



Slaying the Dragon



The Reintegration and Healing
Of Soldiers and Veterans
in an Orthodox Context



Introduction - Statistics



Orthodox Population



❧ Orthodox Christians in US: .04-.06% of population

❧ Estimated: 1-2 Million Orthodox in the U.S.

❧ US Population: approx. 330 Million

❧ Orthodox in the Military: \pm .07% of population

❧ Less than 1 out of 100; almost 8 out of every 1,000

❧ Estimated Orthodox Military Population: \pm 9,100

❧ Total U.S. Military Population: approx. 2.2 Million

Military in Alaska



- ❧ In Alaska there are:
 - ❧ Over **75,000** Veterans
 - ❧ Over **20,000** Active Duty Military Personnel
 - ❧ Almost **5,000** Reserve Military Personnel

- ❧ About 13% of Alaska is either currently serving or has served in the Armed Forces
 - ❧ 1 in 5 adults in Alaska are either military personnel or military veterans

Suicides - The Reality



US Military (All Services & Components)

- ☞ 2012-2014: Suicides exceeded combat deaths
- ☞ 2014 Suicides: 532 (3 suicides / 2 days)
- ☞ 2012 Suicides (Record): 643 (nearly 2/day)

US Military Veterans:

- ☞ ~ 1 suicide every 45-60 minutes
- ☞ Estimated at 22-35 per day

An Ignored Problem



2013 Continuing Education Needs Assessment Survey

- ❧ OCA's CE Department offered 9 training objectives
- ❧ **"Training in Responding to Needs of Military Families and Those affected by War"**
 - ❧ Objective was ranked as the lowest priority of all objectives
 - ❧ It received the ranking of "Lowest Priority" by more respondents than any other objective
 - ❧ It received the ranking of "Top Priority" by fewer respondents than any other objective
 - ❧ This objective fell behind "Training in Rubrics for Lay leaders and Ministers"
- ❧ **Rubrics Training**
 - ❧ Objective was ranked 2nd to last as the lowest priority
 - ❧ Still had nearly twice the percentage of respondents giving it "Top Priority" overall

Responses from Clergy over 50: Not only was Military Families dead last, after Rubrics, the number of respondents ranking **Rubrics Training** as a "Top Priority" was 7x that of those who ranked **Needs of Military Families** as a "Top Priority"!



Growing from Man to Dragon



I - War in the Modern Age

II - Education, Community, and Participation

The Condition of a Man



SICINIUS: Is't possible that so short a time can alter the condition of a man?

MENENIUS: There is differency between a grub and a butterfly, yet your butterfly was a grub. This Martius is grown from man to dragon: he has wings: he's more than a creeping thing. (*Coriolanus* 5.4.7-12)



War in the Modern Age



Changes in Society
Changes in Warfare
Moral Disengagement

Changes in Society



More Precise Diagnosis

- Post-Traumatic Stress
- Combat Stress
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Moral Injury / Soul Wound
 - “A betrayal of what’s right.”
- Survivor’s Guilt
- Compassion Fatigue

Different Military

- More Specialized Force
- All-Volunteer Military
- High Operational Tempo
- Protracted Warfare
 - Including Peacekeeping
 - Operations Other than War
- Strain on Families
- Social Isolation

Changes in Warfare



Non-States: More Complicated

- ❧ COIN/Asymmetrical Warfare
- ❧ Less clearly defined enemy, mission and “front line”
- ❧ Difficulty identifying the “enemy” or what “winning” is
- ❧ No single body, group, structure, or enemy
- ❧ How does one defeat Terrorism?
- ❧ No real possibility of surrender or even decisive battle

First World: Less Processing Time

- ❧ Speed of transportation can mean hours (not months) of transition periods.
War → Front Door in a day
- ❧ Ease of communication: Skype, VOIP, online chat, etc. makes the “separation” surreal in many ways.

Modern Atrocities



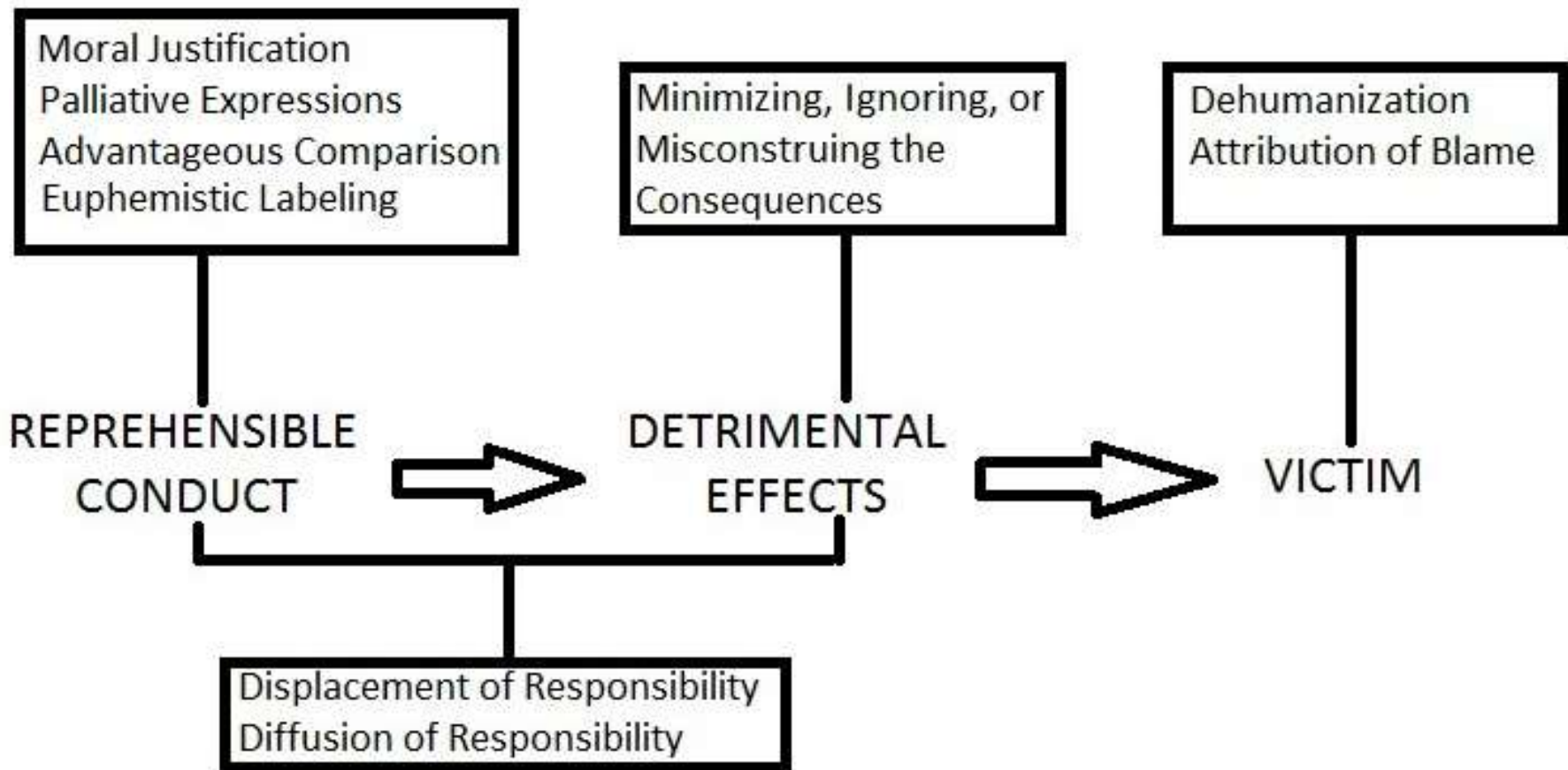
- ❧ Nazi Holocaust: Over 10 million people systematically killed between 1933-1945
- ❧ Stalin's Repression – 20 million dead (execution, prison, 1932-33 famine)
- ❧ Mao Zedong – 30 million dead of starvation during the famine during the Great Leap Forward (1958-1962)
- ❧ Rwandan Genocide: 1,000,000 massacred in 100 days (with many more raped, maimed, or tortured)

American Atrocities



- ☞ Haditha Incident (Nov 2005): A squad of Marines kill 24 unarmed Iraqi civilians, including women, children, and elderly, in retaliation for an IED that killed a Marine
- ☞ Mahmudiyah Massacre (Mar 2006): Five soldiers gang-rape and kill a 16 year old Iraqi girl, and murder her entire family (including a six-year-old girl). They burn their house down and report it as an Al-Qaeda attack
- ☞ Kandahar Massacre (Mar 2012): Soldier murders 16 Afghani civilians, including 9 children. Bodies are found partially burned

Moral Disengagement





Education, Community, Participation



Preventative Care

Education for Soldier/Veteran

- ☞ Preparation for Ethical Decision Making
 - ☞ Critical Thinking - based on moral foundation
 - ☞ Emphasis on independent/creative thought

- ☞ Preparation for Separation
 - ☞ Family issues/dynamics
 - ☞ Spiritual formation (What if there's no chaplain?)

- ☞ Initiation into Role
 - ☞ What does it mean to be an Orthodox Warrior?
 - ☞ How does one walk the line of Christian and Soldier?

- ☞ Basic Faith-Content Familiarity
 - ☞ Scripture
 - ☞ Worship / Prayer
 - ☞ Moral / Ethical Issues

Education for Civilians



- ❧ General Military Knowledge
 - ❧ Yes, there is a war on
 - ❧ Location, Culture, Political implications
 - ❧ Military life-style

- ❧ Issues facing Soldiers/Veterans
 - ❧ Individual/Specific concerns
 - ❧ What's it like to go to war?
 - ❧ Wider Sociological issues
 - ❧ What is *the civilians* role in war?

- ❧ Basic Content-based Familiarity
 - ❧ Scripture
 - ❧ Worship / Prayer
 - ❧ Moral / Ethical Issues

Community



❧ Initiation

❧ Healthy Community

❧ Christ-centered

❧ Strong

❧ Stable

❧ Safe

❧ Sense of community shouldn't stop when Soldier is deployed

❧ especially if family is nearby

Participation



- ✧ Frequent communication between parishioners and deployed soldiers
- ✧ Veterans play a special role in helping to be a link between civilian and military parishioners
- ✧ Pray! Pray! Pray!

Bottom Line



- ❧ The process has to start *before* the Soldier leaves the parish or community, whether this is initial training/assignment or combat deployment
 - ❧ *Re-establishing* relationships require pre-existing relationships
 - ❧ *Re-integration* can only happen if there has been initial integration

- ❧ Education and spiritual formation are important preventative measures
 - ❧ Soldiers/Veterans on self-care & staying connected w/ family
 - ❧ Families (especially w/ children) on staying connected w/ community
 - ❧ Parishioners on supporting families by reaching out intentionally

- ❧ Building loving/trusting relationships is vital to reintegration and healing
 - ❧ Because of the civilian/military gap, it can be very difficult to build rapport from scratch ex post facto, with no prior planning
 - ❧ Build relationships with these families quickly... don't wait for crisis!



The Dragon's Fen



Trauma and Healing in the *Trebnik*

Yet Left Undone



AUFIDIUS: Although it seems, and so he thinks,
and is no less apparent to the vulgar eye,
that he bears all things fairly...
[Indeed, he] fights dragon-like,
and does achieve
as soon as draw his sword;
Yet he hath left undone
that which shall break his neck...
(*Coriolanus* 4.7.19-25)

Disconnect



- ❧ Trauma is often ignored by victim
- ❧ When/if treated, focus is often on psychiatric, psychological, and medical aspects of healing
- ❧ Increasingly, Behavioral/Mental Health professionals are realizing the importance of ritual and ceremony in the healing process, especially in regards to PTSD, which is increasingly seen as an issue of identity, instead of stress
- ❧ Focus entirely on the patient (instead of the family, or the wider community) can create the opposite effect
 - ❧ This can create further isolation
 - ❧ Patient becomes “a problem,” to be fixed instead of an integral member of a community that has a shared responsibility to oneanother

Traumatic Events



☞ Sin

☞ Sickness

☞ Labor/Childbirth

☞ Miscarriage/Abortion

☞ Divorce

☞ Injury

☞ War/Hostilities

☞ Drought/Famine

☞ Impending Death

☞ Death

Supplication, Healing, and Reintegration

- ✧ Confession / Penance
- ✧ Unction
- ✧ Churching of Mother/Child
- ✧ Prayers for Mother:
stillborn/miscarriage/abortion
- ✧ Prayers during Times of
Hostilities
- ✧ For Soldiers going off to War
- ✧ Service for Drought/Famine
- ✧ Prayers for dying / terminally ill
- ✧ Prayers for those being executed
- ✧ Distinct Funeral rites for Clergy,
Laity, and Children
 - ✧ MP: Service for those who
commit suicide
- ✧ Memorial Services for the
Departed
 - ✧ NB: Pannikhida for Soldiers
(Hapgood)



Growing from Dragon to Man



Services of Healing and Reintegration
for the Orthodox Warrior and Veteran

I Sup Upon Myself



VOLUMNIA: Take my prayers with you.
I would the gods had nothing else to do
But to confirm my curses! Could I meet 'em
But once a day, it would unclog my heart
Of what lies heavy to't.

MENENIUS: You have told them home,
And, by my troth, you have cause.
You'll sup with me?

VOLUMNIA: Anger's my meat; I sup upon myself,
And so shall starve with feeding.
(*Coriolanus* 4.2.46-52)

Bodily Injury



- ❧ More than 95% of military personnel wounded in Iraq or Afghanistan survive ; in other words
 - ❧ OEF/OIF 95.0%
 - ❧ World War II 69.7%
 - ❧ Korean War 75.4%
 - ❧ Vietnam War 76.4%
- ❧ Injured Soldier can be at Level-4 Trauma center in Germany in less than 12 hours and to U.S. in less than 3 days
 - ❧ 10 days for transport to US in Gulf War
 - ❧ 45 days for transport to US in Vietnam
- ❧ Over 1,715 amputees in OEF/OIF

Mental Injury



- ❧ PTSD – Over 125,000 diagnosed between 2000-2012
- ❧ OEF/OIF – Longest Wars in American History
 - ❧ Iraq (Mar 2003- Dec 2012) – over 9 years
 - ❧ Afghanistan (Oct 2001- Present) – 15 years & counting
- ❧ Mental/Behavioral Health Problems increase w/ length and quantity of combat deployments

Broken and Battered, Still Breathing

☞ In Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO), including operations in Iraq (OIF, OND & OIR), Afghanistan (OEF & OFS), the number of Soldiers wounded-in-action (WIA) is over 7.5 times the number of those killed-in-action (KIA)...twice the ration of Vietnam and thrice that of WWI.

☞ OCO (7.6x): 52,322 Wounded / 6,862 Deaths*

☞ Vietnam (3.25x): 153,000 WIA / 47,000 KIA

☞ WWII (2.3x): 670,846 WIA / 291,557 KIA*

Isolation



❧ Growing Military-Civilian Gap

- ❧ Smallest percentage of population serving since the period between WWI & WWII

- ❧ Only about half of 1% of the U.S. population currently serve in Armed Forces

- ❧ Less than 2 million out of the almost 250 million U.S. citizens aged 18+

Isolation (cont.)



❧ Despite most military personnel being 22-30

❧ Average age is 28.6 on active duty

❧ Increasingly fewer Americans have immediate family members who served in the military

❧ Ages 16-29 33%

❧ Ages 30-49 57%

❧ Ages 50-64 79%

❧ Ages 65+ 76%

Rituals



- ☞ Local/Native Rituals for cleansing?
- ☞ For Homecoming?
- ☞ Building community (Meals?)
- ☞ Rites of Passage?

Services of Reintegration and Healing

Retreat

- ✠ Confession
- ✠ Unction
- ✠ Pannikhida
- ✠ Vespers/Vigil
- ✠ Little Compline (w/
Rite of Forgiveness)
- ✠ Divine Liturgy

Molieben

- ✠ Relevant Psalms
- ✠ Troparia of Military Saints at
“God is the Lord”
- ✠ Selected Epistle/Gospel
- ✠ Modified Prayers for
healing/repentance/departed

Beyond the Service



☞ Storytelling

☞ Acts of Contrition/Service

☞ Responsibility for Discipleship

☞ Continued Engagement

Ed Tick

War and the Soul

- ❧ Focus on warrior culture (Native American [esp. Plain Indians], Ancient Greek, Samurai, etc.) ; some relation to OT
- ❧ War as Sacred Act – Rite of Passage ;
 - ❧ Argues that modern warfare is fought “out of context “
 - ❧ Must be brought into the context of community – shared responsibility and burden
- ❧ Four Essential Steps
 - ❧ Purification and Cleansing
 - ❧ Storytelling
 - ❧ Restitution in the Family and the Nation
 - ❧ Initiation as a Warrior

Other Resources



☞ See Full Thesis at:

http://www.allsaintshartford.org/files/MDiv_Thesis_Parnell-For-Publish.pdf

☞ See Pamphlets for Clergy, Parishes, and for Service Texts at www.facebook.com/GrowingFromDragonToMan

More Resources



Books

- ❧ War and the Soul
- ❧ What it's Like to Go to War
- ❧ The Things They Carried
- ❧ Achilles in Vietnam
- ❧ Odysseus in America
- ❧ The Untold War
- ❧ War

Movies

- ❧ They Were Soldiers
- ❧ The Mission
- ❧ The Invisible War
- ❧ Restrepo

WAR AND THE SOUL

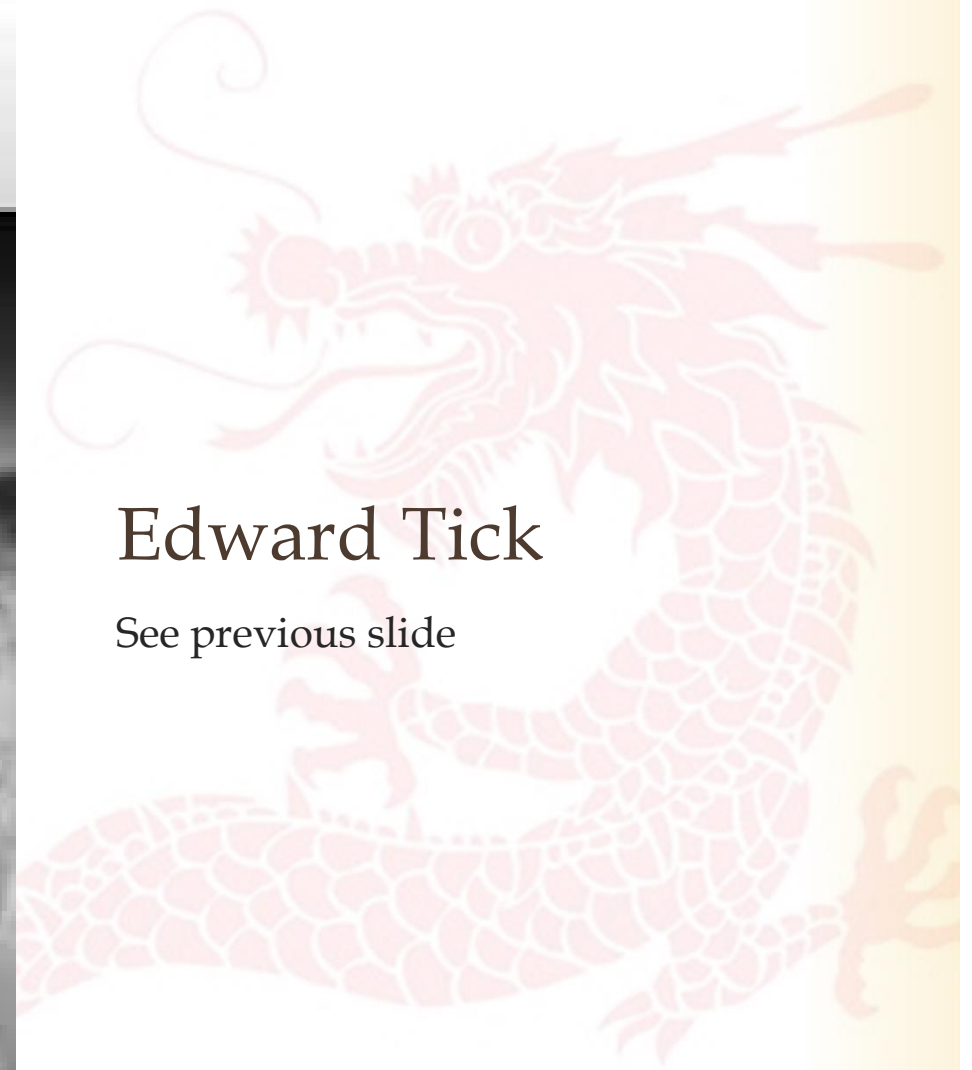
Healing
Our Nation's
Veterans from
Post-Traumatic
Stress Disorder

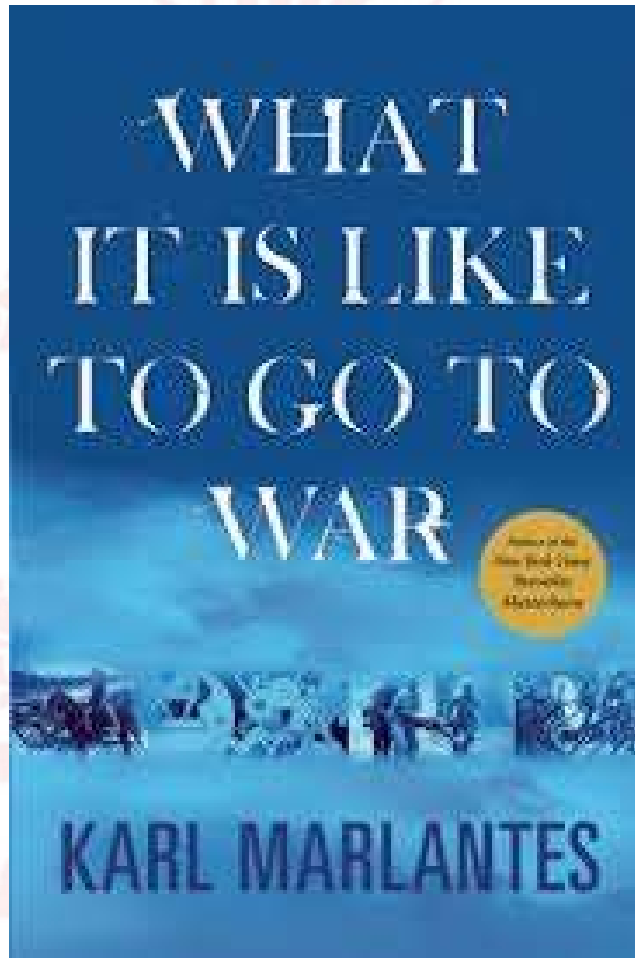


EDWARD TICK, PH.D.

Edward Tick

See previous slide





Karl Marlantes

What it is Like to Go to War

Focus on personal story of Vietnam, but offers many, many spot-on suggestions for how Soldiers can (and should) use ritual, education, and community to be more centered on God and more loving of humanity, despite still getting the job done.

Jonathan Shay



"...CHARABLE GUY ON THE MOST ORIGINAL AND MOST COMPREHENSIVE OF SUBJECTS
WOULD BE HARD TO FIND OUTSIDE THE VIETNAM WAR. BEYOND THAT,
HE IS ALSO AN INTENSELY MOVING WRITER, INTENSELY PERSONAL, REACHING
BACK THROUGH THE CENTURIES TO DOLDS AND BEAL."
—Tom Clavin, author of *Boys in the Trees*
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ACHILLES IN VIETNAM

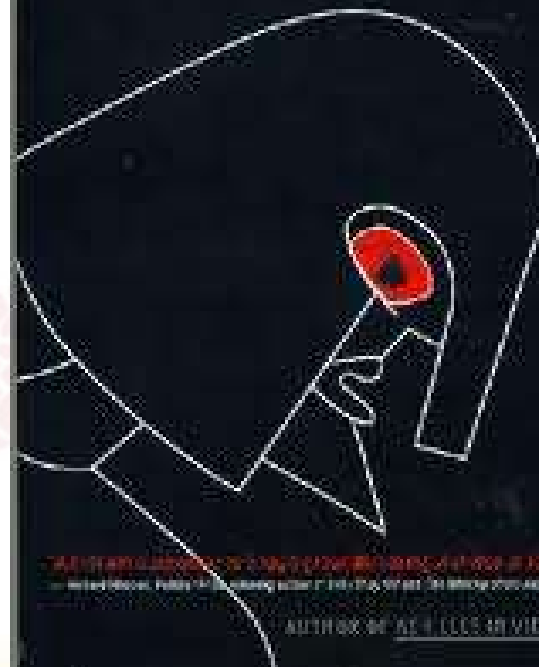
COMBAT TRAUMA AND
THE UNDOING OF CHARACTER



JONATHAN SHAY, M.D., PH.D.

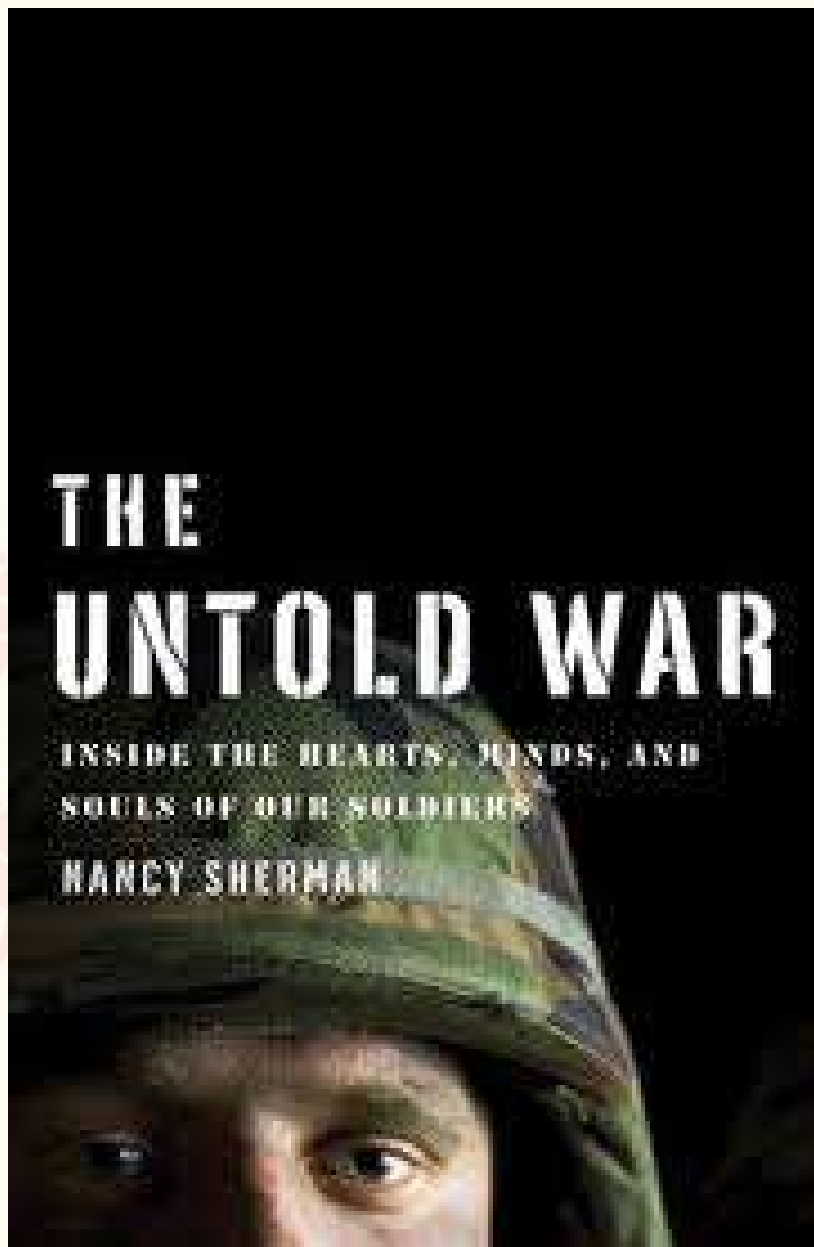
ODYSSEUS IN AMERICA COMBAT TRAUMA AND THE TRIALS OF HOMECOMING

JONATHAN SHAY, M.D., PH.D. FOREWORD BY VETERANRY
AND PSYCHIATRIST DR. JAMES H. HOGAN



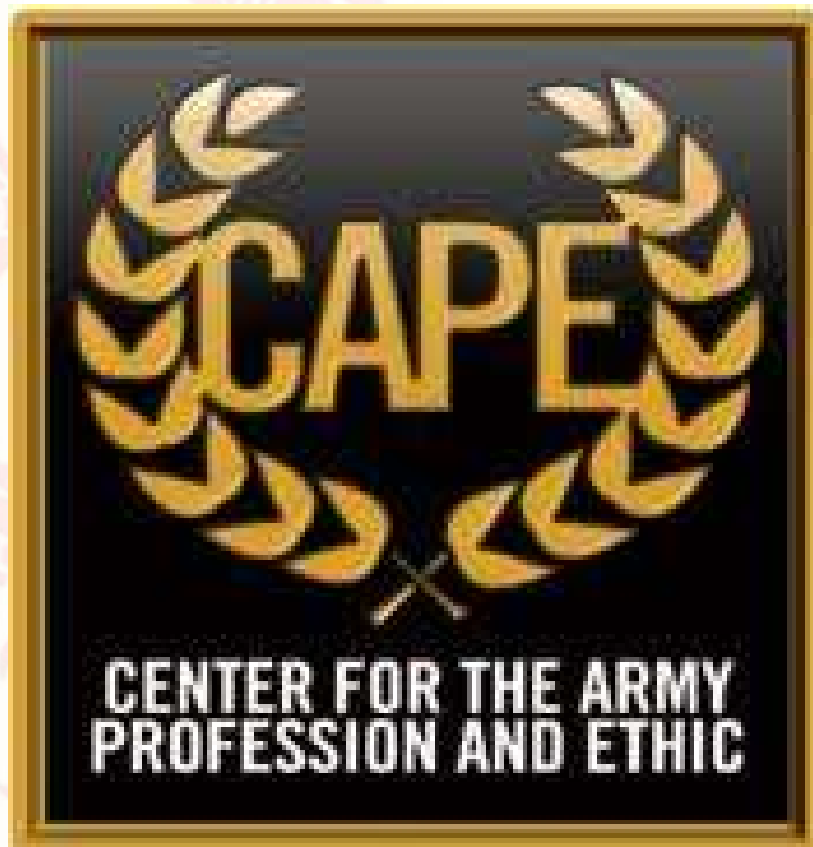
"...THEY WOULD BE ABLE TO SEE THE WAR IN THE EYES OF A FIGHTER,
...THEY WOULD BE ABLE TO SEE THE WAR IN THE EYES OF A FIGHTER,
...THEY WOULD BE ABLE TO SEE THE WAR IN THE EYES OF A FIGHTER."

AUTHOR OF *ACHILLES IN VIETNAM*



Nancy Sherman

Focus on stories of Soldiers and their homecomings. Multiple times the trend of stoicism within the military culture is mentioned. Also, Stoicism seems to be given as a possible philosophical model for dealing with PTSD, and even more so, moral injury.



CAPE.ARMY.MIL

Army Profession and Ethic Training

Master Army Profession and Ethic Trainer

Numerous videos, scenarios, even video games to help inculcate ethical decision making. Focus on Ethical Processing Model to reduce moral injury.

Instead of "Right" vs. "Wrong," the focus is on decisions when values are in conflict, i.e., two "right" answers or two "wrong" answers in a situation.