Developing Good Soldiers: The Problem of Fragmentation Within the Army

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Published online: 20 Jan 2014.


To link to this article:  http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15027570.2013.869389
DEVELOPING GOOD SOLDIERS:
THE PROBLEM OF FRAGMENTATION
WITHIN THE ARMY

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Fragmentation – a form of which involves the division of soldiers’ lives into professional and personal domains that are insulated from each other – is a significant problem for members of the US Army profession. The past 12 years of combat along with the US Army’s posture of persistent conflict seem to have intensified this perennial problem in military service. We argue that the Army Profession campaign – the Army’s main program for moral development – fails to recognize the problem of fragmentation. Instead, it seems to further the fragmentation of soldiers’ lives. Some might contend that the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program – which emphasizes the emotional, social, familial and spiritual domains of soldiers – addresses this problem. We maintain that this is not the case. The Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program fails to view the domains of soldier fitness as constitutive of moral development. We conclude by recommending that the Army begin to address the problem of fragmentation by drawing from the resources of its commitment to the virtue tradition. Leaders and soldiers should use the resources that the virtue tradition provides with respect to self-perception, virtue-relevant goals and the emotions to promote soldiers’ moral development.

KEY WORDS: Fragmentation, moral self, persistent conflict, army profession, virtue theory

Introduction

As social creatures, human beings possess a number of identities. A young woman, for example, is a daughter and a member of a particular ethnic group. She is also likely to be a citizen, a friend, a participant in a club or organization, and a member of a vocation. Each of these identities comes with particular values, customs and obligations that shape the development of a person’s character. Philosophers historically have noted that it is difficult for human beings to integrate the different values, customs and obligations that come with their numerous identities.¹ Many people struggle to see themselves as a unified person, because they believe that each identity requires them to be a distinctly different person. Throughout a given day, they transition from being one person to another as they move to each new social context. When a husband leaves home and goes to the workplace, for example, he no longer sees himself as a spouse but as an accountant. He believes that his identity as an accountant has nothing to do with his identity as a spouse. He is an accountant at work and a husband at home. The one identity is separated from the other. This man’s view of himself and his identities, by which he seems to lead a double life, is an instance of fragmentation.
Fragmentation, a phenomenon that often involves not only the division of one’s self into professional and personal domains but their insulation from each other, is not solely a problem for accountants and other civilian professionals. This type of professional-personal fragmentation arises organically in military service. Given the extent to which the values, customs and obligations of the profession of arms shape military personnel, fragmentation frequently poses a significant challenge for service members of any country in any era. That challenge is particularly acute for the members of today’s US Army (hereafter ‘Army’) as they come to terms with almost 12 years of combat in an era of persistent conflict that will stretch indefinitely into the future. Thus, it seems that any program that the Army implements for character development ought to recognize fragmentation and provide resources and practices to combat it.

In this paper, we will argue that the Army’s center of gravity for character and moral development (hereafter ‘moral development’), the Army Profession campaign, fails to account for fragmentation. Instead, it seems to further the fragmentation of soldiers’ lives. This follows from the manner in which the campaign limits moral aspiration to the domain of professionalism, and excludes the many other domains and goods that are necessary for human beings to flourish. Thus it seems that the Army Profession campaign is not sufficient for soldiers’ moral development.

Some may point to the Army’s Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program as the resource that the Army uses to address this problem. Here they could highlight the program’s emphasis on the emotional, social, familial and spiritual domains of soldiers’ lives. We argue, however, that this is not the case. Neither the Army Profession campaign nor the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program promotes the view that these domains are constitutive of moral development. The prevailing view among leaders and soldiers in the Army is that moral development consists in professionalism, and resilience or behavioral health consists in emotional, social, familial and spiritual fitness. We contend that leaders and soldiers ought to use the resources that the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program provides for their moral development. This will require that they see the former as constitutive components of moral development. We suggest that an attempt to unite the concerns of the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program with moral development would enable the Army to draw more fully from the resources of the virtue tradition.

Let us add that this article concentrates on the US Army. However, we believe and hope that its concerns and even some of its conclusions will be interesting and relevant outside of that national and service framework.

Sources of a Soldier’s Self

Today, the Army offers a new identity for all who join its ranks – the Army professional. Men and women often begin to assume this identity from the very first day that they shed civilian clothes and put on their uniforms. Those who enter the active duty Army must serve full-time for a minimum of three years, barring any conditions or behavior that would be grounds for an early separation. During this time, soldiers live on or near an Army installation, and spend most of their time learning and inculcating the standards, discipline, customs, traditions, skills and values of the Army. All of this contributes to the development of a soldier’s professional identity. Yet, the presence of this new identity raises questions, which we will take up shortly, about how a soldier’s professional identity should relate to his or her personal identity. Contrary to the myth that the Army takes a new recruit, ‘breaks
them down' and rebuilds them into a different person altogether, a soldier's personal identity prior to any military service survives even basic training. Furthermore, who a soldier is independent of their roles within the Army Profession also contributes to their personal identity.\textsuperscript{6} Taken together, a soldier's professional and personal identities constitute their moral self.\textsuperscript{7}

By 'moral self' we mean the cognitive, affective, personal, and social dimensions of an individual's moral behavior. All of these factors contribute to how an individual evaluates the moral salience of situations (see e.g. Punzo 1996). In other words, one's identity constitutes part of one's moral self. When someone becomes a parent, for example, they assume a new identity. Many people find that 'being a parent' entails the exercise of patience toward their children. As a result, on the occasion that their children are slow to understand or respond, they perceive that a moral issue is at stake – namely, whether they ought to exercise patience or not – based on their identity as a parent. Accordingly, a soldier's two identities, professional and personal, are better understood as subsets of the soldier's moral self.

Soldiers frequently find it difficult to integrate these two domains into one holistic moral self. Nancy Sherman has succinctly described that challenge:

\[T\]hough soldiers don uniforms and then take them off, the transitions are rarely seamless. For many, soldiering is not just a job or a career; it is an identity, it is who they become. Leaving it behind is not easy. Finding a moral self capacious enough for both civilian and warrior sensibilities becomes the presiding challenge. (Sherman 2010: 4)

As Sherman notes, many soldiers struggle to see the relevance of both personal and professional moral considerations when it comes to their self-conceptions and their holistic moral development. So knowingly or unknowingly, soldiers may compartmentalize their professional moral self from their personal moral self. As we explained in the previous section, this compartmentalization and disintegration of one's life into separate and isolated domains is an instance of fragmentation.

Soldiers who serve in the Army for any length of time will face the challenge of overcoming the fragmentation of their moral selves. In addition, it is often the case that they identify \textit{predominantly} with their professional moral self. This adds a further challenge that follows from the organic fragmentation that we have described thus far: one's professional identity eclipses one's personal identity when a soldier is on duty. As we noted earlier with the accountant, soldiers in this social context may only see the relevance of professional values, customs and obligations. We call this phenomenon, wherein one's professional identity dominates one's other identities in the professional domain, stage-1 eclipsing. This term clearly suggests another type of eclipsing. We will address that type of eclipse in the next section. For now, we simply want to note this added and serious effect of soldiers' organic fragmentation.

So far we have described the organic fragmentation that grows as a practical outworking of a soldier's service within the profession of arms. Indeed, this type of fragmentation poses a threat to any soldier who puts on their respective uniform and assumes a professional identity. Thus, soldiers who have never served in combat will need to take steps to guard against it. For those who have served in combat, however, the challenge to integrate their professional moral self and personal moral self seems even greater. It is to this issue that we now turn.
Some combat veterans find it extremely difficult to integrate their professional and personal moral selves after they return from deployment. Consider the following quotation from a veteran of Afghanistan:

Every day that passes, I find myself longing for the visceral reality that is combat. I can safely say it is only in those fleeting moments of a firefight that I’ve felt truly alive. In a society where the transition from warzone to civilization takes a matter of days, the rapid change tends to leave a rift between two selves. One self is who you were during the war, while the other is who you were before it. Readjusting to the world after deployment is the reunification of these two selves. After merging them together, you are left with the person you have become after experiencing the realities of conflict. For some people, this rift is never truly closed – the second self tugs at the back of the brain, begging to return to a place where the adrenaline delivered by combat can be reintroduced.8

Not all combat veterans share the sentiments that this veteran expresses. Some veterans have no desire to return to war, particularly those who continue to grieve over the losses that they experienced in combat. Nevertheless, the challenge to integrate one’s personal identity with one’s identity as a combat soldier is something that many combat veterans describe.9 The veteran who shares the thoughts above finds it difficult to see himself as anything other than a soldier, even when he is in civilian social contexts. In other words, his professional identity dominates all of his other identities in all of the domains of his life. We call this phenomenon stage-2 eclipsing. It poses a grave challenge for soldiers, especially those who have been in combat. Consider the following example from the life of a US soldier who served in Iraq.

Corporal Sanchez grew up with a strong sense of the importance of doing what is right. He entered the Army because he believed that his nation needed soldiers who would do the right thing in tough situations. During a deployment to southwest Baghdad, Sanchez was part of a scout platoon that established traffic control points. These control points were intended to secure neighborhoods that were the target of search and seizure operations aimed at confiscating illegal weapons. While on one such mission, Sanchez was providing security for the traffic control point by manning the machine gun from the turret of his vehicle. His squad leader, Sergeant Taylor, was in charge of the checkpoint and made sure that all the proper control measures were in place so that motorists stopped their vehicles at a designated point for an identification card check.

During the first hour of their mission, a car approached the traffic control point. It was moving at a normal pace, but the driver was not heeding the warning signs that Taylor’s squad posted, and continued to approach the checkpoint. When the car passed the warning signs, Taylor gave verbal commands in Arabic as well as hand and arm signals to tell the driver to stop. The car kept moving closer to the checkpoint. As the car passed the traffic cones, Taylor fired a warning shot with his rifle. The car still continued to move. Even after driving over the spike strips that the squad placed as a final control measure, the car stayed on course. It seemed to Taylor that the driver may have been intent on getting close enough to the checkpoint where the blast radius of a car bomb could inflict the most damage. Taylor ordered Sanchez to fire his machine gun at the car. Sanchez did so and hit the car. The car quickly came to a stop. The driver exited the car and fell to the ground. After searching the driver and the vehicle, Sanchez’s squad found no weapons or explosive
devices on the vehicle. Yet the passenger, who was the driver’s fourteen-year-old son, was dead from multiple gunshot wounds.

A subsequent routine investigation of the incident found that both Sergeant Taylor and Corporal Sanchez acted appropriately within the line of duty and rules of engagement. After returning from deployment, however, Sanchez continues to ponder something that troubles him: ‘The Army says I did the right thing, so why do I feel so guilty? How can I say I am a good soldier and a good man when I killed an innocent boy?’ Corporal Sanchez could identify himself as a good soldier within the Army’s concept of honorable service as a professional. Yet at the same time, he experiences an existential struggle to see himself as a good man; he feels guilty for taking an innocent life. His moral self clearly is fragmented.

Sanchez’s story illustrates one way among many through which combat furthers the fragmentation of a soldier’s moral self. Since 2001, the typical US active duty soldier has been deployed to combat multiple times. Many US soldiers have found that this operational tempo has contributed to the quick and comprehensive eclipse of their personal moral self (as either stage-1 or stage-2) by their professional moral self. We will return to Sanchez’s story later to examine how his struggle to see himself as a good soldier and a good man exhibits the problems that come when one’s professional self eclipses one’s personal self. We turn now to illustrate how this eclipsing presents an acute challenge for moral development for soldiers who serve in an Army postured for an environment of persistent conflict.

Persistent Conflict and the Fragmentation of a Soldier’s Moral Self

While operations in Iraq have ceased, and operations in Afghanistan will slow over the next year, Army senior leaders describe the contemporary operational environment of the Army as one of ‘persistent conflict’. This means that many US soldiers will remain in an indefinite wartime posture, with a high probability of a regular cycle of deployments. Former Chief of Staff of the Army, General George W. Casey, Jr., described such persistent conflict as follows:

*Persistent conflict* is defined as protracted confrontation among state, nonstate, and individual actors who are increasingly willing to use violence to accomplish their political and ideological objectives. While we in the Army cannot determine when this era of persistent conflict is going to end, we know that – for the foreseeable future – American servicemen and women will continue to be in harm’s way defending our way of life. (Casey 2011: 1, emphasis in original)

Given the burdens, responsibilities, losses and trauma that are commonplace in combat, there is tremendous potential in an era of persistent conflict for soldiers’ lives to come apart in a relatively short period of time. Even if combat operations subside, an era of persistent conflict will entail regular deployments for US soldiers. The demands of the profession may, and frequently do, affect soldiers’ personal lives. This is perhaps most clearly seen in the breakdown of the relationships between soldiers and their families.

The wife of Brigadier General Sinclair, who is undergoing court martial proceedings for sexual misconduct, describes the impact of such prolonged professional demands:

Since 2001, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have destabilized our life. We have moved six times in 11 years. On average, our kids change schools every two years. Between five deployments, site surveys and training operations, Jeff has spent more than six of the
past 10 years away from his family. None of this is meant to excuse infidelity. I expected more of Jeff, and I think he expected more of himself. But we’re fooling ourselves if we don’t recognize the larger reality. My friends who are married to other combat leaders have been my anchor during this crisis. We understand that our soldiers may come home disfigured or injured in such a way that we will become lifelong caregivers. We also understand that they may not come home at all, and if blessed with a reunion, they may carry emotional baggage few could understand. My friends know that it could have been their heartbreak as much as mine. This is the only time in US history that our nation has fought a decade-long war with a volunteer Army. Doing so has consequences. Nothing good can come of families being chronically separated for a decade or more.\textsuperscript{11}

As Mrs Sinclair observes, it seems highly plausible that the chronic separation endemic to the Army’s era of persistent conflict is a fact that has significantly contributed to the fragmentation of soldiers’ lives. One reason for this, we believe, is that contemporary soldiers face a novelty in the history of the Army – the possibility of spending their entire career as a soldier being deployed every three to five years. Over the course of a 20-year career, an individual could spend between four and seven years away from home. Moreover, many such individuals will spend this time in combat. While this is true of soldiers in general, it has been particularly true of those in senior leadership positions.

Consider, for example, the case of General Petraeus. Petraeus spent approximately 70 of the 104 months between 11 September 2001 and March 2011 away from his family. During this time, Petraeus was deployed to combat four times. In total, Petraeus was deployed for over six years between September 2001 and March 2011. While we recognize that Petraeus served in several unique capacities during this period of time that required his frequent and lengthy deployments, we want to emphasize that many other senior leaders to include non-commissioned officers as well as officers have completed a similar number of deployments that required a similar length of time away from family and in combat zones.\textsuperscript{12} Moreover, as a commander of coalition forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, Petraeus and other American officers in similar roles since him had and continue to have a significant influence on the theory and practice of international forces in terms of their moral and professional development. These forces include, but are not limited to, the militaries of Afghanistan, Australia, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Iraq, Italy, Russia and the UK. Thus, it seems that there are numerous significant reasons why any model for moral development in the Army must take into account both the organic fragmentation of soldiers’ lives, and how combat and a posture of persistent conflict exacerbate this.

Moral Development in the Army

In light of the threat that fragmentation poses to soldiers’ moral selves, we believe that moral development in the Army should include the integration of soldiers’ professional and personal moral selves.\textsuperscript{13} On the one hand, this view is consistent with the Army’s account of the human dimension in Army operations. The Army wants soldiers to cultivate integrity. The Army’s senior leaders seem to maintain that this requires that soldiers align their personal and professional character traits and values so that they are integrated in an internally consistent manner. That is, because behavior comes from character, according to the Army, soldiers who possess the aforementioned type of integrated character will act virtuously in all domains of their life.
On the other hand, however, our claim that moral development in the Army should include the integration of soldiers’ professional and personal moral selves does not seem compatible with the current practices and programs of the Army. Consider, for example, two of the most influential and formative moral programs within the Army – the Army Profession campaign and the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program.

The Army launched the Army Profession campaign in December 2010 as a response to several lapses of conduct that shocked both military personnel and civilians. Its purpose was to ‘refresh and renew our understanding of our profession’. As part of this campaign, the Army took up the question: ‘What does it mean to be a professional soldier?’ To answer this, the Army established the Center for the Army Profession and Ethic (CAPE), and gave it the task to develop two institutional concepts, the Army Profession and the Army Ethic. These two concepts would serve as the basis for future moral development programs. Toward that end, CAPE developed a Master Army Profession and Ethic Trainer (MAPET) course. The MAPET course certifies instructors who will train others to master the Army Profession concepts and create moral development programs based upon those concepts. As a result, through the MAPET course, the Army Profession campaign has become the center of gravity for the Army’s moral development programs.

While the Army Profession campaign clearly has a number of strengths, it does have at least one serious weakness: it conceptually and practically limits the scope of moral development to the professional domain of a soldier’s moral self. Indeed, the entire campaign is based on the presupposition that a soldier’s character consists in ‘an Army professional’s dedication and adherence to Army Values and the Profession’s Ethic as consistently and faithfully demonstrated in decisions and actions’ (The Army Profession 2013: 2-1). Therefore, the scope of moral development within the Army Profession campaign is limited to a soldier’s professional moral self. By limiting moral aspiration to a context-specific good, professionalism, the Army Profession campaign actually furthers the problem of fragmentation. Because the campaign almost solely focuses on the development of character traits within the professional domain of soldiers’ lives, it fails to help soldiers develop in a holistic manner.

There is yet another way that the tenets and practices of the Army Profession campaign further the problem of fragmentation. This second way is a byproduct of the relationship between the Army Profession campaign and the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program. For some reason, the former does not associate moral development with cultivating fitness in the emotional, social, family, physical and spiritual domains of soldiers’ lives. Instead, the program encourages soldiers to see these as matters that belong to their resilience – a soldier’s ability to recover from combat and the mechanisms involved in the process of recovery. In addition, the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program is set up to support the idea that professional moral development is distinct from fitness in its five domains. Thus, within these two Army programs lies a conceptual fragmentation between moral development, which speaks to professionalism, and resilience, which speaks to emotion, and so on. This conceptual fragmentation leads to a fragmented approach to a soldier’s overall development. One can see this when one considers the type of response that Corporal Sanchez could expect to receive if he divulged his overwhelming feelings of guilt to his friends or squad leader.

When Corporal Sanchez tells his friends or squad leader that he is overcome with guilt for killing an innocent child at a checkpoint, they will likely send him elsewhere for help. They might refer him to their unit chaplain, a doctor or psychologist. Note that
these referrals require Sanchez to seek help from those who are not normally his friends or mentors. Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly, Sanchez would not normally perceive these caregivers as professional soldiers. From Sanchez’s perspective, he leaves the professional domain even when he talks to an Army chaplain, doctor or psychologist. In his counseling sessions with them, Sanchez would likely believe that he is not receiving professional development, but some kind of emotional or psychological first aid. Like a soldier healing from a gunshot wound, Sanchez (as well as his friends and leaders) would construe that he is exiting the profession of arms for a period of time until he can return to the real work of a professional soldier.\textsuperscript{20}

We contend that this approach does more harm than good. Once again, it seems that at least one significant problem with this model is the fact that Corporal Sanchez and those who know him best (and could provide the most consistent care for him) do not see the type of care that he receives as a function of professional, let alone moral, development. These soldiers will at least implicitly support the view that emotional concerns fall outside of the domain and expertise of professional soldiering. It is only professionals who are not really professional soldiers that can help Corporal Sanchez with his emotions; only they have the resources to do so.\textsuperscript{21} This sort of reasoning often lies behind decisions to send soldiers like Corporal Sanchez to receive professional help from those who soldiers do not construe as professional soldiers.

We believe that although it is often true that leaders and friends of soldiers do not have the resources to help soldiers like Corporal Sanchez, it simply is false to support the idea that, even if only implicitly, that emotional concerns are not constitutive to the moral development of good soldiers. All of the domains of a soldier’s fitness are relevant to the shape of their character and the actions that are a product of their character. Therefore, soldiers like Corporal Sanchez need a more holistic and integrated view of what it means to be soldier. They must not think that a good soldier simply is a professional soldier in the sense that the Army Profession campaign suggests. To think this way is to foster the type of eclipsing that distorts a soldier’s perception of him/herself and the world around him or her. Rather, a good soldier is one who has developed and continues to develop as a whole person.

Soldiers who pursue a holistic approach to moral development will also more easily see the problems that come with stage-1 and stage-2 eclipsing. So, for example, when someone experiences emotional turmoil like Corporal Sanchez, they need to recognize that the emotional challenges that they face from war do have an impact on both their professional and personal domains. As Sanchez exhibits through his own question about his character, strictly receiving ‘professional’ development will not be enough. Professional concepts cannot satisfy his desire to know whether or not he is a good soldier and a good man. Nor will it be enough if soldiers receive help for their personal lives without seeing how it relates to their professional activities. The Army could avoid both of these shortcomings if it incorporated the strengths of the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program in its model for moral development. Furthermore, such integration is in keeping with the Army’s commitment to the virtue tradition. It is to a brief consideration of this that we now turn.

\textbf{Virtue Theory and the Holistic Development of Soldiers}

We believe that virtue theory, a component of what we can broadly call the virtue tradition, is a good place to look for resources that will help Army leaders and soldiers understand
and perhaps mitigate the problem of fragmentation. Part of the reason behind our suggestion is that the Army shares a common goal with virtue theory when it comes to moral development. Both aim toward the cultivation of virtues like loyalty, respect, honor and courage, as well as the development of the whole person across each domain of his or her life. Consider, for example, the following quotation from a doctrinal manual on the human dimension in Army operations:

> The moral component of the human dimension is rooted in character, and from character comes behavior... Therefore, soldierly conduct must involve the practice of values and virtues until doing the right thing becomes habitual virtuous conduct that takes on the qualities of duty... Leaders serve as moral exemplars by their conduct... The objective of moral development must be the practice of the military and civic virtues and the internalized dispositions to live by those values all day, every day, professionally and in the Soldier’s private life. This is what integrity is all about – aligning individual and professional values in such a way that beliefs and behaviors are internally consistent. (Human Dimension 2008: 15–18, emphasis added)

This excerpt stresses the importance of a holistic approach to moral development, namely ‘aligning individual and professional values in such a way that beliefs and behaviors are internally consistent’. What resources can virtue theory provide to enable the Army to achieve this goal?

One way to answer this question is to note that a central concept of virtue theory is that human beings must reflect upon who they are and who they ought to be. This calls for a sense of self that recognizes the multiple identities that one possesses (e.g. professional and personal). It also requires some means to relate those multiple identities with each other in order to develop united moral selves. We want to consider a way to relate soldiers’ numerous identities (e.g. soldier, spouse, parent, etc.) to one another through their personal goals, such that they constitute a united moral self.

Following the lead of certain philosophers and moral psychologists, we argue for a ‘goal theory’ approach for the integration of one’s identities into a united moral self. We contend that the development of one’s moral self, toward either fragmentation or integration, is related to one’s personal goals. If soldiers examine these goals, we believe that they can do two things that will help integrate their lives. First, to the extent that soldiers construe the moral salience of their goals, it is possible for soldiers to transform personal goals into moral goals. Second, soldiers can then broaden the scope of their moral goals such that they bear upon each of their identities. In other words, goals are an important variable that influences one’s moral development (Colby & Damon 1993: 152). If soldiers align their goals with a holistic sense of self and regular construals of the moral salience of situations, then they can also begin to overcome fragmentation.

In order to see how this works, consider the case of someone who is an Army officer and a parent. Thousands of men and women in the Army share these two identities. Within that group of people, many take these two identities to be in conflict (hence, they are fragmented). One prominent retired officer whose story is featured in the movie We Were Soldiers, Lieutenant General Harold ‘Hal’ Moore, rejected that view. He argued that these identities are complementary. One particular scene from the movie illustrates how Moore’s sense of self (i.e. his identities), his goals and his construal of the events of each situation are interrelated in a unified way.
A young officer in Moore’s battalion who recently became a father asks then Lieutenant Colonel Moore a question: ‘What do you think about being a soldier and a father?’ Moore replies: ‘I hope that being good at the one makes me better at the other.’ Aside from the affection he shows toward this new officer and father, he conveys a point of view in this simple yet profound answer that is relevant to our discussion of moral development.

First, Moore takes his identities as father and soldier to be complementary, rather than compartmentalized and isolated from one another. There is no fragmentation here. Nor is there any evidence of stage-1 or stage-2 eclipsing of his identity. Second, he aspires to be both an excellent soldier and father; in pursuing excellence as a soldier, he also pursues excellence as a father. This does not mean that being a good father necessarily follows from being a good soldier. If that were the case, fragmentation would not be the significant problem for soldiers that it is. Professional concepts would, after all, turn out to be sufficient for moral development. Rather, Moore construes these goals as having something in common – certain character traits like compassion, empathy, patience and so on that are constitutive of being a good father and a good soldier. In this way, they are properly called virtue-relevant goals.25

In the context of this goal theory approach, we could say that one’s identity motivates the development of the moral self by steering virtue-relevant goals. Yet, we could also identify a reciprocal process at work here. The integration of one’s identity occurs as a consequence of one’s virtue-relevant goals, and the perception that one is acting in a certain role in a given situation. What we can take away from this discussion of virtue-relevant goals is that soldiers must aspire to excellence in each domain and role of life.

Turning back to Corporal Sanchez’s situation, how do virtue-relevant goals relate to the emotional turmoil of soldiers like him? How do they help mitigate the problem of fragmentation and the stages in which one’s professional self eclipses one’s personal self? We should recall that the integration of emotion within an account of moral development is also a distinctive feature and strength of virtue theory. Robert C. Roberts states this at the outset of his account of the emotions and moral psychology.26

The involvement of emotions in what may be broadly termed the ‘moral’ character of our lives is pervasive and deep. Because emotions are often impulses to act, their quality strongly affects the quality of what we do. Those who are prone to strong and inappropriate fear and anger tend to act and behave in a certain set of familiar ways, while compassion and the emotions of friendship incline people to actions of another kind. These two sorts of emotional tendencies, and many others, may coexist in a single person, thus making people complex and morally puzzling (Roberts 2003: 1–2).
The specific ways in which, as Roberts describes it, Sanchez’s guilt, for instance, may affect his behavior at a later date is something we hope to address in the future. For now, we want to point out that Sanchez can think about his emotions in terms of his virtue-relevant goals. He can broaden the scope of his goal to be a just person such that it incorporates the other identities that he possesses (i.e. son, brother, friend, etc.). From a more realistic vantage point of how his multiple identities constitute his moral self as a whole, Sanchez will be able to begin to process anew his actions in Baghdad, their consequences, his feelings about them, and their ramifications for his development as a person.

Conclusion

We have argued against the Army’s current program for moral development. In its place, we have championed a model for moral development in the Army, situated in virtue theory, which addresses the problem of fragmentation, and can begin to provide at least some of the resources needed to understand and perhaps mitigate the fragmentation of soldiers. This model inspires soldiers to develop character traits in the professional and personal domains of their moral selves. It also encourages soldiers to acquire goods that are external to the Army profession but are relevant for members of that profession. We have stressed the need and ability of this model to incorporate virtue-relevant goals and to account for the role that emotion plays in developing character. In the future, we aim to provide a fuller account of this model of moral development in a manner that highlights the strengths and resources of the Army’s current force structure, as well as the Army Profession campaign and Comprehensive Soldier Fitness systems. We hope to have shown here that there are good reasons to believe that the development of good soldiers involves more than professional development.

NOTES

1. Western philosophers have recognized and tried to address the phenomena of fragmentation for centuries. Perhaps the most famous ancient/medieval account of this is in Augustine’s Confessions, particularly Book VIII (see e.g. Augustine 1963). For contemporary treatments of fragmentation, see, for example, Adams (2006); Annas (2011); Brewer (2009); MacIntyre (1985, 1988, 1990); Taylor (1989).
2. Military professionals and academics from countries including Great Britain, Canada and Australia who analyze and create professional military ethics programs for their armed forces have noted both in writing and in conversation the existence of the problem of fragmentation and the need to account for it in their programs. One historical response to the fragmentation of soldiers’ lives is the German Army’s deliberate move away from the professional soldier concept and adoption of the citizen soldier ideal (see note 4).
3. The Army Profession campaign proper began in 2010 as a research and steering project for the Army’s approach to moral development. It ended in 2011 after making numerous findings about institutional strengths and weaknesses related to the Army’s moral theory and practice over the previous decade. In light of these findings, the Army implemented courses of action to improve its moral development programs. For the sake of brevity, we retain the use of this term in this paper to refer to the concepts and methodologies that
persist from this campaign in the Army’s current approach to moral development, the ‘America’s Army - Our Profession’ program.

4. Since 2010, senior leaders in the Army have reinvigorated the concept of the Army professional soldier. The professional soldier of today’s Army is conceptually distinct from the citizen-soldier, for example, of the Second World War. Furthermore, all soldiers, not just officers, are considered professionals in the Army’s current understanding. This is also a conceptual innovation. Not all armies describe their enlisted soldiers as professionals. Ironically, the German Army, which developed and championed the concept of a professional military, has replaced the concept by returning to the citizen-soldier ideal. See Robinson (2007b: 267), who writes:

The German concept of Innere Führung stresses that a soldier must be a “citizen under arms”. Perhaps, in the context of the dynamics of honour, this is a more suitable conception of the soldier than the somewhat exceptionalist “warrior” ethics preferred by some other armed forces.

5. Most of the new soldiers entering the Army arrive at basic training with one small duffel bag of personal items, enough to get them through a day or two of travel until they report to their training facility. The Army provides nearly every article of clothing they will need from that point forward. In fact, most soldiers will not wear civilian clothes again for at least six weeks. During Paul Berghaus’ cadet basic training at the United States Military Academy, he remembers looking in the mirror at his new haircut, uniform and military bearing, wondering who he was and if his former self would ever return.

6. An independent element of a soldier’s life includes, for example, one’s role as a husband. In spite of the popular adage, ‘if the Army wanted you to have a wife, it would have issued you one’, being a husband (or not) is not dependent upon one also being a soldier.

7. For treatments of the moral self and identity, see, for example, Blasi (1984); Colby and Damon (1993); Power (2004); Taylor (1989). We understand moral development to involve the integration of a soldier’s professional and personal moral selves. This understanding is compatible with concepts of moral development that the Army has employed in the past. We will discuss this below.


9. There are at least two approaches to overcome this challenge: compartmentalize or integrate the identities. Since the Army is interested in character, we argue that it must provide a model that integrates. However, in its current model, the Army compartmentalizes by inspiring soldiers to embrace the Army Profession and Ethic.

10. Persistent conflict and change characterize the strategic environment. We have looked at the future and expect a future of protracted confrontation among state, non-state, and individual actors who will use violence to achieve political, religious, and other ideological ends. We will confront highly adaptive and intelligent adversaries who will exploit technology, information, and cultural differences to threaten US interests. Operations in the future will be executed in complex environments and will range from peace engagement, to counterinsurgency, to major combat operations. This era of persistent conflict will result in high demand for Army forces and capabilities.


12. Paula Broadwell and Vernon Loeb (2012) indirectly provide a rich discussion of these trends throughout their biography on Petraeus. In making our own claim, we do not have Petraeus’s affair in mind. We simply want to provide an example of the extensive and frequent tours of a well-known military figure who was influential for both US and non-US forces. That said, others such as Don Snider (2012) have pointed to Petraeus’s affair as an example of the decline in moral integrity within the US military’s senior leaders.

13. In his 16 years of service in the Army, Paul Berghaus has seen the Army express a great deal of interest in defining, developing and assessing character. When he was a cadet at the United States Military Academy, from 1991 to 1995, he had to memorize the purpose statement of the Academy, which was ‘to provide the nation with leaders of character who serve the common defense’. That purpose is now part of a comprehensive mission statement for West Point, demonstrating that the Academy is still committed to the goal of producing leaders of character. In 1997, the Army produced a list of seven Army values in order to define more clearly the institution’s professional ethics: loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage. These values form a mnemonic (LDRSHIP), and soldiers in basic training memorize and recite the values daily as part of the Army’s project to shape their professional identity. The Army values have become something of a list of cardinal martial values.

14. An Army White Paper: The Profession of Arms (2010, p. 1), which served as the catalyst for the Army Profession campaign, cites Abu Ghraib as an example of the Army’s ‘struggle’ to uphold professional standards. More high-profile examples, after Abu Ghraib, could be added to show that the Army has not only struggled in some areas, but is in danger of undermining the trust of the American people. On 12 March 2006, US soldiers from the 101st Airborne Division murdered a family of four in Iraq. Staff Sergeant Robert Bales is accused of killing 16 civilians in Afghanistan on 11 March 2012. A former commander of Africa Command, General ‘Kip’ Ward was demoted from four stars to three stars as a result of his misuse of government funds and equipment for personal gain. General David Petraeus (Ret.) resigned as director of the CIA after admitting to an extramarital affair. The last two examples are particularly noteworthy in light of the Army Profession campaign’s approach to moral development. Presumably both general officers, by virtue of their rank, would have intentionally identified themselves as professionals and demonstrated such by their commitment to the Army profession over decades of service.

15. See An Army White Paper: The Profession of Arms (2010, p. 1). It is important to note here that while the Army Profession campaign recognizes the importance of proper civil-military relations, it does not address how the civilian government of the USA ought to exercise its authority over the Army. Rather, its main concern is with the growing gap between civilian society and the Army Profession as that relates to the trust that the one domain has for the other. As such, we do not take up the question of civilian control over the Army in our paper. The seminal works that address these issues are Huntington (1957) and Janowitz (1960). See also Feaver (1996).
The Army Profession is defined as ‘[a] unique vocation of experts certified in the design, generation, support, and ethical application of landpower, serving under civilian authority and entrusted to defend the Constitution and the rights and interests of the American people.’ The Army Profession (2013: 1–2). The Army Ethic is ‘the evolving set of laws, values, and beliefs, deeply embedded within the core of the Army culture and practiced by all members of the Army Profession to motivate and guide the appropriate conduct of individual members bound together in common moral purpose’ The Army Profession (2013: 1–3). Whereas the Army Profession picks out a set of skilled and ethical practitioners, the Army Ethic picks out a set of values that guides ethical practice.

Between the writing of this article and its publication, the Army replaced the MAPET course with a series of Army Profession Seminars that assist units and organizations to develop their own professional character development programs (see http://cape.army.mil/aaop/apseminars.php).

Beginning January 2013, the Army spent an entire year using concepts from the Army Profession campaign as the basis for its ‘America’s Army-Our Profession’ moral education and training programs.

This is not to say that soldiers do not frequently talk with one another about their thoughts and emotions. However, when those thoughts and emotions become chronic, or start to affect a soldier’s job performance or military bearing, they will often consult a first-line supervisor, healthcare provider or chaplain. Given the Army’s vigilance regarding suicide prevention, soldiers are attuned to the warning signs that might point to depression or suicidal ideation. This, rightfully so, makes soldiers more likely to seek help from outside sources.

Soldiers frequently express their desire to get back to ‘real’ soldiering when they have to seek help from a unit chaplain, doctor or psychologist. This, we believe, is yet another example of their fragmented understanding of how being a professional soldier relates to being a holistically healthy person.

The Master Resilience Trainer program has mitigated this problem by training unit-level subject matter experts in concepts of resilience drawn from the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program. These Master Resilience Trainers work with their respective organizations to conduct training sessions in order to teach these resiliency concepts to soldiers. While this program has been successful in providing resources for soldiers and leaders, it has not overcome the (false) perception that resilience and professional development are not interrelated.

In a number of academic and professional publications, authors have argued for the application of virtue theory and virtue ethics to military ethics. To our knowledge, however, no one has focused on the problem of fragmentation, which is a central concern of virtue theorists, and which promises a fruitful account of the double life that presents a problem for many soldiers. See, for instance, Aronovitch (2001); Challans (2007); Gorman (2010); Matthews (2007); Miller (2004); Moelker and Kümmel (2007); Olsthoorn (2007); Robinson (2007a, 2007b); Sandin (2007); Snow (2009); Verweij (2007); Wortel and Bosch (2011).

Psychologists Anne Colby and William Damon (1992) give a ‘goal theory’ account of moral development. They are not alone, however, in positing the role that goals play in moral development. Nancy Snow (2010: 53–55) identifies ‘virtue-relevant goals’ as a central feature of her cognitive-affective processing system (CAPS) based view of moral development as social intelligence. In her view, by using practical reasoning to select
goals relevant to the content of certain virtues, people can develop or change habits of behavior by directing behavior toward those goals.

24. Here we are working from the presupposition that human beings are interpretive creatures; they always interpret their experiences and the components of which their experiences consist.

25. Snow (2010: 53) defines a virtue-relevant goal as:

   a goal which, if the agent had it, would, under the appropriate conditions, result in the agent’s performing virtue-expressive, that is, virtuous, actions… An agent might have the goal of being a good parent, good colleague, good nurse, good citizen, or good friend. Having these goals would result in the agent’s performing virtuous actions, since these roles carry associated virtues.

26. Martha Nussbaum (2001: 1) makes a similar comment in her account of the intelligence of emotions:

   If emotions are suffused with intelligence and discernment, and if they contain in themselves an awareness of value or importance, they cannot, for example, easily be sidelined in accounts of ethical judgment, as so often they have been in the history of philosophy.

REFERENCES


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