

Military Culture Competency
Providing Quality Care for Those Who've Served

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Conflicts of Interest

- None to disclose

Disclaimer of Endorsement

- Full-time employee of the Veterans Health Administration
- The views, opinions, and information in the following presentation are the author's own and do not reflect official endorsement by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.
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What is Culture?

- A group's particular way of life
- *Worldview*- attitudes, opinions, values
 - Product of Culture and Experiences
- How do we go about understanding it?
 - Values, beliefs, customs, languages, traditions, history

The Warrior Ethos

American military as a warrior culture embedded in Civilian society where values can be at odds:

- Individual freedom vs **Group cohesion/obedience**
- Wealth vs **Honor**
- Luxury vs **Adversity**
- Peace vs **Aggression**
- **Mission Accomplishment** before Individual Welfare

Pressfield, S., *The Warrior Ethos*. 1st ed. 2011, Black Irish Entertainment.

“It’s a one way street, once you become military, you don’t go back to being a civilian.”

Understanding Military Culture

- Branches of the military
 - Organizational Structure
 - Sub-cultures
- Values and Beliefs
- Language
 - Acronyms and General Terms

Talk to your patient!

(Cultural Humility)

How are we doing in
understanding military
culture?

Ready to Serve

Community-Based Provider Capacity to Deliver
Culturally Competent, Quality Mental Health Care
to Veterans and Their Families



Terri Tanielian

Coreen Farris

Caroline Epley

Carrie M. Farmer

Eric Robinson

Charles C. Engel

Michael William Robbins

Lisa H. Jaycox



RAND Report
November 2014

Survey of Mental Health
Providers:

- Military cultural competency
- Evidence based care

High Cultural Competency

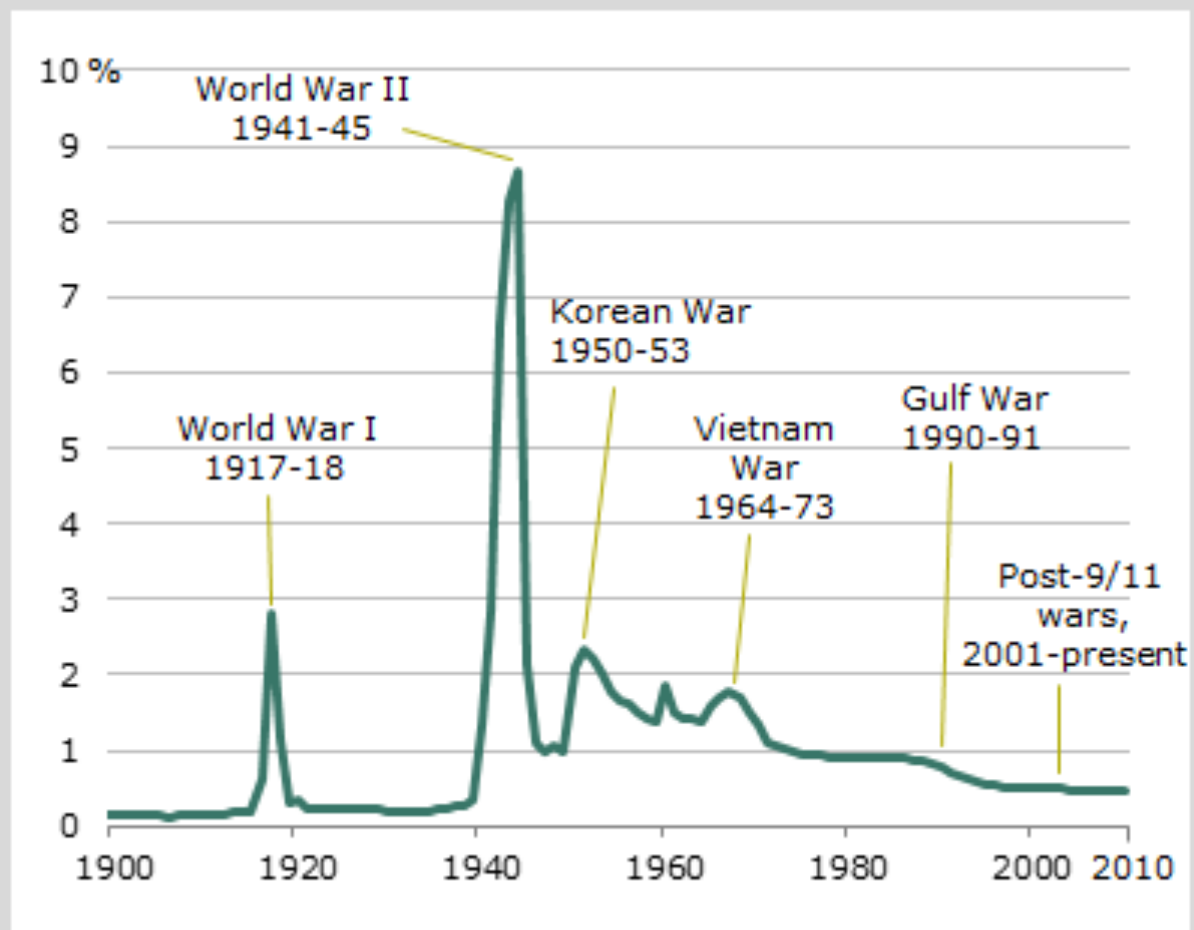
- VA or Military 70%
- TRICARE 24%
- Other 8%

Ready to Serve -RAND 2014

- Military Rank Structure
- General and deployment-related military slang and terms
- Subculture of military branches
- How behaviors learned in war can be maladaptive at home
- Explain how the perceptions of mental health beliefs are influenced by military and veteran culture

Military Participation

% of total U.S. population in the armed forces, 1900-2010



Source: Molly Clever and David R. Segal. "After Conscription: The United States and the All-Volunteer Force." *Security and Peace (Sicherheit und Frieden)*. Forthcoming.

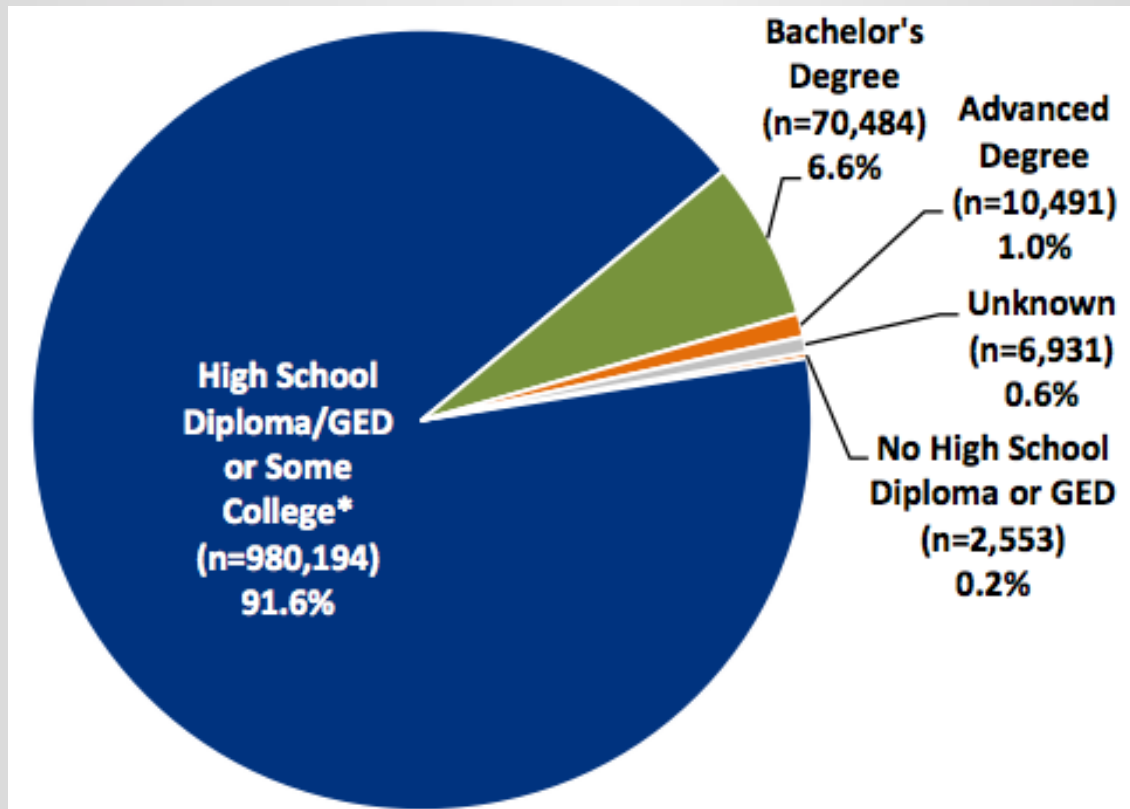
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

**Who are our veterans and
service members and why did
they join?**

Reasons why veterans joined the military

- A) “To serve their country”
- B) “They joined the military because they had no other options”
- C) “They joined because they had a mental illness”
- D) “They joined to escape a bad/abusive home situation”

Education Level of Active Duty Enlisted Members in 2015



US Military Active Duty Enlisted
2015- 0.2% w/o HS diploma or GED

US Population 25 y/o and over
2013- 11.8% w/o HS diploma

2015 Demographics: Profile of the Military Community. Department of Defense, Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy.

www.militaryonesource.mil

US Census Bureau 2016

- Total US Population- 248 Million 18 yrs and older
- Total US Veteran Population- 18.5 Million
 - 9 Million Veterans enrolled in VA system
- Top States in 2017
 - California
 - Texas
 - Florida

US Census Bureau 2016

- Median. Income
 - Civilian- \$ 28,347
 - Veteran- \$ 39,494
- Below Poverty Level
 - Civilian- 12.9%
 - Veteran- 6.9%
- Disability
 - Civilian- 29.3%
 - Veteran- 14.4%

U.S. Census Bureau, *2016 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates*

Self-Awareness and Personal Beliefs about Veterans

- Personal assumptions/beliefs (implicit bias) about military service
- Origins of those beliefs (personal experience; media)

You are seeing a young man in clinic who tells you his job was an “O3” during service. In order to develop rapport and gather more information about his military history, you want to ask him more about his service. When inquiring about his time in service, you refer to him as a:

- A) **Soldier**
- B) **Marine**
- C) Sailor
- D) Airman
- E) **“Grunt”**
- F) Guardsman



United States Military



United States Military

- 4 Branches under Department of Defense (DoD)
 - Army
 - Navy
 - Marine Corps (Dept of the Navy)
 - Air Force
- United States Coast Guard- Dept Homeland Security
- Active Duty Component
- Reserve Component

“The Army and Navy are run like traditional militaries, the Air Force is managed like a corporation, and the Marine Corps is a religion”

Not everyone is a Soldier!



ARMY

- Established 1775
- Soldiers*
- 487k in 2015
- 37% of Total Active Force

- Largest branch of military
- Reserve Component:
 - Army Reserve
 - Army National Guard

NAVY



- Established 1775
- Sailors*
- 323k 2015
- 25% of Total Active Force

- Work closely w/Marines



MARINE CORPS

- Established Nov 8, 1775
- Marines*
- 183k in 2015
- 14% of Total Active Force

- Smallest branch of military
- Navy Medical Personnel

AIR FORCE



- Established 1947
- Airman*
- 307k 2015
- 24% of Total Active Force

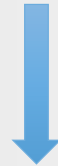
- Newest of services
- Reserve:
 - Air Force Reserve
 - Air National Guard

Training Time Line (Enlisted Personnel)

Basic Training
(Boot Camp)



Military Occupational Specialty (MOS)
-MOS School
-AIT Advanced Individual Training



Duty Station

MOS/Rating/Specialty:
Military Occupational
Specialty (your job)

11B: "11 Bravo" Infantryman- Army
0311: Rifleman- USMC



Your first case in the morning is a 30 y/o woman who tells you she recently left the Army after 6 yrs of service as a **Captain**.



Later in the day, you see a 60 y/o man who tells you he retired from the Navy after 20 yrs of service as a **Captain**. You say, “Boy, the Navy seems to promote slowly, I saw a Soldier this morning who was a Captain after only serving 6 yrs!”



- A) “I know, right! Tell me about it”
- B) “Well, I was at a higher rank, but then I got in trouble and they busted me down to Captain”
- C) “ Gee doc, it sounds like they don’t teach you anything about military culture in medical school”

Military Rank Structure

- Hierarchical System
 - Pyramid Structure
 - Many at the bottom, less at the top
- **2 Separate Tracks**
 - Commissioned Officers
 - Enlisted Personnel
- Hierarchy in Academic Medicine
 - Doctors (medical students, residents, attendings)
 - Nurses (floor nurses, charge nurses, nurse supervisors)
- Rank and Promotion
 - Determined by time in service, subjective evaluations by superiors, objective performance (eg. physical fitness tests, rifle range score, etc)

Military Rank Structure

Enlisted Personnel

- Non-rates (E1-E3)
- Non-commissioned officers
NCO (E4-E5)
- Staff non-commissioned officers
Staff NCO (E6-E9)

- 83% of Military
- Enlist out of high school
- Iraq War-86% HS grad
- Current 99%

Commissioned Officers

- Company Grade Officers (O1-O3)
- Field Grade Officers (O4-O6)
- General Officers (O7-O9)

- College Degree
- ROTC, Military Academy

Military Rank Structure

Enlisted Ranks and Pay Grades

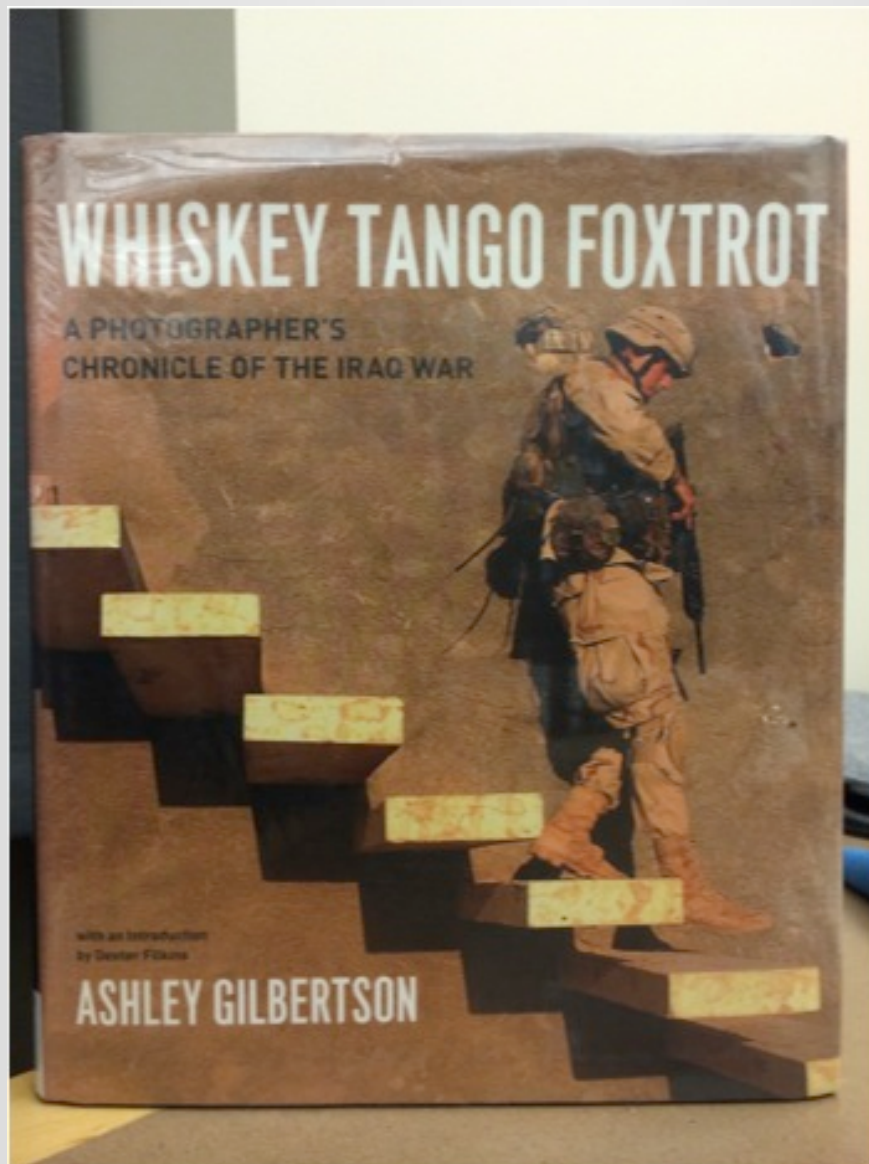
<i>Pay Grade</i>	Army	Marines	Navy	Air Force
E-1	Private E1	Private	Seaman Recruit	Airman Basic
E-2	Private E2	PFC	Seaman Apprentice	Airman
E-3	PFC (Private First Class)	Lance Corporal	Seaman	Airman 1 st Class
E-4	Specialist or Corporal (Cpl)	Corporal	Petty Officer 3 rd Class	Senior Airman
E-5	Sergeant (Sgt)	Sergeant	Petty Officer 2 nd Class	Staff Sergeant
E-6	Staff Sergeant (SSgt)	Staff Sergeant	Petty Officer 1 st Class	Technical Sergeant (Tech Sergeant)

Military Rank Structure

Commissioned Officer Ranks and Pay Grades

<i>Pay Grade</i>	Army	Marines	Navy	Air Force
O-1	Second Lieutenant	Second Lieutenant	Ensign	Second Lieutenant
O-2	First Lieutenant	First Lieutenant	Lieutenant Junior Grade	First Lieutenant
O-3	Captain	Captain	Lieutenant	Captain
O-4	Major	Major	Lieutenant Commander	Major
O-5	Lieutenant Colonel	Lieutenant Colonel	Commander	Lieutenant Colonel
O-6	Colonel	Colonel	Captain	Colonel

Common Acronyms/Terms



Common Acronyms/Terms

- **OIF**- Operation Iraqi Freedom; Iraq '03-'10
- **OEF**- Operation Enduring Freedom; Afghanistan '01-'14
- **OND**- Operation New Dawn; Iraq '10-'11
- **OFS**- Operation Freedom's Sentinel- Afghanistan '15-Present
- **OIR**- Operation Inherent Resolve- Iraq, Syria '14-Present

- **TBI**- Traumatic Brain Injury
- **IED**- Improvised Explosive Device

- **PTSD/PTS**- Post Traumatic Stress (Disorder)
- **MST**- Military Sexual Trauma

Common Acronyms/Terms

- **Chaplain**- commonly 1st pt of contact for psychiatric complaints
- **Corpsman/Medic**- medical personnel (EMT level)
- **NCO**- non-commissioned officer; Staff NCO (E6 and above)
- **CO**- commanding officer (commissioned officer)
- **Service Connection**- VA recognized illness or injury for compensation or health care
- **Comp and Pen Exam**- Compensation and Pension evaluation for service connection

Mental Health in the Military

“How did this service member not get treatment?”

- Malingering
- Speaking to mental health provider
 - Confidentiality
 - Puts the “Command” in question
- Dual Agency of military doctor/psychiatrist
- Questionable for Deployment
 - Can I trust this soldier, marine, airman, sailor

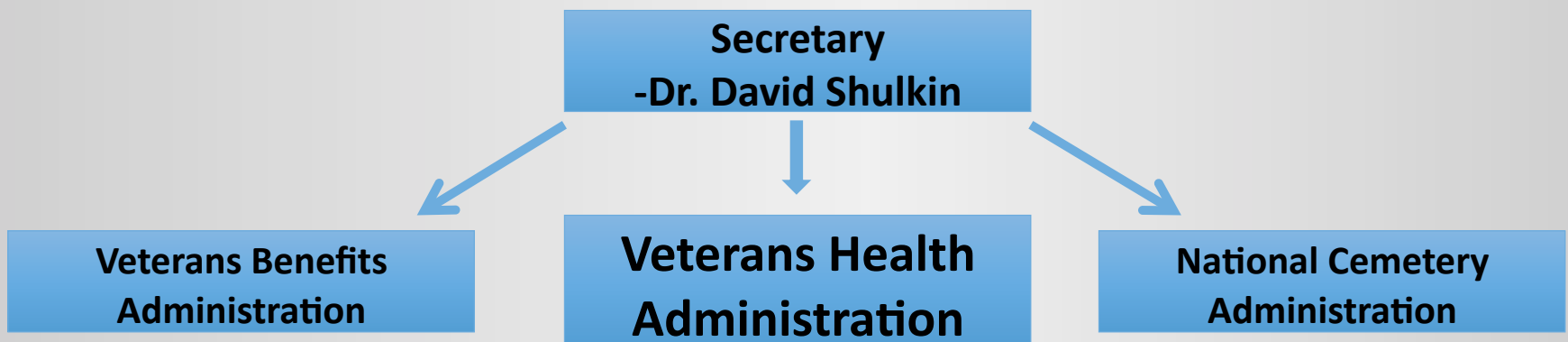
Mental Health in the Military

- Potential Sources of Help
 - Physician
 - Medic or Corpsman
 - Chaplain



VA

U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs



- Largest Integrated Health Care System in US
- 1,700 sites
- 9 Million Veterans
- Veterans Integrated Services Networks (23 VISNs)

Who Comes to the VA

It Depends:

- Eligibility for VA services- active duty, activated reservists, discharge eligibility
- Service connected veterans
 - Injury or illness incurred or aggravated during active military service
 - Agent Orange, Gulf War Syndrome, etc
- Indigent veterans
- Veterans with private insurance
- Veterans who prefer the VA over private providers
- Care can be free-of-charge or co-pay required

MEDPAGE TODAY®

Hospital-Based Medicine > General Hospital Practice

VA Hospitals Better on Most Outcome Measures (*JAMA Internal Medicine*)

— Outperform civilian hospitals for mortality, readmissions, patient safety

by MedPage Today Staff

April 17, 2017



[Journal of General Internal Medicine](#)

pp 1–17

Comparing VA and Non-VA Quality of Care: A Systematic Review

Claire O’Hanlon [✉](#), Christina Huang, Elizabeth Sloss, Rebecca Anhang Price, Peter Hussey,
Carrie Farmer, Courtney Gidengil

Review Paper

First Online: [15 July 2016](#)

DOI: [10.1007/s11606-016-3775-2](#)

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What Now?

- Listen
- Be interested and curious
- Ask questions



Learn About Military Culture

WELCOME to the Military Culture for Healthcare Professionals website. This website was designed by Military Culture experts working as part of a DoD/VA collaborative effort to help healthcare professionals become more culturally aware by providing education, tools and resources for their clinical practice [Click here](#) to learn more.

Take the Course

Contact Us

www.deploymentpsych.org

References

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