of which interpretation of this tattoo is favored, it is evident that Jarvis is now a far cry from the reluctant recruit who claimed to have joined the Army because “I just needed a job, and they were hiring at the time.”

In contrast to the service experiences of those who have been subject to combat, the service experiences of those who have not experienced combat are more similar to prior civilian professional experience. No doubt many of these veterans have also paid the heavy price of family separation, long and strenuous hours of work, and modest compensation; to which a former enlisted Service Support soldier I once knew remarked "If you calculate the amount we get paid by the number of hours we work, we're making only pennies by the hour." Yet despite these experiences, vis-à-vis combat veterans, non combat veterans generally feel better prepared for the next step or challenge that life has to offer, whether that is higher education or a civilian occupation.

Ebaugh's findings present a bit of a challenge to the above statement, as she noted that professionals in her research experienced high role residual, or hangover identity, relative to semiprofessionals. Ebaugh, however, did not compare service-members of different types. In my sample of student veterans, those who had not experienced combat trauma in the military had less difficulty with reintegration, less hang-ups about their past service in the military, and also more enthusiasm for their courses of study. Ebaugh concurs that enthusiasm for the new identity and the lack of regret toward experiences of the former identity are indicative of exes having come to terms with their past identity. As a result they are more apt to moving forward. We will discuss this issue in greater detail, including how it relates to veterans motivations to attend college in a later chapter (i.e. Student Veterans).

Before we employ the concepts discussed in this chapter to explain veteran social behavior in higher education it is necessary to gain perspective of what the reintegration process looks like in

the lives of veterans in my qualitative sample. There are many similarities and differences in their respective reintegration experiences. After having reviewed the way in which their motivations to enlist and the power of the metanarrative contributes to role salience of their military identities at the Before stage; and after seeing how in-service distinctions and experiences have contributed to the salience of their military identities at the During stage; the merit of presenting their reintegration experiences is that it is only at this point that some veterans realize the distance they have come from who they were before enlisting. Salience of the military identity in the After stage is indeed facilitated by the symbolism and meaning of the veteran identity, as I have stated. Most importantly however, at the point of reintegration veterans feel the cumulative effect of all the role salience-building dynamics we have discussed.

Reintegrating

There are perhaps few experiences in a veteran's life that are as distinct as that of reintegrating into civilian life after the military. Despite the 'bad rap' that reintegration gets in scholarly literature and news media, most veterans enthusiastically anticipate it. Having had every aspect of their lives regulated by the military during their time in service, many veterans remember the time that they left the service as one of liberation and infinite possibility. Roy, an Iraq veteran and former infantryman, felt this way when he left the Army:

> When I first came out of the Army I had such a thirst for life. I wanted to go experience everything because I thought I was deprived and [now] sometimes in the day to day grind of living and working, I forget that. I think it's just human nature… Thinking back to that it only reminds me of how hungry I was to get out of there; how tough it was; it almost seems like it could have happened in another lifetime, to another person.

It is at the point of reintegration that many veterans realize their ambivalent emotions toward their service in the military. Military service is a difficult lifestyle in some ways, but easier than civilian life in others.

Some veterans realize after they have left the service that they had fallen in love with the rush and excitement of military living. By comparison, civilian life feels inadequate. Clearly Magnus is a case of this, as he explains his realization via Tolstoy:

> When Tolstoy wrote *War and Peace* he dedicated an entire chapter to what it's like to be a soldier. And when I read it, I was just beginning the military. I wasn't sure how *I* would reflect on it but now that I look back, it always works. He said that [being a soldier] is like the closest you can ever be to being in heaven, because you're paid to do absolutely nothing; but it's not one of those things where you are literally bored to death. He described it as almost like a blissful existence. Now, yeah, if you're in garrison or if you're spit-shining boots all day long, no you can't equate it. But my experience in Iraq paralleled what he was saying. And I even explained that to my sister, because she was like, 'so what made it so good?' I'm like 'look, that one hour a day that my mind had to be fucking floored to the metal; that one hour when fucking everything you're going through is shit; where you suffer and you're getting shot and somebody's dying next to you; that one hour [in contrast makes] those other 23 hours, when you're not doing that, like a blissful experience, literally.

It usually takes the absence of the military lifestyle, and a comparison with civilian living, to come to this realization. Roy also acknowledges the excitement of military living but realizes the ex post facto nature of this point of view, as he explains "it's almost eas[ier] to appreciate when you are outside… When I was inside I just remember it sucking." Roy claims to have no delusions about his service in the military. Unlike Magnus, his "one hour" of action was not enough to make him forget the excruciating twenty-three hours of: "running around… hurry up and wait and you are waiting forever… you sit there and you question all the time 'why are we

doing it this way?' and 'what's going on?' You are tired and you have guard duties in the middle of night. It just is a very painful lifestyle."

While Magnus reenlisted until he could no longer do so, due to his medical issues, Roy sought new ground. The high rate of attrition of lower enlisted troops like Magnus and Roy attests to the fact that most new veterans are closer to feeling like Roy than Magnus. Most choose to leave the service once they are able. Perhaps because of the contrast that Roy perceived, given his service experience and that of civilian life, everything seemed inspiring to him when he left the service. He compared his initial experience of the civilian world to traveling a foreign country for vacation:

> Everything is fresh when it's the first time. You are walking down the street and even looking at the laundry man, you know? Now when I run to work I could have like a million shops and I don't even know what they are, because I am just trying to go somewhere. But when you are there the first time you just look at everything like 'wow, look at all these stores!'

Veterans often have their senses inundated when returning to civilian life. Sometimes this conjures the savoring reaction we witnessed in Roy, but for some this is a cause for concern.

Paul, also an Iraq combat veteran, took a job at a loading dock within weeks after returning home. Some of the sounds he witnessed in this place of business were all too familiar:

> There were times a guard on the loading dock would throw metal into this giant metal bin, and metal-on-metal contact sounds exactly like a mortar round; the exact same way. If you're close to it the vibrations kind of felt like it too. I didn't freak out and go diving or anything but I did make a quick turn to assess the situation.

Paul had a number of occasions, in and out of the work place, where sounds had unsettled him. Once when walking with his girlfriend he heard something "that sound[ed] a little bit like a machine gun." After which he explained, "I grabbed her and pushed her up against something. She asked 'are you okay?' I was like 'yep, yep, I'm good… Could we just keep on going?'"

It is no wonder that Paul felt like his two tours in Iraq gave him a new state of normal, one that was at odds with his girlfriend's definition of the same. She would interrogate him: "Why are you always drinking when you eat? Why do you have beer every night? Why do you cuss so much?" Paul's responses: "I don't know. I have no idea. That's just what I do." He is not as whimsical as these responses make him seem. During our interview he lamented, "These are the questions that normal people ask me and I'm just like I have no idea. This is what I think is normal, I guess." For these reasons and more, Paul's reintegration has proved difficult. He likened it to a horror movie where the protagonist "thinks that he's out of it, he thinks he's okay and all of a sudden he realizes that it's part of the dream. He wakes up and he's back in that place. That's what it felt like for a couple of weeks when I was home. It didn't feel real."

Fear of waking up and being back in the theatre of action aside, Paul felt very isolated after his return home. Painfully he recalls:

> I guess, the weirdest thing about, well, coming home was I think the social aspects. There's a difference between platoon life, like the social fabric of it, versus everyday society. And I felt like an outcast basically because a lot of things I did people found extremely weird, especially my friends. And guys back in the Platoon would find that normal.

The tug-of-war between the definitions of normal and weird behavior strikes a sore point for most people; for veterans, however this issue is a particularly sensitive one. Paul is obviously no

exception. Perhaps the normal/weird dichotomy is so important in the case of veterans because integration into military units is an essential part of their service experience and training. Unit cohesion is one of the most integral aspects of military service (Weiss and Coll 2011). As a matter of survival and military efficiency, veterans have been conditioned to favor behavior that allows them to fit in the group. The behaviors that were conducive to fitting in the group in the military, set them apart when they return to the civilian context. For this reason many veterans feel isolated, or like "outcasts," as in Paul's explanation. Unfortunately this is even the case for veterans who have the most basic of small groups to return to— a family.

Fifty-five percent of all Post 911 combat veterans self-report strains within their family due to military service, and 34% of Post 911 non-combat veterans report the same. Of Post 911 veterans who were married when deployed, nearly half say their marriages were negatively affected (U.S. Census Bureau; Pew Research Center 2011). These statistics speak to the difficulty veterans have returning to their families during reintegration; family strain is often seen as a fact of military life. Some social scientists believe this is because the military and the family are both "greedy institutions," which require a lot of time and effort from individuals (Segal and Segal 2006).

The agreement Bobby, a former Marine, and his wife came to is indicative of their acknowledgement of this fact. When asked if he missed the military Bobby explained, "No, it was fun when I was in there. It was a good job and I was serving my country but now I'm at a different spot in my life. Me and wife had a long conversation after we got married and the result of that was that I was getting out."

In spite of the difficulties many veterans experience when reuniting with their families, some veterans who lack family obligations feel that their reintegration is more complicated for just that reason. Alice notes, "You know you come back and there's family and whatever, but when you're a single soldier, it's kind of shitty. So we went out drinking the very first night." Drinking with buddies is a part of military culture, so many veterans begin to settle into the comforts of home over a drink with friends, but unfortunately for Alice she developed a pattern of alcoholism. "I definitely could have considered myself a heavy alcoholic for that first year… I never blacked out drinking before until then. And I had done it so many times, that I am so amazed that nothing bad happened to me."

After the first year of being back home, during which time Alice abused alcohol frequently, she was deployed again. During this deployment she refrained from drinking alcohol because she knew how dangerous the substance was for her but upon her reintegration to civilian life Alice's alcohol abuse began again and for an extended period of time. "When I got out of the military and came home I was a pretty heavy drinker, up until two years ago… I mean, I [drank] socially… I drank by myself... And I drank incessantly. I could drink men easily under a table."

Corey, a former combat veteran who received a Purple Heart, developed a similar problem with alcohol and other substances during reintegration. "I got hooked on alcohol; I got hooked on a lot of illegal substances… I would literally wake up in the morning and start drinking and basically drink the whole day and go to sleep drunk; wake up and do the same thing."   Like Alice,

Corey's drinking began as "partying" with friends as soon as he came home but it spiraled out of control once a friend he served with died.

> There were three of us that got wounded that same day so we basically spent like the next six months together just kind of healing and everything together. In those six months between getting hurt and ETS [ending term of service] we were with each other literally at least 22 hours a day. We never left each other and [then] we all went home our separate ways. I remember I had friends lined up, waiting to hang out. I remember staying super busy; I was partying with this friend one day and the next day I was partying with a different friend. So I didn't really think about those two very much. I didn't really think about any of it.
>
> I remember I spoke to him maybe two, three, days after we ETS'ed and he was complaining about things. Talking about how [he has] nightmares bad now…and complaining about how he doesn't like his friends anymore. My mentality at the time was just, 'Dude you're not like drinking enough alcohol. You're not partying hard enough. Just forget about all that and have fun.' It never once occurred to me that he was in trouble but right after he killed himself, it was like I understood everything he was talking about. Suddenly my high school friends were losers like I couldn't stand them. They were kids to me. I think that was like the biggest thing I would say about the whole Army thing, like I grew up more in those two years than I did any of the other 25 years of my life.

One of the most definitive experiences veterans have upon returning home from military service is the fact that they feel they no longer have any common grounds to connect with the people who were their closest friends and family in civilian life. As I have posited, the wedge that is between many veterans and their civilian counterparts—whether friends, family, or other students as we will see—is due to the facilitation of role salience of the veteran identity. Although these aspects exist at every stage of military careers (before, during, and after), it is not until the time of reintegration that the overwhelming influence of the aspects contributing to role salience is felt.

In Corey's case his identification with the struggles of his comrade, and perhaps some guilt at not recognizing that his friend was in trouble, precipitated his estrangement from his civilian

friends and his eventual substance abuse problem. Notice that his identification with his comrade is the result of empathy. After realizing his comrade's suicide, Corey's logic seemed to be 'my buddy was a veteran and had this problem as a result. I'm a veteran and I also have this problem as a result.' In this way happily, or even drunkenly, moving on with his life was tantamount to forgetting who he was. Moreover, this tragedy was punctuated by the fact that Corey experienced little empathy and support from his own family.

> My parents were very intolerant of my behavior when I came back, which to a certain extent I can understand. I wanted to lay in bed all day and I couldn't do it because they would kick me out of bed and say 'go make something with your life.' They had no idea how to handle my situation. They did not understand that I needed time. [Also] my cousins, I have like 15 or 16 of them… Growing up, we were all super tight but when I came back and was in the hospital over at Fort Hood none of them ever called me, nor wrote me, none of them.

For Corey, coming home to a family that did not understand his struggles was perhaps just as difficult as Alice coming home to no family at all. As veterans in both situations have trouble coping with their reintegration, it is hard to say which is better or worse. From the outside it may appear that coming home to a supportive family would be the ideal situation but the following statements from Jarvis again illustrate that that can be a difficult situation. Contrary to Corey's experience, Jarvis's family was ready and willing to support him, but his mood swings and temper pushed them away.

> [I was] Extremely short-tempered; the nightmares were intense and crazy; a lot of just wanting to be alone, and just wanting to do whatever it is I wanted to do… My family was like 'oh you have to come here, you have to come do this.' I was like, 'I don't have to come do shit. I just got done, for a year, people telling me what to do. I'm not doing anything, that's just the end of it, and you're just going to deal with that.'

Fortunately, while trying to cope with his return Jarvis did not develop a substance abuse problem, although he did develop other abusive behaviors. Today he laments that his constant desire to be alone was offset only by his thirst for casual encounters with women.

> I needed to chill; I needed time alone. [Although] I had lots of women, chasing and pulling the skirts a lot. [I was] chasing women all the time and trying to get them and just feeling very lonely; a lot of depression; a lot of anger; a lot of just confusion, doubt, uncertainty, hopelessness; I had a lot of that. It still resonates a little bit, but you got to hold on to something to keep you going every day. It's like an ongoing fight.

The struggle to avoid antisocial behavior is a common experience among veterans who have served in the theater of action during their time in military service. Many veterans find that their propensity toward antisocial behavior is most evident when they are in the company of civilians.

Marvin, a former soldier who received the Bronze Star for valor in combat, noticed that when he returned home he could not avoid antisocial behavior. He explained that he "felt normal" when he initially returned to the United States, but like Corey, Marvin soon recognized that the feeling of normalcy only remained "whenever [he] was with soldiers." He continued:

> [When] I got released and went back to the civilian world that was kind of difficult. I lived with my friend…and I found that I was not going out that much. I was a social butterfly before [I had been deployed]; I'd go out and talk to everybody like no problem. But I pretty much put myself in a box [when I returned]… If I went into a social situation like a club I would get so [much] anxiety that I'd almost want to leave or I would just take three shots and be able to maintain.

Marvin began to drink more than usual to mitigate these symptoms. Three-shots-to-maintain became a common practice for him, as he noted, "I couldn't go into bars until I had three drinks real quick and I was fine… It was pretty bad." Eventually this system no longer had the same effect on him and he would concede that his anxiety was so paralyzing that he had to see a doctor

at the VA. The doctor's explanation of his symptom's confirmed some things Marvin intuitively knew were happening.

> The doctor was like 'your body doesn't know that you're not in combat so your fight or flight is kicking back in. It just knows there's people around everywhere that you don't know. Your mind subconsciously triggers and releases a whole bunch of cortisol and [induces] anxiety.

The explanation that Marvin was given concerning his postwar symptoms is related to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder; he was eventually diagnosed with the condition. Jarvis and Alice (mentioned above) were never officially diagnosed with the condition but as I discussed the events of their initial reintegration they both recognized that they could have had PTSD or a related condition. With or without a diagnosis, 37% of Post 911 veterans say they suffer from PTSD and 49% of Post 911 veterans who served in the theatre of action say they have this condition. These are the highest reported levels of PTSD in any generation of US campaign veterans (Pew Research Center 2011).

Marvin acknowledged that he "had to take medication to bring it back," as in restore his "normal" temperament. The VA is well known for prescribing medications rather quickly and indiscriminately to veterans who are dealing with symptoms of PTSD or related conditions (Invisible War 2012; Men's Journal 2012). Fortunately for Marvin, he trusted his doctor's choice of medications to help regulate his mood, and after using them for a short while he was able to discontinue use. Today he asserts "I'm better now." Jarvis felt differently however. He provided a much more cynical view of the treatment for his symptoms.

> You will forever be wrestling with [mood swings] and usually at the end [of service] what the Army does [is] they kind of say, 'hey here is something that will help you… Because it's really not mission critical once you've gotten home; and

> you've demobilized; and turned in all your stuff; and you're just waiting for your DD214s [discharge papers] and your ticket home; then that's when they slip it in: 'Here's all the stuff that you might need, go out and get some help...'

Jarvis has what he calls a "very dim" view of the military because of the things he experienced on the battlefield and also how the effects of those traumas were addressed by the military thereafter. He does not believe the military does all it can to help veterans transition, rather they use a "C.Y.A." (Cover Your Ass) process. He continues:

> [When] your commanding officer is dismissing you… he says, 'hey look this is where you go to get help; here you go. All right now, here's your ticket; there's the door; there's the DD 214.' That's kind of how the Army processed you out at that time. And you're just always ready to go; ready to go at all times because you're in mission mode, so you're always ready to leave. To really fully get out of that mission mode takes a long time. Especially when you're waking up screaming; nightmares and stuff like that… No matter how little [combat experience], like, I had one or two incidents [in combat] and they still resonate with me almost 10 years later… Nothing's going to change; it still pops up… You don't even know how psychologically damaged you actually are from when you get out of that situation. So you don't really know what to do.

Jarvis recognizes that the negative behavioral and emotional effects of trauma are not only due to, what he considers, the military's poor manner of handling separating service-members but culture is also to blame. He states:

> As a soldier, and particularly as a man, you usually go for the 'white-knuckle syndrome' as they call it; where you just try to handle it all yourself. And you don't even know what's wrong. You don't even know how damaged you are... And you don't know how much you've changed, because… you've changed so much, so quickly, you don't even notice. People around you will know that, like, 'no there's something real different about him.' So you don't even know the damage that has incurred while you're there…plus, with the media giving that negative stigma to it – you know, it's like you just get these lost individuals.

Jarvis still has difficulty controlling his mood but he contends, “I will fight forever.” Some veterans take a middle road between Marvin’s—defined by taking medications recommended by VA—and Jarvis—defined by taking no medications or substances at all. For instance, Alice and Corey preferred to plod a path that some refer to as “self-medicating,” as marked by their frequent and prolonged alcohol abuse. For Alice this behavior, and her tendency toward high risk activities (i.e. motorcycling, rock-climbing, and skydiving) ended abruptly two years ago. She doesn’t understand why she discontinued this behavior but tends toward an explanation of it having run its course. Put simply, she explains, “It just stopped.” Corey had a much more difficult time. (His hardship is explained in detail in a later section).

Notably the negative reintegration experiences described in this section are not only relegated to combat veterans. Alice, Corey, Jarvis, and Marvin experienced some of the most difficult reintegrations out of my student veteran qualitative sample. Corey and Marvin are combat veterans in the most rigorous sense of the word, as they have both served in the Combat Arms and engaged enemy combatants in the theatre of action. In terms of the definition of combat used in this study Alice and Jarvis are considered combat veterans as well, due to their experience of combat related-trauma (e.g. assault of mortar rounds on their camps, improvised explosive devices on their routes of travel, and seeing remains of fallen comrades). Jarvis is a proponent of viewing his service in this light, however Alice is reticent in regards to labeling her experiences combat. Her case is more fully addressed in the following chapter. One thing Alice, Jarvis, Corey, and Marvin do have in common, however, is service in the Army; each of these veterans served in the Army during their deployments to the theatre of action. While the Marine’s and Army’s wartime function in terms of contact with enemy combatants is

comparable, it has been well documented that the Army has endured the most demanding deployment schedule in the past ten years of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan (DOD 2004-2010). For a considerable period during the wars, the average length of Army deployments were one year, compared with 6 months for Marine deployments. This has affected morale and health of Army veterans foremost (DOD 2004-2010). The following three t-tests conducted with data from my survey of CUNY student veterans are indicative of this difference.

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare self-reported depression for student veterans who served in the Army and other branches of military service. The lower the score the more depressed the respondents were. There was a significant difference in the scores for Army ($M=2.96$, $SD=0.70$) and other branches ($M=3.14$, $SD=0.69$); $t(248)=1.99$, $p=0.047$. These results suggest that student veterans who served in the Army are more depressed than their counterparts who served in the other 3 branches of military service (i.e. Marines, Navy, and Air Force). Likewise an independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare self-reported happiness for student veterans who served in the Army and other branches of military service. There was a significant difference in the scores for Army veterans ($M=2.80$, $SD=0.85$) and veterans of other branches ($M=3.06$, $SD=0.77$); $t(181)=2.36$, $p=0.019$. These results suggest that veterans who served in the Army self-report less happiness than veterans of other branches of service. Veterans who served in the Army are therefore more depressed and report less happiness than veterans of all other branches combined. This is suggestive of the hardship induced by their rigorous deployment and training schedule in the Post 911 period.

To compare Army trends in self reported depression and happiness I also conducted a t-test comparing Navy self reported happiness to the other branches, as Navy veterans constituted the second largest group of veterans from any branch of service in my data set. There was a significant difference in the scores for the Navy (M=3.17, SD=0.80) and other branches of service (M=2.91, SD=0.81); t(247)=-2.04, p=0.042. These results suggest that veterans who served in the Navy report higher levels of happiness than veterans who served in other branches of military service. Importantly a less strenuous deployment schedule, combined with decreased likeliness to serve in ground combat, may mediate the relationship between Navy service and happiness of veterans.

Brock is a Navy veteran, and on Ebaugh's indicators of exes' readiness to move forward (i.e. enthusiasm for their new roles and lack of regret for actions in past role), he seems pretty forward thinking. He reports a high level of happiness now but he does not attribute that to his service in the Navy, as opposed to the Army or Marines. When his mother asked him "Why … did you leave after 10 years [in the Navy]?" he replied, "I wasn't happy. My happiness is worth more to me than any dollar bill amount you could put on it, anytime of the day." Brock attributes the high level of happiness he experiences now to the orientation he maintained despite serving in the Navy. He explains:

> I'm very liberal; I joined the military before 911 happened, so I was essentially just going to travel and for school and to grow up. So I went in with this mindset like 'okay this might be [an] easy ride for me. I'll go through something cool…' [But] I never liked it; I never let the Navy, essentially, get in me… I was there, functioning on a day-to-day basis, but I never let the Navy become a part of me and [affect] me developing as a person. I always had my own thoughts on things and I always would voice my opinion. I think, on top of that, possibly, never really seeing combat has allowed me to transition very easily back into a civilian life. And its funny because a lot of people that I worked with in the Navy [would

> say] “Dude, you are the most unmilitary person I know…you don’t hang out with anybody at work;’ like all my friends were outside of work. I didn’t associate with the Navy when I left Virginia.

Brock makes some very important connections in this statement. By way of his liberal politics he distances himself from other veterans, most of whom are Republican (Pew Research Center 2011). And although he notes that he joined to “grow up”—read: become a man as communicated by the metanarrative—during his service he actively refused to espouse a military world view and become a man defined primarily by his station in the military. Brock also acknowledges the ability of combat experience to affect the formation of veteran identities. Given the concept of relative deprivation, which many scholars have noted greatly affects service-member identity formation, (Stouffer et al. 1949; Moskos 1970) vis-à-vis combat veterans Brock suggests that his military experience did not require a large change of identity. Naturally, the military as an institution would prefer that any person serving in the ranks and addressed with the statement “you are the most unmilitary person” would consider it insulting. In my experience such a statement would not only be insulting, but considered a warning to “fall in” or else. In contrast, Brock recalls it as a compliment. This reaction is indicative of his belief that he achieved something; something we might adequately think of as ‘serving in the military and not becoming the military.’

‘Serving in the military and not becoming the military’ may sound like a lonesome project within the ranks, where most recruits—as I have noted in an earlier chapter—really do want to conform and assume military identities. Indeed, Brock was lonely, but he was not alone. For Alice, discussed above, maintaining her sense of self was not a project, as it was for Brock; she did not

intentionally try to overcome her training in the Army. Rather during basic training she explained that the feature that set her apart from others was:

> I was 21, so I feel like compared to some of the 18 year olds, I think I was just old enough to maintain some of who I was; whereas a lot of the 18 year olds really got shaped by basic [training]. I ended up identifying with the older [people]. There was me and another girl; [she] was five years older than I was. Our personalities stayed very much the same throughout. Whereas you could see an 18 year old go through stages in basic; you get molded into that that first time they break you down; and they teach you: 'it's not just you; there's no I; it's about the group.' And then they build you up a little bit from there, the way they want you to be.

Although Alice seemed able to maintain her individuality during her time in basic training, while completing an Active Duty contract, a Reserve contract, and two tours of duty in Iraq she, admittedly, became "very military." During our interview Alice listed the good qualities, "becoming more military" gave her:

> I still fold-in my underwear, which I find very funny. And I find that every veteran I know folds his underwear. I am very neat, and organized—mission-driven. I make my bed every morning. I'm never late, and if I am, I almost get anxiety—so that's actually negative because now when I am late, I get anxiety about it. I take responsibility for everything. So if I don't complete something, I own up to not completing it. I don't shift the blame over. Although that was so military-ish too. When I was in people were finding someone to blame things on. [Military service] made me better in those respects. We can't just coast through things. If you really want something, you work for it.

As it reads, this statement is the quintessential NCO's story about 'what-the-military-did-for-me.' And yet that does not make it less authentic. Alice's account of her transition from a barely socialized recruit, to an exemplary and self-affirmed veteran, attests to the transformative power of military social structure. Moreover, scholarly works confirm that unit cohesion is highest in the Marines and Army and lowest in the Air Force and Navy (Moskos 1970). This suggests that there is greater urgency for Marines and Soldiers to assume military identities that

are functional in small groups compared to Airmen and Seamen. Thus limiting the hold of the military identity over him, Brock's orientation was more possible for him, given his service in the Navy, than for Alice, given her service in the Army.

So far we have discussed how certain aspects of military service, identifiable at every stage of military careers (before, during, and after), facilitate role salience of the veteran identity. In the next chapter we employ this theory to the discussion of issues of relevance to female veteran identity formation, exclusively. Thereafter we will view how veteran role salience exerts explanative power in interpreting student veteran social behavior in higher education institutions.

Chapter Six

Female Service-members and Veterans

In previous chapters military women are discussed alongside military men. I have avoided separate parallel discussions concerning male and female military identities, in-service training and experiences, and reintegration experiences. Nevertheless, this one chapter acknowledges that while women in the military have many experiences comparable to their male counterparts, insofar as the discussion is limited to occupational specialties women are permitted to enter, they also have a whole range of experiences that men in the military do not have. These female-specific experiences are not limited to Military Sexual Trauma (MST)[21], although that is certainly a domain of experience that females in the military are subject to in a way that men are not.[22] Rather the focus here lies in the experiences that influence the way women understand and realize their military identities; principally, how a woman copes with being a woman in the most masculine of American institutions, and how this affects her identity during and after service, especially in terms of experiences in college thereafter. This concern is informed by Baechtold and Sawal's (2008) assertion: "how women veterans process and make meaning of their college experience will be influenced by how they are making meaning of their combat experiences."

Foremost it should be noted that the U.S. military does not present itself as an institution capable

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[21] Military Sexual Trauma is the term used to refer to sexual assault and sexual harassment in the military.

[22] I also acknowledge that MST affects men and not only women in service. While it is equally egregious for male and female service-members to be victims of MST, the rate of female victimization is higher. It follows that in many ways MST is considered an occupational hazard for women, while for men this offense is still considered rare. Because of this MST affects female social action widely relative to men in the ranks.

of making women womanly, although it has long laid its claim, even to the point of asserting sole authority, to producing men. This is expressed in many ways in military culture, but none so overtly as past recruitment slogans such as this jingle which aired in 1964:

Feel like a man, Go Army.
Bring out the man in yourself.
Feel like a man, Go Army.
Your country needs your help.
Feel like a man, Go Army.
Pitch in and do what you can.
In the US Army you'll get to know what it means to feel like a man. (U.S. Army Recruiting Service 1964)

This recruitment slogan made absolute sense when it was broadcast nearly a decade before the advent of the All Volunteer Force. Before its creation the U.S. military was nearly entirely male; and females were employed only as a supplemental service support force. Up until the arrival of this slogan, and for nearly a decade afterward, the Armed Forces employed women only during times of need and relegated them to the margins when otherwise not needed (Nuciara 2006).

A Brief History of Women in the American Military

Despite the nearly whimsical appropriation of women throughout U.S. military history, women have made outstanding contributions to U.S. military efforts. As far back as the Revolutionary War women contributed to the maintenance of America's military force. Routinely during 'the war that founded a nation' a small number of women, who followed their husbands onto the battlefield with children in tow, would perform certain service support duties for soldiers in exchange for rations (McKenney 1982). In addition there were several incidents during the Revolutionary War in which women fought under their own volition; and even rarer, but true nonetheless, were women who disguised themselves as men in order to fight in the war (De

Pauw 1976). From the Revolutionary period through 1901, when the Army Nurses Corps and the Navy Nurses Corp officially came into being, military policies of exclusion and relegation to service support roles—most typically nurse—for which they were not considered actually a part of the military, constrained female participation in the Armed Forces. Although the Army Nurses Corp did not gain status as an official part of the Army until WWII, a parallel organization, the Navy Nurses Corps, was created by Congressional mandate and received official Navy status in 1901. "The Sacred Twenty," as the first twenty Navy nurses were called, did not receive full room and board during their service in the way that male Seamen did. Nevertheless they performed their duties honorably, setting the standard of female participation as official service members in the Armed Forces (U.S. Navy 2012). Their counterparts in the Army Nurses Corps, their sacrifices notwithstanding, would serve without the designation of service-member until 1944 (Marsden 1986).

Even the severe manpower shortages during WWI did not pressure the Army to tap into womanpower; it was not until WWII that the Army's policies of female exclusion began to give way. Women provided supplemental service support force to the Army during WWII under another policy of quasi-inclusion; similar to the Army Nurses Corps, in 1942 the War Department created the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC). Women who served in the WAAC were not considered service-members but auxiliaries. The hesitation with which this organization was created left much to be desired, as the Army's demand for the auxiliaries was calculated at 1.3 million for employment in various administrative and rear echelon jobs, yet the supply of "Waacs" during WWII only ever reached 100,000. A year after its creation the WAAC transitioned from a quasi-military organization to an official part of the Army, known as

the Women's Army Corps (WAC). And yet, true integration into the ranks of the Army was still far off; so much so that historian Martha Marsden noted "[I]n one sense women were a part of the real (i.e., male) Army, while in another sense they were not" (Marsden 1986). In contrast the Navy was well advanced in respect to women by this time. In 1944, two years after the Army inducted its first official female service members through the Women's Army Corps, and in the same year that the long standing Army Nurses Corps would gain official Army status, the Navy had already granted its first living female service member a Navy Cross and christened a warship in her honor (USS Higbee) (U.S. Navy 2012).

The unmet demand for womanpower in the Army during WWII raised the idea of a female draft; this galvanized overwhelming support from the American people as evidenced by several polls in 1943 (Treadwell 1954). Nevertheless the War Department persisted in its reliance on the voluntary enlistment of women. Marsden posits that early on the rate of female military participation remained low when dependent upon volunteers due to two factors: the historical exclusion of women from the Armed Forces and "the deeply held belief that being a woman was incompatible with being a soldier" (Marsden 1986). The latter point especially influenced women to decline to elect for military service because it affected the poor public opinion of women who did volunteer.

During WWII the War Department first realized the high demand for womanpower in the Army. After the fighting in Europe and the Pacific ceased this lesson resulted in the Women's Armed Services Integration Act of 1948. This act is probably best described with the colloquialism 'taking two steps forward and one step back,' as it institutionalized female inclusion across the

board in the military but also legislated certain biases against women in uniform that persist today. One such bias is the exclusion of women from all occupational specialties that would subject them to combat. This particular policy applied to all branches of the Armed Forces except the Army, where it was more to difficult to divine which units enemy forces might attack. The combat restrictions on females in the Army were applied on an ad hoc basis and decreased the probability that women would experience combat rather than wholly excluding them from combat. In spite of the limited inclusion of women in the military given this 1948 legislation, the Korean War (1951) saw no participation from female service-members. In 1967 another piece of legislation expanded female participation, undoing some of the restrictions placed on women in the 1948 legislation (combat restrictions remaining) but it had little effect on female participation in the Vietnam War, as female troops were mainly limited to serving as nurses during that campaign as they had for nearly 200 years before (Marsden 1986).

As late as 1970, the overall middle class, white, and male character of the U.S. military permitted sociologist Charles Moskos to assert that the institution was a "vestige of male sanctity." (Moskos 1970). But only three years after Moskos wrote that statement a watershed would take place for the military and women; Congress called a moratorium to the draft and the U.S. military became an All Volunteer Force (AVF). In part, this change precipitated an unprecedented need to populate military ranks with capable and willing bodies of any gender, because thereafter the military had to compete with the private sector for talented employees. As a result of this development, more military occupations previously closed to women opened up (Segal and Segal 2006; Marsden 1986). The negative relationship between conscription and female enlistment has been documented as a general rule in Western nations; invariably as

conscription ceases, the presence of women in ranks increases (Haltiner 1998; Segal 1995; Nuciara 2006).

At present, the progress made toward the military tapping the well of womanpower is questionable. At the beginning of the All Volunteer Force women were only 2% of the U.S. military (Segal 2006), currently women are over 14% (a 700% increase) of the Active Duty force, and they constitute a larger percentage of the Air Force than any of the other branches of service (U.S. Army). Nevertheless the stifled nature of female integration within the services, the prevalence of MST (military sexual trauma), and the apparent inability of the services to address its cultural defects that propagate MST are among the many issues that call into question the success of this policy.

Presently the need for women to serve in the U.S. military is greater than it has ever been. After depending on female labor in the AVF for the past 40 years, riding on the tail end of a two-front war, with what seems like endless prospects for another, current U.S. military imperatives cannot be met without its female members. And yet, despite this realization, the culture of the military and the resultant civilian perception of what military identity is (civilian-military identity standard), have not caught up with recent trends in female military participation.

Images of service women in film

Film depictions of military service-members have extraordinary effects on military identity formation. Charles Moskos' own treatment of this matter within *The American Enlisted Man* implies that film depictions of service members affect civilian perceptions of who service-

members are and also recruits' perceptions of who they believe they will become by enlisting in the Armed Forces (Moskos 1970). Earlier I discussed how Corey, a former Army cavalry scout and Purple Heart recipient, viewed enlisting as the way to fashion himself in the image of Sgt. Elias, a fictional character from the movie Platoon. None of the female veterans with whom I conducted in-depth interviews for this research cited the influence of film depictions of female service-members on their decision to enlist. This is not surprising as female service-members are rarely depicted on the big screen, and the characteristics of the female service-members who are shown in film are hardly admirable vis-à-vis depictions of male service-members. Women often play peripheral roles in military films, fulfilling the popular trope of damsels in distress, or they are service support personnel with minimal tactical capacity.

Movies depicting past wars do not feature female service-members in combat because that would be tantamount to rewriting history. But given the masculine-centered culture of the military, and the present acceptability of African-American males within that culture, on several occasions historical revisionism has been undertaken for black troops on the big screen (e.g. Inglorious Bastards [1978] and Captain America: The First Avenger). Arguably, the two iconic depictions of women in military films that represent popular perceptions of women in uniform are Goldie Hawn's performance in Private Benjamin (1980) and Demi Moore's in G.I. Jane (1997).

The character Private Judy Benjamin, played by Goldie Hawn, depicts a female recruit who entered Army basic training after the sudden death of her wealthy husband. Private Benjamin is having a difficult time assimilating "the Army way." She displays characteristics that are feminine to a fault; her lack of zeal for soldiering and whimsical manner contrast starkly with the

rigid and barking black male drill sergeant and white female captain (Captain Lewis) assigned with the difficult task of training her. In this comedic portrayal of women in uniform perhaps the most telling exchange takes place when Captain Lewis says to Private Benjamin "Benjamin! You are unfit to wear this uniform!" She responds "No shit!" Undoubtedly the main thrust of this movie corresponds with Marsden's acknowledgement of "the deeply held belief that being a woman was incompatible with being a soldier" (Marsden 1986). Most interesting however, is that given the sharp contrast between Private Benjamin and the Captain Lewis, the movie communicates that Army life is not for some women—perhaps womanly women—but there *are* women for whom military service is fitting.

Demi Moore's performance in G.I. Jane presents a different portrait of women in uniform. In this 1997 release Demi Moore's character is the first female to tryout for the Navy Seals. Despite, or perhaps because of, extreme hardship, in the form of rigorous training and the sexist assaults of her peers and superiors, G.I. Jane proves her mettle; she achieves the task and becomes a Navy Seal. This portrayal of women in uniform is the antithesis of Private Benjamin. In essence it is meant to illustrate the perception of women in uniform that the former commander of Fort Benning, the training ground of the Army's infantry, once equated female troops to: "They remind me of the little guy on the baseball team—they try harder and they do a good job" (Marsden 1986).

Given her ability to 'hang with the guys,' her shaved head, lean muscled and bruised body; the image of G.I. Jane begged the question 'do successful women in military roles have to appear masculine?' The answer lies in the inherent irony of the film. While the fictional depiction of

G.I. Jane was grossing nearly one hundred million dollars at the box office, and affecting public perception of women in uniform in the process, her formidable image was completely out of congruence with the military's standard for service women at that time. In fact, if a female service-member reported for duty in any branch of the military in the exact fashion of GI Jane during the same year the film was released, without a doubt she would have been subject to an Article 15 (non-judicial punishment prescribed by the Uniform Code of Military Justice), and very likely a subsequent administrative discharge.

As Hollywood films are often more preoccupied with depicting entertaining military types rather than accurately representing service-members, G.I. Jane, herself, embodied one visible violation of military policy and another possible infraction which was common to that period of U.S. military history. The first has to do with her haircut; per a Marine field manual, at that time women were required to wear their hair in an "attractive and feminine style, not longer than their uniform collars, but not so short as to appear mannish" (Francke 2004). G.I. Jane certainly did not comply with this regulation.

Secondly, perhaps as a result of the negative attention she would garner from her "mannish" hairstyle, G.I. Jane would have become the target of a lesbian witch-hunt. Discharges for women accused of lesbianism skyrocketed after President Ronald Reagan took office and legalized a policy that required the discharge of "a person, regardless of sex, who engages in, desires to engage in, or intended to engage in homosexual acts" (U.S. GAO 1992). Women who received discharges under this policy were not always lesbians, males who were jealous of their achievements and sought to root them out targeted some of them. It has also been documented

that this policy was used to force female service-members to perform illicit sexual favors for their would-be accusers, under threat of the accusation of lesbianism (Francke 2004). In the very same year that G.I. Jane was released (1997) a study found that while women only comprised 13% of the Armed Forces they made up over a quarter (25%) of all discharges for homosexuality; in the Army they made up over 40% of these discharges (Francke 20040. Thus, in 1997, G.I. Jane's high visibility—being the only female in Navy Seal training, her "mannish" presentation, and threatening achievements would have made her a perfect target for such accusation and subsequent discharge.

Before

Women in military service have endured many hardships throughout military history. The contemporary military is hardly out of the woods in terms of female equality; and it is for this reason that many Americans find it difficult to fathom how a woman would elect for military service voluntarily. In this dissertation these women, are regarded as embodiments of the very definition of "being an American." Cornell West (1999) defines:

> To be an American is to give ethical significance to the future by viewing the present as terrain capable of transcending any past and thereby arriving at a new identity and community… [And] [t]o be an American is to downplay history in the name of hope, to ignore memory in the cause of possibility.

Thus female veterans, as the living definition of being an American, exhibit a subjectivity so forward-oriented that they neglect to acknowledge their exclusion from the powerful narratives of the past—including the metanarrative of a boy becoming a man by military design, enabling them to realize a new identity for themselves (i.e. the military woman).

Of the female veterans in my qualitative sample Alice, an Army veteran, illustrated this point with the most force, as she noted how the enlistment of her older brother fueled her desire to do the same. She states:

> I had ideas of grandeur as far as being a hero but I joined before 9/11. I definitely wasn't joining to go to war because there wasn't anything. I thought I'd be a weekend warrior, because I initially joined the Reserves. But yeah, I think I had that idea of it. Like putting myself on a pedestal or what I saw a soldier to be.

Alice was able to read herself into the metanarrative of a boy becoming a man through military design. Despite the military's overtures to American masculinity, Alice, like many women who served before and after her, was able to revise the metanarrative to be conducive to her own uplift. For her, quite literally, it became 'girl becomes hero' instead of 'boy becomes man.' As with male recruits, all females entering the Armed Forces do not openly pursue heroism. There is not a large amount of data on this issue but suffice it to say that there have been no significant observed differences in male and female motivations to serve. Females report similar reasons for enlisting as their male counterparts (Pew Research Center 2011). Kim, a Navy veteran and first generation Chinese immigrant, is perhaps comparable to male immigrants and non-immigrants who serve in the military to gain opportunities, with the hope of avoiding danger. She explains the circumstances around her enlistment:

> When we first came to the United States, it was only my mom and I. My dad didn't come because supposedly he had health issues... My mom used to work in a clothing factory. So with my mom's salary, I didn't think that she would be able to support me into college…Unfortunately, the day I joined the Navy was the day the Twin Towers was hit. I was sitting at the MEPS [Military Entrance Processing Station]. First, I think everybody thought it was just a movie; we didn't think it was real. And then you see the chaos going on at the MEPS, then the reality starts sinking, 'Wow, this is real. We're probably going to go to a war or whatever. Should I sign; should I not sign a contract?' I haven't really signed but they're not letting us go home at all. Well, eventually I signed; I think I thought, you know, being in the Navy, it wouldn't be as harsh or as difficult as surviving in the Army or the Marines.

Admittedly, Kim placed less emphasis on the ideas communicated by the metanarrative of a boy becoming a man than most of the veterans in my qualitative sample. Nevertheless she would become an exemplary Seaman, a matter she will describe in the following section.

During

Despite the concreteness of the "deeply held belief that being a woman was incompatible with being a soldier," females in military service tend to express different views. Tammy, an Air Force veteran, explained, "I don't feel that being in the military contradicts being a female because I played sports growing up. Even though I played sports I was still feminine. After the game I wanted to get dressed; still looking at the boys; I was still doing everything that a woman does." Although her experiences in sports gave her a different, more capable, sense of femininity she acknowledged that she understood how some females could feel that the two roles are contradictory. Tammy explained that the conception of femininity differs "especially depending on what branch of service you are in…" She continues:

> …The AirForce is very different. [Male and female] jobs are still very segregated. You have a lot of women that are secretaries; now you have some guys that are secretaries but it is still very women [populated]. So I could see how a woman could feel like that. Especially in the Army; the Army jumps out of airplanes and stuff. This girl I used to play basketball with she was airborne and she was so extra; running with rucksacks and stuff, doing five miles. When I was [in the Air Force] I remember some girls from the Army came on our base and they were surprised we had on lipstick and earrings. They were so shocked like 'You get to wear earrings and lipstick?' Air Force sounds like they let women express themselves more… Not saying that makes you a woman but that makes some women feel more feminine. If you're coming from that kind of culture you assume everyone has that lens [concerning] what a military person is. The Airforce is really different though. I mean we have skirts and we have our little stuff. I know the Army wears skirts too but we are not in the field as much. Even when we were deployed we had hairdressers at the base.

Tammy acknowledges that the accessories do not make the woman, however they may "make some women feel more feminine." By her standard, expressions of femininity are more at odds with the image the Army projects than that which the Air Force projects. In this way she agrees that being a woman is incompatible with being a *Soldier* but not an *Airman*. Some researchers might agree with Tammy, given their assertion that Army and Marine culture diverges from civilian life and Navy and Air Force culture is convergent with civilian life (Moskos 1970). The emphasis on Combat Arms in the Army and Marines may also provide a strong argument for this interpretation.

Barring women from serving in Combat Arms specialties within the Army and Marines does not keep them from experiencing combat in theater. Yet it has been argued that this policy contributes to the decreased symbolic worth of female troops, and females generally, within society (The Invisible War 2011; Nuciara 2006). Likewise, despite the inability of this policy to facilitate the type of exclusion it legalizes, it has had other increasingly visible effects on females in ranks. Alice, the 32 year-old former Army sergeant who served in the Army Corps of Engineers during her tour of duty, acknowledges that when she went to basic training in early 2001 she noticed that women were only allowed to attend basic training on a select few bases in the United States. At that time she was inducted into a military social experiment that required her to attend basic training in Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Prior to her unit of trainees, Fort Sill had not been a training ground for female recruits and some time afterward the military discontinued training female recruits at this location. Alice noted that training in such a male dominated environment increased her confidence in some ways. She had become familiar with bases like Fort Jackson, South Carolina, "Relaxing Jackson" as it is pejoratively referred to by soldiers

because of the large presence of female soldiers on the base. Comparing her experience of basic training to the typical female recruit experience is a point of pride for Alice, as she noted:

> [In] other places where women are allowed to be at basic, it's usually disproportionate, like there's more women to men. When I was in basic [at Ft. Sill], it was like 30 something people in my platoon and only 10 of us were women. So there were more men than women… I don't want to make this sound like my basic was harder, but I think it was harder than Jackson or other basic training for women. Kind of like women could step up [as well], and I was there in the dead of summer too, which is horrible.

Like many service-members, Alice finds that the prestige of her military experience is directly related to the hardship that she experienced. Several studies in WWII and Vietnam documented the centrality of deprivation in the calculation of prestige and self-worth of veterans (Stouffer et al. Combat; Moskos 1970). This is an essential factor contributing to the increased prestige of Combat Arms units and the decreased prestige of service women who are excluded from them.

An issue that is germane to the lack of prestige attributed to women within military ranks is the manner in which their male counterparts regard them. All of the female veterans interviewed for this research reported difficulty negotiating relationships with male service members during their time serving. Alice noted that male service members interpret female service member identities in one of three ways:

> In the Army you have three things a woman can be... They can be a lesbian, a slut, or a bitch. Guys don't like to take orders from a woman so a female in charge is always a bitch… Some women have no respect for themselves so the guys have no respect for them either. They're just [sexually] loose with everybody [these are the perceived sluts]. I only escaped this whole thing because I was gay and a guy I made friends with asked me about it one day and I admitted it to him. After that he helped protect me and pretended we were a couple the whole time I was serving. I remember one time a guy from a combat unit asked me on a date and I decided to go out with him just to make it seem like I was interested.

Notably the thoughts expressed by Alice in this passage are not unique, as several women in uniform have confirmed the "lesbian, slut, or bitch" trichotomy (The Invisibe War 2011). Each of these categories functions as a stereotype, and given that each female service member, as Alice points out, must fall within one of these categories, one can imagine how the social behavior of female service members is subject to continuous critique by male service members in order to interpret their identities in one of the three ways. Furthermore, historian Marsden confirms the legitimacy of this view when she writes "because their numbers are so few and their isolation from the dominant male Army culture is so great, women soldiers tend to be viewed by their male peers, and subordinates less as unique individuals and more as common female stereotypes" (Marsden 1986).

Having been a lesbian in service during the time of Don't Ask Don't Tell (DADT), a military policy that banned the disclosure of sexual orientation of gay service members, Alice avoided being singled out as a lesbian and reported to her unit command only because of the actions of her male confidant who feigned to be in a relationship with her while she was serving. While this issue was very influential in terms of Alice's in-service experiences, fortunately it is no longer in practice in the military. DADT was repealed in September of 2011, and thereafter the Department of Defense called a moratorium to administrative discharges for homosexuality, which the Reagan Administration initiated. Despite this improvement in military policy, which will undoubtedly have positive effects for many female and male service members, we can expect that the stereotype of "lesbian" remains viable within military culture however it is now defanged, as it is no longer threatening to female service members' careers. Presumably the stereotypes of "slut" and "bitch," however, are still used to justify sexual violence and

harassment of female service members.

As discussed, Kim, the Navy veteran and Chinese immigrant, enlisted in the Navy reluctantly as the terrorist attacks of September 11th unfolded on the very day she was signing her military contract. Nevertheless, she went on to become a distinguished member of the Navy, as she moved quite quickly through the junior enlisted ranks. Her service was not easy however:

> The first 2 years were actually pretty tough. Especially being a female and doing the work we do. What I did was while we are under way our department was responsible for driving the ship and taking the fuel and food from one ship to another ship. We stood lookout watches. Whenever we pulled into a port we were closer to the pier or more at sea. When we are in port what we did was cleaning, basically maintenance.

Aside from the inherent difficulties of her duties Kim also had to contend with other obstacles. As if her duties were not difficult enough, male service members whom she served with behaved insubordinately toward her when she was in a position of leadership. She explains her frustration:

> When it comes to working with males sometimes it comes to a point of who is going to be the dominant one. I, as a female, as you can see I'm short but I had chevrons and I had to tell the guys to work certain ways. Sometimes I think it's hard. I don't want to come out as the [whispers] bitch. I don't know why but I think its hard for guys to listen to females and follow orders.

Kim's use of the term "*the* bitch" in this statement is revealing of the prevalence of that stigma of women in leadership in the military; "*the* bitch," as opposed to 'a bitch,' is a reference to a role that exists and exerts explanative power over female identities in military service. Kim continues:

> There's the old Navy and there's the new Navy. When it comes to us [women] being the leadership and you have new personnel come aboard they are crazy and lazy… It frustrates you so much and you end up being the one doing their work.

Kim's use of the "new" and "old" distinction can be applied to every branch of service. Many service members deploy the same distinction to explain the acceptable nature of mistreatment of women or minorities in any branch of service in the past. Reference to the "new" is meant to refer to the current unacceptability of such mistreatment, despite the persistence of discrimination in practice. It is therefore very common to hear talk of the 'New Army and the Old Army" from Army veterans and soldiers to explain parallel phenomena within that branch of service.

"The lesbian" is a stereotype of women who seem to be sexually disinterested in males while serving in the military. "The bitch" is the stereotype of women in positions of authority in the military. Finally, "the slut" is the result of sexualizing female service members and thus objectifying them sexually. This view of female service members contributes to the proliferation of Military Sexual Trauma. On July, 2012 Representative Jon Runyan, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs of the Veterans Affairs Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives, noted "The Department of Defense estimates that one in four women who join the armed services will be raped or assaulted, but that only about 10 percent of such incidents are ever reported." He continued, "Even more alarming is that of those few who did report incidents of military sexual trauma, over 75 percent stated that they would not make the same decision about reporting the incident again, due to the consequences it had on their military career" (House Committee on Veterans' Affairs 2012). The reluctance of women to report MST inevitably affects the measurement of how prevalent the issue is within the services, therefore we can conclude that the estimate projected represents only a portion of the reality of the problem.

Importantly, MST does not just refer to rape and sexual assault, sexual harassment is also an experience referenced by the term. While none of the female veterans interviewed for this research were raped in the military they were all aware of the importance of the issue in military life and several of them had fellow female service members they were close to who were sexually assaulted, or knew male service members who were punished for committing sexual assault. One female veteran interviewee mentioned, "I knew two guys I used to play basketball with [in the military] who went to jail for rape. They wound up going to jail for date rape type stuff." Another female veteran, Tammy, explained a situation one of her female comrades experienced:

> My friend just had sexual trauma on her base overseas, Guam... She reported it but you know that whole process… Society is still working on this, getting the kinks out with [investigating] rapes, but the military is still old school with it… She was telling me about it but she was really nonchalant. This dude was deployed to her base and they went out drinking… She's also gay and he knew. This dude is married and everything. So this animosity was created and she woke up and he was raping her… It's been reported but I asked her about it and she was like 'I gave my statement but you know…' I let her know this is not normal. Life is not supposed to be like this.

In spite of Tammy's assertion of the "nonchalant" manner in which her comrade recounted her rape, it is not for us to speculate as to what type of response would be fitting for a female who has experienced sexual violence. Furthermore, as MST is endemic to the military it may be that many troops experience a high rate of exposure of the first and second order. Thus one may be conditioned to respond to such trauma—or even the rumor of such trauma—less sharply. Concerning military life, Tammy may be terribly mistaken, as this *is* normal.

During their interviews, both Tammy and Kim recounted experiences related to MST that in some way traumatized them, and simultaneously turned the issue of MST on its head. Let us turn to Kim first; she explained that certain experiences made her develop a negative view of her own gender. For this reason, as a veteran, she feels closer to male veterans than female veterans. She explains:

> We had to do some hard labor and of course there are females… I hate it when I work with someone who is lazy. That doesn't matter if they are male or female. Most of the time they tend to be female. Somehow they always have their way of getting away with things. Not working or whatever. Of course it all comes down through the chain of command that enforces how people work. I didn't experience anything like loss of trust but more like loss of respect. The females, they used *themselves* to get away with things. And I was not at a position to influence anything.

Kim's reference to the ability of females to "use themselves to get away with things," or appealing to leadership in order to avoid duty is a topic of much informal debate in the Armed Forces. As such, this is not the first occasion where it has been documented in social research; Helen Rogan notes a similar indictment from one female soldier toward the behavior of females in her unit:

> There were four females and one hundred and fifty men. They didn't know what to do with us. Some of the gals used their femininity to get out of certain jobs in the motor pool, because they didn't want to be greasy and dirty. And permissive NCO's let them, so the guys were furious. As more women arrived, the men learned how to deal with it…" Rogan 1981

The commonality of this experience, as indicated by this quote from Rogan's work, did not lessen its blow for Kim. In the following passage Kim explains the essence of her anger about this situation and how it contributed to her eventually leaving the service:

> It frustrates me and I think that's another reason that I got out. When it comes to getting yourself promoted there are different ways: the evaluation points those may propel you further, but you also have to take the exam. We had this female, she flirted with the chain of command. I hated it; she had the exact same evaluation as I did when I was busting my ass. I didn't like it… I don't like to kiss up to people to get whatever I need. I just want my work to prove. It does frustrate me when females get away with that.

Kim was a hard worker during her time in the Navy and expected that her comrades, irrespective of gender, would be 'pulling their weight' just as she did. Her frustration with the fact that despite her hard work her mobility within the ranks was comparable to someone who regularly shirked duty by "flirting" with superiors contributed to her decision to leave the Navy. As Kim explains, at her time of discharge she learned a lot more about the male-female interactions on the ship:

> Turns out that when I was getting out of the Navy, I met somebody who was from my ship and we were checking out at the same time. We started talking and [I realized] I didn't know that prostitutes existed on my ship. When I say prostitutes I mean the females, like me, who are also in the Navy, also a sailor, decide to offer themselves to the guys with a charge of 300 dollars to 400 dollars. The guys will go for it because the deployment is so damn long and they cannot help themselves. I feel bad for the guys, let alone the females. You know what happens to our reputation. After I found out what happened my perspective just changed. I thought they were decent people. I never thought they were… I mean flirting… yea just flirt, touching and kissing—whatever—It never comes to the point that you prostitute yourself. And they talk about it openly. All the guys know and the females know. So at times working with a female is very frustrating.

It is currently unknown how prevalent prostitution of service members is in the military. Likewise no national reports have been conducted concerning the prostitution of military service members for military service members. However in 2008, it was reported that Lieutenant Commander Rebecca Dickerson, a female commander in the Navy and once an enlisted sailor, confessed to prostituting herself while operating as commander of a Navy logistics unit

(Thompson and Shenon 2008). While this and Kim's experience are only isolated incidents, these anecdotal data may be indicative of a systemic problem. Hence, Kim was not the only female veteran interviewed for this research who witnessed prostitution of female service members during active duty.

Tammy described a different situation, as she served in the Air Force and was therefore not confined to a ship like Kim. In the passage below Tammy explains prostitution as an action performed by one of two social types that existed in her unit during her deployment to the Middle East:

> A Desert Queen is when deployed guys hook up with this chick and it might be a girl who traditionally he might think is beautiful. But you know we are in the desert for 3-4 months so he wants someone he could lay with. But then we get on the plane and he acts like he doesn't know her anymore. You had some girls who walked around like that. Like they had this superiority [to everyone] but no one was really messing with them back on the base [in the United States] but out here they're a Desert Queen. With Desert Queens sometimes the guys pay for it [sex].
>
> You had Desert Kings too. They were the guys getting all of the women. It went both ways though because you had a lot of girls that at home they weren't getting any play but now [when deployed] they are though. Some of them became picky but some of them were just so open [enthusiastic] at the idea that someone wants them. So they might be giving this dude play who might have all these girls back home but here he only has a few on the team. He might be the dude who can get somebody back home. So he's a little bit higher now [when deployed], he's doubled [in value here].

Throughout this passage Tammy uses the slang terms "play" and "players" (or "team") to euphemistically refer to sexual play and sexual partners respectively. She aptly describes the two social types, Desert Queens and Desert Kings, as individuals who are objectified sexually by others, and themselves, and have increased in sexual value as a result of being secluded in remote bases away from civilization where sexual partners or "players" are few.

Currently military-wide fraternization policy focuses on eliminating the coercive means by which superiors would attain sexual favors from their subordinates and subordinates would attain professional favors from their superiors. As such, across all branches of service these policies prohibit fraternization of troops within different rank categories (officer/enlisted, Noncommissioned officer/enlisted, recruit/recruiter, trainer/trainee). Under these policies Kim may have been able to report the favoritism she witnessed in her unit. At first glance the relationships Tammy witnessed may not directly violate military policy, as restrictions on sexual activities conducted horizontally do not exist across the services but may be imposed by way of general order (DOD Fraternization). General orders are considered directives issued by unit commanders, detailing conduct expected of persons within a given unit.

After

After service female veterans are less apt to use **deceptive** behavior to garner civilian admiration and deference toward their military identities. Deception is a dramaturgical device that allows the performer to deliver a believable presentation of a character (Goffman 1959); in this case the character is a military veteran. It is difficult for female veterans to utilize deceptive behavior to relay their veteran identities, and draw a line between them and civilians, because few civilians actually understand the nature of female service in the military. Given the widespread belief that women do not serve in combat, as current laws and resultant military occupational restrictions suggests, female veterans are urged more so than male veterans to explain their service. Perhaps as a result they appear to be more guarded about disclosing their veteran status than male veterans.

When Alice returned to civilian life, much to her dismay, she discovered that Americans are not generally aware of the sacrifices that female soldiers are required to make. Corresponding with the **misrepresentation** paradigm of veteran-civilian interaction, in which the identities of veterans are misunderstood due to ignorance of those perceiving them, Alice finds she is often slighted in exchanges with civilians who believe that she could not have served in a capacity that was vital to the overall mission, as if only men perform these tasks. In reference to such conversations Alice states: "You get the stupid questions sometimes. [But] I don't usually get the 'did you kill anyone?' because I think that question doesn't get asked of women often." For many female veterans such ignorance on the part of civilians amounts to adding insult to injury. Although Alice did not encounter direct combat while in theater, her experiences in war were no less difficult, as she had endured a number of difficult assignments during her two tours in Iraq. She recounts one of them here:

> I guess the most combat related thing was we did lose someone in my unit from an IED… And I actually wasn't with them when that person got hit, I was on radio duty that day. So I took the report and I walked it over to the Colonel… It was the first time I took any kind of report like that… One guy, the shrapnel went straight up into him, up through his head. So there was nothing that they could do. Two of the other guys, got hit in the arm and shoulders, they were fine. There was a girl sitting in between them who didn't get hit at all. But they pulled her off and she was covered with blood on both sides from these two other people. I had to clean [the vehicle], so I had to take care of that, and I took care of the truck… so that way there would be no blood tomorrow morning when people came out, so we had to do it with flashlights… And then afterwards, we had to walk in the dark, around everything, because we didn't want anyone to see us… I had to throw out my uniform [because] I was covered head to toe [in blood]. They gave me plastic gloves, but so what, your hands are clean but the rest of you is not.

This is but a small window into the traumatic experiences of war some women in uniform have

been subjected to in the Post 911 generation. And yet because of standing policies of combat exclusion Post 911 women are not commonly thought to have experiences comparable to male veterans of the period.

The threat of misrepresentation, which injures the veteran identity, can cause some female veterans to draw a line at identifying themselves as such. These female veterans, we might say, passively reify the idea "that being a woman is incompatible with being a soldier," by way of **disidentification**. This is a paradigm of behavior in which female veterans deny their identities as veterans altogether. Alice explains her reason for disidentifying:

> I know I'm a veteran. I don't like always putting it out there. When I meet people it's not something in my introduction. I would definitely say something like I'm a grad student first or something along those lines, more than I would say that I'm a veteran. I just feel like once someone says you're a veteran, that's all you are.

Thus, fear of being objectified as a veteran, and misrepresenting herself as a person, warrants Alice's use of behavior in the disidentifiction paradigm. Several other female veterans interviewed for this research choose to disidentify given the opportunity. However there are also those bolder types that realize change of public perception regarding who and what female veterans are is their torch to bear one inquiry at a time. In this way Tammy, an Air Force veteran, notes the following exclamations people make when they find she is a veteran:

> 'You're a vet! I can't believe you're a vet. I would never think you're a vet. No way. Out of all of the people who I would think are vets...' And I'm like 'Yea. I am.' When I started to hear that more it made me feel like I should tell people because they're so shocked. They already have a concept of what a woman vet looks like and when I tell them I'm one they're like 'No way.'

Misrepresentation and disidentification represent a sort of Scylla and Charybdis for female veterans. The tendency of female veterans toward disidentification, concealing their veteran

identities, is a large hurdle for civilian institutions looking to serve female veterans; this includes institutions of higher education. Female veterans seem invisible in these institutions due to their reluctance to identify themselves.

Another reason that female veterans may be prone to concealing their identities as such could be related to the negative experiences that they had in the military, which they decide to distance themselves from after the fact. As previously discussed, Kim the Navy veteran, acknowledged that she was put-off by the way female service members behaved with male service-members. Her desire to leave the service was greatly affected by her disdain for her comrades, with particular emphasis on the insubordination of male subordinates and her observations of female comrades solicitous behavior. Alice explained different reasons; when asked if she missed the military she responded with the following:

> I miss the structure on occasion and always knowing what you're going to do every day. Cause you have a mission and not having to pick out something to wear is nice. [But otherwise] No, I really don't actually. I really like being independent and having my say, if I want to quit school tomorrow, I can just walk away. I like the freedom to do that. And so I don't miss it. I knew the military was only for the one contract and that was it, I was done. And also even the people I was close with, the fact that we always drank together that's because we didn't have much in common, I guess. I'm also gay… [So there was a risk that] someone knows, or I tell someone and I get caught or whatever. I could lose all of that [all of my military achievements] just from that one thing. So it [leaving] had a lot to do, I'm sure, with my drinking, and my second tour too, because I had to remain closeted when I'd never been closeted.

Alice decided to leave the Army as she realized that she was negatively affected by the heavy drinking patterns of her comrades, and that she was in constant fear of being identified as gay. She also trivialized her connection with her comrades as she suspected that drinking together was a way they ignored the fact that they had nothing in common except that they were all in service.

All of these issues still weigh heavily on Alice's impression of the military, as a result it is no small wonder that she believes that presenting herself as a veteran foremost misrepresents her; she had already conceived of herself as having more complexity than her military identity allowed for.

Tammy expressed similar points behind her reason for leaving the service and her selective presentation of self in terms of the veteran identity. However her experiences were exacerbated because of her race. In an institution where the culture is generally, and forcefully so, directed toward conforming she found it difficult to be a black woman. The troubles she experienced as a black woman in the service were most evident when it came to her hairstyle:

> I remember my hair always being an issue… I remember when I first came in and my supervisor tried to tell me [I couldn't wear] braids. I knew that was wrong. I was like "um no!" But I had this supervisor who was a white male in his thirties, coming from the south. I'm a young black girl coming from the west and there's like no kind of cultural training. If you don't want that military person to come out with different generalizations and stereotypes, and go into a job field that might have different types of people, that person might need to know that its OK for people to be different and still do the job. At the end of the day it's the military's way and that's it. And at the end of the day we are all wearing the same uniform, so we're all one or something? But no! We are different. We're doing the same job but we are still different and I should be able to express it.

Like Alice, Tammy realized that the military identity she was forced to conform to was not complex enough to embrace the totality of who she was. Once her military obligation was completed she not only left the service literally but also symbolically. Although she relayed her tendency to assert herself as a veteran in order to challenge civilian perceptions of who veterans are, she is also very selective regarding who she shares this information with. This is principally because she feels that she never actually fit into the service-member ideal type:

> I never was a 100 percent Air Force military member; I never conformed all the

> way. So, that's why I got out anyway because it was like the military comes with a certain kind of [definition of a service-member]. Like this is what it is; and you can't try to fight against that organization because you'll lose… So, for me I knew that I was never really—all the way—being a military person. And I knew that will only eventually stop my growth.

In this chapter we have looked briefly at the history of females within the military, popular depictions of military females in media, and we have identified some common themes pertaining to female experiences before, during, and after military service. Given this discussion we can understand why many female veterans reluctantly identify themselves as such. We can also understand why some female veterans, like Tammy, may feel a need to expose their veteran status to address public misconceptions of female veterans. Keeping true to Baechtold and Sawal's (2009) claim that in-service experiences affect female veterans' higher education experiences, in the next chapter we will explore how the many experiences in and around military service affect veterans' experiences within higher education, male and female alike.

Chapter Seven

Case Study: Student Veterans in The City University of New York

Methods

This research project endeavored to accomplish an ambitious feat, given the bureaucratic stops that thwarted many of my efforts. At the outset of the project just gaining the Internal Review Board (IRB) approval took months away from the study. This was because this study required the approval of a special review board entrusted with the authority to oversee research projects conducted across CUNY institutions; to begin this study I needed to secure what is called a CUNY-wide IRB approval. Nine months after my submission of the necessary items describing the research and the application I was given approval to begin conducting the study.

Key Administrators

For the most part all of the Veteran's Affairs staff in CUNY were supportive of the project. The Director and Assistant Director offered help and direction as needed throughout the course of data collection. They also contributed to the project in terms of making the research design more conducive to institutional needs and bureaucratic processes. Because of their guidance I was able to pool the knowledge of the campus-based Liaisons who work with veterans in the university in order to discover best possible practices for research recruitment. The following is a list of the administrators included in the CUNY Veterans Affairs and their functions. Understanding and utilizing these individuals was indispensable for conducting this study:

Director of CUNY Office of Veterans Affairs

This person is most important in developing and enforcing a University standard of care for veterans. He/she oversees each of the Veterans' Affairs offices across CUNY.

Certifying Official

Each campus is furnished with a certifying official. This official is responsible for the

certification of each student veteran's education benefits. The constant revision of veteran education benefits and programs requires continued discussion and sharing of lessons learned between certifying officials in CUNY.

Veterans Affairs Liaison

CUNY has employed Veterans Affairs liaisons to organize social events, provide education supplements (such as veteran specific talks, job fairs, etc.), and support a veteran student club on each campus. Liaisons do quite a bit of academic counseling too, and in various ways support student retention initiatives. Liaisons are the most hands-on of the Veterans Affairs staff on any campus. Potentially they can deal with the gauntlet of problems a student veterans encounter when returning to higher education. Often I witnessed Liasions dealing with student veteran issues ranging from housing to enrollment in a course. These are the administrators that have the most contact with the student veteran population.

Site

The City University of New York is composed of 24 different colleges. Some of the colleges within the University do not have their own physical campuses; rather they share physical space with other CUNY colleges. Nevertheless each of these colleges have their own leadership and chain of command (i.e. president, provosts, administrators etc.). This structure made conducting research at CUNY challenging. If something was easily prepared and approved at one campus it was no indication of the procedure or reception it would receive at another campus.

CUNY is the largest urban university in the country; its many college campuses are located in throughout the five boroughs of New York City. The colleges included in this study were all of

CUNY's 4-year undergraduate colleges and community colleges with a physical campus. CUNY colleges that were excluded from the study were the professional colleges, graduate schools, online colleges, and colleges without their own physical campus. Of the 17 CUNY colleges studied 6 were community colleges and 11 were senior (4-year) colleges. The list of all the campuses included in the research is as follows: Baruch College, City College, Lehman College, Queens College, John Jay College, Brooklyn College, New York City College of Technology, College of Staten Island, York College, Medgar Evers College, Hunter College, Hostos Community College, Queensboro Community College, Bronx Community College, LaGuardia Community College, Borough of Manhattan Community College, and Kingsborough Community College.

Student Veteran Population in CUNY

The exact number of student veterans within CUNY was unknown at the time of this study. University metrics accounting for student veterans were unable to render an accurate estimate of the total population. However due to CUNY's current recordkeeping efforts at the outset of the study it was possible to calculate the number of student veterans who were using the Post 911 G.I. Bill, as required by the federal government in order to process G.I. Bill payments. These data also reflected a portion of the student veteran's population of the university that was not receiving G.I. Bill benefits. According to these data, the total number of student veterans attending CUNY at the beginning of the 2011-2012 academic year was 2,658. The total population of CUNY's student body was 239,103 in that same year.

Sample

Given a mixed method approach, data presented in this dissertation have a dual nature; they are both quantitative and qualitative. Table 1 displays CUNY campus by total number of veterans CUNY estimated, survey response rate, interview response rate.

SEE TABLE 1

Quantitative Data

Although the research population was quite large, as CUNY had at least 2,658 documented student veterans at the time of the research, the number of completed surveys for this study is but a fraction (nearly 10%) of that total (N=269). As shown in Table 1 the student veteran survey respondents disproportionately represent various CUNY campuses. The procedures used in the survey will be discussed below.

Qualitative Data

Qualitative data were gathered from two sources: 1) 20 in-depth interviews with student veterans and 2) one semester of ethnography at student veteran clubs at several college campuses in the City University of New York. The in-depth interviews ranged from one hour to one and one half hours in length. All branches of service, both combat and non-combat, and both male and female veterans were interviewed. Additionally the sample of interviewees was racially diverse; most were white males, as the military is mostly white males, however black, white, Hispanic, and Asian males and females were interviewed as well. Although the interview schedule was structured, many of the interviews took on a character of their own, as the researcher took cues

from the participants about where to direct the inquiry. [23] Of the 20 student veteran interviewed, 4 were attending CUNY community colleges, and 16 were attending CUNY senior colleges. In terms of the race of the interviewees as they appeared to the researcher: 9 were white, 8 were black, 2 were Asian, and 1 was Hispanic. Four were females and 16 were males.

Recruitment for the interviews was conducted on the internet. Survey respondents were automatically prompted to volunteer for an interview at the completion of the online survey. The researcher subsequently contacted all interview volunteers. Those who kept their interview appointments were interviewed. One attempt was made to reschedule interviews with participants who expressed interest but had to cancel. In the event of a second interview cancellation, no further recruitment attempts were made.

The hours of ethnography conducted with student veteran clubs varied greatly from campus to campus, as all data were collected during student veteran club meetings, and visits to the student veteran club rooms, both of which are open to the public. Many CUNY colleges have difficulty keeping their student veteran clubs populated and maintained, therefore colleges where ethnography was conducted were chosen because of their convenience and access. Ethnography was only conducted in events that were open to the public; no data was collected from private student veteran club meetings.

[23] A copy of the Interview Schedule can be found in the Appendix

Student Veteran Recruitment

Because the exact number of student veterans in CUNY was unknown to the university, this study did not sample from an existing list or roster. Instead, recruitment for survey participants was conducted with the participation of the CUNY Office of Veterans Affairs. This bureaucracy held monthly meetings during which each staff from each of CUNY's 17 undergraduate and community college Veterans Affairs offices were asked to send a representative to participate. At these monthly meetings the Liaisons for the local CUNY Veterans Affairs offices, located at each campus, were asked to disseminate information about the research to their respective student veterans.

These Liaisons were supplied with several items to disseminate pertinent information regarding research participation to the student veterans at their respective campuses. All of the following recruitment items contained the website address where the online survey instrument was hosted, and where emails could be sent for in-depth interview requests, and the name and phone number of the research director. To publicize the research I used 1) flyers, 2) recruitment cards, and 3) emails. At their request, the Liaisons were also supplied with paper copies of the survey instrument, which they believed would increase their response rate given that student veterans could complete the paper surveys while standing in the local Veterans Affairs offices and waiting to be serviced by CUNY Veterans Affairs professionals. I commuted to various CUNY campuses to pick up completed paper surveys and replenished the supply of paper surveys at the request of the Liaisons. This research continued for a period equivalent to one academic semester; by the end of the Spring semester of 2012 the research was completed.

Human Subjects Approval

As required by the CUNY-wide Institutional Research Board several measures were taken to protect the participants of this study. A survey consent form and interview consent form were completed by all of survey respondents and interviewees, respectively. In addition to this pseudonyms are used to refer to all of the interviewees in the body of this dissertation.

Survey of CUNY Student Veteran Engagement[24]

Design

A survey instrument titled Survey of CUNY Student Veteran Engagement (SCSVE) was used to collect the quantitative data of this research study. I developed this survey instrument to measure student veteran engagement, which is defined as behaviors and practices sharing a positive relationship with student persistence and graduation (Hu and Kuh 2002). The instrument also collected some details of student veterans' military service record. This has enabled the researcher to discover the relationship between certain characteristics of a student veterans' military service and student engagement.

On the survey, several metrics to measure student veteran engagement were copied from another national survey: the 2011 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). These metrics primarily focused on the practices and behaviors that are widely identified in the student engagement literature to have the greatest effect on student engagement. They asked how rigorous the student perceives the curriculum to be; how frequently the student discussed grades and course content with professors, students, or others outside of the classroom; how often the student participated in class discussions, worked with other students, and skipped class altogether

[24] A copy of the Survey of CUNY Student Veteran Engagement is included in the Appendix.

(Hu and Kuh 2002; Chickering and Gamson 1987). The questions also attempted to measure the quality of relationships that student veterans had developed with other students, with faculty members, and with administrative staff.

Additional metrics of student engagement focused on the veterans' knowledge and use of various administrative offices and student services within the university. This battery of questions included inquiries concerning student veteran use of Career Services, Tutoring Services, Disability Services, Health Services, Academic Advisement, Personal Counseling, Library Services, etc. Lastly, the instrument also measured the satisfaction of student veterans with various administrative offices and student services.

The Survey of CUNY Student Veteran Engagement was developed in effort to understand the relationships among certain aspects of student engagement shared with features of a student veteran's military service record. Thus it was intended to address questions like: how do combat and non-combat (or service support, combat support, and combat arms) veterans differ in terms of their relationships with professors, administrative staff, and non-veteran students? Are former service-members who were trained in service support occupations more capable of dealing with paperwork issues in college? Do combat veterans feel more or less integrated in their college campuses? Is the category of a service-members occupational specialty (i.e. combat arms, combat support, service support) negatively or positively associated with important academic behaviors? Do rank and/or length of service predict student veteran assimilability on college campuses?

Student Veteran Interviews

By interviewing student veterans the researcher intended to conduct a qualitative investigation of several aspects of the student veteran experience: the process of veteran identity formation at every stage of student veterans' military career (i.e. before, during, and after); student veteran perceptions of their non-veteran student peers; student veteran perceptions of faculty; student veteran perceptions of administrators.

Ethnography

Because so much emphasis is attributed to the group in military service, I wanted to understand how being a member of the student veterans' club affected veteran social behavior in higher education institutions. Each week I visited various student veteran clubrooms on CUNY campuses. In order to be most efficient with the time spent in the field I planned my ethnographic visits to correspond with my collection of completed paper surveys. In preparation for a visit I would contact a campus' Liaison to inquire about the amount of surveys completed as well any upcoming student veteran club events. Campuses that had a number of completed surveys (usually more than 10) and had upcoming student veteran club events, I would plan to visit during the time when the event was held. These events were usually discussions about campus issues, films—mostly military themed, lunch gatherings, and presentations by non-university veteran support professionals (i.e. outreach staff from the Veterans Administration or a not-for-profit organization). Witnessing the interactions amongst student veterans during these events provided me with data on how student veterans were communicating with each other on CUNY campuses. Thus by way of ethnography, I was able to perceive what student veteran clubs were more or less military-like, what student veterans were central to veteran

clubs, what student veterans were on the periphery of the clubs, and what attributes contributed to veterans' location within the clubs.

Chapter Eight

Student Veterans

So far we have come to understand that veteran role salience is facilitated by a multitude of factors, namely: the power of the metanarrative of becoming a man by military design, the investment of military-service experiences (i.e. social interaction within ranks) into the veteran identity, and the inherent symbolism and meaning of the veteran identity. Heretofore this theory, as fleshed out in this dissertation, applies broadly to military veterans of all walks of life. In the current chapter I will apply this theory to a particular case study—student veterans in higher education. Some preliminary issues we must address, in order to contextualize veterans within institutions of higher education, are the cultural and institutional differences between the military and higher education that make it difficult for veterans to adjust in this particular new environment.

Both the US Armed Forces and the US Higher Education system are in the business of training and educating people; however, they employ two profoundly different models of education to cultivate their service-members and students, respectively. Although these two institutions experience little intercourse between them they have become accustomed to complementing one another for the better part of the last century. Military officers must have completed a college degree prior to entering the service, and the GI Bill has facilitated enlisted persons' enrollment in college since WWII. Notwithstanding the continuous traffic of individuals from the Armed Forces to higher education, and vice versa in the case of officers, this says little to nothing about the similarity between these institutions. The US military has developed its own highly effective system for educating its service members in the skills of war and orientations that are

appropriate for their positions in the military. The US Higher Education system, which is one of the most prestigious in the world, has developed a system for educating students in the wide range of skills found on the civilian labor market and corresponding orientations. The focus of this chapter is primarily on the flow of individuals in one direction, from the military to college.

The environments provided by the two institutions diverge greatly as a result of their different orientations toward, their members and to society. Individuals transitioning from military to college life, student veterans as I refer to them, are essentially moving from one institution known for its authoritarian structure into one that is established in Western tradition as liberal (Chomsky 1973). Put simply, student veterans are moving from an institution that allowed little agency or autonomy in their daily lives, and into an institution where they, as students, will find a landscape that is often defined by choice and driven by curiosity.

The student veterans I am referring to are all former enlisted members of the Armed Forces who had continued, or begun college, after the completion of their service obligation. All of them had a certain type of training and experience in the military, although this varied across branches of the Armed Forces. In terms of its organizational character, the Air Force has been popularly viewed as converging with or more similar to civilian institutions. The Navy has been viewed similarly but to a lesser extent. By the same measure the Army and Marines have been popularly considered very different from civilian institutions (Moskos 1970). This implies that enlisted members transitioning from the Air Force and Navy might experience an easier transition into civilian higher education than enlisted members transitioning from the Army and Marine Corps. Distinctions between enlisted members within these branches of service vary widely as well.

This is a function of a multitude of in-service factors.[25] Notwithstanding the many differences among enlisted members across and within the branches of military service, there are certain shared core experiences. We will explore these experiential commonalities in the following pages.

During reintegration there is a lot of assistance for veterans in the form of governmental organizations such as the Veterans Administration (VA), the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), and Department of Defense (DOD), along with the gamut of non-governmental organizations, of which the most prominent are: Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), American Legion (AL), and—for the latest generation of vets—Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA). While all of these organizations offer services to veterans, and most, if not all, can be accessed without charge to the veteran, the problem is just that; they *only* offer services. Currently none of these organizations provide a comprehensive or complete transition program for veterans (Berglass and Harold 2012). As a result, the reintegration of veterans to civilian life is much less seamless than it was in the other direction—when recruits left civilian life, enlisted in the military, and became service-members. What was a logistically daunting task for the military—that of training incoming civilians and deploying them as service-members—was experienced by the individual recruit as an extremely smooth and well structured process.

The process of constant training and deploying takes very little planning or vision on the part of individual recruits and service members. Even the sort of preemptive actions that are characteristic of exceptional service-members barely compare to the type of farsighted

[25] A detailed discussion of important in-service distinctions is held in the "During" chapter of this dissertation.

preparation that makes civilians, across various industries, successful. The military makes its plans and provides everything that is essential for the existence of its service-members, leaving service members to follow the orders of their superiors instead of forging a plan of action for themselves. This condition fosters a myopia among service members, which I refer to here as **target vision**. Target vision is conducive to the service-member's mantra of every era, "Attention to detail." Service-members can pay attention to the minutest of details of their occupations because they do not need to pay attention to many other matters of peripheral importance. For instance, an infantryman can focus on obsessively cleaning, disassembling, and reassembling his weapon because he does not have to worry about where his next meal will come from, who will clean the latrine, or even who will stand guard while he is defenseless because his weapon is in pieces.

The extremely detailed division of labor in the military allows the military to foster the utmost focus of its members toward their particular occupational tasks (Moskos 1970). This is one of several qualities of military life that simultaneously gives veterans, those who served and were therefore trained in this military manner of thinking, an advantage and disadvantage upon reentering civilian life. The advantage of target vision is that veterans are used to paying great attention to details of particular tasks. They have learned in the military to invest themselves in whatever tasks are given to them and to complete those tasks without complaint and without making excuses if they perform poorly. The disadvantage of their prior training is that these veterans may not be well equipped for planning and orchestrating their civilian lives as a whole, including their educational goals and priorities. After years of developing this sort of near-sighted proficiency—target vision—veterans often find it difficult to abandon the orientation

altogether, and assume a broader kind of perspective more conducive to civilian success, which is arguably more aligned with the orientation of military officers. Consequently, many veterans are affected by the advantages and disadvantages of their military training.

Various researchers have made arguments about the differential orientations of officers and enlisted service-members (i.e. Stouffer 1950; Moskos 1970). These arguments, however, are distinguishable from Huntington's "military mind" concept. With the military mind concept Huntington posited that the mind of a soldier—without respect to rank structure—is inherently authoritarian, bellicose, intolerant, rigid, calculating, and inferior in imagination. The nearly offensive and largely subjective nature of this observation notwithstanding, its main flaw is its assumption that all members of the Armed Forces inherently share this character.

The difference between the military mind thesis and the notion of target vision, lies in the fact that target vision is a specific orientation, which is characteristic of enlisted members, especially the lower enlisted ranks, as a product of military training. It is not an inherent or personality characteristic of a member of the military, rather the military institution takes great effort to instill this particular disposition in its subjects, and this effort is first and foremost aimed toward military efficiency. Where the military mind thesis assumes that all service-members are defined by certain characteristics, the approach favored in this research acknowledges that the military institution has trained its members in the impulses, reactions, and perceptions of either an enlisted person or an officer. This is reinforced by a system that provides certain incentives (including promotions and medals) that reward service-members for actions that correspond with their institutionally defined orientations.

Paul, the former Army Airborne Cavalry Scout, illustrated target vision best when during our interview I asked him about the negative effects that serving has had on him personally. In response to that question he stated the following:

> I would say it [serving in the Army] gave me a one-track mind… Like when I get my mind on something it has to be done. There's nothing to get in the way. I don't care about anybody's feelings. [For example] if the kitchens' on fire, goddamn it, that picture is going up, tooth or nail.

Comical though it may seem in Paul's description, he has experienced some difficulties during reintegration that he might have been able to avoid, had he been more flexible. As he explained, his focus on particular goals and his lack of attention to peripheral issues have caused some separation and miscommunication between him and his civilian friends. He did not notice he was neglecting them when he returned, and before he knew it his friendships were deteriorating. He admits "that the whole balancing our relationships thing never came into play for me."

In the college environment Paul has found his propensity toward target vision to be a point of frustration and he has begun to acknowledge that the steps he needs to take to achieve the goal of a bachelor's degree are more than he bargained for. He had hoped the route would be more direct but as he explained:

> I was really behind the curve ball. The thing that pissed me off about that is I really tried not to be. I really tried to study; I tried to get my mind to study for ACT's [CUNY assessment tests]... But I just ended up falling behind because academically I just wasn't strong suited in school. So I had to end up taking these freaking remedial courses and stuff.

Many nontraditional students share Paul's frustration with remedial or developmental course work (Hoyt 1999). For Paul however, any matter not clearly contributing to his immediate

target, or goal—in this case the degree—is considered an obstruction or undue distraction. Most student veterans I interviewed expressed similar feelings not just toward remediation, but towards other aspects of their undergraduate education. For instance, several student veterans expressed frustration with pre-requisites or general course work that was not part of their chosen course of study:

> When I first got here I had to take this pre-requisite slip but once I got into Nursing you don't have to take any of that anymore—yeah straight nursing! But at four year colleges however, they'll make you take some of those classes you really don't probably need—culture and all that. I think even some music, I don't know, to me, I'm like this has got to be a business. Cause seriously how is that going to help you in Nursing? Seriously–I even heard one of my friends, she has to take anthropology. I'm like, 'What? What?' But it's probably a business decision for the college making some money, I guess.

Target vision is symptomatic of the "decisively local" orientation that lower enlisted members were trained and conditioned to have while serving in the military.

Several studies of WWII veterans using the GI Bill to attend college discovered that they held similar attitudes toward US higher education. Many of these veterans judged educational practices in higher education to be archaic and obsolete. They wanted professors to 'just get to the point' of a course, rather than deliver a lot of information in a lecture that they thought was unrelated. These veterans also showed more interest in applied fields (i.e. accounting, law, etc.) (Clark 1998; Gambone 2005).

While target vision is a characteristic that has been cultivated by military service, Post 911 veterans are not entirely captives of it. There are some veterans who are so oriented toward being successful as civilians that they want to go through all of the experiences of an undergraduate, and not skip a beat. My research suggests that this forward orientation is more

characteristic of non-combat veterans. Maurice, a former Marine who served in communications—a service support role—stated:

> I've only been in classes a few weeks now… I just feel like I need to keep going. She [the academic counselor] asked me when I first got here, did I want to do the adult degree program where you just jump straight into the actual building and whatever subject it is that you're trying to get around; and you'll just skip a lot of classes. And I was like 'no just give me the whole nuts and bolts of everything because… I feel behind on everything so just give me—force me to do all the classes and I'll be okay.'

Because of the duties and rank they were relegated to in the military, some veterans experienced harsh treatment intended to make them conform to the needs of the group. As one common image of military training goes, the military breaks down an individual to make him or her conform to the group and then builds the person up to give them the confidence they need to perform the required tasks proficiently. Unfortunately such harsh treatment is not always overcome by subsequent 'building up' of the individual. For some veterans their military experience leaves them unsure of their own capabilities and this rebounds on them when they enter college. Kelvin, a former Marine cook, explains how his service in the Marines made him view himself:

> Enlisted we get belittled in a way and it makes you feel [incapable]. I really thought I was not intelligent enough to even go to college or anything like that when I was in the military. I felt like the brains was always the officers… Enlisted, they had no say; they were just there to follow. It's really the officers that have their bachelor's degree or whatever and the way they made everything so easy and simple it's like they make you feel like you were stupid.

These comments by Kelvin echo the orientation of enlisted ranks toward officers of nearly every era in the American military. Stouffer and Moskos, addressed this issue for earlier generations of military, and many current veterans acknowledge it as well.

For this reason Maurice, who also served in the Marines, responded to the question 'do you miss the military?' with the following:

> No because I don't like getting treated like a child. Because everywhere I've been [with the military] they treat a bunch of grown men and women like children when we should all be beyond that. Even though some people do act ignorant and pretty silly; I don't like that. I think if you just say, 'do something'; either we do it or we don't and there's consequences. And also if I don't like the way you're doing something and I approach you about it, you can't threaten me with [losing] break time or reducing pay or some crap like that. If I wanted to express myself… I'm not saying I got to be rude about it, but just because I'm trying to express myself doesn't mean there should be a problem.

The experience of an enlisted member in the military is frequently likened to that of a child. This is often due the way the military totally consumes the work and leisure of enlisted members, dictating exactly what they can and cannot do. Many enlisted members perceive their station to be one of an infant relative to that of officers. This is a function of differential treatment, as well as training, of officers and enlisted in the ranks.

Although Kelvin's experience as an enlisted man made him feel incapable of completing a college degree, the Marines did successfully build Kelvin up in certain other ways. He acknowledges, "Definitely the determination, the motivation, the things I learned in the military like not to ever give up, that helped me during my time in [the military], and I guess here [in college] as well. If I put my mind to it, I can do it." Kelvin also noted that he learned these helpful qualities in Marine training, which in some respects made him feel like he could "do almost anything." Apparently attaining success in college was not included in the almost anything that the Marines empowered him to do. Kelvin acknowledged that this statement apparently conflicted with his earlier statements about the Marines making enlisted members feel "stupid":

> So it's interesting, it's kind of like competing ideas, right. On one level you're nobody and you can't even think for yourself or whatever, you need to be told what to do. But on another level, it's saying well, you're a powerful individual and you can complete the mission. You can complete the task that you're given. So this is of course, pros and cons about everything. So military is great but obviously there are some things that's not so good about it.

Many veterans explained their service in the military similarly. Military service offers some excellent tangible and intangible benefits to youth. Studies have found that many veterans experience increased confidence, self-worth, determination, discipline, motivation, and maturity as a result of military service. When transitioning to the role of student some veterans, like Kelvin, are able to draw upon the positive attributes military service has helped them cultivate to get the job done. A recent study of Post 911 veterans' attitudes noted that 93% of Post 911 veterans felt they became more mature by serving in the military. 90% of Post 911 veterans self reported they gained confidence in themselves by serving in the military (Pew Research Center 2011).

Veterans as Students

Many student veterans attending the City University of New York view themselves as quite separate from the larger non-veteran student body of the university. This perception is not unfounded. However even if we could control for the many differences in age, background, and life experiences between the two populations, veterans' claims of separation from the student body would stand firmly on an ideology or a set of beliefs. In the following section we will highlight the differences in background and ideology that lead to these feelings of distance between veteran and non-veteran college students.

As we know, reintegration of veterans into the broader civilian population of the United States is a multifaceted complex process. It requires the reintegration of veterans in three ways: 1) physical reintegration which entails the physical replacement of the bodies of veterans back within the territory of the United States; 2) social reintegration, which represents the reintegration of veterans into the social networks that constitute United States civil life; and 3) the economic reintegration of veterans into the civilian labor force of the United States. Although these three dimensions of reintegration are virtually constant for military veterans of all walks of life, they are subject to particular change when institutions of higher education facilitate veterans' reintegration, principally because of the Post 911 G.I. Bill.

With the advent of the Post 911 G.I. Bill, Chapter 33, the federal government has tasked universities with partial responsibility for facilitating the reintegration of the current generation of campaign veterans. The presence of student veterans in higher education is growing rapidly. In 2010 365,640 claims were processed nationally for the Post 911 GI Bill, and 221,900 of these were new claims (VBA 2010). And in 2011 alone $8 billion was spent on funding veterans' education through the new bill (Alvarez 2012). Many of these student veteran enrollments are concentrated in community colleges and for-profit universities (Sewall 2010).

A 2009 survey of students at UCLA found that veterans disproportionately reported they felt less prepared for college, lacked confidence in their academic ability, and were in need of remediation (Pryor 2009). This may not be indicative of a lack of real college preparedness of student veterans, but rather a symptom of another social problem, as returning adult students often feel inadequate and even marginalized after enrollment (Kasworm 1990). Whether their

inadequacies are real or imagined, the idea that veterans may be ill prepared for college is plausible. Veterans share several characteristics with populations that are prone to high rates of attrition from college (i.e., first generation students, low SES students, etc.) (Brainard 2011).

Earlier in the timeline of the War on Terror, one difficulty student veterans faced concerned a lack of infrastructure in colleges and universities to support reintegrating veterans. In 2009, Ackerman et al. noted “not all campuses have functioning programs in place to assist veterans who have become students” (Ackerman 2009). In the 3 years since Ackerman et al. published this statement, increased attention has been given to the state of student veterans attending higher education institutions across the nation. This attention has stimulated a steady and gradual improvement of bureaucratic practices and policies in higher education institutions that support student veterans. As a result, a joint study conducted by several higher education organizations in 2012 reported that 71% of the 609 higher education institutions that responded to their data requests “indicated that providing programs and services for military service members and veterans is a part of their long-term strategic plan” (McBain 2012).

Higher education administrators and education scholars have come to acknowledge student veterans as yet another subgroup of nontraditional students who deserve special accommodations. Current military veterans differ from traditional students in several ways: Veterans are more likely to be parents than traditional college students are. Over 40% of all Post-911 veterans are parents (U.S. Census Bureau 2006-2010). This responsibility, in conjunction with managing all of the details of reintegrating and attending college in the process,

can be stressful. Many veterans, however, may fail to acknowledge this added stress, in part because their military training encouraged a "can do" attitude and discouraged complaints.

For instance, after serving as a cook on a ship in the Persian Gulf, Kelvin was very optimistic about his return to civilian life. He described his reintegration as "perfectly fine." This response is best understood in terms of the yardstick or comparison group Kelvin was using. When asked if he had any difficulties returning to civilian life he responded "I don't think I seen anything that would traumatize me or anything like that. I can see the guys that came back from Iraq [having difficulty] but that wasn't me." Because Kelvin did not experience any trauma while in service he felt it was inappropriate for him to acknowledge or dwell upon any of difficulties he did experience after leaving the service. For Kelvin these difficulties were defined by his wife giving birth to a daughter and as a result he had to step up to the role of father and provider. His decision to attend college upon his return was encouraged by this fact. Despite Kelvin's reluctance to acknowledge the hurdles that reintegration presented him, it is quite obvious that meeting the demands of being a new student while filling new family roles were not easy for him.

Some student veterans are less reticent about the difficulties they experienced when returning to managing their families and education simultaneously. Rolanda, a single mother, did not serve in the theatre of action, but rather stateside in the National Guard. Currently she attends community college in CUNY and remains a member of the National Guard. At times the combined roles of student, service-member, and mother are too much for her:

> Sometimes you feel like screaming, because you're so tired, you're overwhelmed and then you have the kids… It's difficult... because you're constantly doing

> multiple things. You have to think about the bills; you have to think about the kids; you have to think about yourself, your health, your school – it's a stretch.

While all of these responsibilities are difficult for Rolanda to juggle, her children also provide her a source of inspiration to get through it all. "What gets [me] through it is the fact that I have two children that I'm setting an example for… it's not going to last forever. At the end of it I'm going to be reaping the benefits." Juggling the roles of parent and new student is no easy task, however Rolanda remains positive about these responsibilities. Despite this optimism, student veterans who are parents experience greater difficulties achieving desirable grades in college than student veterans who are not parents. Using my survey data, I carried out an independent-samples t-test to compare Grade Point Averages for student veterans who are parents (N=60) and student veterans who are not parents (N=160).

SEE TABLE 2

There was a significant difference in the scores for parents (M=27.88, SD=8.77) and non-parents (M=31.00, SD=6.3); t(218)=2.9, p=0.01.[26] This indicates that student veterans who are not parents academically outperform student veterans who are parents, probably due to the latter's domestic responsibilities.

Current veterans are also more likely to be married than traditional students: 52% of all Post 911 veterans above the age of 21 are in marriages with both spouses present, and 19% of all Post 911 veterans are divorced, separated, or married to a spouse that is not present. Only 28% of Post 911 veterans have never been married (U.S. Census Bureau 2006-2010; Pew Research Center 2011). Increased marriage and childrearing rates in the student veterans' population may explain a

[26] For the survey GPA was calculated as whole numbers. Thus the scores 27.88 is equal to 2.78, and 31 is equal to 3.1.

related trend in this population as reported by the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) in their annual results for 2010. Student veterans that NSSE surveyed spent more time per week caring for dependents (i.e. spouses, children, and older relatives) than their non-veteran student counterparts. Combat veterans were found to spend as much as six times as many hours caring for dependents as non-veteran students (NSSE 2010).

The Post 911 G.I. Bill

The Post 911 G.I. Bill was voted into law in 2008 and some veterans had access to it as early as the fall semester of 2009. By Fall 2010, the nation had witnessed the largest spike in GI Bill beneficiaries since WWII veterans began using the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, also known as the WWII GI Bill. Having served in the military after September 11th 2001 qualifies almost all veterans for this benefit.[27]

In 2010, NSSE also reported that student veterans who served in combat spent more hours working for pay outside of school when compared to noncombat student veterans (an average of 15.1 hours and 11.1 hours respectively); noncombat student veterans, in turn, spent more hours working for pay than nonveteran students (an average of 11.1 hours and 9.1 hours respectively). Although I did not have a nonveteran student control group in my CUNY study, I also investigated hours worked using data from the Survey of CUNY Student Veteran Engagement (SCSVE); a different predictor, receipt of the Post 911 GI Bill, not combat service, was found to be a stronger predictor of hours worked. Using SCSVE data the following independent-samples

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[27] There are rare circumstances where a veteran would be denied access to the Post 911 G.I. Bill. Veterans of the Post 911 era can be denied access to this educational benefit due to undesirable military discharges (i.e. dishonorable conditions, other than honorable conditions etc.). However, the vast majority of veterans of this era have not received discharges of this type.

t-test was conducted to compare number of hours worked by student veterans who are Post 911 G.I. Bill beneficiaries and student veterans who are not.

SEE TABLE 3

There was a significant difference in the scores for Post 911 G.I. Bill beneficiaries (M=9.29, SD=16.42) and student veterans who do not use this benefit (M=17.97, SD=20.64); $t(97)=3.1$, $p=0.002$. While NSSE acknowledges that student veterans in general work more hours for pay than non-veteran students, these results suggest that student veterans who receive Post 911 G.I. Bill benefits on average work nearly half the amount of student veterans who do not collect this benefit. Moreover, the average hours worked by student veterans receiving the Post 911 GI Bill, per the SCSVE, is comparable to NSSE's statistic for average hours worked by nonveteran students (9.29 hours and 9.1 respectively). This fact suggests that at CUNY the Post 911 GI Bill has the effect of reducing the number of hours student veterans need to work, bringing their work hours closer to the national average for nonveteran students.

The differences in working patterns that NSSE has identified are most likely a function of the increased domestic responsibilities that student veterans face (i.e. having dependents to care for as I noted earlier). However there is also an important geographical difference. The NSSE survey of 2010 was administered to 600 colleges and universities throughout North America (i.e. United States and Canada); it is therefore representative of the national trends of student veteran behavior. The SCSVE was administered in the City University of New York exclusively, therefore it represents student veterans in New York City and CUNY specifically. It is plausible that there are important differences in the effects of the Post 911 G.I. Bill on student veteran

working patterns nationally and in New York City, because of geographical differences in benefits, as outlined below.

The relationship between student veterans who are Post 911 beneficiaries and working patterns is affected by differential basic housing allowance (BAH) rates. BAH is the military's way of standardizing a housing allowance for service members based on their rank, dependent status, and location in the United States. In the Post 911 G.I. Bill, Chapter 33, all beneficiaries are compensated at the pay grade of E5 with dependents, however, location is the only factor that changes the rate of compensation. By attending college or university in New York City, student veterans receive one of the highest housing allowances in the nation, because residents of San Francisco and NYC are compensated at the highest rates for housing to allow for the higher cost of living in these areas. The compensation level varies widely by location within the US, as indicated by Table 4.

SEE TABLE 4

Aside from the difference in working patterns , interviews with veterans at CUNY suggest that for some the higher BAH rate incentivized their admission to higher education.

Dean, a veteran who served as a Corpsman for the Marines, responded apologetically when asked how the BAH affected his decision to come to college, "I want to say it didn't, but it most certainly did. If it wasn't for that I might have actually stayed in [the military]." Dean really wanted to pursue a college degree. As he neared the end of his service in the military, he initially thought "Oh I got the GI Bill. I'll just get out and live with my folks." As the end of his

service grew closer, however, he became fearful of this decision, as he noted, "when you're still in [the military] and you're living in the birthing [Navy sleeping quarters] and you have a meal card it's very easy to say that [you will get out, go to college, and live with your parents]. But when you're in that last couple of months you actually have to make a decision."

Much of Dean's doubt concerning leaving the military and going to college was based on accounts he had heard from former enlisted members who left the military to attend school and then received a commission as officers. Their tales of economic hardship while attending college on the Montgomery GI Bill (a college aid program for veterans that predated the current GI Bill) made him think twice about leaving the military to go to school.

> A lot of them were saying that what they [recruiters] don't tell you is when [we] used the GI Bill they didn't give us the money at the beginning of the semester. [We] had to take out a loan [every semester] and then at the end of the semester pay the loan back with the money from the GI Bill… And there's no rent money. So that's what you'd be facing without the BAH.

Fortunately for Dean, and for other student veterans like him, the BAH provided by the Post 911 GI Bill gives him enough money to pay his living expenses while attending CUNY. He explains, "I live on the BAH. I only use like one-third of it for actual rent. I use the other two-thirds to live." Many student veterans in the NYC area have had this experience with the BAH they are given as a result of attending college in NYC. Brock, a Navy veteran, studies art in college. He also spends a lot of his time volunteering in art-focused not-for-profit organizations that serve the community. When asked how the BAH he is awarded while attending college on the Post 911 GI Bill helps him, he exclaimed, "Oh my gosh. It's another reason why I'm able to volunteer so much."

In NYC many student veterans who are Post 911 GI Bill beneficiaries are enjoying the benefits of receiving a high housing allowance. Unfortunately however, many of these veterans have noted what they consider possible misuse of this benefit as well. Similar to Dean, Alvin, an Army veteran, explains how he is able to stretch the BAH he is given:

> I don't have to work I can sit down and budget my money and that's more than enough for me to sustain myself [so I can] focus directly on school. I don't have to go get a part time job… I could even help my parents out a little bit… I view this as an opportunity; it really is.

As Alvin continues he notes the possibility of misuse of this benefit by some of his peers:

> The Post 911 GI Bill was really an opportunity for a lot of vets but there used to be a couple of guys last semester that came here [to college] just for the BAH… I totally disagree with them. [I wouldn't come here] just because of the money. Once you have your degree it's with you for life. This is only 36 months [of BAH]; after that what are you going to do?

Like Alvin, other student veterans interviewed during this research mentioned that they knew veterans who were attending college just to get the BAH. They also expressed great concern about how myopic that plan seemed.

To address this problem, Magnus, a 40 year old Army veteran, suggested that the military should not allow veterans to use their education benefits for a minimum of three years after they get out of service. He believes this would force veterans to reintegrate faster and develop a plan of action for their reintegration before it takes place. In the following passage he vehemently expressed his frustration with student veterans whom he thinks are using the Post 911 GI Bill to their own "disadvantage":

> So they get out and they have no idea what they're doing. They're living on this fucking $2700 when they get here, and when that money is over, it's like they still

> just got out of the military. [All over again] this is their first day out of the Army, but the money is not coming anymore. [They're] in college, but [they're] not going anywhere because [their] GPA is fucking bottom; they have no idea what they're doing, and now they're fucked. So that's why I think they're at a disadvantage.

While this sounds like a serious problem, we should be cognizant of the current state of the U.S. economy, where it has become increasingly difficult for veterans to successfully reintegrate into their communities. The current economic climate does not make it easy for veterans to find work in the civilian labor force. Humensky et al. (2012) corroborates that Post-911 veterans between ages 18-24 are more likely to be unemployed. Consequently, we may view the Post 911 GI Bill as easing veterans into the reintegration process, by not requiring them to undertake all three forms of reintegration (i.e. physical, social, and economic) simultaneously. Furthermore Magnus's argument is not based on even anecdotal evidence, it is pure conjecture. The current GI Bill has been in effect for less than 4 years. Veterans are funded for thirty-six months of study under the benefit, which covers 8 months of study per academic year, not including summer and winter study. Therefore the first cohort of student veterans will not exhaust their Post 911 GI Bill benefits until the end of the 2012-2013 academic year. As the issues of retention and graduation are for the first time in history of interest to the Department of Veterans Affairs (Alvarez 2012), with hope we will see research documenting how many veterans fail to graduate by the time their benefits are exhausted.

Corey, a Purple Heart recipient and former Army cavalry scout, was in a bad situation when he returned to the United States. After being wounded in Iraq and demobilizing with a friend who would eventually kill himself, Corey developed an alcohol abuse problem that kept him in a cycle of homelessness and defeat. He found it extremely difficult to reintegrate physically,

socially, and economically, and he dealt with the stress by drinking alcohol. Although he aspired to go to college he was incapable of combating alcoholism, holding a job, and attending college simultaneously. He needed the help of the BAH provided by the Post 911 GI Bill to get him back on his feet.

> I was literally living in the street; I had no income; couldn't hold a job just because I would get drunk and not show up… People were urging me to come back to school… My take was I tried it twice: I tried it in 02' before I joined the Army, I tried it in 04' when I came back and it just didn't work you know. I figured it's not for me but I decided to give it one last shot.

During his first two failed attempts at attending college, Corey had been collecting the Montgomery GI Bill. His experience with the Montgomery GI Bill confirmed Dean's fears, mentioned above, of how difficult it is to attend college while using it. With only this bill to sustain him Corey's possibility for success was slim.

> I was out of school for basically like two and half years … I was just you know drinking alcohol and things like that and I ended up like they say 'hitting rock bottom.' I ended up homeless and one morning I remember waking up in the middle of Central Park and it was like January, February. So it was freezing and I remember waking up… and not knowing how I got there, just sprawled out in the middle of the green lawn with a bottle of Jameson in my hand… I remember right there just sitting up and going 'yeah I got to change something you know this is going the wrong way here.' Basically you know at the time I was still on the old Montgomery GI Bill…You need money to start going to school with that old GI Bill. You still have to pay your tuition upfront, which I didn't have. I ended up going to my cousin's husband and basically begging him for money to go to school and he lent it to me, paid for my school for the first semester.

After his relative lent him money to readmit himself to college he discovered the Post 911 GI Bill. This new bill gave him the financial support he needed to pick himself up again, so the third and last time Corey tried to attend college he succeeded and worked his way to a bachelor's degree. Corey is a case that some of his fellow student veterans might label as 'coming to school just for the GI Bill.' In some respects they are right, but in the end the GI Bill gave him an

excellent opportunity and he took it, and having achieved a bachelor's degree, he is certainly better off for doing so.

For some other veterans the generous funding level of BAH for those in NYC was not a way out of homelessness, as that was never their struggle, rather it was a chance for an adventure. Tammy, an Air Force veteran from California "always want[ed] to come to New York." She "thought New York was so fly" because of all the different television shows she saw that were set in the city, like "Def Comedy Jam and New York Undercover." Tammy was already prepared to attend college in the second highest BAH rated city in the United States and then decided to move to the first highest. She explains, "I was waiting to go to San Francisco State and I was just getting tired of Oakland. Then my best friend was talking about moving to New York and I was [just] thinking about moving. So [I finally decided] I'm going to move and I moved here and then I applied [to college]."

Tammy grew up in Oakland, so attending San Francisco State was tantamount to sticking close to home and becoming a commuter student. Unlike Tammy, other veterans decide to move to NYC for college because the NYC BAH allowance is better to what they would be awarded if they attended college close to home. Doug, an Army veteran, is originally from a small town of only 700 residents, in Ohio. He says he always "wanted to go to school in a big city." Initially, when he was released from military service he was considering attending school in Los Angeles, but after some investigation that changed. He notes, "The New York rate of BAH is definitely the bonus factor. It helped put New York over the edge... I think San Francisco's is just as good."

Doug did a lot of investigative work when he was planning to enter college after his service in the military was complete. He visited several colleges on opposite ends of the country before he made his decision. Eventually he found that he liked UC Santa Barbara in California but in the end he chose CUNY because he viewed getting less BAH as forfeiting money that he could benefit from. Here he gives a short account of this process of rationalization:

> The BAH [in Santa Barbara] is only $1300 a month, so it's more than doubled coming out here [to New York]. Financially I looked at it as 'I definitely can live off of $1300 a month, tax-free, out there in California. I can go live in Goleta and not Santa Barbara and it's not going to be so expensive that I can't live on that money. But I will be losing $1400 a month. I'm pretty sure I can live on $1300 a month out here [in New York City], maybe $1500… [The remaining] $1200 a month I could be packing away and saving. I could use that money for summer vacations or have $7,000 in my savings account just in case.

Doug clearly approaches the difference in BAH of NYC and Santa Barbara with a cost-benefit analysis. In this way, for Doug and other veterans like him, the Post 911 GI Bill clearly acted as an incentive to go to college.

For some other veterans the GI Bill did not incentivize their enrollment in college because they were set on going to college either way. Paul, a former Army airborne cavalry scout, fits into this category of student veterans. As he explains:

> BAH really wasn't a big thing for me actually because I made good money working [once I got out of the military]. I mean it was a couple hundred dollars difference. Actually I tried to double dip basically, work and do this [attend college] at the same time and just couldn't keep the grade point average where I wanted it to be. I could have had decent grades but I wouldn't have been an A/B student. I would've been a C student and that wasn't good enough for me.

Paul realized that with the help of the Post 911 GI Bill he could be a better student, but there are veterans for whom the Post 911 GI Bill not only enabled them to be better students, but rather students period. Kelvin, the former Marine and new father, stated that the new GI Bill finally helped him overcome the hurdle that stood in the way of his college education—money. When asked about how he felt about the new legislation he said excitedly, "They pay you to get an education. I don't know what country or where [else] you can get that? So I was just like, 'I'm going back to school.'"

In spite of how beneficial the Post 911 GI Bill is, especially for those student veterans who attend college in the NYC area, not all student veterans are jumping at the chance to use their education benefits immediately upon admission to college. Kim, a Navy veteran, thought it would be more beneficial to save her benefits when she first began her academic career. "Actually in the beginning, since I thought about going to pharmacy school; I figured, you know what, I'll use my financial aid instead of G.I. Bill. I thought I would save G.I. Bill for more expensive schooling. But since I gave up going to pharmacy school I started using it. I kind of need it."

For the most part the buzz about the new G.I. Bill is largely positive and student veterans in CUNY are responding to it in predominantly positive ways. This is not to say there are not limitations to this legislation that some veterans express concern over. Roy, a former Army infantryman, explains:

> It helps but there is a distinction in how you use it… I feel the Army kind of misleads you with the commercials in the sense that if you think you're going to do your enlistment, and you are going to get out and then pay for eight years of Harvard education to be a doctor, you are going to find out that's not right

> because there is a time limit. [GI Bill eligibility] doesn't go on indefinitely; especially for people who are doing a masters, then it will probably run out. Also there is a limit on how much it will pay. So if you go to something like Harvard, or one of those very expensive schools, you are going to end up paying the difference. Whether it's loans or whatever you do, you have to hustle for that money. If you come to a State school, especially now with the new GI Bill, you are pretty much making money because unless you are using higher than that amount you get to pocket the difference.

While Roy is correct in most of this statement, he is actually mistaken in his last sentence. Student veterans on the Post 911 GI Bill do not get to pocket the difference between the highest limit of tuition the legislation covers and the tuition of the institution they attend. This mistake is indicative of how complex the piece of legislation is, and also how often it has been revised since it was signed into law. Many student veterans become misinformed regarding GI Bill policies because of unsubstantiated hearsay and/or changes to the policy that have taken place on nearly an annual basis since 2009. As of the end of the 2011-2012 academic year, the Post 911 GI Bill awards student veterans an amount up to the highest public in-state tuition (which is delivered directly to the institution), plus an annual book stipend, and the basic housing allowance (BAH) differentiated by location of the institution the veteran is enrolled in and commensurate with time in service after September 11th.

Some GI Bill historians note that the impetus behind the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, also called the WWII GI Bill, was to fend off a high rate of unemployment in the veteran population (Clark 1998). At that time in the nation's history, booming American industries were inextricably tied to the war effort. When the war was completed the economic climate of the nation had changed considerably. The need for fast and voluminous production decreased, as the government terminated many contracts that helped supply the troops during the war. As a result

the demand for labor also decreased, and yet millions of veterans were returning home expecting new employment. The GI Bill offered an opportunity that was largely intended to fill this void. Not just by enabling veterans to attend college, in fact college attendance on the GI Bill was initially one of the most overlooked parts of the legislation. Rather, in the first few years following WWII greater emphasis was placed on the home and business loans, vocational training support, and one-year of unemployment benefit. Amidst the current economic turmoil, the Post 911 GI Bill can be viewed in a similar manner.

As mentioned previously, the Post 911 GI Bill supports the reintegration of veterans into civil society by not only providing them an opportunity to attend college, but also by lessening the shock of reintegration by postponing the economic reintegration of veterans. In effect, this legislation bridges the gap between the financial support while in the military and securing the same income in the civilian sphere of employment, while enabling veterans to further develop their earning potential in the interim. This bridge is essential, as many veterans, even those who are eager to get back to civilian life, experience some hesitation and self-doubt in reference to their ability to make a living in the civilian world.

Alice was enthusiastic about reintegrating after the Army, but this is just one facet of a complex reaction she had to leaving the military. In the following passage she explains her preparation for this transition:

> I knew that I had no options, I mean, what was I going to do? Before I went into active duty, I was waitressing full-time because I couldn't go back to school because my GPA was too low. I was waitressing and bartending; and that's grueling work. If you're young, in your twenties, it's fine, it's good money but I knew that I didn't want to do that forever. And what other options did I have? Was I going to make it military life or was I going to get my act together and go

> back to college? I already knew [I was leaving the military while] on my second deployment, I started looking at schools. I would actually write for brochures and have them mailed to me, in Iraq. So I already knew where I was applying. I was specific why I was applying and all those things.
> And also while I was on my first deployment into my second, I read all the time. And I'd never been a reader like that and mostly because you live so close to these people that the only way, really, that you're going to have any privacy is in your own head, almost. And I didn't want to constantly be watching a little video on one of those fricken portable DVD's which I have for the second deployment, or whatever, so.
>
> I really just started consuming, and when you read so much, you get faster at it and then just want to know more. And I realized that I had this great passion for really knowing. And then I wanted to know about Middle Eastern Culture and History and specifically religious history, so I did my undergrad in Middle Eastern history.

Familiar with the struggles of attending college and working simultaneously, it seemed that Alice did not believe in her ability to make a viable living in the civilian world. Without the Post 911 GI Bill it is uncertain whether she would have left the military at all, although she wanted to. From the way that she compares her two options, "Was I going to make it military life or was I going to get my act together and go back to college?" it is clear that she considered returning to college the more difficult but desirable option. Alice is not alone in this respect.

In a previous chapter (After Military Service) I juxtaposed Magnus' and Roy's feelings about leaving the military. Roy was enthusiastic about reintegrating, while Magnus quoted Tolstoy to express why he wanted to remain in service, and yet he was forced out for medical reasons. All veterans must address the economic reality of leaving the service and, whether enthusiastic or reluctant, many experience at least some fear, hesitation, or doubt at the thought of doing so. The Post 911 GI Bill is instrumental in assuaging this apprehension at least temporarily; for veterans who are enthusiastic about leaving the service, like Alice and Roy, it provides a new

direction for them to focus their energies; and for those who are reluctant, like Magnus, it encourages them to at least attempt to reintegrate—as they can always return to the service if it does not work out.

The following statement is from Jarvis, who was still in the Reserves at the time. While he initially enlisted because the military was an employer of last resort, given detail of his transformation while in service, it is clear that he came to value and celebrate his identity as a U.S. Soldier. Despite this, he acknowledges that military life is hardly ideal, and the reluctance he expressed to leave this lifestyle echoed the self-doubt found in Alice's statement above:

> I'm thinking about getting out. It will be year 10. I know, that is like…one of the worst years to get out; but I mean, I held on to the Army because I thought, 'Oh I need this' and 'this will save me sometime later.' Well, I can also do other things and there are plenty of other people who make it without the Army. So I think maybe I can just always keep it and keep the pride of being in the Army or [having] served in the Army, and move on with my life – you know – get my beard back or something like that.

Jarvis' mention of the 10-year mark as a bad time to leave the service is a reference to military retirement benefits, for which he qualifies after serving twenty years; he is half way there. He acknowledges however that the military was a crutch of some sort for him. Perhaps this is due to the nature of his entrance into the service; finding the Army as an employer of last resort probably also meant that he had resigned himself to the idea that serving in the military was the only thing he was capable of doing to support himself. Seeing as he no longer believes this, Jarvis is candid about his desire to leave despite his clear identification with, and celebration of, the role of U.S. Soldier.

Most notably, in the future he would like to retain the pride he gained from having filled that role—"always," as he noted. This is often the case for those who have experienced combat in the Post 911 military. In an earlier chapter I explained this attitude in terms of the first archetype of the duality of combat veteran attitudes. This archetype is the combat veteran articulation of the deception paradigm—a dramaturgical device allowing the performer to deliver a believable presentation of a character. For reasons described throughout this dissertation, military roles are powerfully salient and in order to perpetuate the pride experienced, as a result of having answered the call of duty, veterans must always conceive of themselves as such. Jarvis acknowledges this, and he even hints to the fact that remaining in the military is the easiest way to continue to experience that pride. However, his assertion that he can "keep it" even when he leaves reiterates his need to perform this identity, if not within ranks then elsewhere. Although all requirements for the fulfilling of the role of veteran have already been met by service-members by the time they leave the service, in the civilian context such a definitive social type is not simply eminent. Rather, it requires performance.

Student Veterans and the Symbolic Order

In this dissertation I examine the ways in which role salience, as facilitated by a multitude of factors described herein, impedes and advances student veterans ability to function in their roles as college students. The veteran identity is powerfully salient as I have described and its salience remains even upon attainment of the student identity. There are several plausible explanations for this:

1) A study notes that most veterans (75%) mention the GI Bill as a reason they served in the

military (Pew Research Center 2011). While the GI Bill gives these veterans a great advantage, many would not be able to afford otherwise, it is also a reminder that they are former service-members attending university.

2) Identities are activated in direct relation to how relevant they are to the individual. Because of reasons described throughout this dissertation, veteran status may be much more relevant to veterans than any of the other statuses they hold. Therefore this status has a higher probability of being activated in any situation regardless of the field. There are innumerable examples of this in popular culture, and media, where the status of veteran is constantly invoked to explain the good, the bad, and the questionable behaviors of veterans.

3) The military builds up the service-member to be a professional and tells its members that, by the voluntary nature of their service and sacrifice for the nation, they represent the highest American societal values and morality. This is distinct from the individualist and self-serving nature of civilian subjectivities. Veterans continue to see themselves as separate from civilians and of higher integrity and moral character than civilians. Activation of the veteran identity by a veteran can therefore be viewed as "pulling rank," or reminding others and themselves of their higher moral standing.

4) The status of student in the context of civilian life is that of a person who has yet-to-accomplish an important role in life. In contrast, veteran status, even outside of military terminology, is that of an experienced person. Traditional students and military veterans, in essence, embody contradictory statuses. It may be difficult for veterans, most especially

accomplished veterans who have risen in the ranks and/or experienced combat, to accept that in a university setting they are on par with the inexperienced, yet-to-accomplish individuals who constitute the undergraduate student body. By identifying primarily with veteran status and separating themselves from the broader student body, veterans may feel that they are presenting themselves in a more accurate light. They have experienced life; some at its very worse. Thus it may be difficult for veterans to relegate themselves to such an inexperienced identity.

5) The veteran identity has an extensive history of clashing with the college student identity. After WWII, with the introduction of the first GI Bill, it was believed that the veteran identity contradicted that of the college student because of social class associations. As evidenced by prewar media, university was closely associated with the upper class. Contrarily the "veteran-everyman," as the anachronistic nickname suggests, was viewed as the common American man. Historians are split as to what was the true effect of the WWII GI Bill, but they largely agree that the image of veterans attending elite universities, which became so popular in the postwar years, made a tradition of education that was formerly viewed as an upper class privilege, universal in nature (for men!) (Clark 1998; Gambone 2005).

Continuing in this historical vein, as a result of the GI Bill less than two decades after the student identity was broadened, to include the middle class—and even the more underprivileged, it once again became a contradiction—by virtue of the association of student identity with the largely student-led anti-war protests of the 1960's and 1970's. Despite the inherently anachronistic nature of this association, presently some veterans are reticent about participating in campus life due to their preconceived ideas of how non-veteran students may view them. Student veterans

may cling to stereotypes of their non-veteran student peers as "flaming liberals," or sheltered children who have no idea of the "real world." This can be viewed as a defense mechanism, guarding student veterans against being rejected by their non-veteran peers for having participated in the unpopular wars on terror.

Student Engagement

The inability of many student veterans to identify foremost as students has specific consequences for student veteran behavior in institutions of higher education. Within this research, the identified consequences are characterized in terms of student engagement. Student engagement refers to a host of student behaviors and perceptions that are positively related to academic achievement. Among leading scholars, student engagement has been identified as the most important factor influencing student learning and development within institutions of higher education (Hu and Kuh 2002). The current study has utilized some of the most important concepts included in student engagement metrics, with particular emphasis on variables that measure the quality of student veteran relationships with key individuals and administrative offices as part of the educational experience. As such, the following discussion will focus on: the quality of student-peer relations, the quality of student-faculty relations, the quality of student-administrative relations, and the use of institutional resources that promote student veteran life and learning.

In order to measure these aspects of the student veteran experience, the present research has borrowed a scale titled "Supportive Campus Environment" from the 2010 National Survey of

Student Engagement (NSSE). As national leaders in measuring student engagement, NSSE has defined this scale in terms six subsidiary measures (NSSE 2010):

1. "Campus environment provides support you need to help you succeed academically"
2. "Campus environment helps you cope with your non-academic responsibilities"
3. "Campus environment provides the support you need to thrive socially"
4. "Quality of relationships with other students"
5. "Quality of relationships with faculty"
6. "Quality of relationships with administrative personnel and offices"

Together these measures comprise the Supportive Campus Environment metric. In the present study, responses to these survey questions, from a sample of 269 student veterans attending college at CUNY, were correlated with different aspects of their military service records. This method was used to understand how well veterans were integrating in CUNY colleges based on their differential experiences in the military. As noted, this concern was informed by Baechtold and Sawal's (2008) assertion: "How women veterans process and make meaning of their college experience will be influenced by how they are making meaning of their combat experiences." In brief, I suspected that the process of making meaning of combat experiences was relevant to understanding the college experiences of not only female student veterans, but also their male counterparts. In the following chapters I will present the results of this study.

Chapter Nine

Student Veterans and Student Relationships

Although many veterans find reasons to distinguish themselves from nonveteran college students, some veterans view the college experience as an opportunity to not just learn the content of the fields they choose to study—in preparation for economic integration—but also to consciously socially reintegrate into civilian life and the social networks that constitute it. They are cognizant of how stifling socializing with veterans *exclusively* can be to their own development, intellectual and social. And because of their interest in entering new social networks, they may be inherently opposed to identifying themselves foremost in terms of their military service. For this reason, their behavior can be best understood in terms of the misrepresentation paradigm, in which veterans attempt to accurately represent their military identities but the communication is ineffective due to the lack of military competency of their audience, and the disidentification paradigm, in which veterans do not identify themselves as such. Doug, a former Service Support soldier, was very insightful in reference to this issue:

> …This is part of the transition out of the military and into society, that's what this school is. And if you're going to be a part of the society then you have to associate with the 99% of people that weren't in the military…If you just interact with the veterans all the time, we have a way of talking to each other and a way of interacting that if you do that with every person you meet, you're not going to make a lot of friends. Not that we're crude or mean to each other…But there's an instant familiarity; there's an instant kind of closeness. If you treat nonveterans with that kind of familiarity, it's going to put them off I think. The way that we can have a pretty informal conversation—just 'oh my name is Veteran, I'm a Veteran, so let's chit chat," it's a weird connection and we never met each other before. But you can't treat other people like that… Those relationships [with civilians] have to organically bloom and if you're not successful at letting that happen, then you're not going to have a successful reintegration into society.

Doug's perspective seems useful for reintegrating into college, and society as a whole. Clearly he perceives his military identity as being in a state that is conducive to reintegration; and that state is, most appropriately, behind him. As such, he attempts to resocialize into a more civilian

way of relating to people. This task, he warns, requires a reserved manner of communicating that is uncommon to veterans who can speak relatively informally with each other, even at the first encounter. Doug asserts that student veterans must adjust their expectation of being expediently understood when communicating with civilians. Whereas student veterans typically relate to one another easily based on their "common ground," he notes, "when you meet other kids in class, you have to stumble on the common ground and it has to be done in like a really organic way."

Because of the manner in which Maurice, a 24 year-old Marine Combat Service Support veteran, acknowledged how he represents his military identity differently compared to other veterans he knows, we may categorize his behavior within the misrepresentation paradigm. When asked if he shares his identity as a veteran with other students in his classes, Maurice responded:

> If it comes up in the discussion, yes. Like when they say, 'where are you from?' I'm like, 'oh I just moved here from California, because I just got out of the Marine Corps.' I'll say something like that; but I'm not like, 'oh yeah, I was in Afghanistan for 20 years and life is hard; oh you just don't know how good you got it.' No, I'm not one of those people. I came here from California because I was in the Marine Corps, and I was in Afghanistan for a year; I'm from Ohio.

Interestingly, Maurice refers to veterans who emphasize the differences between themselves and nonveterans as "one of those people"; in this way he acknowledges a veteran social type, whose behavior I have defined within the deception paradigm, so called given Goffman's dramaturgical concept in which veterans deliver convincing performances of their identities as such.

Although veteran behavior in the misrepresentation and disidentification paradigms is more conducive to veterans' social reintegration into college, social reintegration is not invariably the result of behavior within these paradigms. Alice, for reasons discussed in another chapter, rarely

identifies herself as a veteran when in nonveteran company; her preferred behavioral paradigm is disidentification. Nevertheless, the following is her explanation of her relationship with nonveteran students:

> I don't really have a relationship with those students. I don't know if it's because I'm a veteran or more of the fact that I'm older, like I'm kind of past that. I'm 32 and past the age of making friends. It's not that I don't like to make friends but life gets busy the older you get, I don't know where the time goes but it seems like I never had any time.

Notwithstanding her behavior within the disidentification paradigm, target vision most closely explains Alice's oversight of the utility of developing relationships with classmates. As such she does not view cultivating relationships with other students as an important part of her college experience and is more focused on her goal of completing a bachelor degree. Furthermore she feels that her time for socializing has expired with her age.

In the remainder of this chapter in which student veteran and nonveteran student relationships are discussed, I will present how several characteristics (i.e. age, disability, and unit cohesion) contribute to the estrangement that veterans feel in college. Essentially the research question addressed in this chapter is how do these characteristics affect student veteran behavior in college?

Age

As indicated by Alice's statement above, the most common distinction that student veterans cited that distinguished them from the nonveteran college student population had little to do with student veteran experiences in the military; rather it was seen as the result of many student veterans having postponed college for a long period of time. Thus being older than other

students was frequently seen by the participants of this study as a factor that inhibited their ability to cultivate quality relationships with nonveteran students. This finding is hardly surprising, as many nontraditional students have raised similar issues regarding their relationships with the traditional college student population (Ackerman et al. 2009). However, there are several factors that cast doubt on the validity of this explanation in terms of the present study. The first assessment has to do with the nature of the City University of New York (CUNY). Being the largest public urban university in the nation with nearly a half million students, located in New York City no less, the population of CUNY is extremely diverse; and it is well known that adult learners constitute a considerable portion of those attending CUNY colleges (CUNY OIRA). Thus student veterans were likely to attend courses where at least several other students would also be adult learners. Another reason to question the validity of the age and estrangement relationship is articulated in Dean's case below.

The present study focused on veterans from the lower enlisted ranks. Therefore 59% of the respondents of the SCSVE were age 29 and younger, and 35% of these respondents were below age 27. In terms of data collected, Dean, age 35, was an outlier. He explained a typical day in class: "I sort of have this attitude: I just walk-in; I sit down; I do what I'm supposed to do and I get up and leave. I don't know if that closes me off to other people maybe it does. It's not malicious in intent but I think that's just how I'm perceived." Subsequently, Dean surmised that the social difficulty with returning to school was "not always about [having been] in the military, as it is the struggles of student life, [principally] being older than the average student—you're seeing other people in your age bracket have their jobs and their families setup while you're still going to school." At his age Dean finds that his position in his life course is incongruent with

civilians of comparable age. However, even if his station in his life course were commensurate with his age, given the criteria in his example, presumably his relationships with civilians of his age would still not suit him. As he notes:

> I still keep in touch with friends but I think I'm closer with folk that I was with in the military or that are in the military. Simply because when you reconnect with people that you've known from High School a lot of them haven't left or haven't done much of anything—talking about when we were under 20 we got drunk and this and that. You know you're in touch with veterans when you're talking about real world contingencies, life after the service, things that are relevant, things that are important as opposed to just stuff that's just basically passing the time.

Although Dean is considerably older than most college students, and even student veterans, this statement shows that he can find more in common with veterans, without regarding age differences, and relate to them more easily than nonveterans of his same age.

Like Dean, other veterans in my qualitative sample acknowledged that they felt they should be filling different roles other than that of student, as they associated the student identity with a premature stage of the life course. Alice, quoted above, is an example of this; she contended that her age precluded making friends with other students, as that was an action she believed to be better suited for the young. Also like Dean, other veterans noted that they felt alienated in groups of people their own age. Corey, the Purple Heart recipient and former Army cavalry scout, related, "You really do grow up in the military, it forces you to grow up. I was more mature [at] age 18 than a 25-year-old student that goes to school here, you know what I mean. It's just you are forced to grow up." This statement reflects a common manner in which veterans view age.

The difference in age symbolized the gulf of life experience and maturity between themselves and nonveteran students; it seemed to operate as a justification for their estrangement from nonveteran students. And given that several student veterans admitted that even relative to civilians of comparable age they felt that their increased life experience and maturity made them feel older, it was necessary to investigate whether the literal age difference was to blame in making student veterans feel out of place in college, or was it the different associations these veterans had for themselves and nonveteran students, and the corresponding bonds between themselves compared to the inherent estrangement they invariably felt from nonveterans. Thus, was their estrangement from nonveteran students the effect of age or deceptive behavior?

I used an independent-samples t-test to compare nonveteran/civilian student relationships between student veterans who were age 26 and older (N=179) and student veterans who were age 25 and younger (N=67).

SEE TABLE 5

There was a significant difference in the scores for student veterans age 26 and older (M=4.53, SD=1.64) and student veterans age 25 and below (M=5.08, SD=1.56); $t(244)=2.17$, $p=0.017$. These results suggest that student veterans who were older than 25 years old had a more difficult time relating to non-veteran students, while veterans who were 25 years old and younger had better quality relationships with nonveteran students. In conjunction with several other t-tests I conducted, which compared veterans of various age brackets, the 25-year mark produced the only significant statistics. This suggests that age 25 is indeed a watershed age for student veterans, beyond which their ability to relate to predominantly younger nonveteran college

students significantly declines. And importantly, this is not due to differential performance of deceptive behavior along age lines, as so far none have been identified.

Disability

Using data from the SCSVE, an independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the quality of non-veteran/civilian student relationships with student veterans who are receiving service-connected disability (N=121) and student veterans who are not (N=126). Student veterans rated their relationships with non-veteran students on a scale of 1 (unfriendly and unsupportive) to 7 (friendly and supportive).

SEE TABLE 6

There was a significant difference in the scores for student veterans who are receiving service-connected disability (M=4.44, SD=1.69) and student veterans who are not disabled (M=4.86, SD=1.60); $t(242)=-1.99$, $p=0.047$. These results suggest that veterans who are disabled have slightly more difficulty developing quality relationships with non-veteran/civilian students. This is evidenced by several disable student veterans acknowledgment of the insecurities they withhold regarding how they are being perceived by nonveteran students, and their inability to temper their reactions in social situations.

Marvin, a combat veteran who is now service-connected for reasons of PTSD, comes off as a generally sociable and humble guy; he used to consider himself a "social butterfly" but since he has returned from a tour in Iraq he has experienced difficulty with civilian social life. Despite being a former infantryman who received a Bronze Star for valor in combat, Marvin prefers not to present himself primarily in terms of his military identity, although he does disclose this identity when the opportunity arises. Marvin likes to be seen as "someone who is fun to hang

out with" rather than being objectified as a combat veteran. The following is a brief excerpt from our discussion of this issue:

> Interviewer: Is it easy for you to make friends in your classes?
>
> Marvin: It's not easy; I still feel kind of anxious, to a point I'm like 'do they [nonveteran students] see me as a normal person?' I kind of have that in the back of my mind a little bit. And I'm trying to break myself out of that. And actually I just talked to a therapist…and I told her 'I'm trying a new thing. My new thing is when I meet students in class I will just say 'Hey,' [or] 'nice shirt!'[or] 'nice, I like your hair.' She [the therapist] was like 'Wow, that's exposure therapy… Where you go out and force yourself to talk people. I can't believe that you're doing that.'
>
> Interviewer: You're just doing it and didn't even know?
>
> Marvin: I kind of logically diagnosed myself. And I keep trying different things to combat it. That's [just] the new thing that I'm trying now… I'd probably say I'm like 80% to 90% back to normal. But I'm trying to get myself to 100%, back to the social butterfly—'hey, how you doing,' jumping around [and such]—but it's a hard road by far.

Marvin's statements are very telling of some of the strains disable combat veterans feel when sincerely attempting to relate to nonveteran students

Unfortunately I did not inquire about the criteria Marvin used to surmise that he is "80% to 90% back to normal." However the next exchange shows that "getting back" is perhaps much more difficult than he perceives.

> Interviewer: Do you think it's really possible to "get back"?
>
> Marvin: I have to hope, you know. I can't believe that it's not possible. But I also have to realize that now I'm 32; I'm not going to get to that social butterfly status because everybody else has kids and a family… Pretty soon I'm going to be like the old guy trying to party and I can't do that. So I kind of have to realize that yeah I can go back to the 100% but I'm not going to be what I know as 100% because I'm not going to be in that same atmosphere.

The existential crisis Marvin explains is a common theme among veterans. What Marvin defines as 100% normal corresponds with not only who he was before combat but also another period of

his life, several years prior. His optimism notwithstanding, considering these factors, getting back to what he considered normal is very unlikely. Instead he must define what the new state of normal will be—Paul, another combat veteran and participant of this study, was quoted in a prior chapter defining this as the "new normal." Marvin is an example of a disabled veteran who truly wants to reintegrate and makes great strides doing so because it is his desire. As demonstrated he works at social reintegration the way some students may work at mastering the material for an exam.

Unit Cohesion

Roy is not a service-connected veteran, but being a former Army infantryman, he notes his preference for veterans over civilians and how PTSD contributes to his bond with other veterans: "I wasn't diagnosed with anything like PTSD, thankfully, but I had a lot of friends that were, so that stuff is all real. That's why I feel like it is easy to relate to other veterans even though I was excited to come out and transition to be civilian." Roy went on to explain his estrangement from civilians as being defined by a "contextual gap." He feels the need to explain who he is to civilians who just have no point of reference, and finds that "it's harder for someone that hadn't been there [in combat] to realize, or know, the sort of stuff that [he] had done." Thus Roy's affinity for other veterans can be attributed to the lack of explanation needs to convey who he is as a result of his experiences in the military. The presence of PTSD in this population, which Roy does not have, he interprets as an indication of veterans' ability to understand him without explanation. Just as disable veterans do not need to explain PTSD to Roy, Roy does not need to explain who he is as a result of "the sort of stuff [he] had done" in the military to other veterans.

My survey data suggests that student veterans who have experienced high unit cohesion while in military service echo these sentiments expressed by Roy. Unit cohesion, refers to the bonds that service-members create between themselves within a military unit and is often referred to as esprit de corps; the Marines and Army are the branches of service with the highest unit cohesion (Moskos 2005), and within those branches occupational specialties that require more time in the field (i.e. Combat Support and Combat Arms) have higher unit cohesion than specialties that are considered Combat Service Support (CBO 2005). An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare nonveteran/civilian student relationships between student veterans who served in the Army and Marines (N=148) and student veterans who served in all other branches of service (N=99).

SEE TABLE 7

There was a significant difference in the scores for Army and Marine student veterans (M=4.46, SD=1.66) and student veterans from all other branches (M=4.92, SD=1.59); $t(245)=2.17$, $p=0.031$. Student veterans who served in the Army and Marines experienced higher unit cohesion and have more difficulty developing relationships with nonveteran students. On the other hand student veterans from all other branches of service, where unit cohesion is less, have an easier time developing quality relationships with nonveteran students.

To further test the hypothesis that student veterans who operated in military units with high unit cohesion have more difficulty developing quality relationships with nonveteran students than veterans from military units with lower unit cohesion I conducted another t-test comparing nonveteran/civilian student relationships between student veterans who served in Combat

Service Support (N=86) and student veterans who served in non-Combat Service Support (i.e. Combat Support and Combat Arms) (N=162).

SEE TABLE 8

There was a significant difference in the scores for Combat Service Support (M=4.97, SD=1.69) and non-Combat Service Support (M=4.49, SD=1.61); t(246)=-2.2, p=0.029 indicating that veterans who served in Combat Service Support have more positive relationships with non-veteran/civilian students, compared to veterans who served in other capacities (i.e. Combat Support and Combat Arms).

Paul is a student veteran who served in the Combat Arms of the Army; he is also an Iraq War combat veteran. Given these characteristics we can expect that he has experienced a high level of unit cohesion in the military and as a result he has a more difficult time developing quality relationships with nonveteran students relative to noncombat Combat Service Support student veterans. Paul does have a more difficult time relating to nonveteran students but his main difficulty lies in his lack of tolerance for other people's behavior. In the classroom he has, on more than one occasion, found himself in power struggles with other students:

> I guess in class eventually every once in a while I get like the people that want to hoot and holler around in back of class. And sometimes you have a teacher who's kind of a little bit too much of a push over. And doesn't like put the foot down and tell you 'oh shut the fuck up.' There was a time in a Psychology Class and in an Art Class—I used to record classes—and this freaking these people behind me, their conversations would be on my damn recording. And I couldn't hear the damn teacher. And there were times I would just move closer to try to get a better recording. And finally I just told these Professors I said 'Listen, either you guys are going to do something about this or I'm going to. And if I do something about it it's going to be bad for all the parties involved.' So they did. They told them to shut-up. I was… really glad I didn't have to do anything because it would've probably been pretty bad.

Decreased unit cohesion amongst Combat Service Support personnel exists only to the extent that these service-members did not experience combat. Jarvis, a combat veteran and former truck driver (a Combat Service Support specialty), recognized that his difficulty with social reintegration was the result of his inability to regulate his mood. Despite what he calls his "dim" view of military service, he identifies himself as a combat veteran foremost, hence the phrase "U.S. SOLDIER" tattooed across his abdomen. In similar spirit, he draws a line between himself and those who have not served. Moreover he feels his relationships with student veterans have been the most open and sincere when compared with his relationships with nonveteran students. When asked about his relationship with other veterans on campus, Jarvis responded:

> When I talk to a veteran I feel like we know each other. We know each other's back-story. And it's like, 'yeah, you remember that one time when you got shit on' – 'yeah I got shit on for that same thing too. Oh my God, that's funny.' It's like you know each other before you even walk up to each other almost. It's like we all know each other because we've all kind of experienced the same story [and] we can communicate [with] each other differently.

As Ebaugh (1988) notes, enthusiasm for a new identity is an indication that individuals have come to terms with the past identity of which they are now exes. In my research, former Combat Service Support personnel, who lacked combat experience, appeared to be most likely to embrace a student identity.

Doug is a noncombat student veteran who served in a Combat Support Specialty. During his time in service he labored in the "S1," which is an administrative body attached to a military unit; his duties in the "S1" were strictly clerical. Doug had a lot of insightful comments to offer concerning student veteran and nonveteran student relationships in college. He prioritizes

building relationships with nonveteran students and encourages other student veterans to do the same:

> It's important to be able to branch outside the Veteran's Office [on campus] and really forge meaningful relationships with non-veterans because the world is full of them. Those relationships take longer to make and they're harder to come by but they definitely exist… I try to focus on getting more civilian friends because the Veterans community is great but I think that you need to have friends outside of this group too. That's really important…

Bobby is also a noncombat student veteran; when he was in the Marines he served in a communications unit, a Combat Service Support specialty. Bobby's comments below reveal that he is open to developing relationships with nonveterans. He is particularly receptive to veterans and nonveterans whom he feels can contribute to his education:

> I have relationships with other students, yeah, as far as studying together. John [a nonveteran student] has been studying with me… [We are] just studying or working together for a degree and clubs too! I am part of the veterans club but and I also want to be part of the Student Association for Sustaining Energy.

Similar to Doug, having the military experience of a noncombat Marine within a Combat Service Support specialty, in college Bobby finds that he toes the line between reintegrating with civilians and reaffirming his bonds with other veterans. It is a difficult balance to maintain but the nature of military service within the Combat Service Support has prepared these veterans to juggle the civilian and military worlds elegantly. In a later section I will discuss how veterans' relationships with other veterans plays out in veterans clubs on campus.

To further illustrate how the relative proximity that military service within Combat Service Support units has to civilian life, an independent-samples t-test was conducted to examine how well veterans report the military has prepared them for civilian life. This t-test contrasted those

who served in Combat Service Support with those who served in non-Combat Service Support positions (i.e. Combat Arms and Combat Support).

SEE TABLE 9

There was a significant difference in the scores for Combat Service Support (M=2.61, SD=0.98) and non-Combat Service Support (M=2.26, SD=1.01); t(261)=-2.61, p=0.009. Veterans who served in Combat Service Support believe that their service in the military prepared them for civilian life to a greater extent than veterans who served in Combat Arms and Combat Support positions. While this may have little to do with unit cohesion, it does suggest an overlap between Combat Service Support and civilian life. Veterans of Combat Service Support, insofar as they have not experienced combat, leave the military better positioned to return to civilian life.

Sociologists assert that in general people tend to migrate toward groups of people or social networks that confirm their identities (Swann 1990). Veterans are no exception.. In fact the relative ease with which Combat Service Support veterans socially reintegrate may be related to the similarity between work within these specialties and civilian employment. One noncombat Combat Service Support student veteran referred to the distinction between veterans and civilians jokingly:

> I always identified as a civilian, myself. So I'm in this quasi-limbo between the two (veteran and civilian)... I just find it funny to think that yes, you're a soldier, yes, you're a veteran, but when did you stop becoming a civilian? You know, I don't remember. I always said that even on the surface, I couldn't be more civilian if I tried.

While the above statement may be common among Combat Service Support veterans who never served in combat, and therefore served in units with lower unit cohesion, it stands as the polar

opposite to the following perspective I will represent with a quote from Corey, the former Army Cavalry Scout and combat veteran.

> I couldn't stand them [nonveteran students] and I couldn't understand them at all. Anybody that said anything to me I wanted to knock him out. You know what I mean? Sometimes knowing that I can beat up 95 percent of the civilians in the school, knowing what I can do physically—having done it, seen it—like just knowing 'oh I can really just wreck this kid right now if I wanted to.' It's dangerous, that kind of knowledge.
>
> So that was the thing with me in 04 [when I first came back to college]… Everybody that said anything, I wanted just get up and hit them… I don't want to sound arrogant or anything—and you'll get this mentality from a lot of vets—[but now] I feel better than the average student I am sitting next to in class *because* I was in the military. So when a civilian student is saying something ignorant… I just kind of sit there and [think] 'Oh you know this is pathetic low life, who doesn't know anything, still lives probably with his mom and dad…'

My purpose for presenting this quote is not to intensify the stigma that already attaches to veterans. Rather it is to show how veteran behavior in the deceptive paradigm tends toward reifying stigmas in order to assert ones identity as a veteran. Importantly because a student veteran is a former member of the Army or Marines (representing branches with the highest unit cohesion) and a former member of the Combat Arms (representing the occupational specialties with the highest unit cohesion) does not imply that they will be violent with civilians. However the matter of violence is extremely important, as increased capacity for violence is perhaps one of the most fundamental distinctions between civilians and veterans. Thus I would be remiss to ignore the manner in which the stigmatization of veterans relays this message, and veterans like Corey reify it in order to assert themselves as such.

In this section we have discussed student veteran relationships with nonveteran students. We have also noted the effects that age, disability, and unit cohesion have on student veteran

relationships with nonveteran students. Veterans above the age of 25 tend to experience more difficulty in developing relationships with nonveteran students than veterans who are younger. Student veterans with disabilities, especially mental disabilities, also have a more difficult time developing quality relationships with nonveteran students. As demonstrated their inability to present a social and friendly sense of self to nonveteran students may contribute to this trend. Lastly, differential levels of unit cohesion, as experienced during military service and augmented by combat experience, contribute to how conducive veteran identities are to reintegration, thereby increasing the propensity of veteran behavior toward the specified behavioral paradigms.

Chapter Ten

Student Veterans and Relationships with Faculty.

Many veterans I met in the course of this research reported positive experiences with faculty members during their studies in CUNY. In the pages that follow I endeavor to explore the pattern of those relationships. Principally, the research question addressed here is how do veterans differ in their relationships with faculty based on certain characteristics of their military service records or characteristics that are a result of their military service? Student veterans, themselves, found several different rationalizations for their good relationships with faculty. Alice attributed her positive faculty relationships to her age. She stated:

> Actually it's easier for me to talk to faculty, because I think I'm closer in age to faculty. Also, it's easier to talk to faculty because of my pursuits. I do the work and I think I'm a good student. I'm closer in age to some of the professors I know; they're in their 30s as well. So it's easier to talk to them than being in a class or with someone who didn't even read the work or who doesn't even want to do it.

Alice was not the only veteran to rationalize her good relationships with faculty this way. Doug made a similar point when he stated:

> I have a really easy time getting along with my teachers…You can treat someone with respect without putting them up on a pedestal. I think that's something that the younger students kind of struggle with. Because they either have the mentality of 'it's you versus me because I'm the student you're the teacher' and they're still in like High school mode, or they're fighting the teacher and I'm like 'You know you're paying to be here, you don't actually have to be here…' Or they have the thing where they're so respectful… they put the person up on a pedestal, which is fine; that kind of makes it easier for them to teach. But I feel like most of the professors and teachers don't want that…because that's a barrier to opening conversation in the classroom. So they don't want to be exalted they want to be like 'obviously I'm the superior of the room but you need to talk to me like I'm your equal because we're trying to express ideas and explore topics and stuff.' I feel like I'm really good at that and I have really good relationships with some of my teachers that I see.

Thus Alice and Doug believe that being older gives them a better relationship with faculty in general. Alice finds that being of older age makes her more serious about her studies than average students. While Doug feels that his age allows him to address professors as equals in class conversations, which make the exchange of ideas an easier process. Although student veterans' relationships with faculty could not be compared to nonveteran students in terms of this analysis, it was, however, possible to test the assertion that older age contributes to positive relationships with faculty.

To test the validity of this claim a t-test was conducted that compared the quality of faculty relationships between student veterans who were older than 25 and student veterans who were 25 and younger. There was no significant difference between the two groups. Yet, several student veterans attributed their own positive relationships with faculty to their age.

Jarvis explained how he is intent on maintaining good professional rapport with faculty. When asked what were his relationships like with faculty he issued:

> Oh, they love me! The teachers like me. I make sure I keep a good rapport with them; I talk to them after class; I make myself known to them; I shake their hand in the beginning of the semester; I introduce myself and then I periodically keep in touch with them in between classes. [I tend to] make sure that they liked me so that later when I come back, when I need a letter of recommendation or a reference, I can go right back to him and say, 'Hey, I need a letter of recommendation, I already wrote it for you; I just need you to sign it.' [I] let him read it, he'll see it, sign it [and probably say] 'Yeah, sure I remember you. You sat in front of my class, and you always had an answer, I liked being around you…'

This is a clever technique Jarvis employs; no doubt, it will serve him well during his undergraduate career and beyond. While most student veteran participants did not report

employing such deliberate rapport-building techniques as Jarvis, ultimately many of them found that faculty simply enjoyed teaching them.

Like Alice and Doug, most student veterans explained the magnetism between themselves and faculty members was due to age. Alvin rationalized his relationship with his faculty mentor this way, as he asserted, “My professor, she is the one reason why I joined the International Facilities Management Association, so I see I click more with older people than younger people, or [at least] people my age…” Despite these claims an investigation of this trend has rendered the possibility of an alternate explanation. Rolanda articulates this best when she explains a day she was able to contribute to the class discussion:

> [In class] they were talking about the chemical war in Germany. You know and how the flesh would fall off the soldiers. I could definitely talk about that because I have more knowledge of it [than others in the class]. I was able to tell them okay this is what happened; this what they use—Mustard Gas. So it was more informative for them and it helped me… She [the professor] allowed me to tell the class what I knew about it. So it helped a lot.

By giving Rolanda the opportunity to contribute her uncommon knowledge concerning nerve gas, the nonveteran students were given a view of the class discussion that is certainly rare—the explanation of the destructive effects of a nerve agent on the human body by an actual expert on the subject. Such a contribution made Rolanda feel included, valued, and useful in the class. It may have also helped the nonveteran students in the class to view Rolanda in that manner. And finally, Rolanda’s opinion of the professor increased, as she felt respected and valued by fellow students and faculty alike.

Experiences like Rolanda's can be redemptive for student veterans who feel they do not fit in. Some scholars claim that the task of reintegration also implies redemption, especially for those who have experienced and perpetrated violence in service of the nation (Tick 2005). Because of this it is not uncommon for student veterans to relish an acknowledgement from faculty like Rolanda's above or Corey's below. When asked about his pivotal relationship with a faculty member, Corey expounded:

> She was just remarkable a professor and very sympathetic with veterans… I guess you would say I had a problem with the people I killed when I was over there [in Iraq]. Which is weird because it didn't bother me while I was there, not at all but I guess when you are home and you are thinking about things like that—it's like you actually killed over 20 people when you were there and now everything was bothering me… We just happen to be reading Dante's Inferno in the class and they were talking about how people who kill go to the eight circle of hell. And so I asked her, 'What about soldiers? You know like because one of the commandments is don't kill people but at the same time they tell you to protect your country. So I said 'So how does that work?' and her response was 'Killing an enemy as a soldier is not anything similar to do not kill.' She said there is a difference between a legal killing and illegal killing and killing as a soldier is a legal killing. I remember immediately that like lifted these two giant boulders off my shoulders, you know. I ended up emailing her afterwards saying 'your statement had a profound effect on me and I wanted to thank you.'

The positive relationships that many student veterans have with faculty may be a function of the life experiences that student veterans bring to the classroom and the propensity of many professors to view them favorably as a result, while using their experiences to enrich the classroom discussion. For student veterans like Corey this attention makes the difference between feeling alienated and feeling a valued member of the class.

The Bad

Based on earlier findings, one might expect that student veteran relationships with faculty would vary according to unit cohesion—meaning that as unit cohesion goes up, in terms of their

military experiences, their relationships with faculty decrease in quality. This was however not the case. The two following t-tests illustrate these relationships. The first compares student veteran-faculty relationships between student veterans who served in Combat Support (N=104) and student veterans who served in Combat Arms (N=61). There was a significant difference in the scores for Combat Support (M=4.42, SD=1.47) and Combat Arms (M=5.06, SD=1.56); t(163)=2.63, p=.009. These results suggest that CUNY student veterans who served in the Combat Arms have higher quality relationships with faculty than those who served in Combat Support.

The next compares student veteran-faculty relationships between student veterans who served in Combat Support (N=104) and student veterans who served in Combat Service Support (N=78). Although there was not a statistically significant difference in the scores for Combat Support (M=4.42, SD=1.47) and Combat Service Support (M=4.84, SD=1.66); t(180) =-1.8, p=0.072, these results are reported here because they approach statistical significance. The results suggest student veterans who served in the Combat Service Support may have higher quality relationships with faculty than those who served in Combat Support. Together these two t-tests express the relationships between student veterans and faculty as illustrated in Table 10.

SEE TABLE 10

As stated earlier, the order of unit cohesion in terms of the categories of military occupational specialties, from the greatest to the least cohesive are: Combat Arms, Combat Support, and Combat Service Support. Notwithstanding this, the order of quality regarding faculty

relationships from greatest to least have been found to be: Combat Arms, Combat Service Support, and Combat Support as exhibited in Table 3. When reviewing these findings, the question arose: how could the group of student veterans with the highest level of unit cohesion experience the best relationships with faculty?

In part this trend may be attributable to the redemptive effects of the student veteran and faculty relationship. However within this research at least one other factor contributing to this relationship has been identified. This factor is best described in terms of student veterans' tendency to perceive, and respect, hierarchy. In the following passage, Paul describes how hierarchy affects his relationships with professors:

> There have been a couple times where some professors have wanted to hang out with me but actually I treat faculty members like I treat my NCO's. There's like a certain level of friendship; you go there and then you stop. Because there's also professionalism—it can get a little bit awkward unless I'm never going to have another class again. Most faculty members when they read my papers and hear about my story they kind of want to get to know me but I try to keep them at a little bit of a distance. It just seems kind of weird otherwise to me.

While the perception of hierarchy clearly allows Paul to maintain a professional relationship with faculty members it also is a hurdle to him developing closer relationships with these individuals, which he might also benefit from.

Additionally some student veterans acknowledged that their issues with persons in authority caused them to realize that military life was not for them. In the civilian context their tendency to view faculty members as persons of authority places inherent strains on those relationships. Marvin, a Combat Arms veteran, explains this complexity:

> [My relationship with faculty] is not the best – because I'm kind of weird with authority figures. I'm kind of working on it… I don't know, ever since growing up I didn't really like anyone in authority. And I kind of just steamroll them—even now. I respect them, but like, I just know that they're in charge of things and they can run my life. So I kind of got to be wary of them. It's almost like a little bit of an anxiety thing…

Another effect of the tendency of student veterans to view faculty members as authority figures begets student veterans' performance of behaviors that are conducive to military command and control. In a previous chapter I discussed Paul's frustration with his peers who engaged in a conversation while he attempted to record the lecture during a class period. The threat he issued the faculty member (either you or I do something about the interruption) is a clear reference to the duties he once held in the military, where as a lower enlisted leader (i.e. corporal in his case) he was required to enforce the authority of his leaders to those of lesser rank than himself. This is a common sentiment that student veterans—especially those of the Combat Arms—carry over to the civilian world. As such, some veterans elect to become enforcers of authority inside the classroom and they may view this as their contribution to the classroom, and a benefit to the faculty. Dean explains this best in the following passage:

> I think faculty likes veterans across the board. They like us a lot because we understand how valuable school is and we sometimes create a buffer with other students when there seems to be issues with the students and professors. Like for a quiz, when the Professor wants to get in, hand-out the quiz, get everything done, and get out sometimes he'll say 'Hey, listen up! One, two, three, four, five—you at this desk; you at that desk; the other five—over there. Alright, let's all sit down…' Or they say 'I need a volunteer.' Usually people like us [student veterans] will get up and make life easier for the Professor instead of harder—at least that's the idea anyway. Like, 'Take the regatta out of your ears, everybody stand the fuck up, get down once. She said it eight times, we can't leave here today, come on knuckle head…'

One might imagine how this self-assumed duty of student veterans in the classroom, as communicated by Dean, could alienate student peers. Furthermore such assistance will not always prove helpful in a class, and may not be viewed as such by faculty as well.

Just as popular stereotypes of veterans affect the manner in which the public views veterans, so do popular stereotypes of faculty affect student veteran perceptions of them. A popular stereotype of faculty activated by student veterans is that of a "left wing liberal." This is yet another perspective that inherently positions faculty and student veterans as opposites, as Alice notes that "you tend to find faculties very liberal and I think you find veterans very conservative..." Given the ascription of these opposing political ideologies to faculty and student veterans, the expectation of a sour relationship with faculty hangs as a dark cloud over student veteran-faculty relationships. Brock expresses this expectation:

> My personal relationships with faculty [are] very good. But I definitely have heard horrible stories about vets and faculty members; like faculty members are shitting all over them and just not treating them well at all, even treating them worse than they will treat other people in class. I've never had that experience; I am yet to have that experience, but I am sure it might happen someday.

Brock's expectation that he would have a confrontation with a faculty member because of his military service is nearly classifiable as an urban myth among student veterans. Although this is not completely unfounded, its source may be found in the anachronistic images of antiwar protests on college campuses, the stereotypes activated upon faculty members due to such images, and a few highly publicized bad experiences.

Given this expectation, many student veterans begin their relationships with faculty members on the proverbial "wrong foot." For some veterans this causes them to disidentify as a veteran in class. Tammy explains this behavior,

> My teachers that I've gotten close with, who I feel comfortable enough with, knew about me being a veteran. But teachers that I wasn't really close with wouldn't know I'm a veteran… So it depends on how I feel, like if I fall in a closer relationship with you being a veteran or not. [In class] I was very guarded about who I was. So I don't know maybe that depended on the impression I got from the teachers in class… I feel like to a certain degree you should not know the teacher's viewpoint. I feel like a teacher is like a journalist almost, you don't want to come out biased one way or the other because you don't know how your students feel… You might have a student feel uncomfortable about sharing stuff with you because they already kind of know which way you are going to lean toward… I feel like college teachers, you knew what side they were on because they will favor those who will always agree with them… I feel like I shouldn't know that. I shouldn't know that you are like this big time feminist and with you women can do everything.

As Tammy notes, she chooses whether or not she will disidentify as a veteran in the classroom based upon her perception of whether or not disclosure will lead her to or from the professor's favor. This social dance can be exhausting for student veterans, which is why some student veterans, like Bobby who follows, choose a course of study in which politics and opinion are irrelevant. As an engineering major he states, "Crying havoc to loose the dogs of war on engineering principles doesn't work. We deal with force, distance, time, acceleration. We don't deal with political crap. Which is great."

And the Bat-Shit Crazy

Although student veterans of the Combat Arms reported their relationships with faculty to be of the highest quality of all student veterans in any military occupational category, the study participants who had the most striking encounters with faculty were veterans of the Combat Arms. Thus while many student veterans feared that they would one day have a negative

encounter with a faculty member due to their service in the War on Terror, qualitative data suggests that those who have suffered such encounters tend to be Combat Arms veterans and yet Combat Arms veterans report having higher quality relationships with faculty than all other student veterans. This is perhaps because student veteran and faculty relationships with reference to this particular group have the potential to be redemptive for the same reason that they have the potential to be volatile. The matters of military service, experiencing and perpetrating violence on the behalf of the nation, are sensitive issues to these veterans. If a faculty member reaches across the civilian-military divide in an attempt to understand and express empathy for veterans the relationship can become meaningful. However a faculty member who openly objects to, or expresses disdain for, the military may be subject to vehement opposition.

Take Corey for instance, who earlier in this chapter explained how his relationship with a professor helped change his experience in college from negative to positive. Although he found redemption through this relationship with a faculty member he also notes:

> Whether or not people want to admit this there are a lot of professors here that are very, very opinionated about the military and they are not afraid to put their opinion in the classroom… The students here are like sheep… What a professor says is like the gospel to these students and if a professor says 'veterans are evil, they kill innocent people' they [the students] leave that classroom thinking that's what a soldier does…

Before Corey developed his relationship with a faculty member, whom he credits as the reason he graduated from college, he had a number of difficult experiences with other faculty members who openly expressed disapproval of the US Armed Forces. In one exchange Corey felt taunted by a professor who voiced opposition to U.S. and Israeli military violence and jokingly challenged him to demonstrate martial arts in front of the classroom. He recounts:

> One of the professors one of these days was talking about the military and how evil the military is and he was talking about how they kill and rape innocent people and you know he's going on and on and on. [Finally] I was like 'you realize I was in the Army right?' I remember he looked at me and said 'Oh so you could share with the class how you were in the military and how you raped innocent women when you were over there. I remember I basically threatened the guy and I said 'You better watch what you are saying because one of these days you're gonna say the wrong thing to the wrong person. And he was like 'Well you know what I'll do if I say this to the wrong person—show him some [martial arts]. He actually looked at me and said you wanna learn some [martial arts]? Right now, come up to the front of the room. And I literally started to get up and a nervous navy guy ran across the classroom and grabbed me and dragged me out of the classroom. That was my last day in school…I dropped out right there and then got all F's. I was like, 'Screw this, I don't need this.'

What could have been a caustic, but unnoticed, remark about military service nearly became a physical confrontation because of the insensitivity of the faculty member as Corey recalls. This is certainly the stuff that urban legends are made of, especially those pertaining to student veteran and faculty relationships.

Outrageous though it may seem, confrontations like this have played out in some classrooms and even rare events like this can affect the kinds of expectations that veterans have of their teachers. Paul, another former cavalry scout and combat veteran, recalls the undue hostility he experienced in a class:

> I think anybody in my class or anybody who's had this professor will agree that guy's just bat-shit crazy. He's just nuts! On top of that he has very, very, very left-wing views and he knew I was in the military… He knew my political views basically and he would challenge them on occasion and he would push my buttons.
>
> For example there was something in the book [we were assigned to read] about some Special Forces tending to be sociopaths. I was like 'you know we're not all bad.' And then he brought up the fact of Snipers using [drugs] to keep themselves still. The fact was his belief that most of the military abused drugs and steroids… But the pinnacle of this battle came between us when it was the very last day in class and we were talking about PTSD… For some God damn reason he wanted to bring up 9/11, which I understand, but he brought it up with his crazy Jessie

> Ventura-type political views…Basically he believes that everybody in the World Trade Center and America deserved to have that happen to us.
>
> And as if that didn't shock the class enough he literally called me out – "So Paul, what do you think of that?" …I talked to him after class about it. I said 'Listen, I believe in free speech but I think that was extremely uncalled for and extremely disrespectful.' He was one of those professors that's an egomaniac; he just didn't care. It was his opinion and only his opinion mattered. So it just it was like playing Russian roulette with a crazy man, all the God damn time.

It is not uncommon for differences of opinion, especially on political matters, to intensify class discussions amongst students and faculty. From Paul's statement above these incidents seem more like provocations, however that is difficult to decide considering that we only have a partial account of these conflicts from one of the parties involved. Nevertheless the fact remains that the hostility Paul felt should not exist in the classroom, as the classroom should be a safe environment for faculty, nonveteran students, and student veterans alike.

Whatever the content of a course, all parties to that course should feel safe and respected, and the course content should be presented in a way that allows for a fruitful and vibrant exchange of ideas. The cases in which student veterans feel 'called out' as Paul noted, or provoked as in the case of Corey, do not benefit faculty, nonveteran students, or student veterans. These incidents reify stereotypes of faculty members as liberals who do not care to understand veterans, and they reify stereotypes of veterans as angry individuals incapable of maintaining their composure. Thus all parties to this interaction are disparaged and the learning environment itself is jeopardized.

This chapter discussed the quality of student veteran and faculty relationships and noted ways in which faculty members have been successful in developing quality relationships with student

veterans in and out of the classroom and even facilitating meaningful exchanges between students during the course period. Additionally we have reviewed some ways in which military role salience affects these relationships by encouraging veterans to perform in particular ways in the classroom and how faculty members may create unsafe and unfruitful spaces given their disregard for student veterans.

Chapter Eleven

Student Veterans and Administrative Relationships

By this juncture I have thoroughly discussed the issues that veterans face during reintegration to civilian life. While many of the issues germane to reintegration are beyond the scope of higher education institutions (i.e. physical health, mental health, reuniting with family, etc.), higher education as a civilian institution is very useful for its ability to reintroduce veterans to the world of civilian bureaucracy and some of the more mundane, and potentially frustrating, aspects of the civilian experience. It is therefore no small wonder that student veteran participants of this research voiced the greatest dissatisfaction, not with nonveteran students or faculty, but with administrators—those gatekeepers of higher education bureaucracy. In this chapter I will discuss student veteran relationships with higher education administrators, and with non-faculty staff, and the ways in which their military experiences and training enhances or stifles their ability to navigate this particular civilian bureaucracy.

Many student veterans only recently left the largest and, arguably, most efficient American bureaucracy—the Armed Forces. At its very worst the Armed Forces bureaucracy works because it has to; on a macro level the military has been scrambling tirelessly for the past decade, setting and attempting to meet military imperatives, and on the micro level each individual service-member is held accountable for the tasks assigned to them under pain of lost pay, imprisonment, or even death. Thus the student veteran participants of this research are no strangers to compulsory hard work, extended work hours, and no pay for overtime. And given the concept of relative deprivation we can understand why student veterans generally express little sympathy for administrators who may also feel overburdened, overworked, and simply

tired. We may even think of the reproach that many student veterans expressed for administrative staff as a projection of their feelings toward their own weakness, frailness, lack of zeal, laziness, and self-centeredness. Having endured experiences in the military that pushed many of them beyond their comfort threshold some veterans have developed a deeply held disdain for the above characteristics and any possible indication of their existence. As we discuss the extreme criticisms that student veterans directed toward administrative personnel in their respective colleges we should be mindful of their sacrifices and view their reproaches as a way of saying, 'Surely, if I accomplished feats civilians can hardly imagine, this administrator can conduct the task at hand dutifully, expeditiously, and politely.'

Although in this chapter I employ the term administrators broadly, I am not referring to administrative staff for CUNY Veterans' Affairs offices. Student veterans reported high regard for administrative staff working in Veterans' Affairs offices, with few exceptions. According to student veteran research participants, the administrative offices that served the broader student body, and were therefore not solely devoted to serving student veterans, appeared to have a different character from Veteran's Affairs offices. This is perhaps due to several trends I have already described in this text, such as the desire of some veterans to be held apart from civilians, and the desire some veterans hold to have the nuances between themselves and civilians acknowledged. This may also be due to the fact that "Vet Reps," as Veterans' Affairs staff are commonly called, are located in the Veterans Affairs offices because they specialize in, and have zeal for, working with student veterans. By comparison, administrative staff who work in CUNY administrative offices outside of Veteran's Affairs may approach their jobs more perfunctorily as they deal with a higher volume of students in one workday. One student veteran

research participant summed this up plainly when he asserted, “The veterans’ reps are great but the rest of admin, I guess they’re *just* doing their job.”

Age

At the outset all student veterans interviewed for this research expressed grievances with the service, or lack thereof, in CUNY administrative offices (bursar, financial aid, etc.). However some student veterans had a more difficult time than others. An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the quality of the student veteran relationships with administrative staff for student veterans who were age 26 and above (N=179) and student veterans who were age 25 and below (N=67). While the results of this t-test were not statistically significant, these statistics are reported because of their near significance. Veterans who were age 26 and above (M=3.91, SD=1.82) had a lower mean satisfaction score than veterans who were age 25 and below (M=4.37, SD=1.79); $t(244)=1.78$, $p=0.07$. These results suggest that student veterans above the age of 25 expressed more difficulty dealing with CUNY’s administrative staff.

Bobby, a former Marine in his early thirties, who performed a Combat Service Support specialty while in service, angrily recalled some issues he had with administrators:

> In financial aid [you get] some freaking kid behind a thick glass window going, ‘Wait in line. Come back in an hour.’ Anytime that happens I’ll be like ‘I need to see your supervisor.’ If they don’t [allow me to] do that I go straight to the ombudsman and I say ‘Look this guy was an asshole. Call up his boss and tell him this guy is an asshole, because I’m not a freaking kid, and you don’t need to treat me like that.’ And it got taken care of; that’s what the ombudsman is there for.

Given this statement it is evident that Bobby has been around the proverbial block in terms of administrative bureaucracies. As he has dealt with administrators he viewed as unhelpful before

he knows the proper point of contact for complaining about these individuals is the ombudsman. Being in his mid thirties, Bobby is older than most college students, and apparently some administrative staff as well. Ironically, while he deploys the term "kid" to refer to administrators who may be younger than him, he also makes a point to state that he, Bobby, "is not a freaking kid" and should not be treated like one. There are several things we may be able to assume given Bobby's statement and his reaction. The first is that he may feel that because of his age he should be treated with more respect than average undergraduate students who generally do not push back when told to return in hour. In his words, "I can see a lot of students in general are getting railroaded but that's because they are not sticking up for themselves. That would have been the case with me if I hadn't stuck up for myself." Second, his reference to the administrator as a "kid" suggests that he condescends to them and possibly projects his frustration about his own age on them as well.

The present research does not afford us knowledge of the frequency with which situations like Bobby's occur amongst older student veterans. However we earlier found that older student veterans expect to have better relationships with faculty because they are closer in age to faculty. Although I have shown this to be false, the expectation alone preempts the orientation these students have toward faculty. The same may be true for their relationships with administrators. Older student veterans may expect to be treated more respectfully by administrators due to their greater age vis-à-vis average undergraduate students, they may be terribly upset when this expectation is not met, and they find that the service they receive from administrators is indistinguishable from students much younger than they are.

Military Occupational Specialty

Possibly as an effect of his military background as a Combat Service Support Marine, Bobby benefits from his extensive experience with bureaucracy, as his training has prepared him to deal with complex bureaucratic situations and processes. Doug, a former soldier who spent his military career working in the S1 (an Army unit's administrative office), shed some light on the differential administrative prowess of student veterans when he stated:

> [As for] navigating the bureaucracy of the school and the school system, you definitely don't have the education for that after being in the Army like you certainly would as an S1 soldier. [As an S1 soldier] you get an idea of how the bureaucracy works and you get an idea of [situations] like: 'I need to get this thing done and I've been told no three times but I know that I only need one person to say yes once.' So if you keep asking different people you might get one person to say yes. And then you can get this paper signed and then you're all set...

Given that he served in a purely administrative capacity in his unit's S1, Doug feels that he is more prepared to navigate bureaucracies, be they military or civilian. He asserts that veterans who worked in other capacities in the Army may not be as prepared as he. Quantitative data suggests that there may be some merit to Doug's argument.

A t-test was conducted to compare the quality of the student veteran relationships with administrative staff for student veterans who were Combat Support service-members (N=107) and student veterans who served in other military occupational specialties (i.e. Combat Arms and Combat Service Support) (N=141). Although there was not a statistically significant difference in the scores for Combat Support (M=3.77, SD=1.74) and student veterans who served in other military occupational specialties (M=4.21, SD=1.85); $t(246)=-1.91$, $p=0.57$ these results are reported because of their near significance. They suggest that student veterans who served in

Combat Support may have greater difficulty developing quality relationships with administrative personnel. Given that another t-test produced no statistically significant difference between student veterans who served in Combat Arms and Combat Service Support, it is implied that student veterans who were once Combat Support troops had the greatest difficulty with administrative staff.

Doug's explanation above explains why we might expect student veterans who were once Combat Service Support troops to be able to navigate bureaucracy better and thereby view their relationships with administrators more positively—as they were administrators and clerks in the military. However his statement does not explain why Combat Arms veterans are indistinguishable from Combat Service Support veterans in terms of the quality of their relationships with administrators. To understand this we turn back to Paul, a Combat Arms student veteran, who explained his strategies for dealing with administrators. First, however, let us hear about his qualms with administrators:

> Administrator Staff, I've run into some problems with them… Sometimes it feels like I was dealing with the DMV [Department of Motor Vehicles]… Like they don't know they take account for the student. They act like the student is the burden when really the student is actually their paycheck—the students are paying for a service… They do need to show a little common courtesy and respect. And being able to do that even when the day is stressful shows the quality of the people you have. You're not supposed to show that face—basically you're pissed off, stressed out—especially to your client…

These frustrations that Paul describes were commonly cited among student veteran participants in the qualitative portion of this study. Paul's manner of dealing with these issues is quite different from Bobby, the Combat Service Support veteran quoted earlier. At yet Paul is no less successful. He continues:

> …[Civilians are] just this inanimate thing that does whatever the hell you tell them to do; as long as you do it with enough force, they'll do what you say; that's one way. And another way is actually to talk to them and feel and find out what's going on, how can you make it better, and in the most polite professional humanly way possible even if they're screaming in your ears. I literally bite my tongue, take a deep breath, and I talk to them; I use my words basically. And I try to reason with them, I try to listen—'Ma'am you know I came from this office. This person told me to do this and have this paperwork. What do you need me to do?' And then usually within about five minutes they will say something along the lines of, 'It's just a crazy day. I don't mean to—you know something like that. It shows a human side, rather than just being some obstacle—yelling and getting all pissed off. You've got to do this paperwork, and so do they.

If we conceive of Combat Arms veterans' tendency toward deceptive behavior as a way of creating distance between themselves and civilians, we may find that this behavior is useful in maintaining that distance even during times when civilian behavior is problematic for veterans. In Paul's example we have witnessed an application of deceptive behavior within higher education that works toward the benefit of student veterans.

Post 911 GI Bill

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the quality of the student veteran relationships with administrative staff for student veterans who are Post 9-11 GI Bill recipients (N=184) and student veterans who were not (N=64).

SEE TABLE 11

There was a significant difference in the scores for Post 9-11 GI Bill recipients (M=3.86, SD=1.81) and non-recipients of the benefit (M=4.48, SD=1.7); t(246)=2.35, p=0.02. These results suggest that student veterans who are Post 9-11 GI Bill recipients had more problematic relationships with administrative staff. This is perhaps because of the issues these veterans

experienced while trying to get their veterans' education benefits processed in a timely and efficient manner.

While all CUNY colleges had a staff member referred to as a Certifying Official[28], who processes paperwork for military related-tuition awards (i.e. Post 911 GI Bill, Montgomery GI Bill, etc.), this administrator is inconsistently located across campuses within CUNY. On occasion this person may be placed in a campus' Veteran's Affairs office but more commonly they are part of another administrative office (i.e. Bursar, Financial Aid, etc.). Thus student veterans collecting the Post 911 GI Bill more commonly attribute problems with the benefit to a university administrative office other than Veteran's Affairs. Poor processing of the benefit may explain why student veteran's collecting the Post 911 GI Bill report having worse relationships with administrators overall; while these recipients are indistinct from non-recipients in terms of their views of CUNY Veterans' Affairs offices.

CUNY Veteran's Affairs Offices

By and large CUNY student veterans tell the same narrative on the micro level that a recent national report tells with macro level data (McBain 2012). That is that when many of them first registered as students at their respective campuses there was barely any infrastructure to support student veterans, outside of the structures that support all undergraduate students. However within the past few years these programs have developed quickly and programmatic growth has benefited many student veterans, as well as made college life more amenable for them.

[28] See dissertation chapter: Case Study, section: Key Administrators

Nevertheless many student veterans were disconcerted by the dearth of veteran employees working in the Veterans' Affairs office. One student veteran asserted the following when asked about the administrators he found in the Veterans' Affairs office on his campus:

> How do you have any sort of veterans anything, when veterans aren't running it? I would go to the veterans [office] and ask 'So you're a veteran?' [The administrator would respond] 'No I'm just here.' But look here, I am looking for a job in school; we have a huge population of veterans. They couldn't find a veteran to do that job? …I just don't like going in the veterans' place and not seeing veterans there.

Statements like the above were common amongst the student veteran interviewees of this study. In most CUNY colleges that participated in the qualitative portion of this study, a desire for more veterans to work with veterans was voiced. This was not only regarding the position of Veterans' Coordinator, a position in CUNY Veterans' Affairs offices that is responsible for organizing events for veterans and assisting the veterans' club. Some student veterans also made reference to the desire to have veteran tutors for student veterans. Similarly, Alvin, a student veteran interviewee, noted that the biggest problem with administrators in the role of certifying official was, "They're not really veterans. All they really do is certify us. Any issues, or other problems, we have they can't really help us…" Furthermore, Alvin found that the benefit of having veteran administrators work with student veterans was that such administrators would fit in with student veterans better and make students veterans feel that they also fit in. He states:

> At least when they did hire another [administrator for] veterans they had a veteran there, not a nonveteran, because we [as veterans] click more. Like say if you [the interviewer who was also a veteran] came in as a coordinator, I would understand you more than a nonveteran. You are not gonna say 'What are we talking about if we start talking about basic training and start singing one of those crazy songs. [A nonveteran would] look at me like 'You need help,' or something, or like 'Why am I singing 'Gory, Gory one hell of a way to die' and stuff like that.'

In Search of P.F.C. Wintergreen

Despite the tendency of many student veterans to group themselves together and limit their interactions on campus solely to other veterans, when possible some civilians were able to work their way into the good graces and respect of this largely reclusive population of nontraditional students. This was particularly evident in CUNY Veterans' Affairs offices where, contrary to Alvin's assertion, the administrators were civilian and yet very supportive and understanding of veterans, and the complex reintegration issues they sometimes bring to higher education. Maurice, a student veteran and former Marine, had this to say about a Veteran's Coordinator, who happened to have no military experience herself:

> When I first got here [to college]; they deleted my stuff, saying that I wasn't even a student here. And she [the Veteran's Coordinator] took me around and waited with me, and got people to cut me in line to get stuff done that I needed... That's why we say we have a love-hate relationship with her, because when you're with her she does everything she needs to do to get what you need to get done with your personal stuff. But when you're outside waiting, you hate the fact that she's giving someone else all that attention, because she does it with everyone. It's not like she singles anyone out. She does her job to the teeth with everyone.

With few exceptions nonveterans and veterans alike, who occupied the position of Veterans' Coordinator, received high praises from student veteran's on their respective campuses. In the course of this research I have not discovered evidence that would justify the preference many student veterans had for veterans to occupy the position of Veterans' Coordinator. This preference is perhaps best understood as being a product of deceptive behavior—hence the routine distance that veterans place between themselves and civilians, a near-reflex that some veterans are inclined to do, warranted or unwarranted.

At best the Veteran's Coordinators in the many Veterans' Affairs offices throughout CUNY are higher education versions of the social type that Joseph Heller's character Ex-P.F.C. Wintergreen represents in the military satire *Catch 22*. As discussed elsewhere in this text, the character of Ex-P.F.C. Wintergreen is a trope representing a service-member, working in a largely administrative capacity, whose position holds no inherent authority but because of his access and cunning this individual skillfully navigates bureaucracy and circumvents red tape. The situation that Maurice mentions above—having the Veteran's Coordinator get him skipped in line and expedite his paperwork—is the type of service that student veterans look for in an administrator, as it is what they would also look for in some individual in the military bureaucracy they left. We might say that many student veterans are in fact looking for their very own Ex-P.F.C. Wintergreen, and many of them have found him (or her) in the position of Veterans' Coordinator, in both veteran and nonveteran form. Thus similar to Maurice, another student veteran voices their support for the Veteran's Coordinator—an Ex-P.F.C. Wintergreen who just gets things done for student veterans:

> He was the first Veterans' Coordinator. I think he is the best thing that ever happened to CUNY... He even got his friends to volunteer in the Veterans' Center to coach us with math and writing and everything. They helped us with homework…

In the current chapter we have discussed student veteran relationships with administrators in CUNY. Using both qualitative and quantitative data we have reviewed the ways in which age, military occupational specialty, and even the tuition assistance program student veterans use affects their relationships with administrative personnel. Finally we have also acknowledged the applicability of the trope that Joseph Heller's character, Ex-P.F.C. Wintergreen, represents in

higher education institutions—being an informal power broker of sorts, who is sought out by veterans in order to cut through bureaucracy.

Chapter Twelve

Student Veteran Clubs

Throughout this dissertation I have noted some student veterans' tendency toward parochialism, their preference to be in each other's company and away from civilians. This behavior is most common among Army and Marine veterans, Combat Arms and Combat Support veterans, and combat veterans. Naturally, the places in CUNY colleges where I have observed student veterans performing deceptive behaviors to the greatest degree are the student veteran clubs. For veterans who favor the deceptive paradigm of behavior, by performing their military identities and eschewing all but the most minimal and conservative contact with civilians, student veteran clubs provide the haven and social isolation they desire. As detailed in a prior section, these veterans usually have a military background in which unit cohesion played a large role. Perhaps as a result of this, I have found that throughout CUNY student veterans clubs are disproportionately populated by Army and Marine veterans, Combat Arms and Combat Support veterans, and combat veterans.

Each CUNY campus has its own student veteran club. Because these clubs reside in different campuses, located throughout all the boroughs of New York City there is little interchange between them.[29] As a result, each of CUNY's student veteran clubs is given the space and opportunity to develop their own unique culture; given this the culture of student veteran clubs across CUNY varies widely. It may be that this culture is dictated by the particular composition of student veterans participating in the club, however the methods employed to study student

[29] During the academic year there are usually several CUNY-wide student veterans events but aside from these events there is no occasion for student veterans from one club to interact with student veterans of another club.

veteran club in this research are incapable of substantiating that statement. Nevertheless it is commonly known by Veteran's Affairs administrators within CUNY that most student veteran clubs in CUNY face a similar issue; they are poorly attended relative to the number of identified student veterans on any given campus. Due to certain characteristics of this population (e.g. older age relative to other students, higher rates of being married and/or a parent) it is unsurprising that student veterans do not generally spend large amounts of time on campus socializing with other students, veteran or nonveteran. However given my observations of CUNY student veteran clubs during one semester of ethnographic research, I have identified another issue that may potentially contribute to the poor attendance of student veteran clubs. This is best described in the words of an administrator who works closely with one of CUNY's many student veteran clubs. When attempting to explain the structure of the club and the relationships of the individuals who participate, this administrator stated, "Military microcosm describes it perfectly." Thus I have found that formal and informal military values and practices have been assimilated into many CUNY student veteran clubs.

In the following section I will highlight the ways in which CUNY student veteran clubs have assimilated military values and practices. It should be noted that the material presented in this section is based upon field notes I took immediately following an encounter in the field. In order to maintain the anonymity of the student veterans involved, all of the names of the participants have been changed and the names of the CUNY campuses have been withheld.

Present Arms

CUNY student veteran clubrooms vary as widely as the culture of the clubs themselves. Depending upon the space constraints on any given CUNY campus some student veteran clubs occupy clubrooms ranging from larger than a classroom to a moderate sized utility closet (e.g. 10' x 12'), and some student veteran clubs have no clubrooms for their club activities whatsoever.

Those student veteran clubs that have clubrooms appear to utilize their respective spaces frequently. The decorations of the clubrooms are invariably military themed. The military theme is often communicated with military recruitment posters representing various branches of service, images of student veteran club members, various military paraphernalia (e.g. rank insignia, unit patches, achievement badges, etc.), and in several cases I have observed military action figures in full battle dress. On several occasions I have observed controversial displays in student veteran clubrooms. The following field note excerpt refers to one such display. Notably it is controversial in a civilian context, however, presumably, in a military unit's common area it would not draw much attention.

> The door of the student veteran's clubroom at Campus 1 displays an image of a soldier or marine in field gear performing hand-to-hand combat with an enemy. The service member's knee is thrust into the chest of the enemy. The enemy appears to be wearing a *dishdasha* or *thobe*.

The *dishdasha* or *thobe* worn by the enemy combatant in this description is the long dress commonly worn by men in some Muslim countries (particularly Iraq and Afghanistan). As this image suggests that Muslim students are unwelcome in the Student Veteran's clubroom, it would rightly be deemed inappropriate on any college campus. Furthermore by displaying such an image on the door of the Student Veteran clubroom a common perspective among student

veteran club members is suggested: Muslims are the enemy to service members and veterans. Although a consensus of student veterans on this point is implied, the poor attendance or membership of the club suggests otherwise. Moreover student veteran consensus with this conspicuous display of symbolic violence toward a religious group is beside the point. The display forcefully asserts the student veteran club's cultural proximity to the military.

In addition to the inhospitable items on display in some clubrooms, some student veterans wear controversial items on their persons. In more than one campus I have observed several student veterans wearing t-shirts displaying images that could potentially be offensive. One example of this is a t-shirt displaying the script, "72 Virgins," and subscript "Compliments of the U.S. Marine Corps." The script of this t-shirt refers to the belief some Muslim extremists hold that they will be granted 72 virgin wives in the afterlife if they die for the jihad against America. The subscript "Compliments of the U.S. Marine Corps" implies that the Marines will happily send such extremists to the afterlife to receive the virgins. I have also seen a version of this t-shirt worn with "U.S. Marines" replaced by "U.S. Army." Another example of an offensive t-shirt I have observed student veterans wearing is a t-shirt displaying the shape of Iraq and the script "Some days are Sunni but most are Shi'te." This shirt plays on the names of the two most prominent Islamic groups in Iraq. Respectively their names are meant to resemble "sunny" and "shit." Lastly I have observed one student veteran club member in the clubroom having a casual conversation with other student veteran club members while he was wearing a flag of a military unit draped around his shoulders. Yet the most conspicuous display of symbolic violence I have observed is a student veteran club member who wore a necklace he fashioned out of a string of

550 cord (a common green colored string used in the Armed Forces) and a single live round of 5.56 ball ammunition (the same used in an M4 and M16).

Given the controversial items on display in some of the clubrooms and the possibly offensive nature of some items student veterans wear on their persons, it is conceivable that some clubrooms stand as spaces where civilians are, for most intents and purposes, unwelcome.[30] Most CUNY student veteran clubs have at least one administrator (i.e. a Veteran's Affairs Liaison) who works closely with the club members to schedule and execute the club's annual activities. In clubs where the disdain for civilians is prevalent the administrator can become a target of student veteran frustration; that is even when the administrator's presence is meant to assist club members. Below one student veteran explains this sentiment in his club and how he argues against it:

> They (CUNY administrators) are trying to get civilians to come and help the vets out. [But] right now a lot of the vets have this mentality: it's us against the civilians. My mentality is kind of different, it's: let's educate the civilians, you know what I mean, not go against them. Because in all honesty this club could not have gotten started if not for a few sympathetic civilians.

Given these observations, to the extent that student veteran clubs are military microcosms and the clubrooms are used as spaces to express that, civilians are also unwelcome to enter the space; and that also applies to administrators whose presence is meant to provide assistance to the student veteran club members.

[30] View field note in Appendix E

Hierarchy

The second set of behaviors indicative of the extent to which CUNY student veteran clubs operate as military microcosms concerns formal and informal military hierarchy. In an earlier chapter I discussed formal military rank structure; I identified two separate hierarchies in the military, one (the officer) is invariably superior to the other (enlisted). As noted, most student veterans are enlisted members because officers must have a college degree in order to be commissioned. Therefore, insofar that CUNY student veteran clubs are military microcosms they only represent lower enlisted military culture, as for the most part only former lower enlisted members (E6 and below) attend the clubs. Interesting still, is the fact that in most of these clubs small differences in rank among lower enlisted members, which accounts for much in the military, stands for very little in terms of prestige in the club. However when a club member appears to be of considerably higher rank, for instance a higher enlisted member (E7 and above), the deference of other club members toward this individual becomes evident. In the following passage one student veteran club member explains interactions around rank in his club:

> In a lot of ways rank is immaterial but it's definitely there. For instance this Master Chief or E9 we got, nobody calls him Billy. We all call him Master Chief. After the first time we found out, when he identified himself as an E9, every time he walked into that office we all called 'At ease!' and jumped up and locked up. We don't do that anymore because he really asked us not to. But still, he is always telling everybody, 'Please call me Billy, please call me Billy.' Nobody calls him Billy—at least not the vets. Civilians call him Billy every now and then and the vets are quick to tell the civilians, 'Don't call him Billy, call him Master Chief.'

Thus although rank is ignored, insofar as it pertains to the lower enlisted. Yet a higher enlisted person, like Billy or Master Chief, automatically garners the respect and deference of club members, even against his will. The call of "At ease," and the actions of "jumping up," and "locking up" are references to a command used to make others aware of the presence of a high

ranking individual and the physical responses to that command, which are standing on one's feet and coming to the position of attention. These behaviors are required of lower enlisted members in the military every time a service member of high rank walks into the room. In this way we see that the respect of high-ranking individuals is a military value retained by some CUNY student veteran clubs.

Another way that rank at plays out in CUNY student veteran clubs is unrelated to the military rank of the individuals in the club. Rather it has to do with the executive positions in the clubs, which are prescribed by CUNY and filled by student veteran club members. Although these positions have absolutely no connection to military rank, some student veterans who occupy them execute their duties with the officiousness and impersonality of a military leader. In some clubs this behavior is tolerated but in cases like the one in the field note below people take objection.

> The club members began to speak about a recent incident between the President and Vice President of the club. An announcer addressed the issue of the club trying to oust the President for leading the club in a direction that the club members did not feel was appropriate. The President claimed the Vice President and Treasurer had called for his resignation in an illegal manner. He explained the protocol that they sidestepped to eliminate him, acknowledging how illegitimate the whole proceeding was. He spoke in a scathing almost condescending manner, a military manner—especially with reference to the cadence of his voice during his diatribe.
>
> One of the vets in the crowd of nearly 30 spoke out, "We've all served in the military and some of us hated it. We had bad experiences so we don't respond well to your NCO-style of leading the club."
>
> A former treasurer accused the President of not doing any work. He claimed the President delegated tasks but did not perform any of his own. The former treasurer asked, "How many times have people complained about your leadership? Please answer the question."
>
> The President responded, "Well I completed the mission."

> This statement created a roar in the room. A student veteran screamed out, "What mission? You're making this sound like we're in Iraq. There is no mission!"
>
> During the uproar the Vice President, who had been addressing the President in front of the gathering, walked out of the room. A student veteran, who was taken by the Vice President's exit, interjected "We know what real stress is. We need real leaders. Not someone who can't handle the stress. I've dealt with real shit. We all have. You can't just leave the group."

The scene illustrated here is an example of how tensions around hierarchy play out in some CUNY student veteran clubs. Clearly, from this incident we can see how the President of this particular club patterns his leadership after military Non-Commissioned Officers, to the dismay of the vast majority of the student veteran club membership. The point of the whole interaction seemed to be summed up by the student veteran who stated "We all served in the military and some of us hated it." Thus the attempt to oust the President was mainly attributable to his attempt to construct the social relations within the club in a manner similar to the military's hierarchical structure.

Although it seems like these club members are opposed to their club resembling the military, the final passage quoted from the field note represents a different view. The club member who issued this statement seems to desire an NCO-style leadership to the extent that such a leader would persevere in times of hardship, although a leader who performs other NCO-style leadership behaviors (i.e. delegating and not performing tasks, condescending, and concerning himself mainly with objectives not humans) is undesirable.

The final way in which I have observed hierarchy at play in CUNY student veteran clubs concerns informal military rank. In an earlier chapter I explored some aspects of informal

military rank, principally as represented by the combat versus noncombat distinctions. As I noted, informal military rank refers to aspects of an individual's military service that would increase the individual's prestige without formally increasing one's rank, which in the military also corresponds to commensurate increases in pay. This concept is hugely important to understanding enlisted culture within the Armed Forces and thereby understanding CUNY student veteran club culture as well.

As such, I have observed some inter-club feuding in CUNY. Given that each CUNY campus has only one student veteran club, inter-club feuding is synonymous with inter-campus feuding, to the extent that student veteran club members are thought to represent the student veterans of their particular campus.

The first incident concerning informal military rank involves the theft of a pike from a guide-on—a guide-on being a flag bearing identifiers of a military unit, and the pike being the spear-like figure fixed to the top of the guidon.

> The feud between Campus 2 and Campus 3 grows more comical with every update. Campus 2's student veterans apparently stole their pike back, only to have two student veterans from Campus 3 try to infiltrate their club room to try to steal it again. At the beginning of the club meeting today Campus 2's Student Veteran Club President recounted this fiasco. For new vets who had no idea of the feud he explained the story from the beginning. While doing so every time there was a mention of the name "Campus 3" the student veterans in the crowd booed.
>
> Per his recapitulation, the pike stealing began very recently. Two weeks ago, at the CUNY Veterans Party a group of Campus 3 veterans stole the pike from Campus 2's guide-on. The Campus 2 Club President explained that the Campus 3 veteran's club stole the pike because of jealousy and corresponding chemical imbalances; this made all of the veterans laugh. Campus 2 veterans stole the pike back earlier this week and now have it guarded around the clock, which is how they were able to thwart the operation to steal it again. When the Campus 2

> veterans stole their pike back they also stole, what the Club President called, "a revenge pike." This was an extra pike they found in the clubroom when they went to steal their own. The "revenge pike" is actually the property of another student veteran club outside of CUNY. Campus 3 veterans admit that they stole this pike from another university during the Veterans Day Parade.

Although the stealing of the pike is a harmless and fun preoccupation for CUNY student veterans it is rich in military symbolism. First, the stealing of a pike in the military is viewed as a sign of ultimate disregard for a competing unit. The guide-on symbolizes a unit's pride. Often during difficult moments in physical training, or even triumphant moments, a unit member who is particularly motivated—wanting to encourage his/her counterparts—will take the guide-on and run laps around the unit formation. This is usually accompanied by a war cry (i.e. ferocious scream) from the motivated unit member. A unit must always secure their guide-on. In this way a guide-on provides unit commanders and NCO's a healthy way to compete, taunt, and even embarrass each other. Thus the unit that successfully steals a pike sends the message to the unit from which the pike is stolen that their combat prowess far exceeds them. Because CUNY student veteran clubs continue to utilize this symbol and the symbolic actions of stealing and guarding their guide-on, the assimilation of informal military practices and values are apparent.

The last observation concerning the assimilation of informal military rank into CUNY student veteran clubs is much less amusing; it also involves indicators of combat prowess. This is where the proverbial 'tires hit the road,' as the following quote describes how the hierarchy of a student veterans club is contingent on the function that student veterans served in the military. In the following passage a student veteran recounts an exchange in the student veteran clubroom that exposes the hierarchical structure of his club:

> You definitely can get more respect if you were a combat vet. But there is still definitely that service rivalry type stuff. Perfect example this guy Bob… I'll never forget the first time he walked into the office. I had another Marine sitting there and an Airman. He walks into the office, I ask him 'How are you doing?' And 'Are you a veteran?'
>
> He says, 'Yes.'
>
> I say 'What branch?'
>
> He says 'Marine Corps.' Of course he goes 'Marine Corps! Oooraaah!'
>
> And I'm like, 'OK, one of those.' I said 'You got a fellow Marine sitting right there.'
>
> And he looks at the Marine and he goes 'What was your MOS?'
>
> And the Marine goes 'Oh I was a helicopter mechanic.'
>
> And Bob looks at him and goes 'You know what you are? You are a pussy. That's what you are.' Then he looks over at this Airman and goes 'What branch were you in?'
>
> He says 'Air Force.'
>
> And Bob goes 'You are a pussy, that's what you are.' The way I see it… the hierarchy is kind of like if you seen combat, if you've been deployed, or if you have like special training [you're at the top]... For example…this EOD guy, [who is also] air assault… He's never been deployed [but] he's sitting up there [on the top of the hierarchy] because he's done all that hardcore stuff—even though he's never been deployed.

This anecdote touches on several extremely important features of informal military hierarchy. Although the insulting Marine never divulges his own MOS (Military Occupational Specialty) we can expect that he either served in the Combat Arms or a Combat Support specialty, which is intimately involved in the violence of combat. He may also be a combat veteran. Note how, before he makes any judgments of his fellow Marine he has to ask about his MOS. This signifies that he understands that service in the Marine Corps is not a uniform experience. There is differentiation by occupational specialty that causes some troops to be subject to combat and

others not. Notice also how he does not ask this of the Airman. This is because he knows that the vast majority of the Airmen are technicians and clerks. He would not expect a fighter pilot to be in college, because they must already be above a bachelor level education to perform their duties. In terms of the quote above, we can see how the hierarchy of this particular CUNY student veteran club elevates those who have served in combat, those who were trained in combat skills, and those who received advanced combat skills training. All other student veterans whose military service description falls outside of these specified characteristics have low rank in the informal hierarchy.

Females on the Margins

Given that the military is a male dominated institution, women only comprise 15% of the entire Armed Forces (U.S. Army, Women), it is not surprising that there are relatively few female student veterans participating in CUNY student veteran clubs. However given the number of female veterans on CUNY campuses, the fact that, with few exceptions, female veterans do not participate in CUNY student veteran clubs should raise some alarms. Given the nature of some of these clubs, as discussed in this chapter, it is no small wonder that females veterans, for the most part, do not associate themselves with many CUNY student veteran clubs.

The U.S. Armed Forces is not only a male dominated institution, historically it has a record of appropriating spaces to be male dominated, and even female dominated. The Armed Forces, is among the few standing American institutions (along with correctional facilities and sports teams) that has a unique history of policing gender lines and differentially allocating resources (including space) to individuals based on gender distinctions. In this respect, for the Armed

Forces there is no gray line—yet oddly enough the graduates of West Point are called "The Long Gray Line." Given these characteristics of the military institution, the assertion that to the extent that CUNY student veteran clubs are military microcosms they are also inhospitable to female veterans, is perhaps a 'no-brainer'.

The following t-test was conducted to compare male (N=201) and female (N=45) student veteran responses to the question, 'how would you rate the CUNY Veteran's Club?' The scale ranged from 1 to 4, where 1 signified poor and 4 signified excellent.

SEE TABLE 12

There was a significant difference in the scores for male (M=2.43, SD=1.63) and female student veterans (M=1.88, SD=1.73); t(244)=2.015, p=0.045. These results suggest that female student veterans rate their campuses' respective student veteran clubs poorly at a higher rate than their male counterparts.

The quote displayed in a previous section in which a Marine student veteran openly calls other student veterans "pussies" is indicative of the lack of regard some student veterans have for political correctness in the seclusion of their veteran, and incidentally male, dominated clubrooms. The following field note serves to reiterate this point:

> I approached a female veteran at a Campus 4 info-session today. I asked her if she would be interested in participating in an interview with me because more male veterans than female veterans are volunteering to be interviewed for the research. We spoke briefly and she expressed her interest in participating. Nearly 10 minutes after our exchange a few student veterans were discussing the sexual behaviors of Bonobo monkeys, using graphic language, and comparing them to human beings. The female veteran I was speaking with then nudged me and said, "This is why there are no women here…"

> I couldn't tell if she was offended or annoyed by the conversation. Either way, it was clear that she considered the clubroom to be a male dominated space, where she was, to some extent, unwelcome.

Although the quote above exhibits the perspective of a female veteran who felt excluded from the club because of its male character this was not invariably the case. Several females noted that particular CUNY student veteran clubs were indeed male dominated spaces but that was not inherently negative. At least one female veteran interviewed for this research explained that she felt more comfortable socializing in the student veteran clubroom with male veterans because of her negative experiences with female service-members when she was in military service. This perspective may not be representative of the feelings of a lot of female student veterans however it is worth noting that in terms of veterans, public spaces, be they male or female dominated, will be seen negatively by some veterans and positively by others and that interpretation does not always correspond with gender distinctions.

Drink Water

Due to popular portrayals and their behaviors in the deception paradigm, which reify stereotypes, veterans are commonly considered to be insensitive. The phrase "drink water" represents this common characteristic, as it is used by soldiers in training and in the field of action as a cure-all response to any complaint or ill. I recall a time in Army basic training while camping in an unheated tent on a snowy winter day in Fort Knox, Kentucky; I said to my Drill Instructor "Drill Sergeant, I believe my toes are frostbitten." His response was obviously, "Drink water, Private!" Although this recollection is comical now, it was certainly not at the time. Alas, in the field note

below a subject matter is discussed insensitively that, unlike my frost bite experience—which was actually not frostbite, is not laughable now nor never will be.

> Today the discussion in the clubroom strayed to suicide. A club member began to discuss the myth of Ajax, mentioning his eventual suicide. Another veteran, a former Marine, interjects 'Suicide is for pussies… people who give up.' The veteran who was explaining the story of Ajax chuckled at this remark. The former Marine continued, now explaining his statement to an intern [civilian] who seemed disconcerted by the remark, "In the military it's really easy to kill yourself. You have hundreds of rounds available and weapons. You know also that if you told the guys in your unit you were going to kill yourself they would say "Go do it pussy. Just make sure you inventory your shit before you do…" We all have problems from our tours in combat. I'm still dealing with a lot of my problems since I came back. Do you know how many times I held a gun to my head? But I didn't do it. That's for people looking for an easy way out. If you want out then quit...'

Insofar as CUNY student veteran clubs are military microcosms the above statement, and the callousness that it represents, may remain difficult to challenge. As we can see from the latter part of the statement, the student veteran's vehement manner of stating his opposition to suicide, even its symbolism as it was discussed in a classical text, is a defense mechanism. His anger toward those who commit suicide is perhaps misdirected anger toward the issues he also faces as a combat veteran. Notwithstanding his remark that "suicide is for pussies," in calendar year 2010 twenty-two veterans were reported to have commit suicide everyday (Kemp and Bossarte 2012). The experiences of these veterans, within and without military service, speak to them being anything but "pussies" –in the colloquial sense of the term. And yet, the tirade above remains an acceptable manner in which some fellow veterans regard those who have taken their lives when it all became too much.

In this chapter we have reviewed the ways in which CUNY student veteran clubs function as military microcosms, providing an insular community and experience to student veterans whose

behaviors are deceptive, given the behavioral paradigms utilized in this dissertation. Although I have used many examples of marginal, or dismal, behavior to illustrate this point I have also noted that all CUNY student veteran clubs do not function the same, nor are they socially structured the same. Nevertheless some of these clubs are adequately represented by the characteristics discussed here. Certainly the issues many of the clubs have with poor attendance is at least partially an effect of the discussed characteristics.

Chapter Thirteen

Conclusion

On December 11th 2012 Syracuse University's Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF) held a panel discussion in Washington D.C. regarding the state of student veterans attending higher education institutions funded by the Post 911 GI Bill. The panel was attended by some notables in terms of veterans' education but the most important statements were made by Curtis Coy, the Deputy Undersecretary of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and Michael Dakduk, the Executive Director of Student Veterans of America. What came to light in the exchange between the panelists was that the Department of Veterans Affairs has never tracked success rates for veterans using the GI Bill to attend higher education. The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, also known as the WWII GI Bill, had not been tracked; the Montgomery GI Bill had not been tracked; and finally the present Post 911 GI Bill had also failed to be tracked by the VA.

This revelation highlighted the truly dire situation of veterans' education, as facilitated by the GI Bill. Although the federal government has spent billions of dollars on the Post 911 G.I. Bill, it cannot assert that those tax dollars were well spent, as it cannot render taxpayers a receipt for their purchase. Thus it is not known what has been, and is being, purchased. Alas, this question is in jeopardy of being answered by opportunists, like David Wood of the Huffington Post, who wrote in an October 25th 2012 article on the matter that 88% of veterans will drop out of college. Wood claimed to have quoted this statistic from another source but that source was not credible. Nevertheless, credibility of a source of statistical information has seldom, if ever, halted widespread belief in a figure once it is made public (a nod to campaigning politicians).

Without data on the success of the GI Bill, a federally funded program, what is at stake is the credibility of the program, and the dedication of the U.S. to extending this benefit to future generations of veterans—many whom will not be able to afford higher education otherwise. Moreover, the absence of a history of tracking the success of the GI Bill has made a nearly insurmountable task for the ambitious new working group oriented toward this end—the working group is comprised of Syracuse University's IVMF, Student Veterans of America, and the VA as a result of the December 11th panel discussion. What makes this task so difficult is foremost operationalizing "success" in terms of the GI Bill. Even during the late 40's and early 50's, at the height of the first GI Bill, such a task would have been difficult. College attendance at this time was not as desirable to most veterans as employment was (Gambone 2005); this point may still be true. A result of this is that many veterans may have attended, and are now attending, higher education only until they are able to find employment and then leaving academia altogether—with or without a degree. Any study that attempts to develop metrics for GI Bill success would have to address whether this situation should be defined as failure. From a micro perspective, I am led to believe that individual veterans would define this as a success!

Until metrics for GI Bill success are developed it may be that the best data available to clue researchers into how veterans are performing in college is student engagement research. Student engagement metrics do not measure student success directly, rather a complex of behaviors that are related to persistence and graduation (Kuh 2001; Hu and Kuh 2002). The present study attempted to examine some aspects of student engagement for this very purpose.

Limitations

As a study attempting to investigate student veteran engagement in lieu of success rates, the present study had several limitations. First, by limiting the study to CUNY colleges exclusively, data collection was limited to a specific type of urban commuter student veteran population. Ideally, a study of student veteran engagement would be able to represent the diversity of student veterans throughout the nation. Second, by administering the survey instrument to any student veteran attending CUNY some respondents were not GI Bill, or even potential GI Bill, recipients. Third, as stated in the methods section of this study, the sampling methodology was less than ideal. Although the study was advertised within CUNY, all potential participants were certainly not aware of the research. The decentralized nature of CUNY Veterans Affairs did not allow for the development of a roster of all potential participants, neither was the parameter of the student veterans' population of the university known. Last and certainly not least of the study limitations, is that the sample size (300 survey respondents and 20 in-depth interviewees) I believe may have considerable power to represent CUNY student veterans—that is with the appropriate sampling methodology. However, the circumstances of this study did not allow me to employ such methodology. Thus, it would have been beneficial to gather more responses and conduct more in-depth interviews to compensate. Alas, time constraints caused me to have to conclude the study.

New Hope

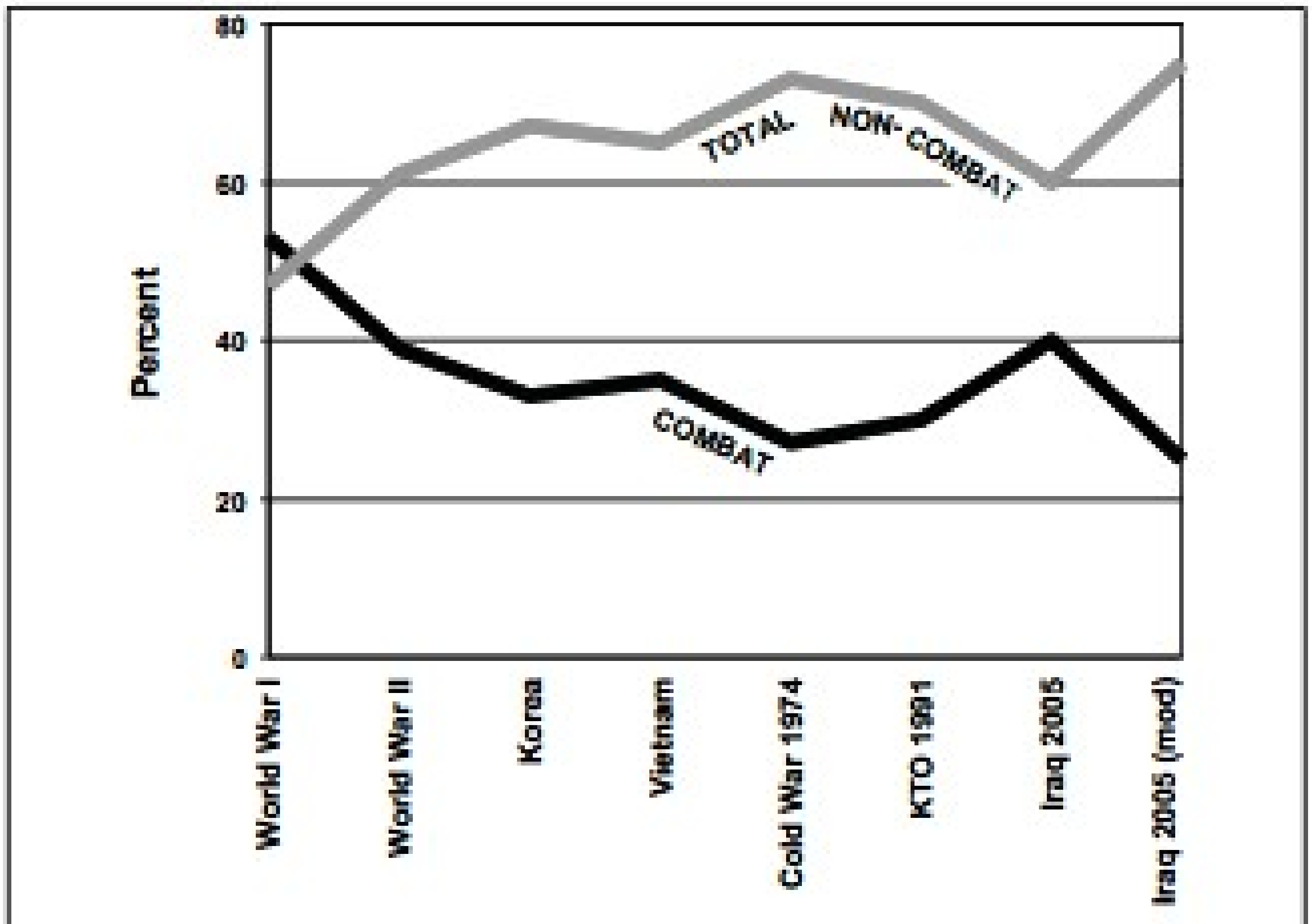
Despite the many limitations of this study I am led to believe that the research I conducted helped to effect change in CUNY's orientation to veteran's affairs and veteran's education. In the spring semester of 2012 I was asked to become a part of a taskforce, which was the

brainchild of CUNY's Chancellor Goldstein. The Chancellor appointed five CUNY college presidents and several high echelon administrators to the taskforce, whose single objective was to develop policy recommendations for CUNY that would help facilitate the academic success of student veterans. I was very privileged to partake in this effort.

This research helped to inform the taskforce of the current state of CUNY student veterans. Before the conclusion of the 2012-2013 academic year the taskforce had developed a catalogue of policy recommendations that, I trust, will make beneficial changes to current CUNY policies—many of which had been in place since 1950 and, thus, referred to aspects of the military and veteran experience that were no longer viable. As always, the legacy of this taskforce, and this research, remains to be seen. However, there may be reason for new hope.

List of Tables

TABLE 1 (p36)



(McGrath 2007)

TABLE 2 (p182)

CUNY Campus	Student Veterans*	Survey Response Rate	Interview Response Rate
Senior Colleges			
Baruch	171	4	0
Brooklyn	99	27	1
City	87	17	6
Hunter	166	3	1
John Jay	362	32	2
Lehman	126	7	1
Medgar Evers	70	11	2
NYCCT	225	22	1
Queens	101	7	0
Staten Island	164	51	2
York	76	1	0
Community Colleges			
BMCC	275	11	1
Bronx CC	158	12	1
Hostos CC	65	23	0
Kingsborough CC	165	12	0
LaGuardia CC	277	11	1
Queensborough CC	71	8	1

TABLE 3 (p203)

	Parents		Non-Parents		
	M	SD	M	SD	*t*-test
Grade Point Average	27.88	8.77	31	6.3	2.91*

*p < .05

Note. M=Mean. SD=Standard Deviation. GPA displayed as whole numbers on survey (e.g. 1.0=10; 2.0=20; 2.78=27.8)

TABLE 4 (p205)

	Post 911		Other		
	M	SD	M	SD	*t*-test
Work Hours	9.29	16.42	17.97	20.64	3.45**

**p < .01

Note. M=Mean. SD=Standard Deviation.

TABLE 5 (p206)

Location	**BAH**
New York City, NY	2751.00
San Francisco, CA	2562.00
Cincinnati, OH	1320.00
Portland, OR	1299.00
Charleston, WV	885.00
Johnson City, TN	870.00

Basic Housing Allowance by City

TABLE 6 (p230)

	Older		Younger		
	M	SD	M	SD	*t*-test
Student Relationships	4.5	1.64	5.0	1.56	2.39*

*p < .05

Note. M=Mean. SD=Standard Deviation. Student Relationships rated on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 meant poor and 7 meant excellent.

TABLE 7 (p230)

	Disabled		Non-Disabled		
	M	SD	M	SD	*t*-test
Student Relationships	4.44	1.69	4.86	1.60	1.99*

*p < .05

Note. M=Mean. SD=Standard Deviation. Student Relationships rated on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 meant poor and 7 meant excellent.

TABLE 8 (p234)

	Army/Marines		Other Branches		
	M	SD	M	SD	*t*-test
Student Relationships	4.46	1.66	4.92	1.59	2.17*

*p < .05

Note. M=Mean. SD=Standard Deviation. Student Relationships rated on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 meant poor and 7 meant excellent.

TABLE 9 (p234)

	Service Support		Other		
	M	SD	M	SD	*t*-test
Student Relationships	4.49	1.61	4.97	1.69	-2.2*

*p < .05

Note. M=Mean. SD=Standard Deviation. Student Relationships rated on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 meant poor and 7 meant excellent. Service Support refers to Combat Service Support. Other refers to Combat Arms and Combat Support.

TABLE 10 (p237)

	Service Support		Other		
	M	SD	M	SD	*t*-test
Prepared for Civilian Life	2.61	0.98	2.26	1.01	-2.619**

**p < .01

Note. M=Mean. SD=Standard Deviation. Prepared for Civilian Life was a 1 to 4 scale, where 1 meant poor and 4 meant excellent.

TABLE 11 (p245)

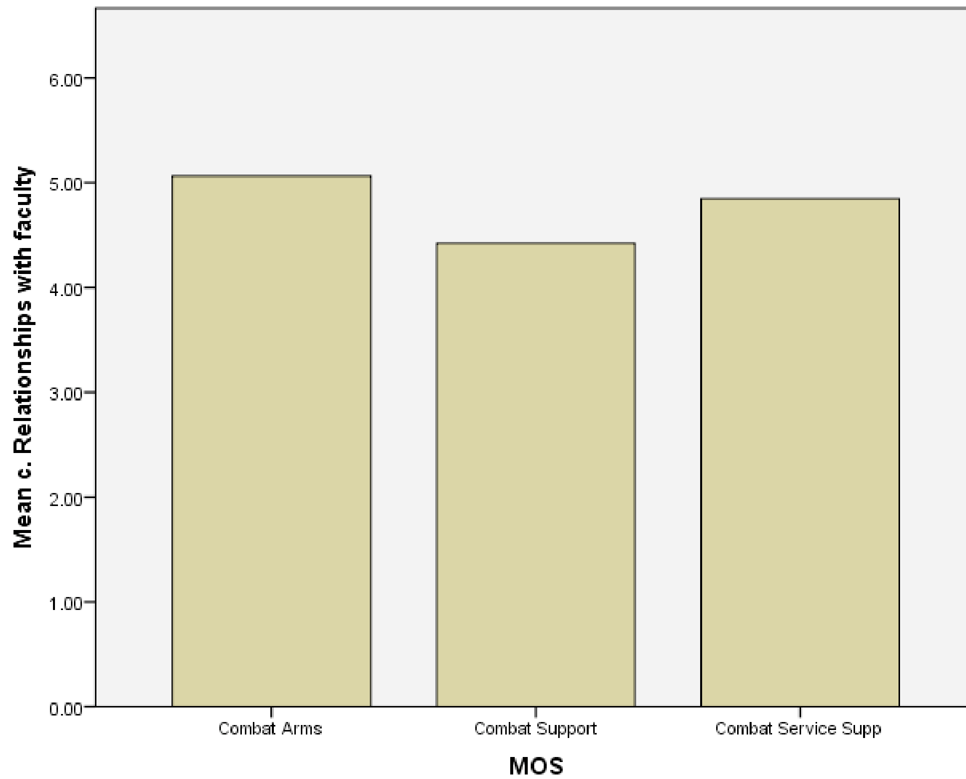


TABLE 12 (p261)

	Post 911		Other		
	M	SD	M	SD	*t*-test
Admin Relationships	3.86	1.81	4.48	1.7	2.35*

*p < .05

Note. M=Mean. SD=Standard Deviation. Admin Relationships rated on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 meant poor and 7 meant excellent. Post 911 refers to those using Post 911 GI Bill. Other refers to those using all other tuition benefits.

TABLE 13 (p279)

	Male		Female		
	M	SD	M	SD	*t*-test
Vet Club	2.43	1.63	1.88	1.73	2.015*

*p < .05

Note. M=Mean. SD=Standard Deviation. Vet Club rated was rated on a 1 to 4 scale, where 1 meant poor and 4 meant excellent.

APPENDIX A

SURVEY OF CUNY STUDENT VETERAN ENGAGEMENT

Survey of CUNY Student Veteran Engagement

CONSENT FORM for Survey

My name is Demond Mullins. I am a *doctoral candidate* in the Sociology Ph.D. Program at The Graduate Center of the City University of New York (CUNY), and I am the Principal Investigator of a research project, entitled "The Military Veterans of the City University of New York (CUNY)." I am studying the transition process of CUNY veterans from military to university life and assessing the university's ability to provide adequate support to veterans like you. As part of this research I would like you to fill out a survey about your experiences as a veteran and college student at CUNY.

The benefit of your participation in this survey is that CUNY will be provided with knowledge that may help the institution significantly improve the lives and experiences of veterans in the university. Because discussing one's experiences in war and homecoming can be upsetting there is some risk of you becoming upset/depressed/unsettled by this study. If necessary I can refer you to a counselor to help you with this; in that event please use my contact information found at the bottom of this page.

This survey will take approximately 15 minutes; it will be administered via a secure (SSL encrypted) survey website or by paper. At any time you can refuse to answer any questions or end the survey. Although this survey is intended to be anonymous and no identifying information will be collected during it, your responses, being reassembled, may reveal your identity. I will however, restrict access to the raw survey data to myself and my advisor (his contact information is below), and I will not publish in CUNY internal documents or any outside publications a telling mass of partial identifiers of survey respondents. Thus while I will publish results of this study, I will not report the names of people, or any identifying characteristics, in any of the publications. If you would like a copy of the study, please provide me with your address and I will send you a copy in the future.

If you have any questions about this research, you can contact me at (718) 807-8305 or Demond.Mullins@gmail.com, or my advisor Professor Paul Attewell at (212) 817-8787 or pattewell@gc.cuny.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you can contact Arita Winter, CUNY-Wide IRB Administrator, City University of New York, (212) 794-5504, Arita.Winter@gc.cuny.edu.

Thank you for your participation in the study. You may keep this page if you would like to have a copy of this document. By accessing the survey you consent to your participation in the study.

Thank you,
Demond Mullins

CUNY-Wide Approval August 30, 2011 – August 29, 2012

Survey of CUNY Student Veteran Engagement

Section I: Military Service

1. **Have you ever served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces?**

- Yes, now on active duty
- Yes, on active duty during past 12 months, but not now
- Yes, on active duty in past but not in the past 12 months
- No, training in the Reserves or National Guard only
- No, never served in the military

2. **What branch of service are/were you in? Check all that apply:**

- National Guard
- Army
- Air Force
- Coast Guard
- Marine Corps
- Navy
- Reserves

3. **What category best describes your military occupation? (Choose only one if you have only one military occupation)**

- Combat Arms (example: Infantry, Cavalry, etc.)
- Combat Support (example: Engineer, Military Police, etc.)
- Service Support (example: Transportation, Finance, etc.)

4. **Which theatre of action have you served in? (Check all that apply)**

- Operation Enduring Freedom
- Operation Iraqi Freedom / Operation New Dawn
- Operation Desert Storm
- I have not served in any of these theatres

5. **How many months were you deployed to each theatre of action listed below? (Add number of months together if you deployed more than once)**

Operation Iraqi Freedom / Operation New Dawn ________________

Operation Enduring Freedom ____________________

Operation Desert Storm ____________________

Survey of CUNY Student Veteran Engagement

6. Did you experience combat?

- Yes
- No

7. Were you ever deployed while enrolled in college?

- Yes
- No

8. Do you have a disability rating?

- Yes
- No
- Pending

9. For how long did you serve? __________years

10. What was your highest paygrade?

E1	E6
E2	E7
E3	E8
E4	E9
E5	Officer

11. Rate the following items:

	Poor 1	2	3	Excellent 4
a. Overall, how would you rate your experience in the military?	❢	❢	❢	❢
b. Overall, how would you rate being a veteran?	❢	❢	❢	❢
c. How well has the military prepared you for civilian life?	❢	❢	❢	❢

Survey of CUNY Student Veteran Engagement

12. Before you entered the military, what was the highest level of education you had?

- ❢ Did not finish high school
- ❢ Graduated from high school, or received GED
- ❢ Attended college but did not complete degree
- ❢ Completed an associate's degree (A.A., A.S., etc.)
- ❢ Completed a bachelor's degree (B.S., B.A., etc)
- ❢ Completed an master's degree (M.A., M.S., etc.)
- ❢ Completed a doctoral degree (Ph.D., J.D., M.D., etc.)

Section II: Demographics

13. Write in your year of birth: | 1 | 9 | | |

14. Your sex:

❢ Male ❢ Female

15. What is your racial or ethnic identification? Check all that apply:

- ❢ American Indian or other Native American
- ❢ Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander
- ❢ Black or African American
- ❢ White (non-Hispanic)
- ❢ Hispanic or Latino

16. What is your marital status?

- ❢ Partnered
- ❢ Married
- ❢ Widowed
- ❢ Divorced
- ❢ Separated
- ❢ Never Married

17. How many children do you have? ____________Children

Survey of CUNY Student Veteran Engagement

18. Including you, how many people live in your household? ____________ People

19. How many hours per week do you spend working for pay? _________ Hrs

20. Which CUNY college do you currently attend?

- Baruch
- City
- Lehman
- Queens
- John Jay
- LaGuardia CC
- Brooklyn
- NYC Tech
- Hunter
- Medgar Evers
- York
- Hostos CC
- Queens CC
- Bronx CC
- College of Staten Island
- Borough of Manhattan CC
- Kingsborough CC
- CUNY School of Professional Studies
- Macaulay Honors College

21. What is your cumulative GPA (3.5, 4.0, etc.)? ____________

22. Please print your major(s) or your expected major(s).

a. Primary Major

b. Second Major or Degree (Not minor)

23. What tuition benefits have you used? Check all that apply:

- College Now
- Montgomery GI Bill
- Post 911 GI Bill
- Yellow Ribbon
- College Discovery
- TAP (Tuition Assistance Program)
- PELL
- CUNY ASAP
- SEEK
- New York State Veteran Tuition Award

24. Did you begin college at your current institution or elsewhere?

- Started Here
- Started Elsewhere

Survey of CUNY Student Veteran Engagement

25. How many credits are you registered for this semester? ____________ Credits

26. How many credits have you completed in total? _____________ Credits

27. How likely are you to finish your degree?

- ❢ Absolutely confident that I will finish this degree.
- ❢ I will probably finish this degree.
- ❢ I doubt that I will finish this degree.
- ❢ I think it is unlikely that I will finish this degree.

28. What is the highest level of education your parent(s) completed?
Mark one box per column.

Father	Mother	
❢	❢	Did not finish high school
❢	❢	Graduated from high school, or received GED
❢	❢	Attended college but did not complete degree
❢	❢	Completed an associate's degree (A.A., A.S., etc.)
❢	❢	Completed a bachelor's degree (B.S., B.A., etc)
❢	❢	Completed an master's degree (M.A., M.S., etc.)
❢	❢	Completed a doctoral degree (Ph.D., J.D., M.D., etc.)

Section III: CUNY Experience

29. To what extent does your college emphasize the following?

	Very little	Some	Quite a bit	Very much
a. Providing the support you need to help you succeed academically	❢	❢	❢	❢
b. Helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)	❢	❢	❢	❢
c. Providing the support you need to thrive socially	❢	❢	❢	❢

30. On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate the following CUNY Student Support Services? (Check one box for each question.)

	Poor 1	2	3	Excellent 4	I have never used these services
a) Admissions Office					
b) Financial Aid Office					
c) Registrar Office					
d) Academic Advisement					
e) Personal Counseling					
f) Career Service					
g) Health Services					
h) Child Care Services					
i) Library Services					
j) Internet Technology Services					
k) Disability Services					
l) College Orientation Services					
m) Tutoring Services					
n) Veterans' Affairs					

31. On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate CUNY Veterans' Affairs on the following items? (Check one box for each question.)

	Poor 1	2	3	Excellent 4	I have never used these services
a) Availability of Veterans' Affairs Liaison					
b) Access to current information about veteran's benefits					
c) Timely certification of attendance for educational benefits					
d) Tuition deferment when needed					
e) Veteran's Club					
f) Referral to college resources and external resources when needed					
g) Programs/workshops of interest to veterans					
h) Information about career and employment opportunities					

32. To what extent has your experience at this college contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas:

	Very Little	Some	Quite a Bit	Very Much
a. Acquiring a broad general education	❢	❢	❢	❢
b. Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills	❢	❢	❢	❢
c. Writing clearly	❢	❢	❢	❢
d. Speaking clearly	❢	❢	❢	❢
e. Thinking critically and analytically	❢	❢	❢	❢
f. Analyzing quantitative problems	❢	❢	❢	❢
g. Using computers and information technology	❢	❢	❢	❢
h. Working effectively with others	❢	❢	❢	❢
i. Understanding yourself	❢	❢	❢	❢

33. How would you rate your entire educational experience at your college?

❢ Poor ❢ Fair ❢ Good ❢ Excellent

34. If you could start over again, would you choose the same college?

❢ Definitely yes
❢ Probably yes
❢ Probably no
❢ Definitely no

Section IV: Personal Experience

35. In your experience at your college, how often have you done each of the following?

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
a. Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions				
b. Made a class presentation				
c. Come to class without completing readings or assignments				
d. Skipped class				
e. Worked with other students on projects during class				
f. Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare assignments				
g. Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary)				
h. Participated in a community-based project as part of a regular course				
i. Discussed grades or assignments with instructor				
j. Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor				
k. Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class				
l. Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with faculty members outside of class				
m. Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student-life activities, etc.)				
n. Received prompt feedback from faculty on your academic performance				

36. Mark the box that best represents the quality of your relationships with people at your college.

	1 Unfriendly, Unsupportive, Feeling of Alienation	2	3	4	5	6	7 Friendly, Supportive, Sense of Belonging
a. Relationships with other students	❢	❢	❢	❢	❢	❢	❢
b. Relationships with other veteran students	❢	❢	❢	❢	❢	❢	❢
c. Relationships with faculty	❢	❢	❢	❢	❢	❢	❢
d. Relationships with administrative personnel	❢	❢	❢	❢	❢	❢	❢

37. Have you used a Veterans Administration hospital or registered for VA healthcare since you left the service?

❢ Yes
❢ No
❢ Not Applicable, because I am still serving

38. Of the two below which one was the greater motivator for you to go to college?

❢ Getting a degree
❢ Receiving housing allowance from GI Bill
❢ Other

39. Over the past month, how often have you felt: (Check one box per question)

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Most of the time
a. That you were just as good as other people	❢	❢	❢	❢
b. Hopeful about the future	❢	❢	❢	❢
c. Happy	❢	❢	❢	❢
d. That you enjoyed life	❢	❢	❢	❢

Survey of CUNY Student Veteran Engagement

40. Please rate the following items on a scale from 1 to 4. Where 1 means "I have very little skill and a lot of difficulty in this area" and 4 means "I have strong skills in this area."

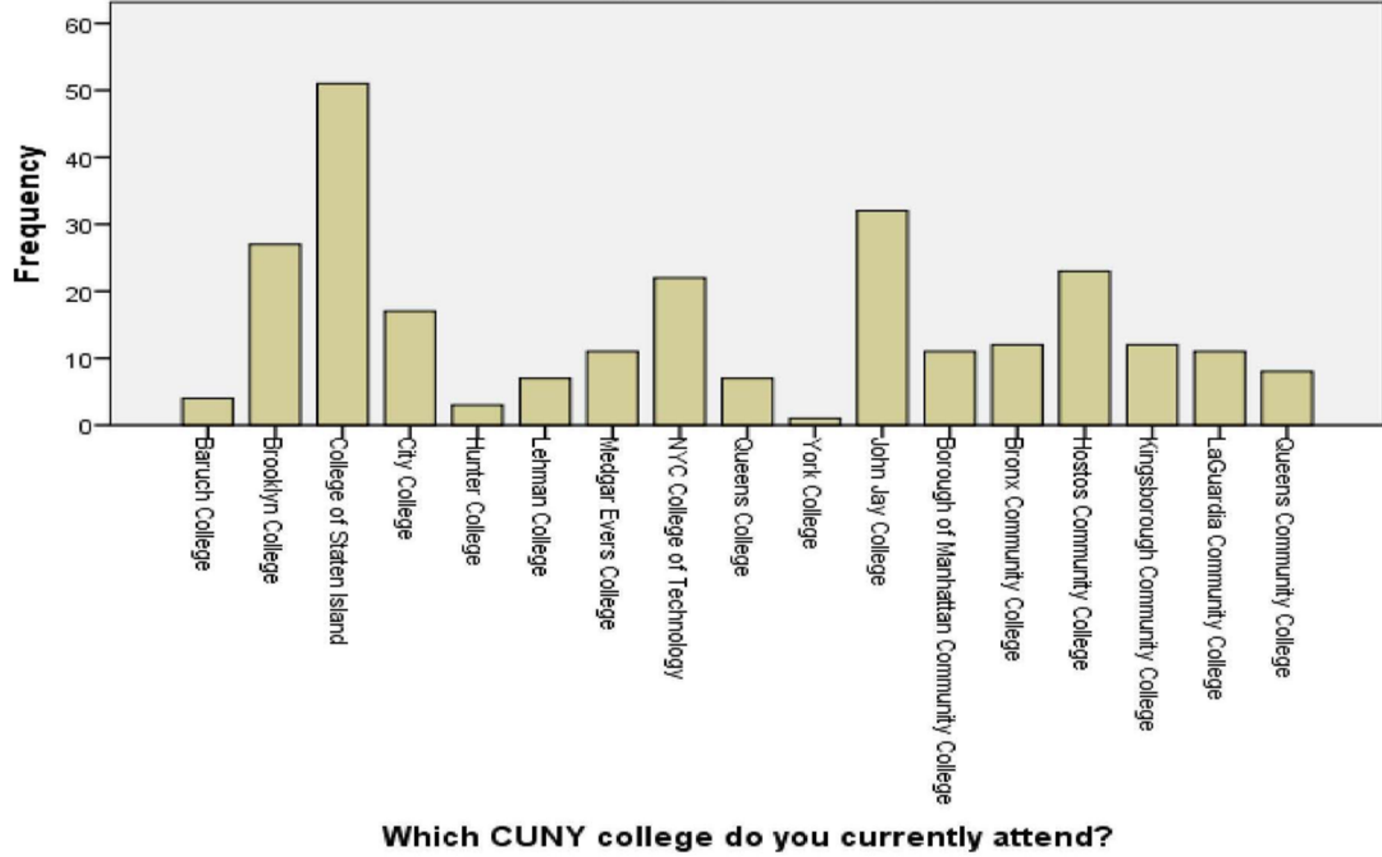
	Little skill 1	2	3	Strong Skill 4
a. Expressing myself in writing				
b. Hearing				
c. Seeing				
d. Remembering				
e. Walking or climbing stairs				
f. Speaking and expressing myself verbally				
g. Reading books and articles				
h. Understanding lectures and academic ideas				
i. Working with my hands				
j. Working with numbers or math				
k. Planning my time and meeting deadlines				
l. Meeting others, making new friends				
m. Getting on with other people in social settings				
n. Getting on with other people in work settings				
o. Controlling my feelings and emotions				
p. Concentrating and remaining focused for periods of time				
q. Handling the bureaucratic and paperwork aspects of college				
r. Managing financially while I am in college				

Survey of CUNY Student Veteran Engagement

Thank you for participating in this survey!

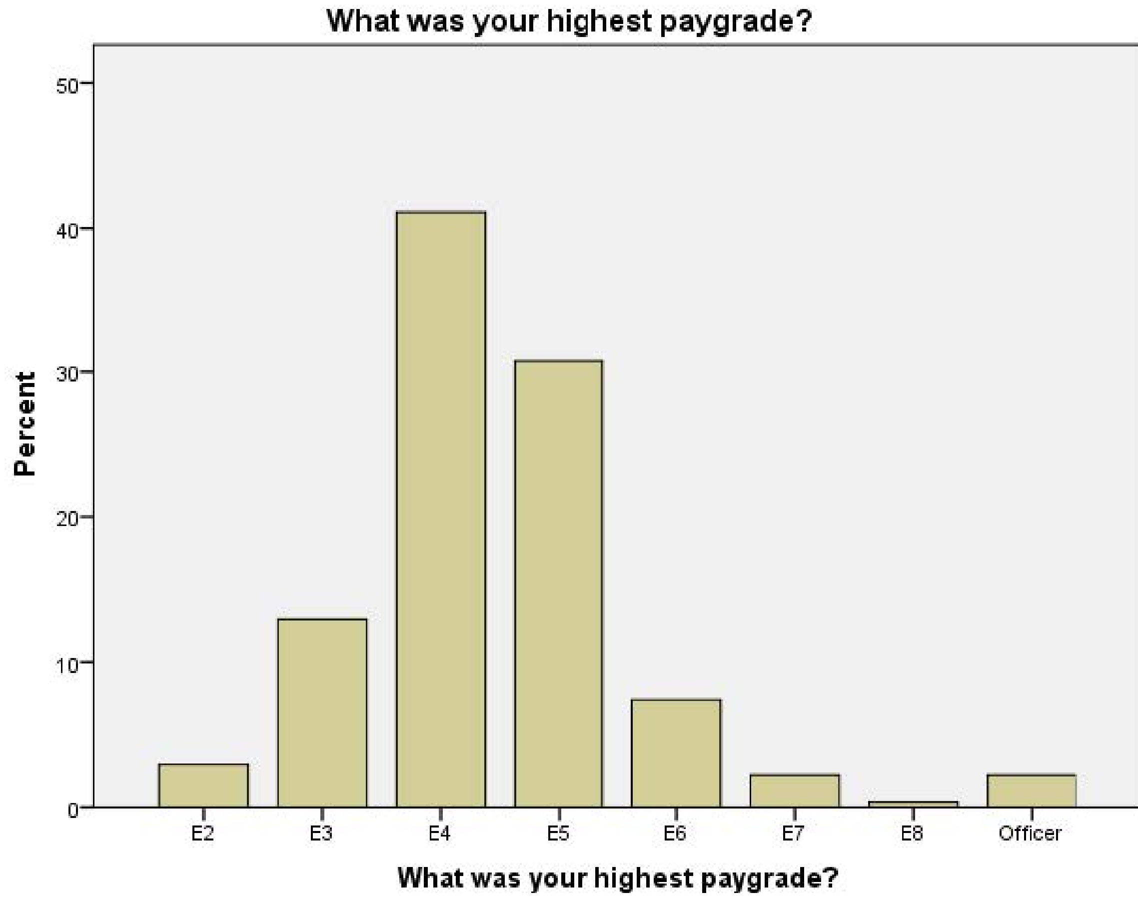
APPENDIX B

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON SURVEY RESPONDENTS

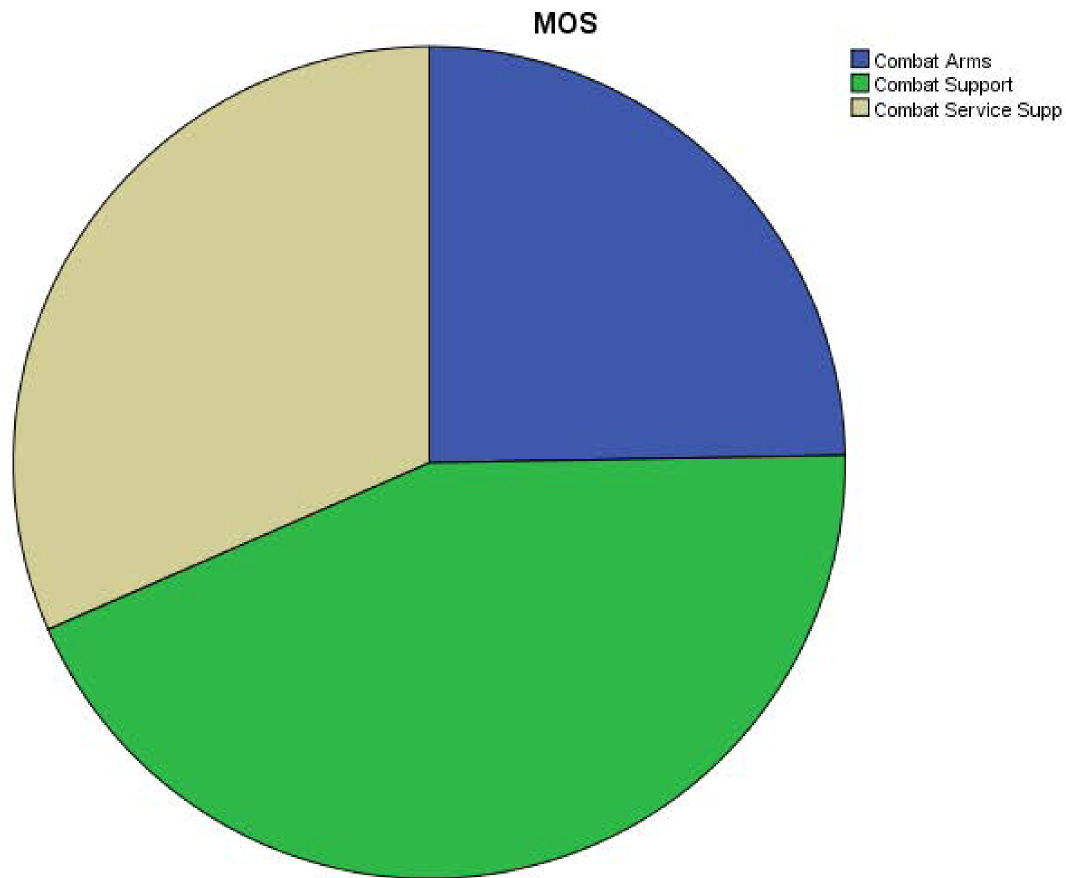


300 Survey Responses
Which CUNY college do you currently attend?
Frequency
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
Baruch College
Brooklyn College
College of Staten Island
City College
Hunter College
Lehman College
Medgar Evers College
NYC College of Technology
Queens College
York College
John Jay College
Borough of Manhattan Community College
Bronx Community College
Hostos Community College
Kingsborough Community College
LaGuardia Community College
Queens Community College
Which CUNY college do you currently attend?

Military Rank



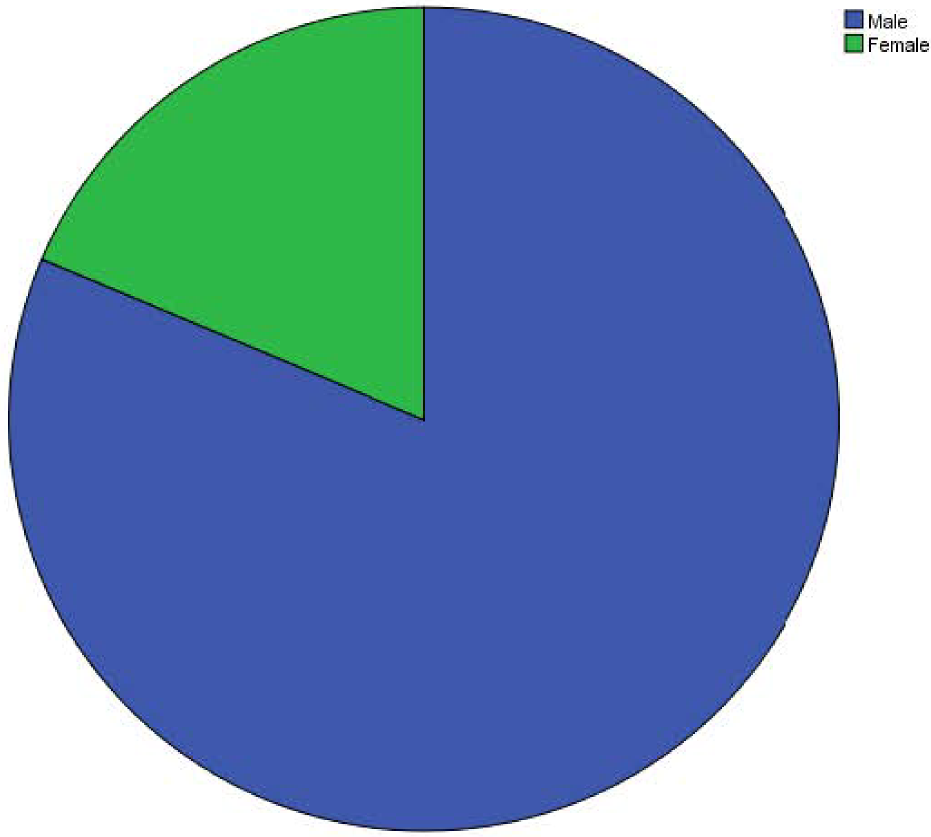
Military Occupational Specialty



(Combat Arms 25%, Combat Support 45%, Combat Support Service 30%)

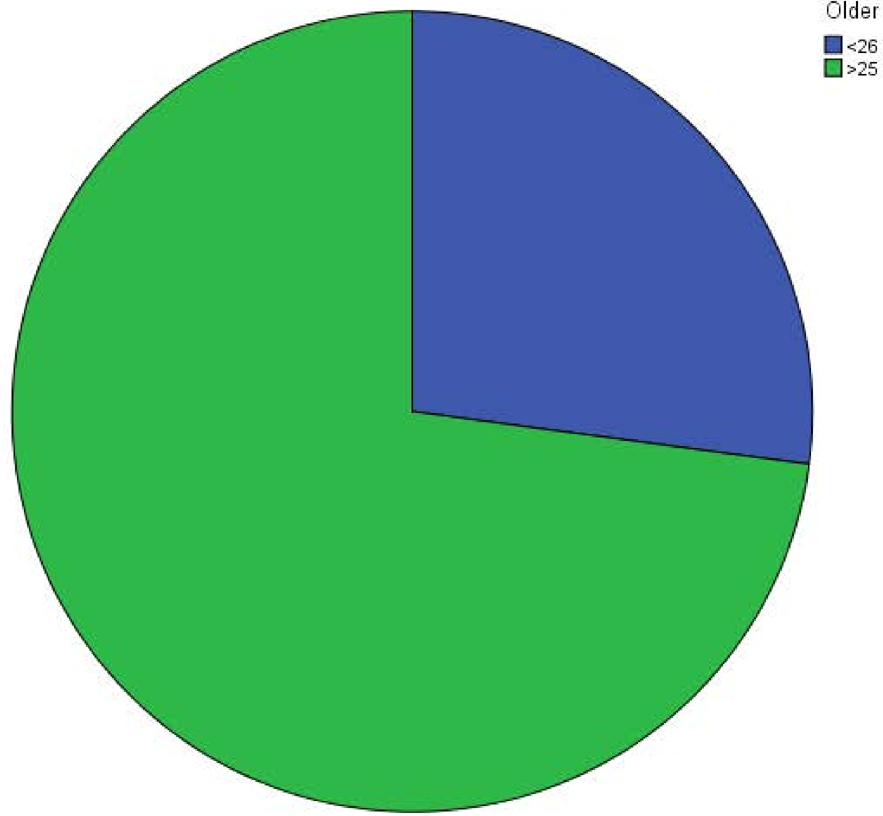
Gender

Your sex:



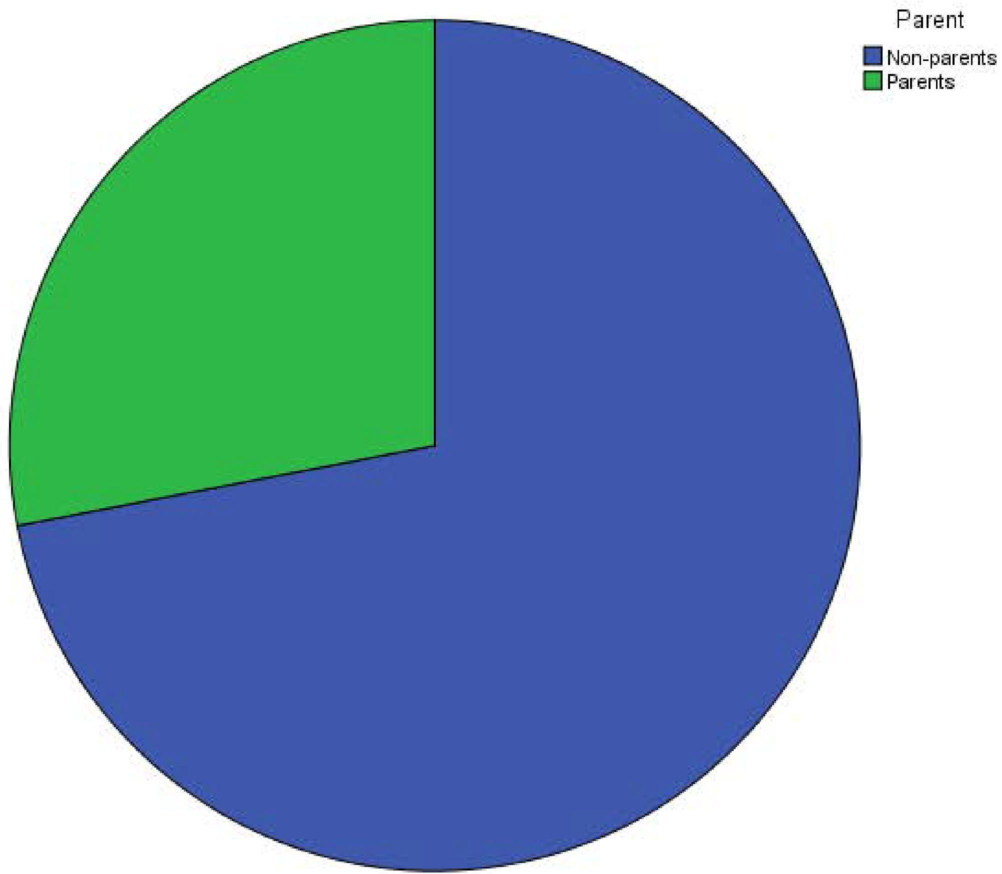
(18% Female, 82% Male)

AGE



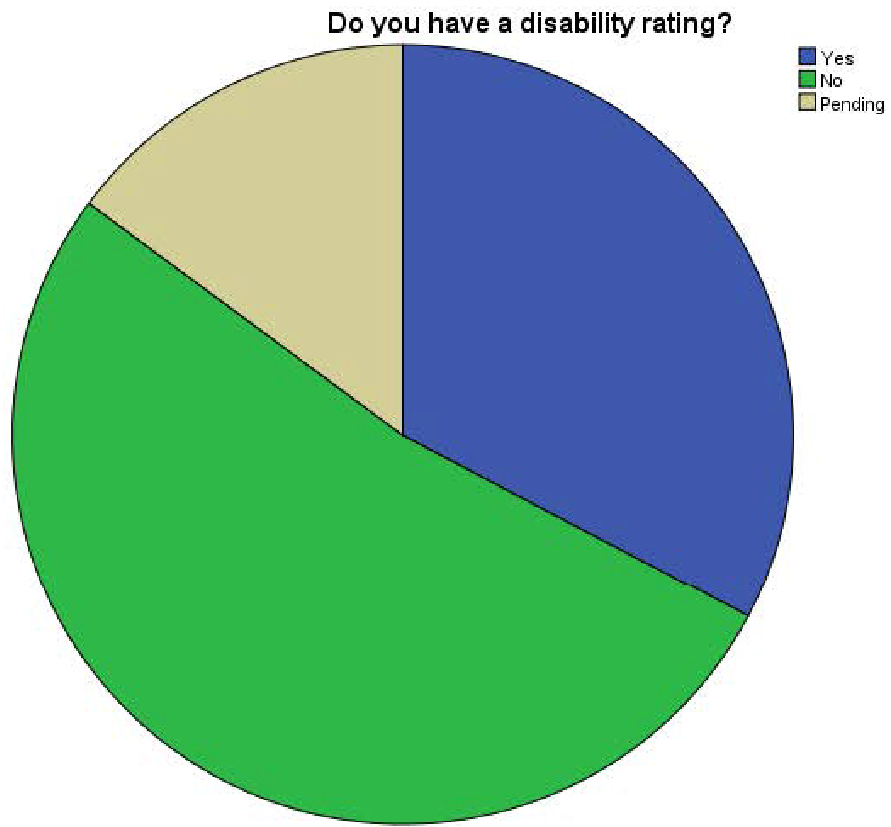
(27% Age 25 and younger, 73% Older than age 25, 30-31 Average age)

Student Vet Parents



(28% Parents, 72% Non-parents)

Disable Student Vets



(52% Not Disabled; 32% Disabled; 14% Pending Disability Certification)

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

MILITARY RELATED ?'s

1. Where did you grow up?
2. Did you join the military right out of high school?
    a. How old were you when you joined the military?
    b. What was that like?
3. What were your reasons for joining the military?
4. Can you describe your military service?
    a. Were you in combat?
5. Can you explain what it was like to return home after serving in the military?
6. What are your relationships like with other veterans?
7. Do you keep in touch with people you served with?
8. Do you miss military life?
    a. What about it do you miss?

COLLEGE RELATED ?'s

9. What are your reasons for coming to college?
10. Can you tell me about your experience in college after serving in the military?
11. What do you like most about college?
    a. What do you like least?
12. What are you studying in college?
    a. Do you enjoy it?
13. Do you feel as prepared for college as other students?
    a. Did you need to take remedial courses?

14. Do you spend time on campus aside from when you are in the classroom?
15. Your reflections on course material?
16. How do you feel about being a veteran?
17. Do you feel civilians treat you in a certain way when they know you are a veteran? Explain.

RELATIONSHIPS ?'s

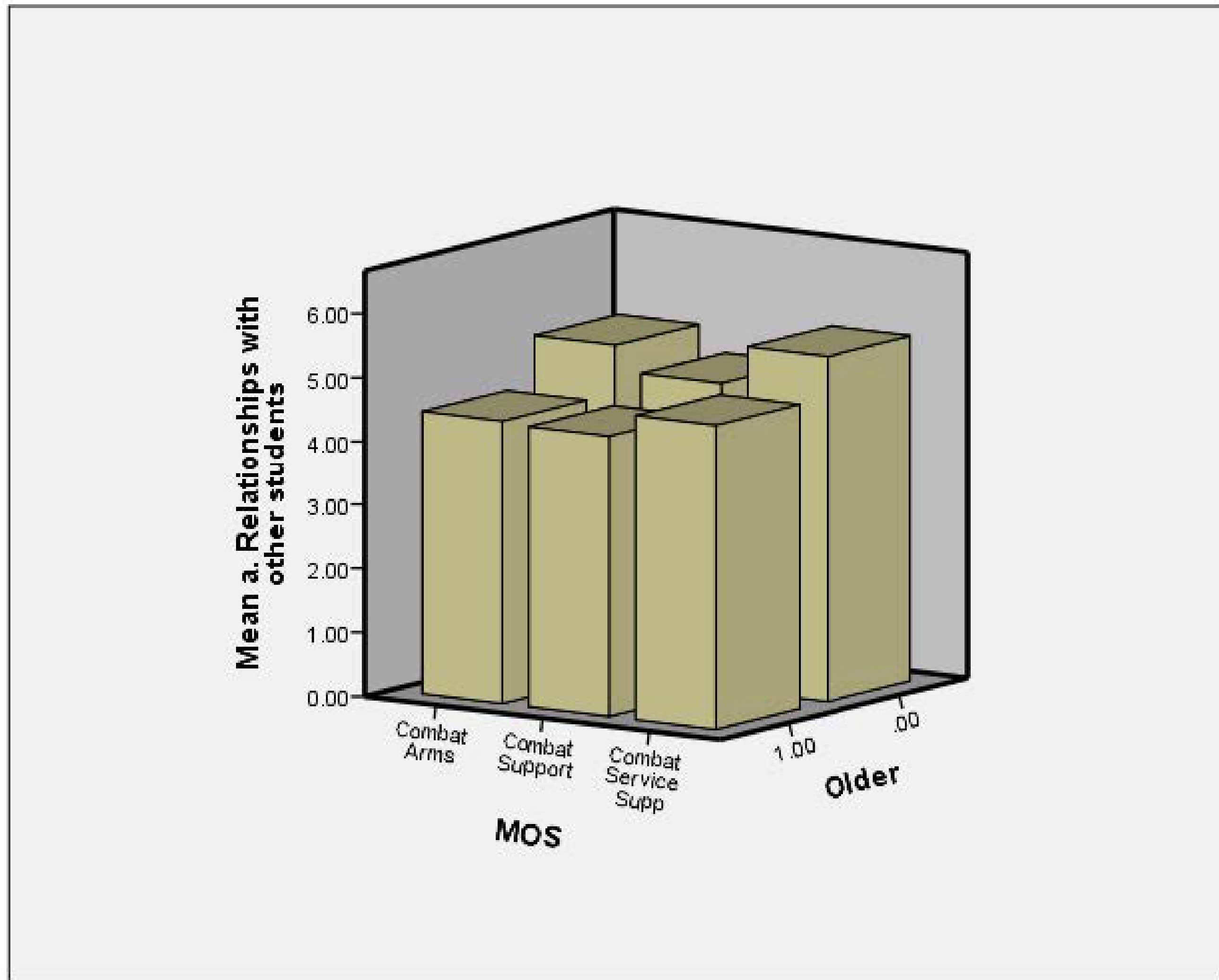
18. What are your relationships like with family and friends?
19. Have you gotten to know other students in your classes?
    a. Do you spend time with other students outside of the classroom?
    b. What are you relations like with them?
20. Have you gotten to know faculty members?
    a. Do you meet with faculty outside of the classroom?
21. What are your relationships like with faculty?
    a. Do you feel your professors appreciate your service? Why or why not?
22. What are your relationships like with administrative staff (i.e. registrar, bursar, financial aid, counselors)?
    a. Do you feel your school administrators appreciate your service? Why or why not?
23. What did the military teach you about civilians? How do you feel about this now?
24. What does it mean to you for civilians to show appreciation for your service? Do they show appreciation for the most part?

25. Do you feel like your particular college does well with providing support for veterans?
26. What is the most difficult thing about living in the civilian world?
27. What do you feel can be done by the university to improve the experiences of veterans at your college?
28. In what ways do you feel like serving in the military has affected you positively?
29. In what ways do you feel like serving in the military has affected you negatively?
30. Do you have any regrets?
31. How satisfied are you with your life now?
32. Where do you see yourself in the next 5 yrs?

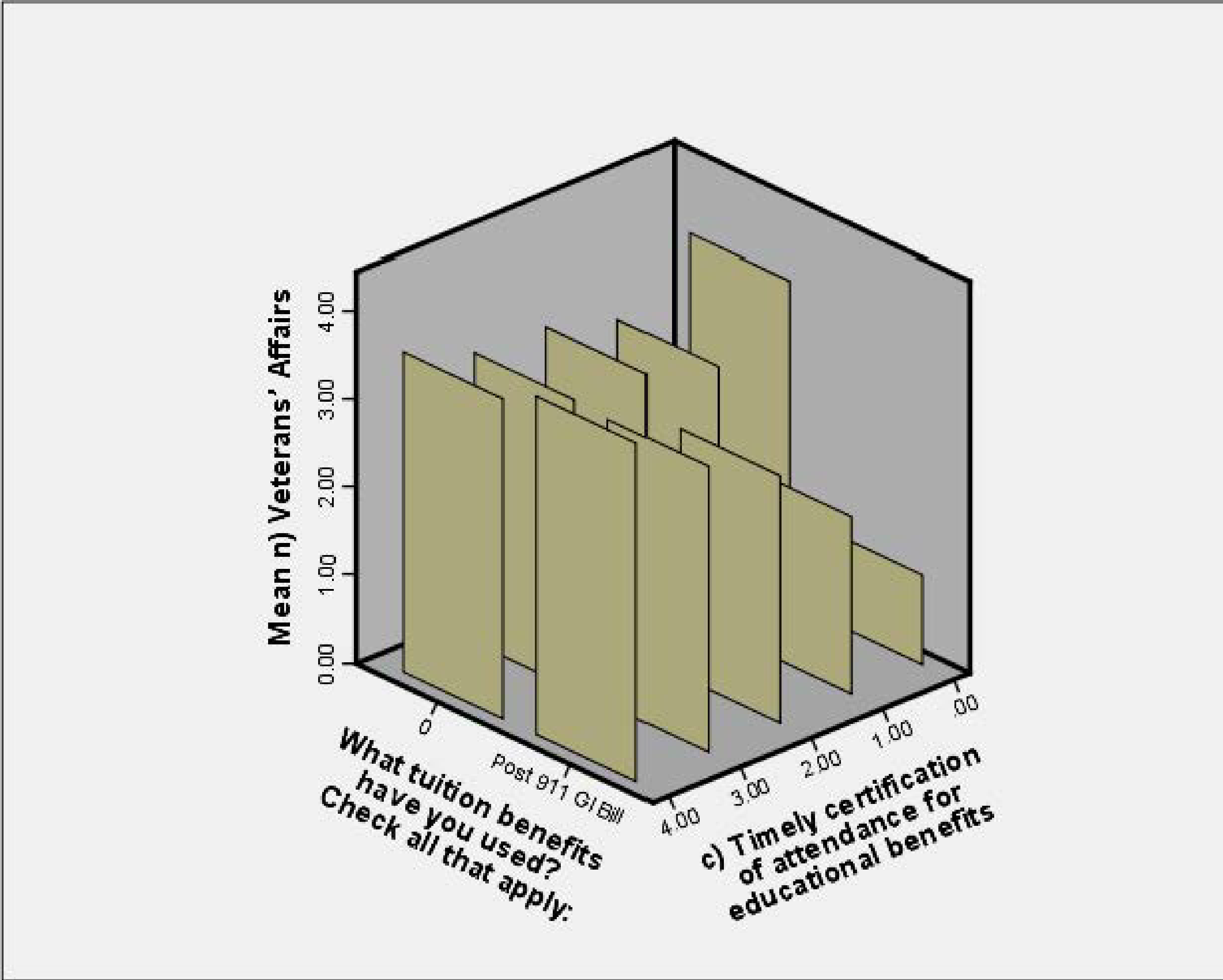
APPENDIX D

SELECTED SURVEY QUESTIONS

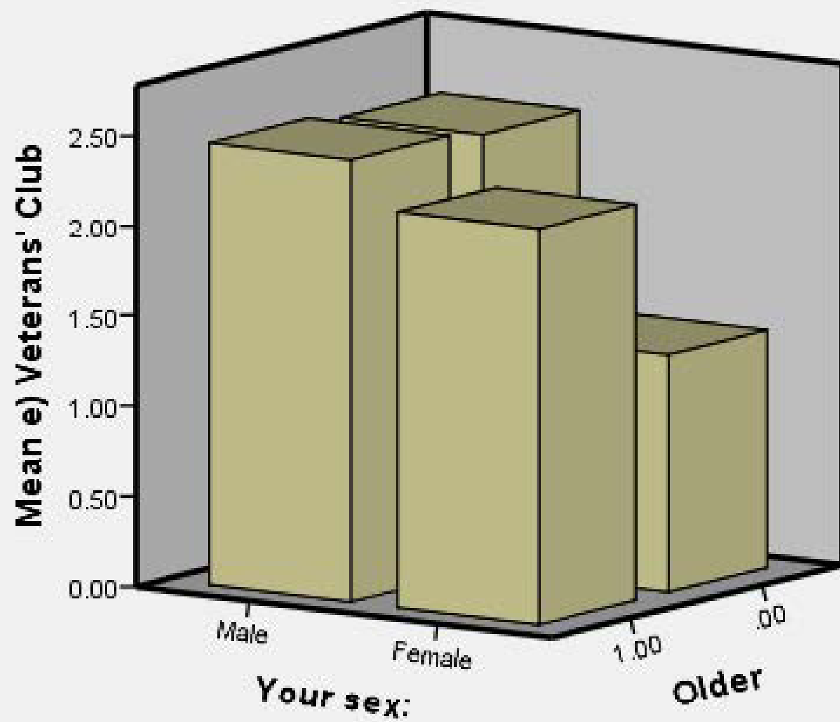
Student Vet/Student Relationships



CUNY VA/Post 911/Certification



Student Vet Clubs



APPENDIX E

SELECTED ETHNOGRAPHIC FIELD NOTES

Tuesday March 11, 2012

The shuffle to get on campus at ### is a real spectacle. Several city buses and school shuttles could not hold the flow of passengers transferring from the train to the bus in effort to get to ###. All of these buses, 4 in total, were full to maximum capacity and yet there were still people waiting. The public safety officer at the entrance of the campus knew exactly where the Veterans Affairs office was and gave me very detailed directions on how to get there.

When I entered the office a secretary was taking the names of students waiting to meet with administrators. The secretary was urging these students to sign an attendance sheet. There was one student standing in the line with a service dog. The student seemed to be blind and he was having a conversation with the secretary. Having to announce who I was in front of the students waiting to meet with staff, apparently caused a veteran student to start a conversation with the secretary and me. He began by addressing a popular current event, the soldier who killed 16 Afghans. He asked me if I knew about it and how I felt about it. I told him it was a very unfortunate event and I had remorse not only for the victims but also the young who had perpetrated the crimes. Combat is very stressful and he was deployed so many times, I explained. The student responded “I know, I know, believe me I know… It’s terrible.”

He then began to explain to me that he was also an Army combat veteran. He fought in Iraq and had been discharged from the military within the past year with 100% disability. He had been shot in the back while in the field of action. Without warning he lifted his

shirt and turned around to show me his wounds. An 18inch scar from an incision ran down his spine and a 6inch scar ran diagonally across the small of his back. Although he was severely wounded he did not receive a medical discharge from the Army because he was at the end of his contract. For the last two months of this contract he was in a coma however. He explained that after he was shot the last thing he saw was his commanding officer looking over his body, which lie on the ground. As the officer looked over him he was shot twice in the neck. He fell and died at his side and then the young man passed into a coma.

The way he spoke of his injuries was nearly as profound as the injuries themselves. He had some level of pride in his voice but he was also deeply sad. I was frozen with intrigue and soaked up the encounter like a sponge. His delivery of the account was dry, monotone, staccato, and yet warm. It reminded me of Iraq—the dragging, retarded, time of a deployment.

The Veteran's Coordinator's office is immaculate. I felt slightly uncomfortable talking to her, as if I were being interviewed. She has a very austere manner and her gaze is piercing. She gestured to a large stack of papers that sat on a chair next to me. These papers were unfinished benefits certifications. GI Bill benefits are processed in two phases. The first phase involves certifying the student's eligibility for receipt of the housing allowance. Several weeks later, the second phase involves certifying for the schools receipt of tuition payments. This is structured in such a way because students often change their course schedule so the tuition benefits are certified after the period during which students can change their schedules has elapsed.

March 5, 2012

College is a beautiful campus in the Bronx. It is a refreshing space in relation to the neighborhood surrounding it. The prewar buildings on ###'s campus are relics of another time for this area of New York City. The real estate for the campus is vast in comparison to other CUNY campuses. Being located in an urban area like NYC causes serious concerns for space in CUNY. ### college has more space on their campus than CUNY schools, and the new construction taking place in some of these spaces shows ###'s attempt to utilize their wealth of space.

Despite the wealth of outdoor space on campus, office space is still hard to come by. ###'s Veteran's Affairs operation is confined to a small office in the administrative building. The representative there finds the space inadequate for her purposes. She compared the size of her office space to the size of the community service office. "They have two big offices! This is a CUNY wide problem!" The Veteran's Affairs office is a small L-shaped, enclosed, space. It is somewhat cluttered because of the amount of furniture in such a small space. Almost every inch of the little room is currently appropriated for some purpose.

On the wall in the office is a large world map. The VA representative has taken it upon herself to use multi-colored pushpins to indicate all of the places in the world the military veterans of ### College have served (Red-Marine, Green-Army, etc). The board is an interesting spectacle, and a reminder of the amount of worldly experience this subgroup

of non-traditional students brings to the classroom. It also problematizes policies, rather the lack thereof, regarding academic credit for military service. As the map displays student veteran experience on nearly every continent, these students are not awarded credit for these experiences. And yet, students who participate in study abroad programs (not very popular in CUNY) are. This question should be posed: What makes one creditable and the other not? Any university would be hard pressed to find define the distinction.

Tuesday January 31, 2012

It was frustrating that the Public Safety officers at ### couldn't tell me where the veterans Affairs office was. ###'s campus is not in one central location. The buildings are spread out across several city blocks, in a largely residential area. Therefore depending upon a student's schedule a student may have to walk several blocks in order to get from one class to the next. The structure of this campus makes it absolutely necessary for Public Safety officers to know where essential offices and departments are located. If a student is misled it could result in the individual having to walk up to six city blocks. Unfortunately for me today I walked much more than six blocks because out of the 4 Public Safety officers I asked for directions, only one knew the correct
location of the Veterans Affairs office. This situation is particularly alarming for veteran students, who may be dealing with high levels of frustration or even physical ailments that complicate mobility.

After 40 minutes of walking around the dispersed campus following poor instructions of Public Safety I finally made it to the Veterans Affairs office. This office is very humble and dark. Several essential administrative office of ### College (including admissions) are located in this space—the storefront of a residential building. Veterans Affairs is in the basement of this building. The cubicles are poorly assembled and aligned; there are walls lined with file boxes; and obviously no concern for aesthetic.

The Veterans Affairs staff I met with was very professional. They took their time explaining the difficulties of handling their operation professionally in such a poorly kept space. They

brought my attention to the rows of boxes, the depressed ceiling caused by water damage, the lack of space for meeting and speaking privately with student veterans. Notwithstanding their professionalism the affect of this dismal space on their morale was evident.

The staff also took the initiative to explain their operation to me. Veterans Affairs, as they explained, has three basic functions: 1) the processing and follow-up activities of Veteran's benefits, 2) the recruitment of student veterans, which includes event planning, and 3) the counseling component upon which student veteran academic success is heavily contingent.

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