

**LOVE, SACRIFICE, AND HONOR: WARRIOR VIRTUES AND
THE AMERICAN SOLDIERS' EXPERIENCE OF WORLD WAR II**

An Honors Fellows Thesis

by

BENJAMIN KENNETH WILLIAMSON

Submitted to the Honors Programs Office
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the designation as

HONORS UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH FELLOW

April 2010

Major: Sociology

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ABSTRACT

Love, Sacrifice, and Honor: Warrior Virtues and the American Soldiers' Experience of World War II. (April 2010)

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The twentieth century has been called the bloodiest century in human history. In two world wars and various other conflicts spanning across decades, man was more combative than ever before. Yet despite this century of conflict, the combative disposition appears to run contrary to the nature of man.

Mingled with stories of the horrors of war, we find reports of heroic warrior virtues: among them love, sacrifice, and honor. To better understand the nature of man as warrior, we must explore the manifest and latent social functions of these warrior virtues in the lives of soldiers.

This research examines the theories concerning the nature of man at war and the manifestation of warrior virtues on the battlefield. Through a literature review of war theories in relation to man, as well as first-hand accounts of heroic virtue by American soldiers in World War II, this study presents a generalized picture of the essence of man

at war and seeks to provide insight for the future training and health management of soldiers on the battlefield.

An examination of nine World War II narratives by American soldiers revealed time and again their reliance upon the warrior virtues of love, sacrifice, and honor to communicate their personal experiences of the war. For each of these men, it was their personal commitment to these virtues that shaped their service and their experience of the war. This dependence upon warrior virtues for explaining their experiences conveys the important social function that such virtues played in their time of service and how—when properly enacted—warrior virtues provided social organization to counter the chaos of war, simultaneously uniting the soldiers to the cultural values of the society from which they came.

We stand at the outset of another century which, for our nation especially, has already been marked by a new kind of war—a war on terror. For the safety and well-being of our soldiers, it is imperative that we continue to increase our understanding of the personal and social impacts war has on the individuals who fight them. While this study does not answer all of the questions regarding warrior virtues and the nature of man at war, it examines the life of warriors from both a theoretical and experiential perspective and lays the groundwork for future research.

DEDICATION

I respectfully dedicate this work to:

The brave men and women of our armed forces who have fought honorably in our nation's wars in order to secure freedom, goodness, and peace to our country.

The men whose records of service and accounts of war I examine in the following pages, which greatly opened to me the life of the warrior and the role that warrior virtues play in the lives of our soldiers.

My grandfathers—the late Lieutenant Colonel Robert L. Markey, USAF (Ret.), and Technical Sergeant Charles R. Williamson, USAF (Ret.)—whose dutiful service to this nation I greatly admire.

For your loyalty, your dedication, and your sacrifice for this nation, I salute you.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. James Burk, my research advisor, for his support and guidance in conducting my research. It was in his Military War and Society course that I first considered the implications of warrior virtues in the lives of soldiers, and it was only under his direction that I was able to determine how to form this interest into a research problem to be studied.

Thanks are also due to the Texas A&M University Honors Programs office for their direction and support and to Dr. Dave Louis, coordinator of the Honors Undergraduate Research Fellowship program.

I would like to thank my fellow participants in the fellows program who have joined me in this year of research, as well as my close friends who have sustained me through hours and hours of researching, writing, and editing. Without your aid, I truly would have been lost on this journey. Thank you for your companionship.

I am most indebted however, to my family, who have continually supported me and always driven me to do my best—both in academics and in life in general. Their encouragement has sustained me through times of trial and moments of confusion and frustration, and their faith in my abilities has driven me to strive to be the best student that I can be. Thank you for your constant love, prayers, and support.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
ABSTRACT		iii
DEDICATION		v
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....		vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS		vii
CHAPTER		
I	INTRODUCTION.....	1
	The focus of this study	2
	Aims of the current research	5
	Methods.....	6
	Plan of the Work	8
II	WAR AND THE HUMAN PERSON:	
	THE NATURE OF MAN AND HIS LIFE AS WARRIOR.....	9
	On the nature of man.....	10
	On the life of man as warrior	14
III	THE NATURE OF MORALITY AND VIRTUE	17
	On morality	17
	Regarding virtue, with respect to moral objectivist standards	19
IV	WARRIOR VIRTUES:	
	DEFINING LOVE, SACRIFICE, AND HONOR	23
	Love.....	23
	Sacrifice.....	25
	Honor.....	26

CHAPTER	Page
V	WARRIOR VIRTUES: IN THEIR OWN WORDS 29
	Joe Hanley 30
	John Ciardi 32
	George D. Keathley 32
	Lloyd H. Hughes 34
	Horace Carswell 35
	Timuel Black 36
	Dr. Alex Shulman 38
	E.B. “Sledgehammer” Sledge 40
	Elliot Johnson 42
VI	AWARDING VIRTUE: MEDALS OF HONOR AND THE AMERICAN SYSTEM OF MILITARY COMMENDATION 45
	History of the American system of commendation and the Medal of Honor 45
	From the soldiers’ perspective 47
VII	SUMMARY OF RESULTS, DISCUSSION, AND CONCLUSION 52
	Theoretical foundation 52
	Socio-historical examination 56
	Discussion 63
	Conclusion 65
	REFERENCES 67
	CONTACT INFORMATION 69

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the American military today, the question of what constitutes the body of warrior virtues has become one of great interest. Warrior societies throughout history and across the world have established warrior codes of behavior based upon their own image of what constitutes an ideal warrior—codes which enumerate precisely that which the society deems virtuous in its warriors. Such codes often impose the strictest of standards upon the warrior and detail “not only how he should interact with his own warrior comrades but also how he should treat other members of his society, his enemies, and the people he conquers” (French [1970] 2003:3). As Michael Walzer put it, “we must ask ‘how the duties of a belligerent, fighting in the name of justice, and under the restraints of morality, are to be determined,’” ([1977] 2000:128). What virtues must be exemplified for a warrior to be deemed just?

Once a solution to the aforementioned question has been investigated, a question of greater importance arises: how best do we conduct the moral education of warriors-in-training? Can a “warrior code” truly be taught as curricula at a training academy? The United States Military Academy at West Point is attempting just this, having established the Simon Center for the Professional Military Ethic—an ethics center created to “administer and provide oversight for programs to assist cadets in synthesizing their

This thesis follows the style of the *American Sociological Review*.

experiences; to inspire a personal ownership of a self-identity as an officer who acts in harmony with the Army Values and the American Professional Military Ethic” (Simon Center 2009b). The Simon Center seeks to ingrain in its cadets a respect for the warrior code of conduct and provide a value-based education so that the cadets may make ethically and morally sound choices and have the courage to fulfill their responsibilities as courageous and honorable warriors. More than simply learning a code of honor or a list of values deemed important to military life, the Simon Center wishes see in its cadets a *living out* of these warrior virtues (Simon Center 2009a).

The focus of this study

In order to understand how such virtues operate among contemporary warriors, I intend to study theories regarding the nature of man, the nature of man’s life as warrior, and the nature of morality and virtue. Furthermore, I will investigate the way in which “warrior virtues” operated—or failed to operate—in the experiences of soldiers in World War II. As stated by James Turner Johnson in his book *Morality and Contemporary Warfare*, “The problems posed by contemporary war are both particular to it and similar to problems already experienced and addressed in moral reflection on other wars”(1999:7). To understand the future of conflict we must look to the past while keeping a watchful eye on the present.

Love, sacrifice, and honor

This study utilizes the reflections of J. Glenn Gray in his book *The Warriors*:

Reflections on Men in Battle to provide focus and direction to researching the role of the warrior virtues of love, sacrifice, and honor in the lives of American soldiers in World War II. In his own role as an American intelligence officer in the Second World War, Gray experienced a heightened sense of urgency, a “nervous excitement” that was unlike anything he had experienced before. The structure of his duties as an intelligence officer allowed him a great deal of time to himself—time which he often spent reflecting on the meaning and inevitability of the war. Indeed, his background in philosophy at Columbia University prepared him to think analytically about how war affects warriors socially, mentally, emotionally, and physically ([1959] 1998:14-20).

In his book, Gray discusses at great length the warrior experiences of comradeship, self-sacrifice, and honor. Comradeship, he says, is one of the greatest appeals of war—“a genuine advantage of battle that peace can seldom offer” ([1959] 1998:39). United by a common purpose and a common livelihood, warriors almost invariably find comradeship to be the greatest phenomena of battle and a source of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual strength. This comradeship transcends all relationships prior to its discovery and after its dissipation (Linderman 1997:263-266). It is a love that is unlike any other known to man.

It is this very love which leads men to great acts of self-sacrifice. This spiritual bonding which constitutes camaraderie leads men to “insist on going hungry for one another, freezing for one another, dying for one another” (Ambrose 1993:19). Gray declares that

it is when men are willing to give up their lives for one another—“without reflection and without thought of personal loss”—that they become true comrades. It is then that the “I” becomes “we” and “individual fate loses its central importance” (Gray [1959] 1998:45-46).

The virtue of honor discussed by Gray is crucial to the love and self-sacrifice of a warrior. Love and sacrifice rely upon honor, for without the impulse to act justly, rightly, and morally—without honor—who would give himself over to love? Moreover, who without honor would give himself over to a self-sacrificial death? It is the honorable warrior who performs his duties and seeks to live his life for the greater good, even when it calls him to extreme sacrifice.

In *The Code of the Warrior*, Shannon French declares: “Accepting certain constraints as a moral duty, even when it is inconvenient or inefficient to do so, allows warriors to hold on to their humanity while experiencing the horror of war” ([1970] 2003:10). In examining the experience of love, sacrifice, and honor by World War II soldiers, I hope to determine whether the presence of these warrior virtues truly aids the warrior in maintaining a sense of humanity in the midst of the chaos of war.

It will only be in investigating the soldiers’ experience of virtues in war that we may be able to completely answer the question: “What constitutes the body of ‘warrior virtues?’” If we gain a greater understanding of the warriors’ experience, we may better

know the nature of morality for soldiers and what constitutes “right conduct” in war. In comprehending this, we gain valuable insight into the warrior code—priceless insight which will help us to understand the inner-workings of a warrior and which can be used to direct military programs for creating honorable, virtuous, and socially prepared combat-ready soldiers.

Aims of the current research

This study examines both philosophical and social theory as well as the experiences of soldiers in World War II in order to gain a greater understanding of the role that warrior virtues play in the lives of contemporary soldiers. The first section attempts to construct a theoretical framework for comprehending this problem by examining theories regarding the nature of man and his life as warrior as well as theories regarding the nature of morality and virtue. The second part of the study examines the personal accounts of World War II American soldiers in light of this theoretical foundation and seeks to determine the social function of warrior virtues on the battlefield.

In this research I wish to examine the American soldiers’ experience of the virtues of love, sacrifice, and honor in World War II to determine how and to what extent warriors rely upon these virtues to maintain—to the greatest extent they can—a sense of humanity amidst the chaos of war. I hypothesize that such humanitarian virtues as love, sacrifice, and honor provide a sense of order for warriors who are under extreme

physical, emotional, and spiritual stress as a result of war, thus enabling them to maintain a sense of their humanity amidst the chaos of war.

A secondary question which the research attempts to address is whether such warrior virtues are teachable. Is it possible to teach a nation's soldiers how to form intense bonds of camaraderie within the military unit? Can a soldier be taught how to willfully sacrifice his own well-being for his comrades if the opportunity for sacrifice presents itself? Can a soldier be taught how to carry the warrior code of honor with him at all times in order to guide his conduct in war? If warrior virtues do prove to have an advantageous social function for soldiers on the battlefield, the implications of whether or not such virtues can be taught to soldiers are of great consequence for ensuring the well-being of our nation's servicemen and women.

Methods

The entirety of this study was conducted utilizing a literature review, with all of the research being completed through the Texas A&M University libraries. The university libraries database was searched several times for key words and phrases such as "comradeship," "warrior virtues," "World War II," and "American soldiers' experience," and the results of these searches were examined for their applicability to this study's investigation of warrior virtues in the lives of American soldiers. The sources revealed in these searches were then reviewed to identify specific manifestations of warrior virtues in the lives of soldiers in order that the relevance or irrelevance of these warrior

virtues might be analyzed. Furthermore, the study attempts to analyze the effects of such virtues on the perceived orderliness of war and the warriors' sense of a maintained humanity amidst the chaos of war.

This method of study was chosen for several reasons. The overall aim of this study was to provide a general picture of the lives of all American soldiers in World War II rather than a specific subset, such as those veterans living within the Brazos Valley.

Furthermore, the resources and time necessary to conduct an adequate survey of surviving veterans were neither available nor feasible for the scope of this study.

Documented accounts of the warriors' experiences of the Second World War, on the other hand, were highly available through the Texas A&M University libraries.

This method of study, however, suffers from several limitations. It relies upon soldiers' past memories, which can often be colored by emotion and clouded by years of distance between the experience being recalled and the time of the actual recollection.

Furthermore, though it seeks to provide a generalized view of American soldiers' experiences, it is difficult to be certain this is accomplished without surveying the entirety of literature concerning World War II. This study seeks to minimize these limitations by examining a wide variety of source material from an assortment of authors, covering the experiences of servicemen in nearly every branch of the military.

Plan of the Work

The remaining chapters show the progression of research from a general discussion of the theoretical foundations for understanding warrior virtues to an examination of the personal accounts of World War II American soldiers. To gain a greater understanding of the experience that warriors have on the battlefield, the next chapter examines the nature of man and his life as warrior from a theoretical perspective. The third chapter then investigates the nature of morality and virtue in a similar manner. Chapter IV utilizes the reflections of J. Glenn Gray in *The Warriors: Reflections on Men in Battle* in order to define the warrior virtues being examined. In Chapter V, a selection of soldiers' personal accounts of the war are reviewed to demonstrate the role that warrior virtues played in their lives both during the war and after its conclusion. The sixth chapter discusses the American system for awarding medals and decorations upon its servicemen as well as the flaws and imperfections of such a system. The seventh and final chapter discusses the results of this research, the implications of its findings for the military and for future research, and closes by presenting the conclusions of this study.

CHAPTER II

WAR AND THE HUMAN PERSON: THE NATURE OF MAN AND HIS LIFE AS WARRIOR

In order to properly assess the role that warrior virtues played in the lives of American soldiers in World War II, we must first lay the theoretical foundation for understanding the nature of man, his life as warrior, and the nature of virtue. As noted by James Lowde in his book *A Discourse Concerning the Nature of Man*, what the author of such discussions intends to signify by the terms “nature,” “by nature,” and “naturally,” must properly be defined from the beginning of the work and applied consistently throughout his work ([1694] 1979:151). When encountered within this study, the reader should infer that such terms refer to the qualities which define the essence or character of the subject. For instance, when discussing that man is “by nature” inclined toward a certain disposition, it is intended that the reader would understand that mankind in general expresses a predilection for such behavior. With Cicero we regard the nature of a subject as an “internal ordering principle” (Litman 1930:13).

A great deal of classical theory concerning the nature of man utilized thought experiments to create hypotheses by assessing man in a theoretical pre-societal or original state—“in nature.” While this study examines selections from classical theories that utilized the term nature in this respect, it should not be confused with the present definition of these terms. This study is primarily concerned with man as a social being,

and will deal only with the implications of theories regarding the nature of man for his role in society.

On the nature of man

In his reflections on war, J. Glenn Gray asks, “If we could gain only a modicum of greater wisdom concerning what manner of men we are, what effect might it not have on future events?” ([1959] 1998:24). It is in this vein of thought that this study attempts to form a more comprehensive understanding of man’s nature. Within the literature addressing the nature of man, there exist two prevailing attributes that a great number of philosophers and sociologists treat: that of man’s self-preservative instinct and his resistance to change. It is necessary to explore each attribute more closely.

The self-preservative instinct

Man’s inclination toward self-preservation is easily evident within the world around us. It is this instinct which impels man to action, to work and to cooperate with others in society in order that his best interests may be realized and he may continue to obtain the resources necessary to continue onward in his existence. It is precisely because this instinct is so fundamental to the actions of mankind that philosophers throughout the ages have attempted to address it in their writings.

While both Cicero and Hobbes placed the utmost emphasis upon man’s self-preservative instinct, making it the foremost principle of mankind’s nature, they arrived at completely

different conclusions based upon the same attribute in the nature of man. Cicero claimed that the purpose of this self-preservative instinct was to serve as “the guide to living well” (Litman 1930:29) and was also the starting point of morality and ethics. For him, this aspect of man’s nature was to be applied by his higher faculties to help guard and preserve his fellow men. In contrast, Thomas Hobbes claimed that the self-preservative instinct would lead all men in their original, pre-societal state to be in a condition of constant war against one another in order to obtain the goods necessary for survival. According to Hobbes, social contracts evolved to allow man to live in a state of peace and to, in a sense, compromise his instinct for self-preservation with that same instinct in others. The disparity of the conclusions which they reached in their inquiries into the self-preservative instinct arises out of their largely different ideas on man’s nobility or baseness in comparison with other forms of life. While Cicero regarded man as the “best and most excellent of all types of being” (Litman 1930:33), Hobbes generally regarded man on the same level as other beings of animal nature and framed his hypotheses upon the basest conduct of mankind, ignoring their nobler respects (Lowde [1694] 1979:166).

Though Hobbes emphasized this self-preservative instinct as the primary impulse of man—to be employed even at the expense of other men—mankind’s ability to sacrifice indicates that this instinct is neither the only end to which he must attend nor the cardinal attribute of the nature of man. This instinct towards self-preservation does, however, explain why sacrifice and virtue are held in such high esteem: they require man to set

aside his self-seeking desires, realize his social character, and consider the societal consequences of his actions.

Regardless of the viewpoint which the reader wishes to take regarding the nobility or baseness of mankind, it is simple to recognize the truth of this principle of self-preservation by assessing the biological response of our species to stimuli which are potentially dangerous. Maslowski and Winslow devote considerable analysis to the biological components of fear and danger perception and the role this biological mechanism plays in the lives of soldiers on the battlefield. They note that in the presence of a potentially dangerous stimulus, the sympathetic nervous system will be alerted by the sensory organs, the amygdala, and other brain structures to take over the operation of many vital systems within the body (2004:215-217). This reaction is often referred to as the “fight or flight response” and demonstrates scientifically the complexity of this instinct in man.

Man's resistance to change

Litman notes in his discussion of Cicero's philosophy on nature and man that humans have a certain love of stability and a fear of change (1930:22). It is widely recognized in sociological studies that man requires a level of stable social organization in order to function properly and to live a healthy life. Such studies as *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* have revealed that stable and dependable relations between individuals and their surrounding society are critical to the well-being of individuals and

groups who are taken out of their native society and placed in a foreign, unfamiliar environment (Thomas and Znaniecki 1958).

This principle could easily be applied to the situation of the modern warrior, who is transplanted from his native land and placed in the midst of a war on foreign soil in a sociopolitical conflict which is altogether foreign to him as an individual. Furthermore, the nature of war is such that it defies man's generally peaceable lifestyle, which is guided by his instinct for self-preservation. If the soldier does not have a high degree of social organization in his life on the battlefield, he will encounter a great deal of stress and not only have difficulty functioning in his role as soldier but also in leading a healthy life.

War by its nature is in a constant state of dynamic change, resulting in heightened stress levels for those who are its participants. As noted by Gray, who served in the American Army during World War II, "Sometimes I moved through days and weeks trying to reach the familiar, the accustomed, and the intimate" ([1959] 1998:15-16). The social disorganization which is characteristic of any war wreaks havoc upon the social system internalized within the soldier—the norms, behaviors, and social controls he carries with him from his native land—and degrades his ability to cope with the crisis at hand.

The military organization does its best to counter the social stress which confronts the soldiers by providing them with a high degree of stability and organization within their

military units. These small primary reference groups serve to form intimate bonds amongst their members by means of the mechanical solidarity inherent in living and working together towards a common end. Furthermore, the high degree of stability with which the military seeks to provide such units enables soldiers to better cope with the social disorganization and chaos that is war. In his 1947 book *Men Against Fire, S.L.A.* Marshall wrote that: “Man is a gregarious animal. He wants company. In his hour of greatest danger his herd instinct drives him toward his fellows. It is a source of comfort to him to be close to another man; it makes danger endurable” (Coates and Pellegrin 1965:161).

On the life of man as warrior

In his book *The Warriors: Reflections on Men in Battle*, J. Glenn Gray reflects on the nature of war, its effect on man, and his personal experience as an American intelligence officer in World War II. Having received his doctorate in philosophy from Columbia University just prior to being drafted in 1941, Gray’s perspective in *The Warriors* provides the reader with an impressive window into understanding the experience of war and the nature of man as warrior.

In contemplating the war, Gray remarks that “the alternation of dullness and excitement in their extreme degrees separates war from peace sharply and promotes the discontinuity in our memories. War compresses the greatest opposites into the smallest space and the shortest time” ([1959] 1998:12). Gray describes the jarring experience of

having shells launched at him for the first time during the invasion of southern France, and the subsequent lull after he and his buddies reached safety. He notes that in this dynamic flux of war—between boredom and excitement, extraordinary cruelty and heroic compassion—“Inhibitions vanish, and people are reduced to their essence” ([1959] 1998:13-15).

But what does Gray mean by this statement: to be reduced to one’s essence? Gray explains that in the lives of many warriors it means that they face a narrowing of desires. Due to the violence which pervades this environment and the constant threat to the soldier’s life, his more refined interests fade away as the natural, sensual appetites take on a more significant role in his daily life. He becomes more concerned with eating, drinking, and enjoying the company of a woman when he gets the opportunity. As demonstrated by this reduction of the soldier’s desires to those of his basic appetite, the war always brings about a change in the men who fight it. This change in the soldier may be toward a greater baseness of desires, an elevation towards noble virtue, the realization of prevailing despair, or a movement to greater reflection; regardless, no man leaves war unchanged. Gray notes that although soldiers—particularly those who were conscripted—filled various other social roles during peacetime, their roles as warriors were capable of transforming the whole of their person ([1959] 1998:26-27).

This transformative property of the war, along with the constant state of social change for the soldier, reveals a discontinuity with his former life. Even the social organization

of the military unit—assembling a diverse group of men who generally had no pre-war connections—represents for the soldier a discontinuity from his normal life. In the midst of this chaotic world, it is nearly impossible for the soldier to reflect on the past or consider the future; only the present is available to him. As Gray notes, “The insights of one hour are blotted out by the events of the next, and few of us can hold on to our real selves long enough to discover the momentous truths about ourselves and this whirling earth to which we cling” ([1959] 1998:21). The soldier has a feeling of dissociation from his former life and experiences a lack of continuity in his life following the war (Gray [1959] 1998:15-23). It appears that every man who is associated with the waging of war must condition himself for his participation in this sociopolitical event which so goes against the nature of man (Terkel 1984:201).

There is a great deal more that could be said about the nature of a warrior’s life and experience, but for our purposes it will suffice at this point to recognize four points from Gray’s analysis:

- 1) War is a compression of contradictions in the experience of man.
- 2) The pervasive threat to every soldier’s life leads most to experience a narrowing of desires, what Gray refers to as a reduction to one’s essence.
- 3) In what can be called the transformative property of war, no warrior can leave the war unchanged. Rather, his entire person is transformed.
- 4) The war represents a great discontinuity in the life of the soldier.

CHAPTER III

THE NATURE OF MORALITY AND VIRTUE

When considering the nature of virtue, we must first begin our discussion with an inquiry into the nature of morality. Only after establishing a foundation for moral theory and gaining a greater understanding of the social basis for judging what is right and what is wrong can we make judgments about whether an action is virtuous or not and begin to understand the role that such social constructions play in the lives of warriors.

On morality

Throughout the centuries, philosophers have faced difficulties in defining what a morally right action is. Various theorists have at different times claimed that “actions are morally right if and only if they maximize pleasure, that things are good just because they are desired, and that exchanges are just if and only if all parties to the transfer have agreed to abide by its terms,” or that a morally right action is that which is reasonable and proper (Shafer-Landau 2005:519-20). Though each of these claims defines morality in a different manner, they each assert that morality is objective; that is, morality can be defined for all persons without regard to personal feelings, prejudices, or interpretations. Because of this objectivity, they claim that what is morally right for one man is also morally right for another indiscriminately.

Many people today promote the concept of moral subjectivism, the idea that acts are morally right based solely upon the approval of the person who is judging the action. This claim allows the same action to be morally right for one man and morally wrong for another. Russ Shafer-Landau demonstrates the difficulties this creates for moral philosophers in his discussion of ethical subjectivism. Firstly, this subjectivism in principle states that everyone's moral views are equivalent to everyone else's—they all become morally equivalent and equally plausible. Likewise, this subjectivism makes everyone nearly infallible in regards to their own moral judgments, which generates moral contradictions between individuals or groups who have opposing viewpoints. Shafer-Landau notes, however, that theories which generate contradictions cannot be true. Furthermore, he explains that if moral subjectivism were true, it would cause everyone to lose the incentive to have moral conversation, because the truth of morality would only consist of "reports of personal feelings" (Shafer-Landau 2005:510,514-5).

Due to the problems inherent within moral subjectivism and the apparent contradictions which arise as a result of this outlook, the traditional view of moral and ethical objectivism appears to be more plausible and coherent. Despite the difficulties which were noted in defining objective morality, such a theoretical standpoint is particularly useful in the area of law and justice, for it enables us to make moral judgments that apply universally to all peoples. We can confidently claim that the actions of Hitler and his armies were evil—that is, morally wrong—and that freeing those who were unjustly

captive was good and morally right. This objectivism enables us to form international laws guiding the conduct of war and relations between the nations of the world.

Likewise the objectivity of morality enables us to speak of virtue in an objective manner. The question of whether morality is founded upon a society or within the nature of man himself is nothing new. Philosophers have sought to understand this problem since the time of Aristotle. Fortunately for our purposes, a definitive answer to this question is unnecessary. Whether or not such norms arise from the nature of man or from the structure of his society is irrelevant. What is important is that these standards are in fact normative, that is, they are agreed upon within society.

Regarding virtue, with respect to moral objectivist standards

In the same way as for morality, we may examine virtue to inquire as to its source and the standard by which it is judged. In his essay *The Nature of Virtue*, Aristotle says that virtue is a habitual pursuit after that which is good. Furthermore, he claims that this standard for judging that which is good is derived from a supreme good which is the cause of the goodness of all others. Whether Aristotle considers this supreme good to be a deity or a natural law is not stated, but such information is also of negligible importance in our study of virtue. Rather, we must focus on his concept of virtue deriving its goodness from some higher moral standard (2005a:526-7).

If Aristotle was correct in presuming that the standard for judging virtue and goodness is derived from an external moral standard, which as we have shown must be objective, we can conclude that the standards of virtue are likewise objective and universally applicable to all men. The interrelation between virtue and morality enables us to speak about warrior codes which establish a moral order for the conduct of war. As noted by Lowde, “That Men may lawfully do something in the time of War, which is not lawful to do in the time of Peace, is certainly true: but then we must not think, that the same blast of the Trumpet that Proclaim’d the War, did at the same time blow away all those airy Notions of just and unjust,” ([1694] 1979:160-1). Even in the midst of a seemingly barbarous conflict such as war, there must be standards by which all participants must abide, and this finds its basis in morality and virtue.

Throughout history, societies have established warrior codes of behavior to guide their soldiers in the right conduct of war. For each society, this warrior code is based upon its own image of what constitutes an ideal warrior—a code which enumerates precisely that which the society deems virtuous in its warriors. Such codes often impose the strictest of standards upon the warrior and detail “not only how he should interact with his own warrior comrades but also how he should treat other members of his society, his enemies, and the people he conquers” (French [1970] 2003:3). For the warrior who abides by such a standard of conduct, the code serves to impose structure upon the social chaos which is war.

From society to society, however, warrior codes vary. This was evidenced unequivocally by Allied soldiers who fought in the Pacific Theater during World War II; Japanese soldiers fought brutally and mercilessly in a manner to which no Western soldier was accustomed. As noted by Hynes, “The Japanese fought suicidally, without any evident sense of self-preservation and this meant that they would attack in banzai charges, or would infiltrate Marine lines at night armed only with a bayonet, to kill and be killed” (1997:163). Though to Western soldiers it may appear that Japanese soldiers have no sense of a warrior code, this could not be further from the truth. The Japanese code of *bushido* has the strictest of standards for its adherents; if one were to make the slightest infraction against this code of honor it would bring the greatest disgrace upon him and his family. This shame is a powerful and driving force in Japanese culture, the threat of which is intended to prevent Japanese soldiers from taking part in shameful acts. The only way such a disgraced warrior could redeem himself from the shame he receives for his dishonorable actions would be to make the final sacrifice and give his life in service of his country (French [1970] 2003:199,213-214).

Though certain elements within the warrior codes of different nations and cultures are similar in nature, each warrior code is a distinct product of the society from which it comes. The warrior code of a society reflects that civilization’s values, beliefs, and history and is based upon the societal view of what makes a warrior just and virtuous. Because it is grounded in the culture of the society from which it comes, it serves to

connect the soldier to his native land and acts as a sort of transferable social framework upon which he can transpose his experiences of the war.

Though the concept of virtue and the standards for judging the virtuousness of an action can be taught and socially passed on from generation to generation, it is impossible for those who teach the importance of such standards to force their pupils to enact their knowledge of the subject. There are too many factors affecting man's ability to act virtuously for us to be sure that he will choose the virtuous action over the shameful, even when he knows and understands the moral content of the situation (Lowde [1694] 1979:205-207).

Throughout the literature concerning the nature of virtue, both classical and modern theorists agree that virtue necessarily involves *having knowledge* of the morally proper mode of action and then *acting* upon this knowledge when the opportunity presents itself. While the virtuous course may be known in the mind of a man, we do not say that for this alone he is virtuous. Likewise, if he acts in a virtuous manner, but only begrudgingly, we would not say he is truly virtuous. Rather, he must willingly act upon the knowledge he has obtained with satisfaction in the act for its own sake in order to receive such a classification (Gray [1959] 1998:39; Lowde [1694] 1979:204; Aristotle 2005a:530,540; Litman 1930:28)

CHAPTER IV
WARRIOR VIRTUES:
DEFINING LOVE, SACRIFICE, AND HONOR

Having laid a theoretical foundation for understanding the nature of man, as well as his life as warrior, and having explored the concepts of morality and virtue as they relate to man, I must now discuss the warrior virtues which are the basis of this study.

Love

Of the three warrior virtues examined, love—or camaraderie, as it is otherwise known—is the most socially expressed within military culture. It does not present itself as the “love” of conventional thought, but as a deep and abiding bond amongst soldiers within a small, interdependent unit. It is the intensity of these interpersonal bonds which gives this social relationship its character and by which we can name it “love.” J. Glenn Gray describes this comradeship as one of the appeals of battle. He explains: “The communal experience we call comradeship, is thought to be especially moral and the one genuine advantage of battle that peace can seldom offer” (Gray [1959] 1998:39).

In this testimony we see, namely, that this comradeship is a social bond which is regarded as one the noblest of all wartime experiences and that the fervor of such connections is greater than anything known during peacetime. Gray explains that this comradeship—this feeling of mutual belonging—must be awakened by the

straightforward and common purpose to take up arms and fight. In the beginning, the men must have a clear objective in mind in order to form such strong social connections. The nature of this social interaction, however, is such that once the bonds are formed, even if the original purpose of their relations becomes obfuscated the soldiers are “often sustained solely by the determination not to let down his comrades” (Gray [1959] 1998:40). Other than being in the general vicinity of one another as in an aggregate social group, soldiers need to be organized toward a concrete, common goal. The military organization, with its bureaucratic objectives, lends itself to forming such concrete goals for the units (Coates and Pellegrin 1965:162). Gray notes that, as a general rule, the more well-defined an objective is, the greater is the willingness of the soldiers to “abandon their natural desire for self-preservation” and commit fully to the task at hand, even if it presents a threat to his own life ([1959] 1998:42).

In defining this comradeship, Gray furthermore declares the presence of danger to be a requisite component of such social bonding. In some way, such danger is essential to breaking down the barriers of the self and enabling men to form these communal connections. It is the bonds formed by this danger which allow the men to transcend the self so that his own fate becomes insignificant in light of the communal fate of his comrades ([1959] 1998:42-4).

Sacrifice

Inherent to war is the apparent contradiction of sacrifice. The impulse to self-sacrifice goes against both what our culture has engrained within us and oftentimes too, the directives of our own human nature (Gray [1959] 1998:49). Cultural standards impel us to think of our own well-being above all else, and our natural human instinct for self-preservation tells us to avoid death at all costs. Yet somehow sacrifice on the battlefield is just as much a reality as are the bonds of camaraderie which form between soldiers.

As noted by Gray, sacrifice is greatly bound to this intense camaraderie experienced during war ([1959] 1998:40-50), for it is often only love which impels men to sacrifice. Love of his country leads man to join the war effort, love of his neighbor leads him to sacrifice a meal so that another's hunger might be sated, and love of his buddies may lead him to death so that a comrade might live. For Gray, it is the concrete relationship a soldier has with his unit that most often enables him to make the final sacrifice:

“Numberless soldiers have died, more or less willingly, not for country or honor or religious faith or for any other abstract good, but because they realized that by fleeing their post and rescuing themselves, they would expose their companions to greater danger. Such loyalty to the group is the essence of fighting morale” (Gray [1959] 1998:40).

In discussing such sacrifice, Gray says that the nature of sacrificial love enables the warrior to “gain a relationship to something greater than the self” and that this

transcendence greatly reduces the foreignness of the environment in which he is forced to live ([1959] 1998:36-37). This transcendent feeling within the man enables him to see beyond the importance of his own life, and thus to move past his instinct for self-preservation. Gray describes this as a sense of immortality which arises from something even greater than the social bonds of comradeship. He explains that this sacrifice on the battlefield holds a marked resemblance to religious martyrdom, because for those who are able to willingly make the final sacrifice of giving their lives in the war effort, the sting of death has disappeared along with its reality. It is this feeling of immortality within the soldiers which makes self-sacrifice at crucial moments in battle a nearly effortless act. Gray explains: “Men are true comrades only when each is ready to give up his life for the other, without reflection and without thought of personal loss” ([1959] 1998:46-47).

It is because of the natural and cultural resistance that man has to this final form of sacrifice that we praise such sacrificial warriors above all others. It is precisely because we cannot fully understand such selflessness that we regard sacrifice as one of the greatest facets of war.

Honor

Honor is the crucial foundation of the other two warrior virtues and finds its expression in the soldier’s impulse to act justly, rightly, and morally. It is this virtue which leads him to right conduct in war and which enables him to give himself over to comradeship

and self-sacrifice. Though it is the most abstract of the three virtues examined, it is also the most prevalent in the soldiers' experience and finds its source in the society from which he comes.

The concept of honor for the soldier is based primarily upon the moral standards of his culture: what values and virtues does his society uphold? It is the value system of his culture which will form the soldier's concept of honor and will inform the soldier's conduct in battle (Cook [1954] 2004:22). Because he is socialized from a young age to adhere to certain standards, he will carry this value system with him—at least in some degree—wherever he goes. Furthermore, the soldier's idea of honor is based upon the training he has received to instruct him in the right conduct of war, following the *jus in bello* principles of discrimination and proportionality and other such principles concerned with the governance of just war (Johnson 1999:18). The soldier's code of honor builds upon his cultural value system and provides a foundation upon which he may frame his experience of the war and his conduct in battle.

Honor is the only of the three warrior virtues which is truly teachable; love and sacrifice in battle demand experience to be properly understood. Honor, however, is most often transmitted through the natural process of socialization: as a child grows, he is taught the difference between right and wrong, good and evil, and is in this way taught what is honorable according to the standards of his culture. Furthermore, the standards of right conduct in war are transmitted to soldiers through their training and the leadership of

their superiors (Cook [1954] 2004:22). Even though this warrior virtue can be more easily taught than love and sacrifice, soldiers cannot be forced to act upon their knowledge of that which is honorable. In the end, though this understanding of morality is based on societal values and norms, “morality involves action,” and it is up to the soldiers as individuals to enact their knowledge of honor and virtue on the battlefield (Gray [1959] 1998:39).

CHAPTER V

WARRIOR VIRTUES: IN THEIR OWN WORDS

In this chapter, I now seek to assess the American soldiers' experience of warrior virtues in World War II. Specifically I examine love, sacrifice, and honor and the social function these virtues had in the lives of soldiers on the battlefield.

To do this, I draw on several personal recollections of American veterans who participated in the Second World War as well as a number of military citations of valorous behavior which exemplify these warrior virtues. Following the lead of Samuel Hynes in his book *The Soldiers' Tale*, I wish to affirm the authority of soldiers' personal witnesses to the experiences of the war. Because we were not there, the primary accounts of the soldiers who were participants in the battles of World War II provide us with the best understanding we can possess of the nature of battle and the role that warrior virtues played in their experience (Hynes 1997:1-3). The cases I present to you on the following pages are a small selection of the material reviewed for this study and are primarily drawn from "*The Good War*" by Studs Terkel, a compilation of interviews completed by the author in which veterans and others who lived through the war recount some of their most vivid memories about the life-changing experiences they had during the war. Additional accounts come from the Congressional Medal of Honor citations for three former students of Texas A&M University who gave their lives in the service of the war effort. While these citations are not personal reflections upon the war, they

provide us with key insight into the final sacrifice which too many of our nation's soldiers have had to make.

Each case below exemplifies one or more of these warrior virtues in the experience of our soldiers in World War II. In some of their accounts, the soldiers will mention these virtues explicitly, while in other recollections the virtues are merely alluded to in the manner that the story is narrated. Throughout most of these soldiers' accounts, though, you can find one common theme: these virtues, or the lack thereof, played a significant role in their experience of the war.

Joe Hanley

Joe Hanley was twenty years old when he entered the United States Army near the end of the war. A member of the 103rd Division, 411th Infantry Regiment, Company G, Hanley fought with this unit throughout the war and was on the right flank in the Battle of the Bulge. His candid interview with Studs Terkel decades after the war reveals the disillusionment faced by service members regarding the harsh realities of war: "Little did I realize that one day I'd be a killer. (Laughs.) But there I was and tried to be the best soldier I could possibly be" (1984:273). Despite this deviation from the social norms of the peacetime society to which he was accustomed, he realized the task at hand and sought to perform his duty responsibly and to the best of his abilities.

His memories further reveal the importance that is placed upon camaraderie within the armed forces. But the story of Joe Hanley is unique among the narratives of World War II soldiers. The death of one of his buddies changed the course of his life forever. He reveals:

“I lost many, many buddies over there. Some I don’t even remember their names. I can still remember their faces, I remember how they died. A few last words and then there was no more. One buddy, of course, was the husband of the woman I married eventually. He literally died in my arms. He was hit by shrapnel. That was December 15 of ‘44” (Terkel 1984:274).

Following the war, he felt the need to write the widow of this buddy, Kevin, to fill in the details of her late husband’s death and to help her through the grieving process. They became acquaintances, then friends, and three years later they were married. They now have three children of their own, and live with the constant reminder that it was Kevin’s death—his sacrifice in the war—that brought them together. Pictures of Kevin still hang on the wall in their house, and every December 15, the memory of that day comes alive for Joe once more (Terkel 1984:270-7).

Hanley’s narrative intimates the connection he still feels with his fallen comrade, Kevin. There is a shadow of survivor’s guilt which hangs over him, but he knows that his connection to Kevin was what changed his life forever, and he looks upon the circumstances with reverence and gratitude. His wife, Rosemary, said it best: “There’s a closeness that these boys feel with their buddies, because they didn’t know from one

minute to the next whether they were gonna be, you know... There's a bond there that I think never is broken" (Terkel 1984:272).

John Ciardi

Serving as a gunner in the United States Air Force, John Ciardi learned the value of the bonds of camaraderie in a military unit. For him, this unit was the crew with which he flew. "You belonged to eleven men. You're trained together, you're bound together. I was once ordered to fly in the place of a gunner who had received a shrapnel wound. I dreaded that mission. I wanted to fly with my own crew. I didn't know those other people. I didn't want to run the risk of dying with strangers" (Terkel 1984:199).

In these few sentences, Ciardi reveals the critical role played by the primary group loyalty and solidarity of the military unit. This comradeship enables the soldiers to put their lives on the line every day because they know that they can depend upon their buddies to fight for their protection, even if that means dying for one another.

George D. Keathley

A class of 1937 graduate of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas—now known as Texas A&M University—George Keathley joined the army at the outset of the war. Assigned to the 338th Infantry, 85th Infantry Division, Sergeant Keathley was leading the first platoon of Company B in battle against the Germans in the mountains near Mount Altuzzo, Italy on September 14, 1944. During the fighting, the officers and

noncommissioned officers of the second and third platoons had become casualties, and Keathley assumed command of the remaining men (Center of Military History 2009b).

The Medal of Honor citation documenting his efforts in this battle reads:

“The remnants of the two platoons were dangerously low on ammunition, so Staff Sergeant Keathley, under deadly small-arms and mortar fire, crawled from one casualty to another, collecting their ammunition and administering first aid. He then visited each man of his two platoons, issuing the precious ammunition he had collected from the dead and wounded, and giving them words of encouragement” (Center of Military History 2009b).

As he continued to lead the remaining soldiers through the battle, he sustained a mortal wound to his left side from an enemy hand grenade. Despite the severity of his wound, he continued to lead his men, and removing his left hand from the wound he had received, used it to steady his rifle to continue the fight against enemy combatants. His heroic leadership inspired the men of these platoons to persevere until assistance from friendly troops forced the Germans to retreat. Shortly after the battle was won, Sergeant Keathley passed away from the injuries he had sustained (Center of Military History 2009b).

The case of Sergeant Keathley exemplifies the sacrifice which so many men made during World War II and the honor with which they fought. Because of his brave leadership and the value he placed upon the lives of his men without regard to his own

safety, he received posthumously the highest commendation of the United States, the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Lloyd H. Hughes

A student of Texas A&M University when the attack on Pearl Harbor occurred, Lloyd Hughes ended his time at the university in the weeks following the attack in order to join the United States Air Force. Like Sergeant Keathley, Lieutenant Hughes was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his “conspicuous gallantry in action and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty.” While flying with the 9th Air Force in a heavy bombardment raid of Nazi-held Romanian oil refineries on August 1, 1943, his plane sustained hits by antiaircraft fire and began to leak gasoline. Because he and his crew were in the last formation to attack the target, the area surrounding the objective was already ablaze when they arrived. Recognizing the importance of their mission and his duty to destroy their objective regardless of the cost, Hughes flew into the blaze rather than turning back or making a forced landing. Having accurately dropped his payload, destroying the assigned objective, he emerged from the target area with his left wing ablaze, at which point he attempted a forced landing. However, due to the strength of the fire consuming the aircraft, his plane crashed killing Hughes and five of his comrades (Center of Military History 2009b).

The commitment to honor and duty demonstrated by Lieutenant Hughes and his comrades led them to persevere in their mission to destroy the enemy oil refineries and

subsequently to give their lives in service to their country. It is precisely for this commitment to duty and the bravery with which they executed their task that they are honored by our government as heroes of the Second World War.

Horace Carswell

Just before the German invasion of Denmark and Norway, Horace Carswell joined the United States Army Air Corps in March of 1940. After a few years in the service, Carswell was promoted to Major and was assigned as the deputy commander of the 308th Bombardment Group in the Pacific Theater. On October 26, 1944, while flying a B-24 in a one-plane strike against a Japanese naval convoy, Carswell made two bombing runs which resulted in two direct hits on a large Japanese tanker. Major Carswell's copilot, however, was injured in the flight, and his plane was considerably damaged from Japanese antiaircraft fire, losing two engines and sustaining injury to various other critical systems. Due to his advanced skill as a pilot, Carswell was able to gain control of the plane in its plunge toward the sea and bring it into a halting climb headed in the direction of the Chinese shore. When they reached land, a member of his crew discovered that his parachute had been ruined by enemy fire. Rather than leave his injured copilot and this man to attempt a crash landing alone, Carswell ordered the crew to bail out as he maintained the plane's altitude. Unfortunately after his crew made the jump, Carswell was no longer able to control the plane, and it crashed into a mountainside, killing himself and the members of his crew who were still aboard the plane (Center of Military History 2009a).

Carswell's commitment to completing his assigned mission and his efforts to save each member of his crew, despite the risk to his own life, exemplify the honor with which all soldiers are called to serve their nation. He is thus remembered as an American hero and was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor by the United States government.

Timuel Black

An African-American 1943 draftee, Timuel Black was assigned to the Quartermaster Corps in the European Theater and serviced combat units in the Normandy Invasion. He witnessed the chaos of those days himself and spoke of how strange the experience of combat was for all of them: "It was a weird experience. Young men cryin' for their mothers, wetting and defecating themselves. Others tellin' jokes. Most of us were just solemn" (Terkel 1984:279). These seeming contradictions display the extreme stress under which the men were fighting and the various ways they coped—or failed to cope—with the stress of the war.

After the initial invasion and establishment of Allied Forces in France, Black and the other African-American soldiers had to do double duty to move the supplies by day and patrol the streets by night. German saboteurs continued to pose a threat and proved indistinguishable from American soldiers, especially at night. It was for this reason that the army began to assign only black soldiers to patrol at night, so that any German infiltrators could be distinguished and subsequently arrested or shot. It was because of

the sacrifice of these African-Americans that the streets became much safer at night. Black's entire outfit received the Croix de Guerre commendation from France for their service in this area (Terkel 1984:280).

It was when Black arrived at Buchenwald Concentration Camp that he realized the horrors perpetrated by the Nazis and was passionately inflamed to do his duty to bring about justice in the matter. He described this sight to Studs Terkel:

“You get closer and you begin to see what's happened to these creatures. And you get—I got more passionately angry than I guess I'd ever been... On reflection, I know not all the Germans did this. But my feelings were, how could they let others do it? This was the clincher for me. If this could happen here, it could happen anywhere. It could happen to me. I could happen to black folk in America. I guess more than any single event, it was this sight that crystallized my determination to do as much as I could to bring about some sanity in a very insane world” (Terkel 1984:281).

Upon returning to America after the war, Black was defiant that he wouldn't get emotional. As his ship approached the American mainland, the soldiers on deck began cheering when they saw the Statue of Liberty in the distant New York Harbor. Despite his defiance, Black found himself tearing up, joining in with the cheers and celebration. “I could no longer push my loyalty back, even with all the bitterness that I had” (Terkel 1984:282). Despite the horrors he had experienced and witnessed in the war, and the

discrimination he faced as an African-American in the army, he had remained loyal to his country and his duty as a soldier, and was elated to be returning home.

Dr. Alex Shulman

Serving as a surgeon for the United States Army during the Second World War, Dr. Alex Shulman was thankful for the advances that had been made in technology since World War One. In his interview with Terkel he describes the compassion with which he administered aid to the injured and fallen—even to fallen Germans—and the rules that were in place to ensure proper care of his patients. He reveals the story of a young German boy who was brought in to his medic station while he was serving in Belgium. The boy had been cut off from his outfit in the German army and had hidden in a barn for several weeks. When he arrived at Shulman's station, he had a horrible head wound and "was covered with old straw and manure and blood" (Terkel 1984:283). His long hair was caked and matted with filth. Shulman reveals:

"All I did was get a basin of hot water and some soap and washed his hair. Here was a captain in the United States Army washing the hair of a little German boy. I finally cleaned him up and looked at the wound. It wasn't bad. Nature had done quite a job healing it. Then he really started to cry. I said, 'What are you crying about?' He said, 'They told me I'd be killed. And here you are, an American officer, washing my hands and face and my hair.' I reminded him that I was a Jewish doctor, so he would get the full impact of it" (Terkel 1984:282-3).

Shulman's decorum in treating this German child—and the compassion with which he cared for all the wounded who came to him—exemplify a life of service and honor.

Trained in neurosurgery, Shulman was often the only field surgeon qualified to treat head injuries, which were a common occurrence. For a number of weeks, as the fighting raged on in Normandy, Shulman was working literally day and night to save the lives of his comrades. He knew the meaning of sacrifice well, at one time spending thirty-six hours continuously in the operating room (Terkel 1984:286).

He recalls one day when an administrative mistake led convoys of ambulances to his field hospital rather than to the various other hospitals that were set up in the area. As far as the eye could see, there were men lying in the field outside his medical tent and ambulances waiting to admit the wounded, but the four hundred beds in his hospital were already filled. So he grabbed twenty syringes and twenty shots of morphine and went from group to group asking who needed treatment first. The men in each group would always point to another soldier, never asking for the medicine themselves but always referring him to one of their comrades who was in worse shape, putting the comfort of another above their own well-being and exemplifying the warrior virtues of love and sacrifice (Terkel 1984:285).

E.B. “Sledgehammer” Sledge

Serving with the United States Marines in the Pacific Theater, E.B. “Sledgehammer” Sledge had a much different experience from soldiers fighting in the European Theater. This difference in experience was in great part due to the differences in the enemies they were fighting. Sledge divulges, “Our attitude toward the Japanese was different than the one we had toward the Germans” (Terkel 1984:61). Having a brother who fought with the Second Infantry Division in the Battle of the Bulge, he heard stories of German surrender. The American soldiers would sometimes reveal that they hated fighting the Germans, because when they surrendered, they were just like the Americans. But with the Japanese it was not the same; they would almost never surrender. For the Japanese soldiers, surrendering or being captured was the greatest disgrace one could bring upon himself and his family. In their culture, it was better to die than to be captured, and many Allied soldiers died or were injured in the efforts to take Japanese soldiers prisoner. The Japanese warrior code and method of fighting was vastly different than any the Americans had seen or heard of prior to the war, so the Allied response to such violence was often equally as savage (Terkel 1984:60-62).

Sledge describes how the Japanese warrior culture eroded the American soldiers’ faith in and adherence to the conventional view of honor and warrior conduct:

“You developed an attitude of no mercy because they had no mercy on us... At Peleliu, it was the first time I was close enough to see one of their faces. This Jap must have been hit. One of my buddies was field-stripping him for souvenirs. I

must admit it really bothered me, the guys dragging him around like a carcass. I was just horrified. This guy had been a human being. It didn't take me long to overcome that feeling. A lot of my buddies hit, the fatigue, the stress. After a while, the veneer of civilization wore pretty thin" (Terkel 1984:62).

As a result of the stress of the war and the extreme tactics of the Japanese soldiers, Americans often fell into such dishonorable practices as killing the wounded, field-stripping them for souvenirs, extracting their gold teeth, and other such savage habits, some of which are too gruesome to divulge here (Terkel 1984:61-2).

At one point, when Sledge was about to extract a gold tooth from the body of a dead Japanese soldier, a navy medic stopped him and gently called attention to the act he was about to perform, saying "You don't want to do that" (Terkel 1984:62). He continued to dissuade Sledge from performing the extraction by reminding him that he was risking infection by doing so. Upon later reflection, Sledge realizes his comrade wasn't really worried about germs, but "He just didn't want me to make another step toward abandoning all concepts of decency" (Terkel 1984:62). Throughout the war, it would take reminders such as these for Sledge to sense what horrors he and his comrades were prone to commit in fighting the Japanese. Recalling various instances of divergence from the conventional warrior code of honor, each time Sledge notes how decent of a person the offender was. It was unbelievable to him how the men were able to act so dishonorably in these instances, but he maintains both that such episodes of dishonorable behavior on the part of his American comrades was merely due to the enemy's warrior

culture and that, as a whole, his comrades fought honorably in service to their country (Terkel 1984:59-65).

Elliot Johnson

Elliot Johnson remembers vividly the day of December 7, 1941. He was eating with some friends at a Chinese restaurant when one of the workers emerged from the kitchen with a portable radio in hand. It was then that they learned of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Furious that their homeland had come under attack, all four of the men immediately went to the marine recruiting headquarters to enlist (Terkel 1984:254).

He remembers the invasion of Normandy and how this battle was the first time he truly realized the human body as finite. On that day he saw a young man who had lost so much blood that he was deathlike in appearance. Johnson witnessed as the soldier received a blood transfusion and the color came back to his face. In his interview he notes the relief he felt that this guy was going to survive. In retrospect he can't even recall whether the soldier was German or American (Terkel 1984:256). Their shared humanity, however, enabled him to have the utmost sympathy for the man. This sense of compassion remained with Johnson throughout the war and conditioned him to serve his nation honorably.

As another example, shortly after the invasion Johnson came upon an American paratrooper who had become entangled in a tree:

“He had a broken leg, compound break, blood coming out of his pants... He was so humiliated because he had been up there since daybreak. It had been a shock to his system, so his bodily eliminations had functioned. He was so mortified he didn’t want us to get near him. We just cut off his pants and gently washed him all over, so he wouldn’t be humiliated at his next stop” (Terkel 1984:258).

Johnson’s compassion for this soldier allowed the man to maintain his self-respect and dignity despite the circumstances in which he found himself. It is acts like these which embody the virtues of honorable conduct and love for one’s fellow man.

Johnson makes clear in his interview with Terkel the sacrifice that every soldier makes simply by participating in the war. Whether they gave their lives or their innocence to the cause, willingly or unwillingly, the victory belongs to their sacrifice. He recounts for Terkel the memory of having a comrade die in his arms as the result of friendly fire, and the difficult time he had coping with the experience. Even now the memory pains him as he remembers the death of his comrade (Terkel 1984:260).

For Johnson, the warrior code of honor was a fundamental component of his service. As a forward observer, he would scout out the location of the Germans and order for fire power from the division behind him. While observing in the Hürtgen Forest from a forester’s tower, he spotted someone in a nearby tower:

“There was a German lieutenant looking right at me. We waved at each other. I marked him on the map. I got my guns zeroed in on him, and I know in my heart he

did the same thing to me. He was also an artillery observer. Along my ridge was a road. German tanks rolled along there. My target. He would watch my shooting” (Terkel 1984:262).

The German observer had a close eye on Johnson, indeed. One day several German vehicles approached on the nearby road, among them ambulances. Recognizing that ambulances were “hands off,” Johnson merely watched as they rolled by. However, another American began shooting at them, and the German observer assumed that Johnson had ordered the fire on the convoy of ambulances. Though he tried to signal to the German lieutenant that he had not called for that fire, it was too late. The German called a hit upon Johnson and his crew, and they were barely able to escape the shells that were lobbed their way. When the fire had ceased Johnson once more climbed the tower and signaled to the German observer: “I had my hands up and I was waving and shaking my head: not me. He looked at me. Then he took off his helmet. That was his apology to me” (Terkel 1984:263).

This account given by Johnson provides us with key insight into the code of the warrior and the honor with which he and his comrades were called to serve. Between the German lieutenant and himself, there was an unspoken pact to abide by this code of honor, and when the German observer believed that Johnson had acted in violation of this code, he was no longer willing to forgo treating him as an enemy combatant.

CHAPTER VI

AWARDING VIRTUE: MEDALS OF HONOR AND THE AMERICAN SYSTEM OF MILITARY COMMENDATION

Throughout modern history, civilizations and governments have attempted to encourage the meritorious behavior of their citizens by honoring those who exemplify virtue and best illustrate the noblest of human accomplishments (Aristotle 2005b:441). The tradition of this practice within the military continues today as governments confer a wide array of medals and honors upon those whom they deem their most virtuous soldiers. This practice, while noble in intention, suffers from several drawbacks originating in the flawed system of commendation which is currently in place.

History of the American system of commendation and the Medal of Honor

In the early years of American history, there was no bureaucratic system in place for the awarding of meritorious conduct in battle. In August of 1776, during the American Revolutionary War, General George Washington created the Purple Heart in order to inspire his soldiers to virtue and bravery. He required documentation that attested to the individual's bravery before he would confer the award, but because the war ended the next year, only three men received this decoration before it faded out of existence. During the Mexican War, Congress established a Certificate of Merit to honor courageous soldiers, but like Washington's Purple Heart, this award faded out of existence when the war was concluded (Maslowski and Winslow 2004:221-2).

It was not until the Civil War that the Medal of Honor was established. The award was first created by the United States Navy and was quickly followed by a similar distinction in the American Army. In 1863, when Congress began to award the first Medals of Honor, it was established as a permanent decoration that would endure after the war's conclusion. However, because no explicit criteria for awarding the Medal of Honor were established at the time, abuses were common. This lack of standardization severely devalued the worth of the medal as a social reward and diminished its ability to serve as encouragement for other soldiers to behave virtuously. Under the system in place during Lincoln's administration, almost anything was considered meritorious behavior, including mere reenlistment, for which the President conferred the Medal of Honor upon every soldier within an entire regiment (Maslowski and Winslow 2004:222).

Early in the 20th Century, Congress began to require official documentation detailing the valorous deeds of soldiers in battle before the Medal of Honor would be awarded. Following soon after this, President Theodore Roosevelt mandated that the medal would always be presented in an impressive formal ceremony. In 1916, a review board was established which studied all of the medals that had been awarded and—in order to correct past abuses so that the medal might be regarded with more dignity—the board recommended that 910 of the 2,625 Medals of Honor which had been awarded up to that point be rescinded (Maslowski and Winslow 2004:223).

The American system of military commendation continued to develop and expand, and in the post-World War I era the government began to bestow awards much more liberally upon American soldiers. In World War II, some generals would even carry Silver Stars in their pockets to award men as quickly as possible following their heroic deeds on the battlefield. This practice of “impact awards” reached its peak in the Vietnam era, when superior officers were attempting to maintain morale in the midst of a seemingly hopeless war (Maslowski and Winslow 2004:224).

The result across the years is the development of an inconsistent system of military commendation which only imperfectly awards medals that only imperfectly encourage valor and sacrifice. This system of commendation suffers from a lack of credibility for two seemingly contradictory reasons:

- 1) It distributes medals to too many soldiers whose actions are undeserving of public recognition and praise, and
- 2) It cannot adequately award all of the servicemen who truly deserve the highest of praise for their valor and sacrifice.

From the soldiers' perspective

The biographies of two modern day American heroes testify to these problems faced by the system of military commendation. Furthermore, they provide the reader with an insider's view into the system which is in place for awarding virtue displayed by American soldiers in their service. The biography of Joe Hooper, a Vietnam War hero

who is the most heavily decorated American soldier on record, provides an in-depth reflection on the awarding of medals throughout American history. Within its pages it records the testimony of World War II veteran James W. Johnston, who declared that the awarding of medals for valor was:

“An unqualified miscarriage of justice and a spurious practice. It implies that men with medals for valor are valorous and men without them are not. Nothing could be further from the truth... Day after day I have watched countless line company Marines and infantry soldiers commit deeds of great courage and sacrifice and receive nothing for their efforts” (Maslowski and Winslow 2004:225).

As noted by Johnston, the system of commendation has the potential to undermine unit cohesion because of its spurious nature. Postwar studies confirmed Johnston’s observation that, because too many virtuous and valorous efforts went unrewarded, the system of commendation did in fact undermine morale (Maslowski and Winslow 2004:225).

Roy Benavidez, another in the class of Vietnam War era Medal of Honor recipients, testified to the sacrifice of all soldiers in his autobiography:

“Every one of them had his own story. Maybe he just stepped off a plane one day and got it from a misplaced mortar round. Maybe he was walking back from the latrine when a sniper got him. Maybe he’s a bigger “hero” than I’m supposed to be, but few are alive to tell the tale. Every one of those guys sacrificed his life, or his

limbs, or his humanity, or his youth, or his mind, and I'm alive to tell about it"

(Benavidez and Craig 1995:xvi).

He further explains that he wears the Medal of Honor he received for all who serve and have served the nation's armed forces honorably, but who did not receive such public recognition of their service. These soldiers, Benavidez explains, must carry their heroism silently in their hearts, knowing the praise they rightly deserve for doing their duty as a soldier and serving their country honorably in spite of the personal sacrifices they had to make (Benavidez and Craig 1995:171).

In addition to the testimony to a flawed commendation system which these two biographies offer, several of the interviews Studs Terkel had with veterans of World War II confirmed the imperfections of this system of merit. Charles Gates, who served in an African-American tanker outfit in World War II revealed the racial prejudices of the merit system in place at that time. Though his unit was heavily awarded, he is aware that his unit received "only the crumbs" of the awards they deserved (Terkel 1984:267). Following the war, his unit sought a Presidential Unit Citation for their outstanding service in the war. Though twelve other units to which they had been attached received such citations almost immediately following the war, for this African-American unit it took thirty-three years to receive such commendation (Terkel 1984:268).

Robert Lekachman, who served as a typist and citation writer for his company, remembers the emphasis that was placed on medals: "There was an awful lot of hustling

for awards. Each one was worth five points. People were shipped back home in the order of points accumulated. But there were so many genuine acts of bravery, too” (Terkel 1984:67). For Lekachman, there was pressure from above and below to write grandiose accounts of valor and virtue on the battlefield so that the awards would steadily flow back to the company. For superior officers, such decorations were desired to serve as a concrete, quantifiable measure of their leadership and the efficacy of their unit. Individual soldiers under this system primarily wanted to receive medals so that they could return home more quickly (Terkel 1984:66-68).

John Ciardi recalled for Terkel the day that he was summoned by the colonel in charge of decorations and awards for his regiment and commissioned to become the unit’s citation writer. Because he had published a book, his ability to write was well-known, and he was re-assigned to this desk job from his post as gunner. He explains:

“This program was raided by the brass, so that decorations were pointless after a while. Anybody up to the grade of a captain, you may assume earned it. Anybody from the grade of major up who has a high decoration *may* have earned it, but you don’t have to believe it” (Terkel 1984:199).

He reflects sarcastically upon the fact that, after agreeing to this reassignment, the colonel told him to sew on another stripe to his uniform. “I couldn’t make tech for having been shot at, but I did it for grinding out words” (Terkel 1984:200). This testimony reveals the emphasis which was placed on elaborately worded citations of merit over actual virtuous action in combat.

If our government and military wish to retain credibility for this system of merit and restore the validity it has lost, they must conduct routine assessments of the methods used to award medals to our soldiers in order to verify that such commendation is accomplishing the social functions which they intend it to perform. Such assessments are necessary to ensure that medals are awarded only in truly meritorious cases of valor and virtue, and that decorations are made as equitably as possible so that all who deserve such commendation receive it. They must remember what Aristotle declared in his *Nicomachean Ethics*: “virtue is superior to honor” (Aristotle 2005a:527).

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY OF RESULTS, DISCUSSION, AND CONCLUSION

The current study has examined warrior virtues from a theoretical and experiential perspective in order to determine the social function that such virtues have historically had in the lives of American World War II soldiers and to gain insight into the implications of these social functions for contemporary warriors. From this examination we have seen the critical role that such humanitarian virtues have played in the lives of warriors, providing a structural social framework upon which the soldiers can compose the chaotic events of war.

Theoretical foundation

A review of literature concerning the nature of man revealed the classical philosophy of Cicero, in which man has a nature that serves as an “internal ordering principle” of his life in society (Litman 1930:13). Examination of more modern philosophers revealed the contrasting accounts of Thomas Hobbes and James Lowde, yet throughout the literature these philosophers indicated that man has an instinct toward self-preservation. The accuracy of these claims was further supported by the biological evidence of man’s response to danger as noted by Maslowski and Winslow. Further review of Cicero’s philosophy revealed his belief in man’s need for stability and resistance to change. This claim was evidenced by such contemporary sociological studies as *The Polish Peasant in America* by Thomas and Znaniecki, which provided valuable insight regarding man’s

need for social organization and dependable, stable relationships both at home and on the battlefield. *Military Sociology* by Coates and Pellegrin further revealed the importance placed upon primary reference groups within the military and how the organization of these intimate military units seeks to provide a greater stability and social organization for the soldiers.

A thorough review of Gray's personal reflections on life in battle revealed several important observations regarding the nature of man's life as warrior. Gray's experience of World War II demonstrated that war is a compression of contradictions in the experience of man, bringing together extremes of emotion and pushing man to the extremities of his physical and mental capacities. Furthermore, Gray noted that the pervasive threat to every soldier's life leads most to experience a narrowing of desires to those of man's basest appetite, what Gray refers to as a reduction to one's essence. Moreover, Gray remarked that war transforms its participants completely, and that this transformation and the transposition he experiences represent a great discontinuity in the life of the soldier.

In examining the nature of morality and virtue, we have seen Russ Shafer-Landau demonstrate the difficulties presented by moral subjectivism and offer a case for moral objectivism. Reliance upon a morally objective order allows societies to form laws both for their own society and to construct international laws which apply to people equally across the globe.

The objectiveness of morality enables us to speak of virtue in the same manner, deeming certain actions to be honorable or dishonorable, virtuous or vile. Aristotle claimed that the standard for judging the virtuousness of an action is derived from a higher moral standard, which can be applied to all men. This interrelation between morality and virtue enables us to speak about warrior codes, which impose a moral order on the conduct of war and guide its participants to morally right conduct.

The warrior code of each nation is based upon that society's image of what constitutes an ideal warrior, and this code is shaped by the nation's history, values, beliefs, and customs. It is for this reason that warrior codes vary from society to society. This distinct variation in warrior codes was witnessed by the World War II American soldiers who fought against the Japanese in the Pacific Theater. Because each nation's warrior code is grounded in the society from which it comes, the code serves to connect the nation's warriors to the society from which they come and provides them with a social framework upon which he can transpose his experiences of the war.

In regards to the whether or not such warrior virtues can truly be taught to warriors-in-training, it was shown that while the standards for moral judgment can be transferred from generation to generation socially, the final decision regarding whether or not to act virtuously lies within the individual. In order to be deemed virtuous, the warriors must not only have knowledge of the virtuous action, but must willfully act upon this knowledge.

Relying upon Gray's analysis of his own experience of the war, the warrior virtues with which this study is concerned were then discussed. The camaraderie experienced by soldiers on the battlefield—designated more simply as love—was shown to be a deep and abiding bond amongst a small, interdependent group of warriors. Gray notes that this bond between the soldiers must be awakened by a common purpose for which they are working, and that a sense of danger is crucial as well.

Sacrifice on the battlefield was shown to go against cultural and human instincts towards self-preservation and was noted by Gray to be greatly bound to the sense of camaraderie between warriors. He compared such sacrifice to religious martyrdom and further declared that the transcendent nature of sacrifice in war reduces the foreignness of the soldier's environment, enabling him to gain a sense of immortality and move beyond his instinct for self-preservation.

Finding its source in the society from which a warrior comes, the virtue of honor was shown to be a crucial foundation for the other two virtues and was expressed as the impulse to act justly, rightly, and morally. The soldier's concept of honor is based upon his socialization as well as the moral education he receives from the military. Regarding the three warrior virtues studied, love and sacrifice demand experience to be understood fully, yet the moral standard of that which is deemed honorable can be taught and transmitted to soldiers through socialization and training. Despite this apparent

teachability of honor, the final decision to act virtuously lies within the individual warrior.

Socio-historical examination

Constituting the substance of this study were the personal narratives of nine Americans who served during World War II. Though the stories of each man's experience are distinct, each account uniquely expresses the role that warrior virtues played in his experience of the war. For those soldiers who survived the war, these warrior virtues continue to play a role in their understanding of the experience. Furthermore, these virtues provide us with a means for understanding the actions of the soldiers who gave their lives in service to their country and their comrades.

Throughout the soldiers' personal interviews with Studs Terkel we see how the soldiers return to these warrior virtues time and again to recount their experience of the war.

Whether explicitly stated or merely implied in these narratives, we can see the crucial function that they played and continue to play in the lives of our soldiers.

We first see the account of Joe Hanley, who desired to be the best soldier he could be, and whose sense of honor and love for a fallen comrade impelled him to communicate with the widow of this man, in order to help ease her through the grieving process by providing the details necessary for her to reach emotional closure. In the course of their acquaintanceship they fell in love, and were later married. Throughout both of their

interviews with Terkel they candidly reveal their acknowledgment that it was not only the sacrifice of Kevin which brought them together and changed their lives forever, but the comradeship between the two men as well.

John Ciardi's short interview with Terkel revealed the critical role of the bonds of comradeship within the military unit and spoke of the significance of such bonds in his own service. As a gunner in the United States Air Force, Ciardi's unit was his flight crew. When asked to fly as gunner with another crew, he was considerably reluctant to do so, not only because he was unaccustomed to the men with whom he would be flying, but because he preferred not to risk dying with strangers. For him, the bonds of camaraderie were crucial for operating successfully in battle.

The Congressional Medal of Honor citation for George Keathley offers us insight into sacrifice on the battlefield and demonstrates the honor and courage with which he and so many other soldiers have fought. When the casualties of the officers in his regiment demanded that he assume command of the second and third platoons, Keathley committed himself to leading the men through the battle and preventing any further casualties. Even when he became terribly wounded by an enemy grenade, he continued to fight to protect his men and lead them to safety rather than save himself. It was because of this commitment to his comrades above his own well-being that Keathley was unable to recover from his wounds and subsequently died. His commitment to

serving honorably and courageously and to ensuring the safety of his men led him to make the final sacrifice, giving his life in service to his men and his country.

Lloyd Hughes' Medal of Honor citation likewise provides us with wisdom for understanding the sacrifice of American soldiers in World War II. Despite injuries to his aircraft, Hughes' and his crew were committed to completing their mission to destroy the Nazi-held oil refineries in Romania. It was precisely because of this commitment to completing their duty honorably that his plane caught fire in the blaze and crashed soon after, killing Hughes and his comrades.

The account of Horace Carswell's service in the Pacific Theater provides further insight into the sacrifice of American soldiers. While piloting a bombing run on a Japanese tanker, Carswell's plane received numerous hits and his copilot was injured as well. Despite the heavy injuries to his plane, Carswell was able to regain control of the flight until they reached land, where his comrades would be able to parachute out from the plane. The parachute of one man, however, had been damaged in the gunfight, so Carswell chose to attempt a landing rather than abandon his copilot and other crew member. As in the cases of Keathley and Hughes, Carswell was committed to completing his assigned mission and to saving each member of his crew, despite the risk to his own life. His commitment to serving honorably despite the risk to his own life is the reason for which he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Terkel's interview with Timuel Black serves to further construct a picture of soldiers' commitment to duty and honor. As an African American in the United States Army, Black was often mistreated and the service of his unit underappreciated. Regardless, they were committed to following orders and to winning the war. We see this in the sacrifice that his unit made in running double duty as quartermaster corps members by day and patrol troops by night. Because of the threat of German saboteurs, African American soldiers had to take sole responsibility of night patrols, and it was for their service and sacrifice in this area that they received the French Croix de Guerre. Furthermore, Black speaks of the indignation he felt upon seeing the horrors that the Nazis had perpetrated upon concentration camp prisoners and the resultant passion he had to do his duty to enact justice in this situation. His sense of honor demanded that he would not merely observe this atrocity, but that he would act to counter it in order to bring sanity to an irrational world. Lastly, Black's recollection of his return voyage to America reveals the loyalty he felt toward his country. Despite all of the discrimination he had faced and the horrors he had seen during the war, he served his nation honorably and was proud to be returning home.

Dr. Alex Shulman's narrative of the war reveals his personal commitment to honor and sacrifice in serving his nation as a field surgeon. Whether his patient was an American or a German soldier, Shulman was always committed to administering treatment with compassion and dignity. Because he was often the only qualified neurosurgeon around, he would oftentimes work long hours, sometimes even managing thirty-six hour shifts in

the operating room. This form of sacrifice enabled him to save the lives of many servicemen who would have otherwise died. Furthermore, even his patients demonstrated the virtues of love, sacrifice, and honor when they refused to be treated before their buddies who were in worse shape. Shulman's virtuous commitment to administering aid compassionately and honorably is manifested in this short interview.

The case of E.B. "Sledgehammer" Sledge is vastly different than the others because of the environment in which he served. Fighting the Japanese soldiers, Sledge and his comrades had difficulty applying the warrior code that they had been taught to their own experience of the war. Oftentimes, their methods of fighting would equal the savagery of the Japanese. The fatigue and stress of the war greatly eroded the American soldiers' sense of honor and what constituted right conduct in war. Because the Japanese fought mercilessly, the Americans did so as well. Yet despite the stress Sledge felt as a result of the war, he never fully lost this sense of decency and morally right action; he simply needed reminders such as the one offered by the Navy medic, which served as invitations to act according to the standards of his society rather than the conventions of his unit. In his interview with Terkel, Sledge reveals the horrible things that men in his unit did in fighting with the Japanese, handling their wounded, and dealing with their dead, but he counters each story with an affirmation of the decency of the man who committed the dishonorable act. For him personally, he still has difficulty understanding such dishonorable actions of American soldiers in the Pacific Theater. He maintains, however, that episodes of dishonorable behavior on the part of his American comrades

were merely due to the enemy's warrior culture and that, as a whole, his comrades fought honorably in service to their country.

Elliot Johnson's interview serves to counter the dishonorable actions of Sledge's comrades with his account of compassion and shared humanity. He recalls witnessing a blood transfusion for a wounded soldier who was deathlike in appearance, and the joy and relief he experienced as he saw the color come back to the man's face. He could not remember if the man was German or American, and to Johnson it did not matter. What was most important for him was the compassion and sympathy which he was able to have for this man. Johnson maintained this disposition towards compassion throughout the war, as when he cleaned up a wounded soldier who had defecated himself before sending him on to a field hospital for further treatment. He remained committed to serving these comrades honorably throughout the war, and remembers with difficulty the experience of having a comrade die in his arms. In addition to the love and compassion with which he served his fellow soldiers, the sense of honor he had received from training informed his conduct in battle, helping him to make decisions as a forward observer about which German vehicles could be fired upon and which were off limits. It was this code of honor that enabled him to have a silent compact with a rival German observer and provided a frame for judging what actions were morally acceptable.

In chapter six, the history of the American system of military commendation is reviewed and the analysis of this system of commendation from the biographies of two

Congressional Medal of Honor recipients is given. It was shown that the current system fails for two seemingly contradictory reasons, the first being that it distributes too many medals to soldiers who are undeserving of the award, and the second that it cannot adequately award all of the soldiers whose actions *do* deserve praise and honor for their sacrifice and service. In the biographies of Joe Hooper and Roy Benavidez, emphasis was placed upon the sacrifice of all who serve in the war and the value of medals was deemphasized. The biography of Hooper notes that postwar studies confirm the claim that the current system of commendation actually undermines morale because so many virtuous actions go unrewarded. Additionally, the testimony of Charles Gates, Robert Lekachman, and John Ciardi in interviews with Terkel reveals that this system was flawed during World War II. Gates testifies to the racial discrimination his unit faced in seeking recognition for their valorous service. Lekachman discusses the importance that officers placed upon well-written citations, because more medals for their men translated into a better record of leadership on their part. Furthermore, the soldiers desired the medals so that they could return home more quickly. Ciardi further testifies to the emphasis that was placed upon well-worded citations over actual valorous action. When viewed together, these accounts of the American military's system of commendation reveal the need for reform and reassessment of the current system for awarding medals. In order for such medals to perform their intended social function, the American military must work to ensure that decorations are given only in cases that are truly meritorious and that these medals are awarded as equitably as possible to all who are deserving of commendation.

Discussion

In the accounts of World War II American soldiers we see time and again their reliance upon the warrior virtues of love, sacrifice, and honor to communicate their personal experiences of the war. This reliance upon warrior virtues for explaining their experience of war conveys the important social function that such virtues played in their time of service.

For each of these men, it was their personal commitment to the virtues of love, sacrifice, and honor that shaped their service and the experience they had in the war. For some soldiers, commitment to their comrades led them to sacrifice their lives, while for others it led them to build a new life in which the memory of their fallen comrades would live on. Some soldiers sacrificed their lives because of their commitment to honor, but most died in combat because of their commitment to saving the lives of their comrades. For eight of these soldiers, the honorable actions of their comrades—and even their enemies—helped to form a more coherent and socially organized environment in the midst of the chaos of war. For one of these soldiers, the absence of this sense of honor proved to be an obstacle for his coping with the stress of the war, and taints his stories of valor and heroism with the memory of dishonorable savagery. Yet when these warrior virtues were properly enacted in the lives of soldiers, they provided social organization to the chaos of war and united the warriors to the cultural values of the society from which they came.

Because these warrior virtues have been shown to provide a positive social function for warriors in the midst of battle, the American military would be astute to conduct further research into the possible methods for training its warriors and providing them with adequate moral education. Because the final decision to act virtuously or not lies within the individual, this presents a difficulty for the military. It is not sufficient to merely teach these warriors what is morally right; they must be given opportunities to enact their knowledge of the warrior code so that they may habituate morally proper conduct before the need arises to employ the use of this warrior code on the battlefield. Further research is needed to address the disillusionment and stress that soldiers face and the role that warrior virtues may play in understanding the physical, emotional, and mental health issues faced by contemporary warriors.

While this study is limited both by its scope and its resources, it provides impetus for further research to be conducted regarding the role that warrior virtues should play in the moral education of soldiers and the implications such training could have on the health and well-being of modern warriors. Because this research was limited to a literature review of theories and the personal accounts of World War II soldiers, it cannot directly assess the role of warrior virtues in the lives of soldiers, nor their thoughts concerning the role that such virtues played in their time of service. The current study can only seek to analyze these theories and accounts by examining the nature of man, his life as warrior, and the emphasis placed upon the role of such warrior virtues as love, sacrifice, and honor in the lives of our soldiers. We stand at the outset of a new century which, for

our nation especially, has already been marked by a new kind of war—a war on terror. For the safety and well-being of our soldiers, it is imperative that we continue to increase our understanding of the personal and social impacts war has on the individuals who fight them. While this study cannot answer all of the questions regarding warrior virtues and the nature of man at war, it examines the life of warriors from both a theoretical and experiential perspective and lays the groundwork for future research on the role that such warrior virtues have in the lives of our soldiers.

Conclusion

In this study we have seen that war violates the nature of man, which is inclined towards self preservation and stability, by thrusting him into a dynamic and unstable situation which threatens his life. Furthermore, we have seen that an objective moral order and the concepts of virtue and a warrior code serve to provide a social framework which soldiers can utilize to guide their conduct in war and to frame their experiences of the war, imposing order upon their otherwise chaotic lives on the battlefield. We have likewise seen that though the concepts of virtue and morality can be taught in theory, the final decision to enact this knowledge of morally right conduct lies within the individual warrior.

Time and again we see the emphasis placed upon love, sacrifice, and honor in the accounts of World War II American soldiers. Not only did these soldiers rely upon warrior virtues to inform their conduct within the war, but they also utilized these virtues

to provide a meaningful social framework for communicating the experience of war to persons who were not there. Despite the violence to which war calls man, warriors wish to maintain a sense of order in their own lives in order to counter the chaos of war. Thus, soldiers utilize the warrior virtues of love, sacrifice, and honor as scaffolding upon which they can frame both their conduct within the war and their memories of the war, providing a greater sense of order, social organization, and humanity to the otherwise chaotic world of war.

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