BATTLE TO BADGE:

OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM/OPERATION

IRAQI FREEDOM COMBAT VETERANS WITH

POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS TRANSITIONED TO

POLICE PATROL OFFICER CAREERS

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Abstract: Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) warriors served on the battlefield in an era and contexts that set them apart from combat veterans of previous wars. Some notable factors are advanced battlefield medicine leading to greater numbers of survivors carrying grave physical and mental effects; multiple successive deployments with little or no physical or mental recovery time; and intense stressors unique to wars in countries where indigenous civilians, police, and armies are enlisted to help U.S. general troops and Special Forces.

Combat mental trauma from physical injury, killing others, or watching co-warriors die and ongoing risk of violent death can lead to Post-Traumatic Stress. Veterans entering law enforcement with that diagnosis embody this complex dynamic. Historical setting aspects including terrorism-response wars render present-day troops a unique demographic. A qualitative study to mine the compounded facets of these officers focused on experiences of twelve male interviewees. Methods for this qualitative, phenomenological dissertation research included recorded in-person interviews, verbatim transcription, and analyzing and synthesizing data for themes.

 Results and conclusions carry the concepts: military and police cultures, highly masculine, discourage help-seeking; veterans bond with co-combatants, fellow officers, and non-extremist Iraqis and Afghanis; and seek to protect these nationals as well as American civilians once back home. Veterans applying intensive military training and combat strengths to law enforcement could benefit jurisdictions more than they may be applying; beyond firearm expertise and maintaining calmness under fire they effectively differentiate threatening targets from innocent civilians. Current conversation of police use of force including shooting of suspects should acknowledge veterans as a resource; re-forged combat skills, utilizing this sharp judgement expertise, is an asset needed by our public.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

America has spent most of the current millennium at war. As the United States

demobilizes many troops following the Iraq and Afghanistan-era conflicts, numerous

veterans return stateside to resume civilian life. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

stated a 2011 statistic that 57% of the over 2.2 million military men and women deployed

to Iraq and Afghanistan are later discharged, returning to civilian life (Office of Public

Health and Environmental Hazards). Those who have served in the United States military

are separating from their service years and beginning the transition into their post-

military life; one crucial aspect of this transition is finding employment either

immediately, or following higher education or vocational training to prepare for post-

military employment. While all current troops are required by their respective branches to

satisfy requirements of reintegration programs preceding their formal discharge, the

Department of Defense has no standardized prescription for what this reintegration

should resemble (Sayer et al., 2011).

Complicating the transition from military to civilian life is the presence of Post-

Traumatic Stress (PTS) in many troops separating from full-time military service. PTS

"typically develops after exposure to a situation or event that is, or is perceived to be,

threatening to the safety or physical integrity of one's self or others" (Asmundson &

Stapleton, 2008, p.66). Symptoms may include avoidance, flashbacks, and difficulty sleeping (2008). Hypervigilance is also common—this refers to being in a constant state of stress and alert, almost anticipating endangering events that could occur (Tovar, 2011).

Many men and women exiting military service consider law enforcement (LE) as a natural next step, particularly patrol-level jobs (Johnson, 2012). There is a strong perception by veterans and others that those with military experience would "make desirable law enforcement employees" and indeed they possess a unique body of skills including experience in combat, leadership, recognizing authority structures, firearms use, and intercultural interaction (U.S. Department of Justice, 2009, p. 17). The combat-experienced individual may transfer positive skills, such as problem solving and leadership, to the task of patrolling America's streets and neighborhoods (Trott, 2006). Alternately, those diagnosed with PTS could bring the potential for negative responses and actions, possibly endangering themselves, law enforcement partners, suspects, and the public.

The military and law enforcement professions are seeing increasing overlap in many aspects. Police officers in domestic settings are assuming more and more duties that previously were required of military forces, including immigration enforcement, homeland security duties, and terrorism preparedness tasks. Likewise, military service members are tasked with community protection while deployed as well as policing native populations and training indigenous peoples to police their own communities. This hybridizing of police and military purposes and strategies may lend itself to greater affinity between the veteran's previous role of deployed warrior and stateside employment as community peacekeeper.

"Increased emphasis on homeland security has also widened the responsibilities of local police officers, increasing the demand" on them as they broaden their duties (Wilson, 2011, p. 331). The latter period of the Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) conflicts has seen American troops performing peacekeeping tasks in villages; this involves interacting with civilians in much the same way officers exercise community policing procedures in the United States. On the other hand, not all responses to incidents that were appropriate in military deployments will apply to officers' accepted response processes on the streets, for "Police actions are not equivalent to military actions" (Johnson, 2013, p. 47). Another similarity between military and law enforcement is that even non-military-veteran police officers develop PTS from their work.

This research examines the veteran exiting full-time military service and entering a career in law enforcement, focusing on those diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress. This particular dynamic—the intersection of OEF/OIF veterans, police patrol officers, and a PTS diagnosis—has not been widely studied in scholarly literature, although aspects of this phenomenon have been researched. Due to some unique characteristics in this demographic, initial excavation in depth was needed to assure inclusion of all facets that may come into play in the experiences of the person described. A composite figure or description produced in a thorough qualitative study could inform understanding of the person who follows this career sequence, and transports this diagnosis through the transition. Green states, "There was a dearth of qualitative studies based upon the in-depth accounts of service or ex-service personnel to capture their experiences" (Green et al., 2008, p. 5), referring to the mental health of the OEF/OIF

veteran. This qualitative, phenomenological research uses in-depth interviews to probe the sphere of relevant experiences of police officers who previously served in combat and were subsequently diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress. Research questions included: What effects does traumatic military combat experience have on the job of a patrol officer? What do law enforcement jurisdictions do to maximize the effectiveness of combat veterans with PTS as patrol officers while minimizing risk to all involved? How does the rapport among veteran and non-veteran officers impact performance and morale?

 Twelve men who fit this demographic were interviewed individually and confidentially using in-person interviews with the investigator. These interviewees lived in three states and represented eight jurisdictions. Following verbatim transcription of recorded interviews, data was coded for themes and analyzed.

Officers interviewed offered varying motivations for enlisting in the military but all expressed a desire to serve their country; most were spurred by the terror attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001 to join the military or re-enlist. While deployed the men sustained physical injury, and/or acute and cumulative trauma and they attributed later diagnoses of PTS to these experiences. Following separation from full-time military service, officers chose the law enforcement profession for a range of reasons including affinity for work protecting others; familiarity with firearms, danger, and high-adrenaline situations; recapturing camaraderie they had felt with fellow warriors; and the desire to continue serving their country and the public.

The timeliness of such an inquiry is supported by parallel reporting of statistics such as veterans transitioning to post-military careers; prevalence of PTS in those veterans; suicide, substance abuse, and use of force concerns in research literature, and policy studies and legislation as well as media reporting.

This study should increase understanding of the growing phenomenon of military-to-police transition for individuals diagnosed with PTS prior to their law enforcement employment. It could highlight strengths that militarily-trained police officers bring to patrol work and contributions of the military mindset and procedures in general to the civilian peacekeeping aspect of police work. This investigation could also enhance understanding of the challenges of working as a patrol officer with PTS that resulted from combat experiences. The awareness of PTS in veterans-turned-police may help to destigmatize the PTS known to exist in non-military police officers who developed it as a result of trauma in their policing work. Policy concerning screening, hiring, supporting, and utilizing skills and experiences of officers who fit this study's demographics may evolve to address this sector of workforce development.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Constructionism

This is a qualitative research. This statement locates the study philosophically, tracing back to the constructionist epistemology (Crotty, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) and in turn the theoretical perspective of interpretivism that frame the inquiry. The term epistemology refers to the theory of knowledge including its nature, ways to discover it, and how it is constructed (Crotty, 1998). Plotting the epistemological influence is crucial when planning a research effort for identifying the locus of knowledge origin provides "philosophical grounding" (Maynard, 1994, p. 10). Clear identification of beliefs about knowledge also indicates the direction of methodology and methods that stem from that perspective (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Where early research aligned with an objectivist epistemology, which flowed down through the positivism perspective and the experimental studies that required empirical methods, the philosophical split that opened the door to constructionism (and later subjectivism) began to consider that there was not merely one discoverable reality. Rather, humans constructed their unique and varied

reality in interacting with the world, or as Crotty asserted, "Truth, or meaning, comes into existence in and out of our engagement with the realities in our world" (1998, p. 8).

As opposed to making the assumption that there is exactly one discoverable truth explaining the experience of transitioning from military combat to law enforcement work with a diagnosis of Post-Traumatic Stress (PTS), a constructionist view allows that a unique interpretation of one's experiences stems from interacting with one's world and therefore the perceived experiences of individuals making this transition will vary. Crotty explains it thus: "actual meaning emerges only when consciousness engages with them" meaning objects in one's world (1998, p.43). "Human being means being-in-the-world" Crotty further asserts, and this interaction with one's world takes place in context (p. 45). If meaning is only created when one interacts with objects in one's world and interprets that interaction, it is the interpretation of both the experiences and the context that can yield a rich picture of the events and their impact on the men in this study. These contextual items, also referred to as events in phenomenology, which is concerned with the "experiential underpinnings of knowledge," (Holstein & Gubrium, 2005, p. 484) are important parts of the experiential perception of reality by the warriors in this inquiry, and they include cohesive relationships with fellow combatants, masculine culture, multiple deployments, surviving grave injuries, PTS, law enforcement culture, and interacting with civilians, among others.

Interpretivism

Interpretivism is one of the theoretical perspectives that stems from the constructionist epistemology. As opposed to positivism, an objectivist perspective that

holds that there exists one discoverable reality about the world, interpretivism assumes that there are "multiple realities or interpretations of a single event" (Merriam, 2009, p. 8). "Reality…is constructed through the interpretations of researchers, study participants…" and even the audience of a research inquiry (Blandford, 2013, para. 8). Further, interpretivism, then, the locus of most qualitative inquiry, "assumes that reality is socially constructed," and that there "is no single observable reality" (Merriam, 2009, p. 8). It follows that there are a variety of not only realities but ways to interpret an event. The role of the researcher, then, is not in discovering reality but in actually constructing it (2009) for "To interpretive constructionist researchers," what is vital is people's view of an event or an object, coupled with meaning that they, themselves, "attribute to it" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 27).

Qualitative inquiry

Constructionism and interpretivism hold that a person's experiences and interpretation of them are the source of reality and truth for that person. Capturing those lived events is not possible using experiments or even observation alone. Interacting with a person and using that person's words to elicit lived reality is possible through qualitative research. Qualitative inquiry focuses on "describing, understanding, and clarifying" experiences (Polkinghorne, 2005, p. 139). Patton's explanation of this type of research is, "an effort to understand situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context and the interactions there" (1985, p. 1).

As opposed to quantitative data, which are often available to be recorded in one action such as experiment or survey, qualitative data must use a process, a continued

action, an interaction between investigator and people being investigated real-time that is produced in those intercourse moments. In qualitative research, the "researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and data analysis" (Merriam, 2002). "Data used…are not simply lying on the surface ready to be gathered up…researchers…dig below the surface" (Polkinghorne, 2005, p. 141).

It is not only the average experience shared among members of a group but the aspects of one's experience that the qualitative investigator seeks. Whereas quantitative research seeks to assure "horizontal generalizations" in various, repeatable settings, it is the "vertical generalization" sought by qualitative researchers, who attempt to "link the particular to the abstract and to the work of others" (Yardley, 2000, p. 220). Polkinghorne supports this: "Experience has vertical depth" (2005, p. 138).

Distinct from quantitative studies, whose aim is to replicate their own or previous findings and apply those to many settings, qualitative research seeks to produce data sources that are "sufficiently rich to bring refinement and clarity to understanding and experience" (Polkinghorne, 2005, p. 140). Rubin & Rubin hold, "statistical summaries may not communicate, because numbers do not tell a story people easily understand" and "boiling down" responses necessarily removes context thus flattening the complex and rich picture (2005, p. 2), or as Polkinghorne describes this picture, the "intense, full, and saturated descriptions" (2005, p. 139) captured using "skillful exploration" (p. 143).

In searching rich description of humans' lived experiences, numerical data is limited in its two-dimensionality; it lacks the dynamic of the interconnections of words; their interrelatedness. While some quantitative studies do use word data, such as word

counts, etc., this compresses the interactivity of words in the matrix of language; quantitatively analyzing language data would blur the three-dimensional picture painted by words that best give verbalization to experience remembered.

If numerical data would strip the richness of the web of language interactions, it must be acknowledged that even verbal expressions are reductions of recalls of life. Incumbent then on the qualitative researcher is the undertaking of depicting the synthesis of words in their interplay that represent meaning. The "core description" yielded by retaining the "complex relations" of words comes the closest to apprehending life-experiencing for which even "textual evidence is indirect evidence" (Polkinghorne, 2005, p. 138) for language is not as complex as experience (Ricoeur, 1978). Arnheim proposed that vision is the primary medium of thought" (1969, p. 18); asserted that humans tend to recollect using visual imagery (1969); and held that language alone is "often an inadequate presentation of a visual experience" (Polkinghorne, 2005, p. 139).

Words–that is, our linguistic ability to narrate our experiences to ourselves and others, can actually impact how those experiences are subsequently remembered (Ricoeur, 1977). "Memories are reconstructions of the past, not simply retrieval" so even memories, retrieved then related using language, are reconstructed events (Polkinghorne, 2005, p. 143) for humans have imperfect access to recovering their lived experiences (2005). Although language itself is limiting to perfect re-fabrication of one's experiences, it is the best reclamation tool for remembered life events; Polkinghorne supports this idea thus: "Despite the problems involved in transforming human life experiences into language" it is our "primary access to people's experiences" for memory is "not completely fallible" (2005, p. 139).

Phenomenology

The qualitative methodology for this research is phenomenology. VanManen distinguishes phenomenology from natural science by identifying it as a human science (Dowling, 2007). Some human interaction—either with other humans or with one's own surroundings and events—is the root of the experiential realm that phenomenological views and inquiry seek to highlight and clarify.

Phenomenology must be understood before it can be applied in research. It is both a philosophy and a method of qualitative inquiry. Although at the epistemological level positivism, post-positivism, interpretivism, and constructivism are divergent, all of these actually appeared as bases of perspective throughout the history of phenomenology. Husserl, considered the father of phenomenology, was a positivist. Merleau-Ponty approached it from a post-positivist stance, Heidegger represented the interpretivist paradigm, and finally Gadamer was a constructionist, as are most recent and current phenomenologists (Dowling, 2007).

Husserl and Dilthey held that the immediacy of experience, prior to reflection, is where a human's "lifeworld" is first to be understood. Going back to the "things themselves" was essential to understanding a phenomenon (Husserl, 1931). Further, avoiding interpreting experience through the culture in which it is embedded, or its "cultural context," (Dowling, 2007, p. 132) follows from this same mindset that experience can be understood in isolation outside of external influences. The terms "natural," "primeval," "original," and "naïve" are used to describe this early state of a

phenomenon before humans reflect on it. Husserl, then, considered experience to be the primary font of knowledge.

Intentionality is a concept central to the philosophy of phenomenology—it holds that every human thought has an object. That is, the thinker has an object for all thoughts. Consciousness does not exist alone; it must be conscious of something. A concept, then, it follows, also cannot exist outside of one's perceiving it. "Human being means being-in-the-world" according to Crotty (1998, p. 45), and "…intentionality is a radical interdependence of subject and world" whereby objectivity and subjectivity are "held together indissolubly" under constructionism (p. 44).

"Phenomenology asks for the very nature of a phenomenon" and is "the systematic attempt to uncover and describe the structures, the internal meaning structures, of lived experience" (VanManen, 1990, p. 10). Essence, also referred to as a universal, is the idea in phenomenology of an element that is distilled as being basic to the experience and its removal would not be an accurate representation of the experience. In fact, Merleau-Ponty states, "Phenomenology is the study of essences" (1962, p. 7), and Crotty even felt that the "original intentions" of phenomenology were to search for the essence of a phenomenon (Dowling, 2005, p. 137). Essences are irreducible. "The essence or nature of an experience has been adequately described in language if the description reawakens or shows us the lived quality and significance of the experience in a fuller or deeper manner" (p. 10). This essence is expressed using words, or, as VanManen describes, a "linguistic construction" (1990, p. 39); this language form of data is supported by Polkinghorne's description of experiences as taking the form of "distilled descriptions" (p. 137).

Phenomenology seeks among other aims to unearth common experiences among those being examined, and this shared reality carries the term essence: it is a "composite definition" (Cresswell et al., 2007, p. 253) as opposed to an abstraction applied to, say, theory-building that is the goal of phenomenological inquiry. Because the particulars of their statements are preserved and studied to discover the essence of their shared phenomenon, careful review of existing literature describing the contextual elements in the lives of contemporary combatants, law enforcement officers, and those diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress informed evolution of interview questions that elicited those statements. In this study, the progression from combat to law enforcement work with Post-Traumatic Stress is the phenomenon shared by all men interviewed.

VanManen asserts that phenomenological inquiry is actually "search for what it means to be human" (p. 12). This is what Crotty referred to as "being-in-the-world" (p. 43) and, as VanManen adds, the "sociocultural and the historical traditions that have given meaning to our ways of being in the world" (p. 12). The participants in this study think, act, and talk about their lived experiences from the context of their own sociocultural setting. This setting includes the military and law enforcement cultures in which they have spent many years.

European phenomenology used experience as merely a tool to decipher phenomena; this closed off the potential of grasping the importance of the human experience itself. American phenomenology values and examines the experience itself; this allowance opens the door to a more complete excavation because of its embracing of the situated nature of the experience—a door thus opens to the human science aspect and shines a light on the conditions in which humans act (Caelli, 2000).

Distinction emerges between traditional (European) and New (American) phenomenology, particularly along two lines: experience, where the former approach desired a pre-reflective analysis; and culture, where European sought to isolate data from a cultural setting. American, then, both allows for reflection on one's experience and takes into consideration the situatedness of one's culture (Caelli, 2000). With Heidegger, a new direction in phenomenology began that has led to New, or American, phenomenology, differentiated from traditional European strains that studied the phenomena themselves removed from any cultural influence, and this American strain acknowledges the reality of humans' interacting with phenomena. This culturally-situated intercourse is the focus of New phenomenology (Caelli, 2000). The verb—the action—is important. New phenomenology, then, considers: 1) the individual's own perspective; and 2) the impact of culture. Context of those whose experiences are being investigated is key, rather than searching for any universality.

Modern understanding of culture's impact on one's thinking has led to the assertion that it is "impossible for humans to think aculturally" owing to our understanding of our world being "constructed by the language and traditions of our heritage" (Caelli, 2000, p. 371). VanManen (1990) advocates for seeking both overlap and differences in descriptions converted into text—this reflects the American Phenomenological goal. This, as opposed to the European tradition following after Husserl, which set up "false dichotomies and oppositions" (Benner, 1994, p. 100).

Interviewing

One method of collecting data in a phenomenology is interviewing. Eliciting first-person accounts of participants' experiences requires effective interview techniques. Moustakas considers the "long interview" typical in phenomenology; this entails "open-ended comments and questions" in a process that is generally interactive and informal with the end of "evoking a comprehensive account" of the experiences under investigation (1994, p. 114). Approach should be encouraging, sensitive, and non-judgmental (Charmaz, 2006) and the interviewee should feel sufficiently at ease so as to offer responses that are both honest and comprehensive (Moustakas, 1994).

The value of an interview lies in successfully producing an account that is "contextual and negotiated" according to Charmaz (2006, p. 27). That is, the interviewer has an effective impact on the study's results if the verbal interchange is guided towards the research's topics but still allows the participant to do most of the talking (Rubin & Rubin, 2005; Charmaz, 2006). Capturing the meaning of an interviewee's experiences may be "primed and assisted" by skilled interviewing. Rather than the outcome of citing perfectly-recalled events, the interview should be instead an effective "occasion for reflection" (Polkinghorne, 2005, p. 143). Emphasis should be on presenting interviewees with what may be the "first or only opportunity to tell" their story (Biddle, 2013, p. 357).

The process of granting an interview to a researcher and reliving one's experiences could in itself be helpful to a participant; Biddle et al. examined four studies (*n*=63) in which self-harm including suicide attempts was experienced by all participants. Semi-structured interviews, preceded and followed by assessment of interviewees' self-described distress level while considering granting the interview, yielded rich qualitative data. An important result was that up to 70% of participants reported improvement, and

the "cathartic value of talking" was credited by many (2013, p. 356). Although some interviewees experienced distress and dark thoughts anticipating the interview or following it, they themselves predicted that those emotions were transitory.

The study described in "Qualitative interviewing with vulnerable populations: Indviduals' experiences of participating in suicide self-harm based research" examined a slightly different demographic than did this current veteran research but addresses some of the same mental health aspects nevertheless. It asserts that self-volunteers tend to benefit because by the time they volunteer, they're ready to talk about traumatic experiences and this might account for the positive results of their participation leading to self-disclosure, which they described as "both uncomfortable and therapeutic" (Biddle, 2013, p. 357). The phenomenological interview examines lived experiences (Polkinghorne, 2005) such as traumatic events as well as the contexts (VanManen,1990) in which those events occurred. For the police officers in this study, those experiences and contexts include military life and culture; masculinity and cohesion; Post-Traumatic Stress; transitioning from one profession to another; and law enforcement life and culture.

CONTEXTUAL TOPICS INTRODUCTION

Military combatants who have relied on camaraderie in the field (Buckley, 1997) and who have lived through traumatic events and possibly injuries have lived these experiences in a particular context. This battle context can include being deployed multiple times (Walker, 2010; Karney et al., 2008); both war fighting and policing civilian populations; enjoying strong bonds with fellow warriors; killing others

(Komarovskaya, 2011); watching fellow fighters die; handling dead bodies (Hoge, 2004); surviving grave injuries due to advancement in medical technology (Cullison, 2010); and later being diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress (PTS) as a result of these events. Returning to the United States and separating from the military, followed by a transition into work on a police force, these men enter a new context that may have some, all, or none of the same components as their former military setting.

One may enter a jurisdiction where PTS is not acknowledged or understood; he may experience different stressors than those he knew in combat; he may be active in civilian peacekeeping and counterterrorism (Wilson, 2011); and may or may not know the same camaraderie experienced on the battlefield, even though he has entered yet another culture of masculine-minded counterparts (Rudofossi, 2007).

The above dynamics compose the context of the men in this study, during both the military and law enforcement phases of their working lives. Gleaning a man's lived experiences, using his own words (Polkinghorne, 2005), could be effective if the contexts (Crotty, 1995) in which he lived them can be understood as thoroughly as possible—these are the objects with which he interacts, in the terminology of phenomenological qualitative researchers, and the topics that follow compose the context of the interviewees in this research.

MILITARY REALITIES

There are particular characteristics among Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) veterans that may not be parallel for all veterans from earlier conflicts. A number of quantitative and qualitative studies and

scholarly literature sources detail the unique characteristics of the post-911 combatant realities. One often-cited phenomenon is the veterans' serving on multiple deployments without sufficient physical, mental, or emotional recovery periods between these assignments (Ritichie & Curran, 2006, p. 47; Karney et al, 2008, p. xvii).

There is currently advanced battlefield medical care that ensures more survivors of previously fatal wounds (Cullison, 2010); and psychological stress in addition to obvious battle danger: IED's (improvised explosive device), suicide bombers and other continuous, "invisible" threats. Green et al. state that "very few studies" have approached the warriors themselves directly with the aim of conducting in-depth research of a qualitative nature (Green et al., 2008, p. 4).

The troops who served in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan represent the first all-volunteer fighting force in major, sustained war in America for centuries. Hoge supports this, stating that this volunteer force as well as "the type of warfare conducted in these regions" differ greatly from those of any past wars (2004, p. 14). Greenberg speaks of the "the high technology, fast-paced warfare of the 21st century, the battlefield which leaves little margin for error" in reference to modern stress of battle (2007, p. 931). Troops are also performing "hazardous security duty" in addition to intense combat on the ground (Hoge, 2004, p. 13). One quantitative study (n=2797) examining Operation Iraqi Freedom warriors following their deployments found that 40% reported either directly killing or being accountable for the killing of enemy combatants (Maguen et al., 2010).

United States Military OEF/OIF troops are not the only ones whose service and combat experiences differ from those of previous generations and conflicts. Great Britain,

for example, has experienced the multiple-front war in Afghanistan and Iraq simultaneously leading to multiple deployments for troops and longer deployments, realities that are in "breach of 'harmony guidelines' " and that "lead to adverse impact on psychological health" (Walker, 2010, p. 791).

Serving in the military submerges an individual in a micro-culture that is a world of its own. It has unique jargon, unwritten rules, loyalty, and comprehensive care for its members. That is, housing, insurance, training, and other elements of everyday life are rigidly scheduled and overseen for those who serve. While this system may be efficient for managing, moving, and housing large numbers of members and their families, years of living in this self-contained sphere may lead its departing members to experience transitional issues when re-joining the non-military world, leaving them "unprepared for civilian life" (Walker, 2010, p. 794).

COHESION AND MASCULINITY

Military research has identified the concept of cohesion, developed among deployed combatants in intense situations. "Unit cohesion protects against PTSD regardless of level of stress exposure" (Dickstein et al., 2010, p. 482). The relationship developed in military units among warriors is referred to as cohesion. "The ultimate source of this cohesion is a bond among individuals who may not have anything in common other than facing death and misery together" (Buckley, 1997, p. 66). Marshall defines cohesion as: "feelings of belonging and solidarity that occur mostly at the primary group level and result from sustained interactions, both formal and informal,

among group members on the basis of common experiences, interdependence, and shared goals and values" (1978, p. 37). An apt picture is created by Phillips:

> Four brave men who do not know each other will not dare to attack a lion. Four less brave, but knowing each other well, sure of their ability and consequently of mutual aid, will attack resolutely. There is the science of the organization of armies in a nutshell (1987, p. 136).

Also included in writings of cohesion are references to moral, psychological, and self-esteem aspects of the individual soldier. Quoting *Roots of Strategy*, Book 1, Buckley notes "Self-esteem was an important motivator for the soldier in combat" and crucial was "man's desire not to be perceived as a coward among his fellow men" (1987, p. 180); indeed, combatants desire never to be viewed by their comrades as being weak (Hoge et al., 2004).

The term "buddy system" describes informally the convention and mindset of reliance on one's co-warriors; this common expression may have embedded within, though, a double-edged sword. Whereas the camaraderie and mutual care are stabilizing particularly during battle, this idea can be "prostigmatic" according to Surgeon Commander Greenberg, in his "Culture: What Is Its Effect on Stress in the Military?" (2007, p. 932). Seeking help for mental health issues following battle may convict the affected veteran of the idea that he is letting down these buddies—his very brothers-in-arms—and he may not take the steps to get this help in order to avoid casting a bad light on his battle buddies (Greenberg, 2007) as well as his leaders (Hoge, 2004) and even

himself, whom he may stigmatize because of the fear of being seen as weak drawn from the culture in which he operates (Green-Shortridge, Britt, & Castro, 2007).

There is indeed a mindset passed down from commanding officers to newer recruits in the military; the "old school" mentality often discourages talking about feeling distressed by impacting events. The saying "keep a stiff upper lip" is traced back to the Civil War so this thinking is anything but new. Commanders' attitudes could prevent military personnel from getting mental health help; this is an indirect effect but recruits may also fear treatment that singles them out particularly by the leaders within their own units. In addition, same- or similar-rank battle buddies may have a distrust for the fighter who has sought mental health help then rejoins his unit (Greenberg, 2007).

Warfighters need not like those whom they must obey; they can feel dedicated to commanding personnel for, "Men may learn to be loyal out of fear or rational conviction, loyal to even those they dislike" and "loyalty to the group is the essence of fighting morale" (Buckley, 1997, p. 66). In fact, the deterrent of leaving one's comrades behind by flight is credited for costing more lives than necessarily fighting for ideologies (Buckley).

Embedded in combat cohesion is the bond of masculinity. From the military literature, one author states, "there seems to be a persuasive evidence supporting the idea that male bonding is not only very real, but it is also a vital element that has a substantial and positive overall effect on cohesion" (Buckley, 1997, p. 67).

Both the military culture and the law enforcement culture are highly masculine in nature. Where military culture offers its acknowledged cohesion, law enforcement culture

also boasts "internal solidarity, brotherhood, and support" as well as "isolation from the society" (Woody, 2005, p. 525). Some researchers would suggest that "masculinity that is characteristic of police forces…is taught in police academies as a subtext of professional socialization" (Prokos & Padavic, 2002, p. 439). New York Police Department psychologist Rudofossi, himself a uniformed officer asserted, "at the police academy, open expression of fear was unacceptable, and skepticism of any sort was considered resistance" (2007, p. 24). This denial of emotions, particularly fear, does not stop at the academy level but persists through the duration of an officer's career in all aspects of police culture (Papazoglou, 2012). This "masculine hegemony" present in police culture dictates that expressing emotions, far from being encouraged, is actually viewed disparagingly (Papazoglou, 2012, p. 198).

"There is a substantial body of literature showing that the bonding of men in male-only peer groups is often associated with hypermasculinity—expressions of extreme, exaggerated, or stereotypic masculine attributes and behaviors" (Rosen, Knudsen, and Fancher, 2014, p.326). One negative expression of hypermasculinity can be violent behavior. So while cohesion can be a positive reality, hypermasculinity that often accompanies or contributes to it could bring inflated responses that could lead to use of force issues; Rosen et al. refer this concept laid out by Madeline Morris in "By Force of Arms: Rape, War, and Military Culture." Balancing out the hypermasculinity motivation for actions are other characteristics of the military mindset including honor, duty, and discipline, as acknowledged by Rosen et al. (2014). Whether veterans accustomed to military unit cohesion can transfer this bonding ability to law enforcement colleagues cannot be assumed. If it were to transfer, this bonding could have positive outcomes or

potentially lead to responding more aggressively to stressful situations. Further,

hypermasculinity could already be present in law enforcement agencies.

POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS

The National Center for PTSD estimates that, of every 10 combatants returning

from Iraq, 1 to 2 will have a Post-Traumatic Stress (PTS) diagnosis (2008). PTS

"typically develops after exposure to a situation or event that is, or is perceived to be,

threatening to the safety or physical integrity of one's self or others" (Asmundson &

Stapleton, 2008, p.66). Symptoms may include avoidance, flashbacks, and difficulty

sleeping (2008). Hypervigilance is also common—this refers to being in a constant state

of stress and alert, almost anticipating endangering events that could occur (Tovar, 2011).

Although traumatized police feel on edge and perceive that they respond quickly, at least

one quantitative study using Magnetic Resonance Imaging shows more sluggish reactions

among these officers than in the non-traumatized (Hennig-Fast et al., 2009). Cortisol

levels have been shown to become and remain elevated throughout a work day in officers

who have been traumatized—with resultant central nervous system effects on the body

and mind (Violanti et al., 2006). In fact, "functional impairment" is an item built into an

instrument used to assess PTS symptoms, particularly for the non-military population

(The Mississippi Combat Scale, 1988).

Currently, it is widely accepted as evidenced in the literature that emotions

accompanying PTS diagnoses are "fear, helplessness and horror" (Diagnostic and

Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition; American Psychiatric Association,

2013). Another emotion often occurring with PTS is shame (Harman & Lee, 2010).

Harman and Lee refer to Ehlers and Clark's (2000) cognitive model addressing PTS,

which "proposes that persistent PTSD only develops if individuals process the trauma/trauma sequelae in a way that causes them to experience a sense of ongoing current threat" (p. 14). This enduring threat can be external (caused by fear) or internal— caused by shame. If veterans carry over into their patrol careers this continuing sense of threat, this could predispose them to react according to it when stimuli arise from actual threatening situations.

As mentioned above, emerging in the literature is the concept of shame in PTS: "PTSD is not necessarily maintained by fear, but rather it is maintained by shame" (Harman & Lee, 2010, p. 15). Komarovskaya states of the *The Impact of Killing in War on Mental Health Symptoms and Related Functioning* (Maguen et al., 2009) that "moral conflict, shame, and guilt associated with taking a life can be uniquely related to post-killing mental health consequences" (2011, p. 1333).

Since it is not only fear- or threat-related incidents that might trigger PTS reactions, it is possible that an officer with PTS could experience responses in varying situations that bring back a sense of shame, degradation, guilt, and other possible emotions that anchor PTS in an individual. It has previously been reasonable to predict that an officer confronted with obvious outward threat, such as a suspect with a weapon, might on occasion overreact with too much force; however, experienced combatants possibly unfazed by violence and physical danger may nevertheless be triggered by other emotions when in the role of a police officer. Since shame is also emerging in the literature as a stronghold of PTS, there is the possibility that taunts and baiting, such as video recording policed actions and protests demonstrating rancor towards officers, could also trigger extreme reactions.

Although this research examines the OEF/OIF veteran, not all of those deployed had the same potential for exposure to traumatic combat events or the same experience while in combat. One quantitative study (*n*=3671) found that combat exposure for troops deployed to Afghanistan was far less likely than for those who had been deployed to Iraq. Those deployed to Iraq reported more frequent enemy contact as well as actual combat experiences. Respondents reported occurrence of actual firefight engagement in both countries. This obvious firearm endangerment—"being shot at" (Hoge et al., 2004, p. 16) was not the only factor that correlated with later PTS symptoms; also reported as impacting experiences were killing the enemy, knowing fellow troops who were killed, and the handling of corpses of those killed, on either side (Hoge et al., 2004). This research built on a longitudinal study of Army and Marine combatants surveyed anonymously before and/or after deployment to Iraq and Afghanistan in the OEF/OIF conflicts. Of those service members in the study who, by study responses, were categorized as having mental health disorders, approximately 40% admitted they would be open to getting help. This is one figure to bear in mind for this study; later induction into law enforcement brings additional factors that may reduce further still the numbers of those willing to get help for diagnosed mental health issues.

Not all men and women with PTS will experience symptoms or be correctly diagnosed at the time of their military departure; the condition may develop over time (Tanielian & Jaycox, 2008). Veterans with PTS who successfully navigate police academy may show no symptoms for a very long time; however: "Individuals are most likely to experience the onset of problems when they are confronted by stress, and may function normally in the absence of stress" (Karney et al., 2008, p. xix). Coping with PTS

taxes resources constantly in the individual; situations that arise further stressing capacity drains remaining energy, putting at risk the officer and those affected by his decisions, actions, and responses (Karney et al., 2008).

Of those displaying symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress, many are reticent to request help either in getting diagnosed initially or accepting longer-term counseling and other avenues of assistance. The potential for being stigmatized by fellow military service members often leads to strong resistance to mental health treatment in those who need it most. Stigma definitions include presence of traits in individuals that differentiate them from others—and not as merely separate but negative; often these traits cause biased treatment (Green et al., 2008).

Stigmatizing can come from various directions—leaders, equally-ranked peers, and even oneself. When one turns stigma on himself, low self-esteem often results; shame can accompany this deficit of esteem and this is shown in current literature to be one of the anchors of Post-Traumatic Stress (Green et al., 2008; Harman & Lee, 2010). One estimate of help-seeking behavior numbers is that as many as 50% of troops who develop mental symptoms following traumatic incidents will not ask for professional services (Gabriel & Neal, 2002). While physical injuries are perceived as acceptable reasons to receive medical treatment, psychological issues often preclude willingness to be screened, diagnosed, or prescribed remediation measures (Britt, 2000).

Compared to combat veterans, law enforcement officers are understudied despite their increased risk of exposure to and experiencing of trauma (Neylan et al., 2005). Law enforcement work introduces trauma that is "cumulative over time, complex, and

multifaceted" and this is exacerbated by the "unpredictability and variety" of environments fraught with threat and violence (Papazoglou, 2012, p. 196). Trauma that is unique to police officers due to this complex dynamic has been conceptualized in a theoretical model entitled Police Complex Spiral Trauma (PCST) by Papazoglou and he has included in this model psychological, sociocultural and biological dimensions (2012).

Rudofossi used the term Police and Public Safety Complex PTSD to describe the varied, hazardous nature of police work set in the environment of unpredictable events and danger. What Papazoglou has added is the re-experienceing of trauma in such a setting over decades of police service, hence the "spiral" nature that not only repeats but possibly builds in intensity of effect on officers (Rudofossi, 2007; Papazoglou 2012). Examples of repeated traumas for police officers on the street include negotiating to free a hostage, responding to homeland terror attacks, attending to fatalities at crimes settings and traffic accidents, and processing murder and suicide scenes. In addition to actual events, the daily anticipation of possible traumas impacts officers by layering on long-term stress (Papazoglou, 2012). In Papzoglou's model, the length of the spiral depicts years of service while the density of loops in the spiral show frequency and intensity of traumatic events (2012).

The previously listed traumas that police officers encounter naturally incite strong emotions; those who have been formally and informally trained or influenced by their superiors and work culture to suppress emotions rather than confronting them have difficulty processing these feelings healthfully (Berking et al. 2010). The law enforcement culture attaches stigma to the disclosure of mental health problems and help-seeking for these symptoms, yet many officers develop trauma symptoms, cumulative or

acute, from their job situation. There is also stigma related to use of force events in law enforcement officers (Komarovskaya, 2011), and since these occurrences often cause PTS, this stigma may prevent officers from turning to professionals to help them process these situations. Komarovskaya asserts that such use-of-force stigma may contribute to avoidance in the processing of traumas in a timely manner that could be beneficial (2011).

This denial of emotions is harmful because effective "reappraisal of past trauma" combined with expression of current emotions (Littrell, 2009) could allow for "positive outcomes" (Papazoglou, 2012, p. 198). Evidence of this suppression in police officers manifested as symptoms can actually be predicted (Carlier et al., 1996) by "introversion and their difficulty in expressing their emotions" (Papazoglou, 2012, p.198).

CROSSOVER OF PROFESSIONS

The two workforce areas of military and law enforcement appear to be continuing to overlap in philosophy, strategies, and tactics in recent years. The post-9/11 military and policing worlds are different from their previous realities and identities in important ways that affect the population under investigation. Some civilian law enforcement agencies show evidence of moving towards military-based training and management styles; they take their cues from the military education system. Technology improvements underwritten by the military that later filter down to home-front law enforcement agencies offer advancements that local jurisdictions may not otherwise be able to afford if they were taxed with the research and development aspects of these innovations. Kratzig and Hudy assert that "Although the military is the main driver of the

multi-billion-dollar simulation industry, many companies have identified business opportunities in the area of law enforcement" (2012, p. 66). Such equipment that revolutionizes effectiveness of academy and certification training includes "video-based judgment" simulators that afford cadets invaluable response training in anticipating life-threatening scenarios (2012, p. 66).

Not all adaptations streamline and enhance police work, however. The nature of policing the civilian population must now include training for recognition of, investigation of, and apprehension of, terrorist actors (Campbell & Campbell, 2010). Many daily duties of police officers reflect what were previously not required of the domestic peacekeeping force, and this evolution of the role sees an expansion of responsibilities (Wilson, 2012). Wilson points out that, among other post-9/11 homeland security duties, police must recognize counterterrorism intelligence, perform threat assessments, and formulate plans for response for biological, chemical, and other substance events.

These activities require greater cooperation and coordination among various agencies such as federal and special task forces; while this interaction has always been a reality of policing, terrorism contingencies have greatly increased the frequency of these interagency events. Also taxing police hours and efforts are greatly intensified immigration enforcement activities (Wilson, 2012). Wilson supports this increased burden on police officers, acknowledging Kraska's article when he states, police departments "also take on roles, such as counterterrorism and internal security, usually reserved for the military" (2007, p. 331).

Kraska's work "examines the blurring distinctions between the police and military institutions and between war and law enforcement" (2007, p. 501). Many military operations include nation-building abroad and policing of indigenous peoples in war zones—the term "constabulization" can be found in some sources; Campbell and Campbell additionally term this "police-military fusion" and define it as a "convergence of the primary aspects of the two roles" referring to military and police tasks (2010, p. 327). Such switchbacks in missions for the two entities could mean that there is greater affinity among the tasks of soldiers and stateside law enforcement than was previously the case. However, those veterans who have policed local populations abroad and who have experienced traumas and/or injuries leading to PTS in that setting could have symptoms triggered in civilian environments in the United States because of similarities in setting yet due to different rules of engagement required in civilian law enforcement their long-honed military responses might not be appropriate.

CAREER TRANSITION

The military world is agreed by many to be a culture in itself. In the book Fields of Combat, Finley names the three "cultural environments through which most PTSD-diagnosed veterans pass" and considers the U.S. military one of them (the others are the family and the mental health care of the VA) (2011, p. 3). Veterans transitioning to their post-military existence are exiting a self-contained world where all aspects of their lives are ordered and cared for from housing and uniforms to training and medical care. A report by Dandeker et al. (2003) acknowledges this reliance on the military-base lifestyle and Walker refers to "limited self-reliance" and a culture based on dependence (2010, p. 794). The transition, then, back to civilian life is in itself a stressor and a challenge due to

the repositioning of logistical and practical responsibilities; the weight shifts from the government organization to the individual and the family. While transitioning from military to post-military life carries the obligation to transform in personal, financial, and family aspects, cultivating a new career can further deplete the well-being of the separating veteran.

Modern battlefield medical technology assures survival of higher rates of combat-injured troops; more severe injuries are survivable than was the case in any other conflicts in human history. This means that greater numbers of those returning from service carry visible and invisible scars from their traumatic events (Karney et al., 2008). Pertaining to those integrating into law enforcement, with its rigorous physical requirements, troops adequately healed from physical injuries may nevertheless import severe mental, emotional, and cognitive conditions that do not preclude their satisfying police academy physical requirements but may affect their decision-making abilities, responses in the field, and judgment calls (2008). PTS, "the most prevalent mental health disorder among deployed service members," affects up to 15% of these people (2008, p. xviii). It is important to examine the characteristics of the OEF/OIF veteran, for "Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) veterans constitute a large portion of police officer recruits" (Johnson, 2013, p. 45), and their unique characteristics may influence their behavior in law enforcement environments.

Military combat is not the only source of violence-, stress-, and risk-caused PTS. Law enforcement work has its own stressors. "While 'warfighting' and 'crimefighting' clearly are different professions," both combat and law enforcement environments are "frequently filled with uncertainty, crisis, and danger, as well as complicated by a

considerable responsibility for the wellbeing of others" (Trott, 2006, p. 12). Much like battlefield combatants must be able to pull the trigger and cause death when necessary, so must police on the streets, for the "capacity to use deadly force is central to understanding police function and is a key element in characterizing the police role" (National Institute of Justice, 1999).

Unfortunately, PTS can be both underdiagnosed and undertreated due to shortfalls in Veterans Affairs healthcare staffing. "The healthcare needs of OEF/OIF veterans can fuel psychological issues for police departments. These issues usually take place in the form of negligent hire and/or retention misconduct cases" (Johnson, 2012, p. 45). "Large US police departments report that anywhere between 35 and 40 percent of new police recruits are Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) veterans" (pp. 45-46).

Once a veteran is hired by a jurisdiction, there is a cultural shift he or she must adjust to; this adjustment is "not as straightforward as some might assume" for "There are two forensic psychological factors operating." First, psychological testing of veterans is not always a requirement for acceptance on a police force. Second, "a successful military career" is not necessarily a predictor of suitability for the stressors of policing a civilian population (Johnson, 2013, p. 47).

Many police jurisdictions do not have psychological screening required for hire, some others do, and the practices of still others are not even a matter of record at present. From municipal police forces to county Sheriffs' offices to state highway patrol organizations and federal agencies, it varies widely which, if any, psychological evaluations are required in the pre-hiring process of future officers or agents. For

example, the Los Angeles Police Department does require a psychological evaluation but only a PTS-specific assessment when deemed appropriate. On the other hand, the Seattle Police Department and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) examine past medical records, treatment records, or perform their own standardized testing; the FBI even gives a polygraph tests as part of the PTS assessment (Ballenger-Browning). Even more important than identifying a PTS diagnosis, one must concede that a "successful military career is not a sufficient prerequisite for a veteran to be psychologically suited to the stressful work of civilian police officers" (Johnson, 2012, p. 47).

LAW ENFORCEMENT

The law enforcement workforce segment welcomes the influx of veterans departed from the military to help fill recruiting gaps (Wilson, 2012). This employing of veterans as patrol officers and in other roles is important in the current US context because there are hiring shortfalls in law enforcement jurisdictions in general; "Maintaining the police workforce level is continually one of the greatest challenges facing law-enforcement agencies" (Wilson, 2012, p.327). Not only recruitment but also retention creates issues in the law enforcement world. One factor leading to the need for more recruits is the retiring of large numbers of Baby Boomers—a natural timing out due to age. Retirement and other police force turnover can be expensive to compensate for due to the high-dollar training involved in moving a recruit through the process of hire-to-preparedness for street patrol. In addition, turnover can erode cohesion (Wilson, 2012).

Contributing to attrition is a perception, which has become increasingly negative, of police officers and law enforcement in general in the eyes of the public (Wilson,

2012). In addition to threat of harm to an officer himself or herself and the potential of having to kill a suspect, the complex nature of modern policing is complicated by "complaints by citizens and attention of the media" (Komarovskaya, 2011, p. 1334). Additionally, budget restrictions limit salaries and benefits that can be offered to younger, incoming officers: police jurisdictions must compete with other, higher-dollar security jobs or other jobs in general and in addition to salary offerings, "uncompetitive benefits" keep new recruit numbers lower than desired (Wilson, 2012, p. 327).

Recruiting new officers means being able to attract them to an ever-expanding role. The evolving role of stateside police includes not only taking on homeland security duties and community policing efforts but also response to crimes that are emergent such as the technological realities of cybercrime and identity theft as well as increased human trafficking (Wilson, 2012). Although police work now reflects characteristics of what were formerly military realities, there are facets particular to police work alone. The nature of police work can follow periods of boredom and routine punctuated by the need for intense response and extreme vigilance; indeed, "vigilance-boredom balance management" is "unique within police culture" (Johnson, 2012, p. 47). This constant readiness over long periods of time can be taxing and can set the stage for intense impact from stressful or traumatic events.

Considering law enforcement officers who received traditional training, "police officers of the past were hired for their good physical condition, their interest in crime control, and their ability to follow command decisions without hesitation" (Birzer, 2003, p. 29). Mental health concerns, both prior to patrol jobs and those resulting from street

work, are now gaining attention in clinical, professional, policy, and research arenas concerned with policing.

The occupation of policing naturally predisposes its members to risk of anxiety and other mental health symptoms leading to diagnoses including Post-Traumatic Stress. Many who choose law enforcement do so out of an "ethic of care" or they develop this as they serve; this weight of protection causes stress in and of itself (Papazoglou, 2012, p. 196) for officers encounter child sexual assault victims, danger, and violent deaths from vehicle crashes among other traumatic events (Weiss et al. 2011).

Jobs on the street such as patrol duties insert officers into "populations where exposure to traumatic events is not uncommon" (Asmundson & Stapleton, 2008, p. 72). As with the general population as well as military service members, police officers can also develop symptoms of PTS after just one traumatic event (Asmundson & Stapleton, 2007). Cumulative effects of exposure to hazardous events and environments are credited with causing PTS as well (Marshall, 2003); protracted exposure to traumas poses threats to officers' mental and physical health, relationships and logically their performance on the job (Papazoglou, 2012). The authors of "Resilience Training Program Reduces Physiological and Psychological Stress in Police Officers" acknowledge this long-term effect of trauma and stress when they state that police officers thus exposed are at "a greater risk of error, accidents, and overreactions that can compromise their performance, jeopardize public safety, and pose significant liability costs to the organization" (McCraty & Atkinson, 2012, p. 44).

Since this range of traumas and stressors occurs within the environment of the law enforcement culture, the product can be a complex impact on officers (Papazoglou,

2012). A long-term danger is a buildup of these effects capable of causing a "cycle of retraumatization" (Rees & Smith, 2007, p. 267).

Police work carries potential for trauma, and officers who have never served in the military may themselves develop PTS—a complicating factor in examining the population under study (Asmundson, & Stapleton, 2008). Specifically pertaining to use of force issues, the military has generated more research addressing lethal events than has law enforcement yet patrol officers participate in these contingencies: "Less is known about the impact of duty-related use of force resulting in death or serious injury on police officers, a population with a high degree of occupational traumatic exposure" (Komarovskaya et al., 2011, p. 1332).

In the longitudinal quantitative (n=400) study, *"The impact of killing and injuring others on mental health symptoms among police officers,"* (Komarovslaya et al., 2011, p. 1332), which began tracking future officers during the academy phase, 10% were found to have seriously injured or even killed a suspect in line-of-duty actions within just 36 months (2011). This number can rise to 25% or more over the span of a career (Weiss et al., 2010).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Aim of the Study

This research had as its goal creating a rich and thick description in order to understand the experiences of Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) male combat veterans with Post-Traumatic Stress who had transitioned to police patrol officer careers.

Recent relevant studies

Previous, recent research and scholarly publications detailing the areas of: interviewing people with mental health diagnoses; Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) veterans; masculinity and cohesion, military combat; and Post-Traumatic Stress, and law enforcement; informed the background for this study. These concepts were also used in the formulation of research and interview questions.

A recent study on interviewing vulnerable groups was relevant in the conceptualizing of this study. Biddle conducted a research with sixty-three individuals who volunteered to be interviewed—these people had attempted self-harm in the past; this use of a "self-selecting group" was purposeful for those who willingly participate in

such a qualitative research process may benefit (2013, p. 361). Respondents' very choice to engage in an interview and relate their experiences could signal that they are at a stage of growth where self-disclosure in an interview setting could augment their continued progress (2013). This research piece supported this current study's rationale regarding the ethics of interviewing those with mental health diagnoses.

Studies highlighting the uniqueness of OEF/OIF-era combat personnel and battle realities supported singling out this timeframe from among other possible eras' veterans to study. Rapid succession of deployments allow for insufficient time for physical and mental recovery (Ritchie & Curran, 2006; Karney et al, 2008); combatants survive more would-be fatal wounds due to technological advances in battlefield medical care (Cullison, 2010) and this suggests greater trauma impacts on the surviving body and mind; also, the threat of Improvised Explosive Devices (IED's) and infiltration of indigenous police, Army, and third-party contract workers add cumulative stress to the acute stressors of battlefield events, and this typifies modern Middle East Warfare (Hoge, 2004; Green et al., 2008). In addition, OEF/OIF combatants are part of the first all-volunteer US force in sustained warfare for centuries (Hoge, 2004).

A recent study found that cohesion—feelings of bonding, solidarity, and unity—among troops could actually help to prevent or control severity of PTS (Dickstein et al., 2010). Masculinity in both the military culture and law enforcement culture has been reported in research that examined this dynamic, and this had been suggested as a contributor to a mindset of concealing emotions and mental health issues (Buckley, 1997; Prokos & Padavic, 2002; Woody, 2005, 2006; Papazoglou, 2012; Rosen, Knudsen, & Fancher, 2014).

Post-Traumatic Stress (PTS) can be caused by acute or cumulative stress or a combination of both. A recently-completed longitudinal, quantitative research (*n*=3671) found that troops deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan were exposed to a wide variety of traumatic events and that where one was deployed could be a predictor of number and types of traumas (Hoge et al., 2004). Personnel separating from the military may have already been diagnosed with PTS or they may have developed symptoms during re-integration back into post-military life; this suggests that veterans who become police officers may leave the military with a diagnosis or may develop PTS during their police work (Tanielian & Jaycox, 2008; Karney, 2008). Law enforcement work itself exposes officers to both long-term and acute trauma and stress (Papazoglou, 2012; Weiss et al., 2010) and a recent quantitative research utilizing Magnetic Resonance Imaging indicated that traumatized police officers have slower reactions than those who have not been traumatized (Hennig-Fast et al., 2009). Both recent military and law enforcement research report that stigma exists in these contexts regarding response to individuals with PTS; this stigma can originate in authorities, co-workers, or even the self (Green et al., 2008; Harman & Lee, 2010; Gabriel & Neal 2002; Britt, 2000).

Qualitative Research

Rationale

A constructionist view of reality affords that there are "multiple realities or interpretations of a single event" (Merriam, p. 8, 2009) and further, "Reality…is constructed through the interpretations of researchers" and the participants in the study (Blandford, 2013, para. 8). This research endeavored to elicit participants' perspectives of

the phenomena under investigation as well as the meanings that they placed on these realities. "To interpretive constructionist researchers," what is vital is people's view of an event or an object, coupled with meaning that they, themselves, "attribute to it" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 27).

The rationale for conducting a qualitative study was that this avenue is the only one capable of capturing the depth and richness needed to understand the uniqueness of the dynamic of the sequence of combat trauma, Post-Traumatic Stress, and law enforcement work in the trajectory of an individual's timeline. Inquiry into this phenomenon is nascent and there is little or no research or literature addressing this combination of attributes. This study is among the first to use not just compiled statistics from the Department of Defense, Veterans Administration, law enforcement research bodies, and other sources of rigorous quantitative data that represent these characteristics or to treat just one of the aspects in qualitative inquiry or mixed-methods research; rather, this investigation synthesize the realities into one qualitative research. Green et al. state that "very few studies" have approached the warriors themselves directly with the aim of conducting in-depth research of a qualitative nature (2008, p. 4). They further state, "There was a dearth of qualitative studies based upon the in-depth accounts of service or ex-service personnel to capture their experiences" (Green et al., 2008, p. 5), referring to the mental health of the OEF/OIF veteran. Adding to this description the transition into patrol careers, this niche is unique indeed so time and effort needed to be invested in going to the men themselves to get first-hand data in the experiencing of this sequence.

Approach

This qualitative study used a phenomenological approach to gather data about the experiences of the selected interviewees. The phenomenological aim of this research was to define and present a composite person demonstrating the picture of his experience, both overlapping and outlying events.

The semi-structured interview method was chosen to allow for both well-constructed questions based on literature-supported concepts and flexibility. This permitted follow-up and clarifying questions as well as the liberty to pursue directions prompted by the interviewees themselves during their narratives.

During the process of honing interview questions, member checking was conducted to assure validity of concepts and language used to interact with subjects—to "provide evidence of credibility" in the words of Lincoln and Guba (p. 374, 1985). A Captain in one of the largest municipal police jurisdictions in the United States and a Sergeant at a major metropolitan police jurisdiction were among current practitioners who have both served on the streets and have recruited, trained, and/or supervised other officers in patrol work served in this capacity for this study. The police officers recommended and supplied copies of current industry reports including "Final Report of The President's task Force on 21st Century Policing" (2015) and "Guiding Principles on Use of Force" (2016). One officer consulted wrote *Behind the Badge: The True Psychological and Moral Perception from Those Behind the Lights, Shields, and Maltese Crosses.*

Military combat veterans representing rank-and-file infantry personnel, Special Forces experts, and current ranking officers in the military contributed to conceptual

description and vocabulary used for recruiting, interviewing, or seeking relevant literature. A Marine veteran who has also served as a police officer and who is now an award-winning technology college instructor of criminal justice courses recommended the book *Warrior Mindset: Mental Toughness Skills for a Nation's Peacekeepers.* These reports and books, while not all scholarly publications of current research projects, served to build understanding of the background of these industries, providing rich description of the culture, experience, and mindset of the law enforcement and military personnel that form the population for this study.

Procedure

The investigator made contact with over fifteen police administrators in jurisdictions in eight states, briefly describing the study and requesting permission to send recruitment emails to those administrators for further potential distribution. Initially this recruitment email, approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB), was sent to these jurisdictions.

All but one of these fifteen jurisdictions that had initially expressed interest in the study and who had received the description and recruitment email eventually declined to participate; the emails were never distributed to patrol officers. The one municipal police department who agreed to participate in this initial recruitment effort yielded four officers who followed through with interviews.

An alternate recruitment method was devised; the investigator made a video in which she recited a script approved by the IRB describing the study and the demographics of the participants sought. This video was posted on a social media outlet and as a result the remaining eight officers were recruited for the study. This change in

method allowed for officers to come from many jurisdictions and additionally this did not require them to receive a recruitment email through their work email accounts.

After contacting the investigator at a dedicated, secured email address created exclusively for this study, respondents were invited to continue communication through telephone, email, or text messages. The investigator traveled to the participants' cities for the interviews. Interviewees themselves chose the location and time for the meeting; this helped to assure that they were as comfortable as possible regarding privacy concerns. These venues included law enforcement academy and special operations offices; patrol and SWAT vehicles during ride-along shifts; and coffee shops and homes. Some officers were interviewed during their shifts and others used time off to meet.

All participants signed a printed release form approved by the IRB before the interviews began. Audio recordings of the entire interview session were made and officers were informed that they were being recorded, both on the release form and verbally. Two devices were used to make the recordings; one for transcription use and one for backup. The officers were assured that the investigator would be the only person to hear the recordings, which would be deleted following transcription. The investigator conducted the interview using IRB-approved questions; all interviews included twelve demographic and eleven topic questions but officers were allowed to insert additional conversation directions as they told their stories in response to questions.

Following interviews, audio recordings were downloaded from the devices to Express Scribe transcription software on the investigator's personal computer at her home. Recordings were then deleted from the recording devices. The twelve interviews were transcribed by the investigator verbatim with this exception: officer names, city and

county jurisdiction names, and other identifiers were not typed into the word documents. Interviewees were assigned numbers on the transcript such as Officer One and Officer Two.

Officers chose the mode they wished the investigator to use for follow-up communications for purposes of member checking and clarification; these included telephone, text messages, or emails.

Population and Selection

Patrol officers who have previously served as combat personnel during the OEF/OIF era and who were diagnosed with PTS during or after their military service compose a highly specific group of potential subjects. Qualitative and statistical research differ in focus; qualitative "requires a set of principles for the selection of data sources," and the "term *selection* more closely describes the method for choosing qualitative data" asserts Polkinghorne in his "Language and Meaning: Data Collection in Qualitative Research" (2005). Whereas statistical research in many cases seeks a random sample from among a population, in a phenomenological interview study, the selection of individuals to interview is a critical process; Cresswell terms the subjects in such an investigation "purposefully selected" (2003, p. 185) because "interest is about the experience itself not about its distribution in a population" (Polkinghorne, 2005, p. 139).

Selection for this study had as its end choosing "notable exemplars" intended to "enrich understanding of an experience" for the findings sought in qualitative inquiry do not "determine mean experience" but rather aid in "describing aspects of experience" (Polkinghorne, 2005, p. 140.) These aspects form a unique topography representing each

participant; outlining of the territory of one's experiences of a phenomenon under investigation cannot emerge from statistical data alone—recreating a dimensional map of an individual human's journey requires in-depth interaction with each participant.

Twelve male interviewees were chosen from among those who responded to the investigator's recruitment email or video. These included four who served in the Marines and eight who served in the Army; they were not chosen because of branch but this proportion occurred naturally in those who responded, qualified, and agreed to be interviewed. One of the Army veterans had also served full-time in the Navy and several had been in the National Guard either previously or were currently at the time of the interviews. Highest rank achieved by each included two Corporals, one Petty Officer First Class, six Staff Sergeants, one Chief Warrant Officer 3, one Captain, and one Major. Three interviewees completed one combat deployment, five completed two deployments, two completed three deployments, one served on four, and one completed over five deployments.

Current or final rank in police jurisdictions included nine patrol officers, one full-time SWAT officer, one undercover organized crime investigator, and one Chief of Police. Several of the patrol officers had served on SWAT or other special teams in the past. Eleven interviewees were currently working as law enforcement officers and one had resigned from police work. The men's ages at the time of interviews ranged from thirty to forty-eight; mean age was thirty-six.

Research Questions

What positive or negative effects does military experience have on the job of a patrol officer? What should law enforcement jurisdictions do to ensure the effectiveness of combat veterans with PTS as patrol officers while minimizing risk to all involved? How does the rapport among veteran and non-veteran officers impact performance and morale?

Data Collection Tools

Interview Questions

Demographics:

1. In what branch(es) of the military did you serve?

2. How many years were you on active duty in the military?

3. What was your highest rank achieved in the military?

4. How many deployments did you complete?

5. Where were you deployed?

6. What is your age?

7. What were your primary skills/training/assignments in the military?

8. List any physical injuries you sustained in combat or any military role.

9. When were you diagnosed with PTS?

10. What kind(s) of treatment did you receive or are you receiving for PTS?

11. What is your rank in your police jurisdiction?

12. How many years have you served on police patrol, total?

Topic questions:

1. Please tell me why you joined the military.

2. Please tell me about your relationships with your fellow combat troops.

3. Please talk about the reasons you chose to become a patrol officer following your military service.

4. Tell about any thoughts you may have had regarding PTS and becoming a police officer.

5. How have you used military-taught skills and experience in your patrol work?

6. If there were any particular incidents where you thought PTS impacted your actions in your patrol work, please tell me about them.

7. Talk about how you unwind.

8. If you have ever experienced others' responses towards you based on any PTS-related incidents please tell me about them.

9. Please tell me about your relationships with your fellow police officers.

10. What are your future plans for your law enforcement career?

11. Is there anything else you would like to tell about your experiences transitioning from combat to patrol professions?

Data Analysis

Two hundred eighty-eight pages of verbatim-transcribed interviews from the twelve officers were compiled into one master document. Each of the twelve interviews was color-coded by highlighting or assigning a font color in the Word document; in this way material could be moved around to organize themes while retaining the assigned alias identity of the officer if desired. As opposed to using a qualitative analysis software,

all analyzing of data was effected manually using electronic documents to compile and organize data.

This research applied "thematic content analysis" as is often used in qualitative research; involved in this process were the practices of "analyzing transcripts, identifying themes within those data and gathering together examples of those themes from the text" (Burnard, Gill, Steward, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008, p. 429). Transcribed interviews were examined to derive themes; these themes were compared and contrasted among the twelve interviewees' captured experiences. While some themes were evident immediately due to their correspondence to literature concepts, other themes and sub-themes emerged that had not been predicted. Further, transcription of later interviews suggested new themes not evident in earlier interviews so an iterative practice of gleaning new insights from previously-analyzed interviews yielded new perspectives.

Coding for themes and sub-themes was accomplished by creating electronic files and folders as these themes were identified; material from various interviews were then compiled by copying them and pasting them into themed folders and files. In this way the master transcript was not altered and material could easily be placed in more than one possible location and also simply moved to a more appropriate file as analysis evolved.

Whereas demographic data collected in twelve initial questions described some respondent characteristics such as age and branch of the military, topic coding aided in labeling "all material on a topic for later retrieval and description, categorization, or reflection" (Morse & Richards, 2002, p. 117). Beyond simple labeling, coding allowed for later association of ideas into a matrix of patterns among the coded discrete concepts, for "Coding is *linking* rather than merely labeling" (p. 115) and analysis began as early as

systematic labeling was applied. The exercise of linking concepts lent to the qualitative aim of "unfolding a system of relationships, looking at the way things hang together in a web of mutual interdependence" (Becker, 1996, p. 98 as cited by Carreiras & Alexandre).

Qualitative coding is acknowledged to be emergent by nature, and analysis overlapped continued coding of categories, for processing of new data that fit earlier recognized topic labels was dynamic and categories developed theoretically lent themselves to comparison among topics (Morse & Richards, 2002). One strategy was to produce memos while coding—labeled "notes" in the master transcript for easy retrieval using the electronic "find" feature in Microsoft Word software—these memos were "abstract and reflective" and aided the researcher in processing the material meaningfully for reflection is one key aspect of qualitative inquiry. In fact, coding was seen as "a theorizing activity" for "Even apparently simple topics…may sprout complex ideas" (Morse & Richards, p. 123). Some coding references refer to a collection of codes as "coterie" and others as "clusters" but all terms acknowledge emerging associations among themes (Morse & Richards; Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

Organization of analysis, once data was coded, was facilitated by "insights and interpretations that emerged during data collection" (Patton, p. 437). The mindset with which to approach analysis "demands a heightened awareness of the data, a focused attention to those data, and an openness to the subtle, tacit undercurrents" of the environments described by interviewees such as the military or law enforcement setting in this case (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 214). This heightened familiarity with the data was possible due to the personal processing of interviews rather than relying on software. Analysis was integrative since themes evolved as coding progressed, for

"interpretation brings meaning and coherence to the themes, patterns, and categories, developing linkages" that are of value beyond mere coding of categories (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 219). These webs, linkages, and associations mentioned above only became evident as coding progressed and data from all twelve interviewees was transcribed, coded, and interpreted; this emergent procedure was in accordance with the nature of qualitative inquiry, which draws out lived experiences in context of the events, objects, and environments that formed the framework for this study.

Ethical Considerations

Confidentiality of all communications with respondents was assured by using secured email services and personal texts. Recordings of interviews were destroyed once transcriptions were typed and identifying information was scrubbed before any person other than the investigator viewed any documents produced from interviews. The change in recruitment methods allowed for even more privacy in that the officers were not recruited through communications distributed through their workplace, but viewed the recruitment video on social media and responded directly to the investigator.

Trustworthiness

A worthy qualitative study requires the investigator to establish credibility through demonstrating cognizance of his or her own presence in the study, acknowledging potential impact on outcomes and controlling for that as much possible from the outset. Additionally, biases and assumptions should be described. This responsibility for reflexivity grows from the knowledge that interaction between researcher and interviewees, in this case, is part of the social construction of the data.

Moustakas refers to "Epoché" as the process in which an investigator "engages in disciplined and systematic efforts to set aside…" (1994, p.22) "prejudgments and preconceptions" (p. 90). "Bracketing" and "reduction" are also used in overlapping definitions with "Epoché," and these terms all refer to deliberate, effective reflexivity.

Prior to undertaking this research on the intersection of the veteran and law enforcement officer populations, the investigator volunteered with veterans organizations for over five years; this included representing an organization that treated veterans with PTS and Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI's) free of charge using hyperbaric technology and also a disaster relief organization founded by veterans, Team Rubicon. In addition, she also served as a Sheriff chaplain for over 3 ½ years for a local county and spent many hours riding on patrol shifts with deputies, attending officer funerals, delivering death notifications to jail inmates and county citizens, and attending squad meetings and awards ceremonies. She also visited the county courthouse, several police academies, a shooting/training range, and other police training and meeting facilities.

This exposure to, followed by immersion in, the cultures under investigation satisfies Yardley's explanation of one of the four characteristics essential in constructionist qualitative research (Blandford, 2013). Yardley calls for "commitment and rigor" and includes "in-depth engagement with the topic" (2000, p. 219). The other three characteristics are "sensitivity to context," "transparency and coherence," and "impact and importance" (p. 219).

In addition to thorough engagement with some veteran and police populations through volunteer work, this orientation also points to potential bias. It would be natural

to assume that a veteran advocate and police chaplain would view these men positively and interpret their experiences favorably. To help control for this, a negative case (Blandford, 2013) was purposefully included as an interviewee once the recruitment methods changed and access through specific jurisdictions was no longer required: this was a man no longer serving as an officer because his taking of a suspect's life, while cleared procedurally, so negatively impacted him that he is vociferously against veterans with PTS serving as law enforcement officers. This inclusion of "cases which do not fit an emerging conceptual system is invaluable because it serves as a device for challenging initial assumptions and categories" (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1992, p. 107).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction of Results

Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) combat
veterans separating from full-time military service often choose law enforcement careers.
These warriors may have experienced traumatic physical and mental injuries and
incidents leading to symptoms and diagnoses of Post-Traumatic Stress.

This qualitative study used purposive sampling to choose law enforcement
officers who had transitioned from full-time military service and who had been diagnosed
with Post-Traumatic Stress. Only men were included in this study due to the
overwhelmingly male composition of those who are allowed by the US military to
engage in combat roles. Those who served at least two years on police patrol qualified.
The rationale for this figure was that officers will have served on the streets post-
academy, post-FTO (Field Training Officer) period with a trainer in a squad car, and
post-rookie phase long enough to have experienced a wide range of incidents as well as
demonstrated that they are good candidates for continuing in law enforcement beyond a
period when new officers often quit. One figure that supports this is that eighteen months
is often used as an attrition measure threshold; the *Best Practices Guide of the*

International Association of Chiefs of Police cites a Florida Department of Law Enforcement figure that for county and state officers, a rate of 14% attrition is standard; this figure rises to 20% for municipal officers (Orrick, 2008).

Officers privately responded to a recruitment email or video and agreed to meet for a confidential interview with the investigator. Interviews were conducted at locations selected by the officers themselves to ensure their comfort due to privacy concerns. These sites included patrol and SWAT vehicles; police academy, narcotics, and special operations offices; and coffee shops and officer homes. Recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim and the data was coded to distill themes. Some of these themes and subthemes followed literature concepts and some new themes emerged during interviews and analysis of data. Major themes were identified, with subthemes further detailing concepts. The six major themes were: motivation, culture/nature of work, relationships, trauma and injury, Post-Traumatic Stress, and competence.

Theme: Motivation

Sub-theme: Motivation for joining the military

An important factor in forming a picture of the men in this study was inquiring about the officers' motivation for joining the military in the first place. Widely varied responses ranged from Officer One's "college wasn't an option" and Officer Seven's spontaneously visiting a recruiter's office with a friend then joining himself, to Officer Ten's also tagging along with a buddy then joining the Marines after the two dropped out of high school to do so. Officer Eight admitted, "I joined simply because I told my parents that they can't tell me what to do. And nobody can. So I joined the Army." He

also added that the work had indeed interested him previously and once he had joined he could not imagine doing anything else.

Some veterans in this study enlisted in the military because family members had served: it was tradition and considered an honorable thing to do to follow in the footsteps of grandparents, fathers, aunts and uncles, and siblings. Serving in the armed forces was seen as being at once heroic and familiar; Officer Four stated that his father, brother, and many in his life were Marines and indeed, "There was somethin' about the Marine Corps, you know?" Whereas many men and women join the military to follow the example of family members, Officer Nine disclosed that he was the first in his family to do so and that, "My goal in life was to die for my country, really and truly. No one in my family had ever done it before." Officer Six stated, "I'd die—I'm dyin' for a cause."

All of the officers expressed at some point in the interviews that they had felt a strong desire to serve their country. Officer Eight admitted, "I was kind of an adrenaline junkie. And that only made it a lot worse but…when I joined the military, I joined it to serve, then. It sounds so lame, but I joined to serve my country…" Officer Six, a naturalized citizen who had immigrated to the US from East Asia as a child "knew I had to give back to the community and give back to…the great nation that allowed me to come here…" He was thankful "for this nation" that gave him the "opportunity that I have now" and "I'm very grateful and I feel that I have to do something to serve. So that was my calling." This from a man that, on the eve of entering medical school, put it all aside to enlist and serve in combat.

Still others were inspired by the tragic attacks on America on September 11, 2001; they changed their plans out of a desire to express their patriotism in a meaningful way. Officer Five had experienced some major life changes and sought a significant transition into something different. Prompted by the 9/11 events and following completion of a college degree with the intention of becoming a police officer, he joined the Marines first: "I still wanted to do law enforcement but I also wanted to serve my country and be a part. So that's why I decided to join." Officer Two, a political science major, was headed for law school with "every intention of trying to get into politics" yet "after September 11th I felt I needed to do more"—six months later he enlisted. Officer Twelve, who works in narcotics and other vice specialties, related that he had planned to be a zoologist—his dream was to study marsupials "and then 9/11 happened." A SWAT officer in a large municipal jurisdiction, Officer Three, disclosed: "I wanted to participate in the War on Terror."

Sub-theme: Motivation for becoming a law enforcement officer

Interviewees shared the nature and complexity of transitioning to stateside law enforcement patrol officer careers following combat deployments and carrying a Post-Traumatic Stress diagnosis. Officers reported a variety of reasons for joining law enforcement following their separation from full-time military service. Several men had been interested in a career in policing prior to their years in the military. One had completed an associate's degree in criminal justice before enlisting. For Officer Five, after a high school career day for juniors exposed him to the profession and a ride along with a local police office, he was "immediately hooked…this is what I want to do. You

know, a public servant. Be out there to help people." Officer Three, who serves full-time on a SWAT team, said that he loved "serving the community and the greater good."

For many, the relationships shared by battle buddies in combat had a great impact and they desired to recapture that bond. "I missed the camaraderie that we had when I was in Iraq" responded Officer Two when asked why he became a police officer. Officer Four supported this thought: "You are kinda chasin' a couple things…Brotherhood and the camaraderie. That's a huge one. That's where this transition to law enforcement kinda pulls people in."

Officer Two gave a slightly different angle to his motivation for transitioning to law enforcement: "I needed that as my coping mechanism…to be a police officer. So I wouldn't have to deal with normal life. It could just be, like I am still in some type of combat."

Officer Nine stated, "…as a civilian, there's nothing close to what you experienced in the military…the closest thing you look for is…a cop. You're in a uniform. Every day. You're carrying a weapon. Every day…you're protecting and serving every day…it's just natural." Also, "…most of us that I know are not comfortable without a weapon." Officer Six shared, "…the jobs they do, the uniform they wear. They represent something. They represent authority. They represent someone…I always knew that…when I'm in trouble, I call the police and the police are there to help me."

Theme: Culture and nature of work

Sub-theme: Culture and nature of work: Military

Upon joining the military, recruits entered a world with its own culture, practices, and traumas. The veterans in this study reported quickly being molded in a regimented, physically and mentally demanding environment that formed the young people into warriors; this initiation was described by Officer Six:

> You get out there in your civilian clothes. You have no idea what you're doin'; it's like a bunch of chickens with their heads cut off, running around in circles, getting yelled at…it wasn't fun at the time. It's fun watching them now…'cause I'm a Commander and Drill Sergeant now. I command the drills. I yell at these privates. That's what I do now…but back then it was not fun. It was a horrible experience. They yelled a lot and I was like, 'Oh my God, this is just like the movies.' And I expected it. But you know, I had also talked to people that were in the military. They said, Keep your head cool. Don't be the last, don't be the first. Don't stand out.

Officer Ten admitted, "the Marines molded me. They gave me the discipline and you know, a lot of the traits that you need in LE (law enforcement)…I wouldn't say that I had the military mindset going into it." He went on to relate:

> bein' raised by a single mother…you know, I didn't go in with some of the more, I guess, masculine qualities that some of the other Marines had; they more or less took me under their wings…so you know, I had to learn those things. I had to—I matured in the Marines.

While the young recruits are yelled at during training, once they are trained they have instilled in them their superiority as fighters before they face the realities of deployment and war; according to Officer Six: "They don't tell you that in training. They tell you you're the best, they tell you you're the greatest warrior in the world, but, you know, you—in reality, it's not like that. It's very, very different."

Veterans reported as an element of military culture loyalty towards commanders and peers, and spoke of the military mantra never to leave behind any man; this refrain was related by Officer Six: "you know they teach you in the military, you don't leave a man behind—you never leave a fallen comrade." It is not a necessity that a warrior get along with or even like those for whom he feels this allegiance:

> All these guys…cared about you. Whether they like you or not…a guy that I couldn't stand in my unit. I may hate him but I'd still take a bullet for you. Because that is what brotherhood is. We're soldiers first. Our duty is to each other,

and not necessarily one's nation:

> Protect the guys to my left and right. I don't care who is to my left and right. I don't care if I hate you; I don't care if you…slept with my wife. I would still take a bullet for you. And it's kinda hard to explain if you're not there.

Unfortunately this presents dilemmas when sending troops into risky situations to save still others and not leave them behind: "Well, you're not leaving him. You're tryin' to minimize casualties, and you're gonna create more casualties by doing that. I mean, you gotta have a clear mind. You gotta make a call."

59

Veterans reported that drinking is part of military culture; Officer Two projected:

…probably we're never gonna change that in military culture. You have too many
people that are…in positions of authority…They're like, Yeah, go grab a beer. I
never drank until I came back from Iraq. So, I was 24? 23, before I started
drinking.

Officer Ten, who joined the Marines when he was still under 18, said "I was really
young…there were a lot of people in my unit that were of drinking age…so…I didn't get
that bond…there were always goin' to the bars together. Goin' to clubs together…
Dancin'…and doin' that stuff. I was 17."

Sub-theme: Culture and nature of work: Law Enforcement

Veterans enjoy the variety of police work and the on-scene involvement required
by this hands-on career. Officer Five commented, on being up close to the action:

a lot of people want to—it kinda comes along with being a police officer. You
get a front-row seat to the best show in the world. People drive by a car
accident…Everybody's looking…wants to see what's going on. We're
intrigued by that…there's some things that you can't un-see.

Officers frequently referred to the pace and adrenaline drop-off after separation
from their active duty years; this activity level differential created a discontent with
mundane jobs described by Officer Four: "You get used to bein' overseas and…you're
chasin' definitely that high…the adrenaline rush." Officer One told about his current
police unit, where there are "a handful that aren't military…we kinda gravitate towards

those types of…tactical…jobs…we all hang out together. We don't normally stay just policemen…we go into specialized units—don't like to stay in regular patrol where it gets boring." Officer Nine disclosed: "You're accustomed to violence. You become accustomed to it."

One patrolman, Officer Eight, stated "…it's different every day….everything changes…so rapidly and I like the stress of it" and spoke of a shift that had started out boring: "before shift ended we have a 100-mile-an-hour pursuit goin' through the city." He went on, "My wife thinks I'm really weird. She thinks I'm an adrenaline junkie but…I thrive better in higher-stress situations."

Officer Ten, who is a PhD candidate, volunteered:

> it would be really hard for me to go to a desk job. I'd thought, after I got my Master's in public administration, about going into city government and trying to become a city manager at some point. But then I did a year as a special projects officer with (his city) PD where I was doing project management. And after a year, I decided that wasn't for me. (Laughs). There was zero excitement. So I— just basically got rid of all thoughts of doing that, at least in the short term.

The culture of the law enforcement world begins as early as academy days for the officers. A municipal police chief, Officer Seven, referring to the instilling of vigilance in cadets during his police academy training, asserted "Part of that is, I think, that at the academy, they teach you that everybody's out to kill you…if I'm sitting here talking to you, I have to have a plan that you're trying to kill me." Most officers mentioned this alertness, or hypervigilance, even referring to it as part of everyday life; according to

61

Officer Eleven: "You know, we're used to being in this hypervigilant state that is normal to us." Officer Four described the necessity of living with this stance: "You…stay at that…level so long that that becomes you; that's who you are; the hypervigilance…that's just our level of…how we operate; you have to. 'Cause in this job, if you don't, or overseas if you don't…Consequences are…permanent."

Interviewees mentioned drinking as part of military culture as well as the police reality. Officer Two said, "But, no, the police culture's the same way…drinking's a huge thing…it's almost like…a decompressing thing…like it's the normal way for you to decompress…I don't know why I need to grab a beer while I'm relaxing, but I need to grab a beer." This alcohol consumption as part of police life can be complicated by officers' drinking to cope with Post-Traumatic Stress symptoms. Officer One, who lost a leg on a police call and who now wears a prosthetic, used to drink heavily only in the anniversary month of his accident; the rest of the year he abstains from all but light drinking; he relates, "I was getting hammered drunk out of pure anger." Officer Two, who is now a police academy instructor, used to get drunk following a police shooting and before he sought counseling help for Post-Traumatic Stress. Whereas many police officers do drink, a municipal patrolman, Officer Eleven, offered reasoning for why some do not: "I think law enforcement helps shy you away from" drinking "even though alcohol is so big in law enforcement." The deterrent? "I've been dealin' with drunks…when I drink, I don't become the drunks that we deal with."

Interviewees described the personality facet of law enforcement culture. Officer Two, currently a police academy instructor and Captain in the National Guard, related his

view of relations in police jurisdictions and why there may be conflict among officers and supervisors:

> because of the…personalities that police bring in. They want the Type A, solve-problems type of personality. And now, all of a sudden, you have the Type A, solve-problems, personality that's now being…dictated to, that you will not solve this problem like this. 'You're not gonna tell me how to solve my problems.'

Officer Five hypothesized, "I think it comes from that A-Type personality; the masculinity of things, you know, a lot of people…feel like…they've been through…it. They've experienced… it; it kinda comes along with being a police officer." In a police academy training scenario in a large city involving a non-veteran male college graduate and a female Navy veteran, about whom "some guys are just thinkin' automatically…" was "gonna be the weakest link," Officer Four related that the male cadet froze and the woman had to rouse him and lead him successfully through the exercise. So the predicted strength due to masculinity did not hold; the officers were pleased that the woman veteran was the stronger cadet. Finally, Officer Two pronounced: "Police…they're all alphas."

Theme: Relationships

Sub-theme: Relationships in the military: combat buddies

Troops form strong bonds with fellows in combat. The officers in these interviews referred to camaraderie often, in motivating them to join the military or re-enlist; in the context of battlefield events and traumas; and later in seeking to recapture that connection

with fellow law enforcement officers. Some interviewees referred to the bonds that at times feel stronger than family ties: "Like they're my brothers. I have siblings. I have a sister…and I'm closer to them than I'll ever be to my sister" shared Officer Twelve. Officers even compare the closeness to marriage relationships. Officer Two described this: "Well, when you are able to go through very high-stress, crazy situations with people, it just draws you closer and closer to them. Because you know, that could've been it. You know. Something that even a spouse won't understand." Officer Six stated, "Yeah, they'll do exactly what you tell 'em to do. You tell 'em to walk to that pit of fire, they will. So you gotta be very careful what your mission is, and how much you're willing to sacrifice." He continued, "You know, you don't leave your soldiers. You don't leave your friends." In addition, Officer Four asserted, "One of the big things is camaraderie. I say camaraderie but really…brotherhood…those guys weren't just co-workers…you'd die for those guys; you care more about them than you do yourself…it's hard to ever find that again outside of the military." Willingness to die for a battle buddy was not rare, as detailed by Officer Six:

> I'm gonna take a bullet for you…it's kinda hard to explain that camaraderie that you have with your folks...me and you are…brothers and…I would go to the end of the earth for you…if they said, alright there's only enough room for one of us in the helicopter and it's a 20-mile walk…we're walkin'.

Veterans disclosed a deep desire to find this type of close connection again. Officer Six used the description: "Amazing. Absolutely amazing. You trusted them. It's—it's such a bond that I drive to this day to have that bond with somebody."

Sub-theme: Relationships in the military: indigenous peoples

In the crucible of combat dangers and tragedies, our troops formed bonds with their fellow combatants, and fighting the ruthless enemy forged these ties; however, not all native Iraqi and Afghani people were at enmity with our American troops, and this complication presented stresses of its own. Weeks and months of training, working with, and protecting local nationals formed bonds among our troops and these innocents caught in a war in their homeland. Soldiers in the Iraq and Afghanistan armies were allies as were many local police; US troops helped to train these groups to resist ISIS, the Taliban, and other extreme factions.

Interviewees report very strong relationships with the indigenous people; Officer One fondly recalled: "The townspeople liked us; I was on the front page of their newspaper all the time…we'd go in and eat and hang out and…the people that lived…in northern Iraq…loved us up there…they were huge fans of us." Even Special Forces groups utilized indigenous citizens; Officer Four told how "they hired the locals; they would hire them for the military as well, and the police, and that's kinda where we came in, where we'd help them train these guys. Take them out on patrols, missions…"

Officer Eleven spoke protectively of the Afghan citizens: "I would get in a fistfight to this day if I hear some arrogant veteran callin' the Afghan people Hajis or towel heads or anything like that because the Afghan people… they were GREAT people." He further described, "We go into these villages and they praise you and they…hate the Taliban and—they feed you."

His fondness extended to the youth:

you know these kids…they just wanted candy and food and stuff. And you'd go to Afghanistan up here, where I was at. And the wanted…pens and paper. You give 'em candy and they're liable to throw it on the ground. They would always do this (gestures with hand swiping forearm) 'cause in your uniforms we had pens, right. Pens, Pens, Pens. And they would say Paper. 'Cause they want…that's what they wanted. They wanted to be educated. And I loved—that in people.

Sub-theme: Relationships: law enforcement

Interviewees referred frequently to the high number of fellow police officers who had also served in military combat, and how that enhanced their synergy; Officer One described this:

> A large majority of us were prior military guys. So we worked really well together. And now, with my police buddies, my relationship—most of us military guys just gravitate towards each other. It's all…the military family never really leaves you, and we just—we're close together because of it. And a lot of us, we work really well together because of that. We don't have to log the communications. We don't have a lot of…indecisiveness.

Officer Six spoke of his closest friends in his department: "they're—the police officers that have been in the military; my rapport with them is different than the ones that have not. 'Cause we think alike." He continued: "One of my good friends, we used to work graveyard together last year and we're—we think alike. Everything we do is

synchronized. We're like joined at the hip. Like your husband, your wife." He described the commonalities that lead to effective communication: "Certain indicators, body language. Cues, certain ways military talk. We use military lingo sometimes. We use military terms." This, contrasted with non-veteran police officers: "And the civilian counterparts, you know, they're—all they know is what they were taught in the academy."

Officer Five described his workplace:

The group that I'm with now, a lot of them are prior military and a lot of 'em have combat experience…they're married; they have children…and we're all out there. We're real pro-active. We're all out there, we're tryin' to…keep (names city) safe. We're all out there trying to get arrests and you know, make sure we're getting the bad guys outta there. So it's good.

Although officers mentioned the natural affinity for working with other combat veterans, they also spoke of a good rapport with their fellow patrol officers who had not served in the military. Sharing humor and ribbing each other was one aspect that helped them to work together. Officer Two disclosed his personality: "I always tell people, If I'm not making fun of you, then…I don't like you. So I expect the same from them." Officer Six admitted about his relationship with his work partner, "We make fun of each other. He's a Marine, I was Army. And you know, we have that camaraderie and that's what makes us great." An experienced investigator and narcotics officer, Officer Eleven, noted: "I like the fact we can sit around and joke and look at the humor in things…at something that shouldn't have humor with it."

Law enforcement officers spoke about the familiarity, dependence, and trust shared with other police: "We see each other day in and day out. We work together, we work out together. Lot of times we go out together, you know, the wives know each other. The kids know each other; stuff like that," shared Officer Three.

Much like in military combat, officers protect one another in danger. Officer Four, an Army veteran, told of a situation with a mentally unstable person who had injured a police officer; a call went out to several agencies:

> Hey, the officer's hurt, he's bleedin' and he's in the middle of the street. And there was officers from every agency that worked in this city that came there. I mean, there was probably 50, 60 police cars downtown on one street. You know, and everybody jumped out and was just like, Where is he at? You know, and guys that didn't even know him. It's just that brotherhood, you know. That's my brother, and I'm not gonna let anything happen to him if I can avoid it.

Several officers commented on the current climate of distrust, hatred and animosity towards police in the United States, and how this pressure had caused stronger bonds among the police force "that's definitely been strengthened over the years because of everything that's been going on; it's kinda been tighter." Officer Four understood "Because…we know it's not the majority of people that have bad…vibes against us. It's a very small portion… and I think they're just loud…so for us, it kinda made us more of a closed-knit society in a way." Referring to some Black Lives Matter incidents in which police were labeled Nazis, he expanded:

Man, people talk such craziness…officers aren't out here just huntin' down one group of people, you know? If you call…police officers across the country are—we're mostly reactive, not proactive. I mean, you know, we spend most time answering calls. You know? Not chasing down people? And, you know, folks don't understand, they think we're all—we're not. Like the Gestapo, you know? I tell young people. I don't think you really know what Gestapo means, or you wouldn't—because if you really lived in that kind of environment, you would hate it.

He concludes, "I think what's gone on now, has made us closer. You know?" An officer at the same large municipal police office admitted that this climate has made officers band together as though they were fighting another war together.

Much like the veterans had disclosed about combat relationships and protecting even those one may not be fond of, they also reported this loyalty towards fellow officers back home in the United States. Addressing stateside bonds in comparison to military bonds, Officer Eleven described:

It's only a piece—it's still close. There's—there's—what I find interesting in the closeness as an officer, you do get the closeness there. Even if there's an officer you can't stand. Or he's a knucklehead. You're still gonna be there to protect him. Help him. Back him up. There's that camaraderie.

Although veterans admitted that they share many of their experiences with their spouses, there are some things they do not wish to expose them to; these officers are able to do so with fellow officers: "But you can share stuff like that. And you can always talk

to them. You know, you don't come home and…" tell your spouse everything, related Officer Eleven. "That's probably one of the biggest things, is you have someone to talk to…law enforcement, you see stuff that bothers you. And you always got a buddy to talk to, 'cause you can talk to your partner."

Finally, Officer Twelve, who still serves in the National Guard, credited his law enforcement relationships with helping him to negotiate the often-difficult transition from military to post-deployment life. He asserted: "I think that they're just as strong as…well…I wouldn't say they're as strong as the guys I served with, but they're…it's pretty close. I mean, it's a brotherhood. We're all out there doing the same thing." He mentioned that having the same mission as his police workmates helped: "and getting in the streets and looking for the bad guys…it's very, very close. And I think—I think that is one of the big reasons why I've been able to transition out of the military so effortlessly."

Theme: Trauma and injury

Sub-theme: Trauma and injury during combat deployment

Many men and women trained to go to war are inevitably deployed to do so. Officer Six recalled his first deployment to a war zone and the commander's message:

> Our brigade commander, colonel, took us all to the field…before we deployed and gave…all three thousand of us that were deploying…the realest speech I ever heard. Said…'You guys are about to embark on a wonderful journey. It's very admirable work' and he thanks everyone for what we do and continue the fight and stay strong, but he's—'Let me be honest with you…not everyone here's

gonna come back alive; some of you guys are gonna die over there.' And that's a

real-life truth. I knew that already…we ended up losing about 23.

All officers interviewed spoke of combat horrors and losses. Officer One, a two-deployment veteran told, "my roommate got killed…his buddy got blown up…shit, I think out of 9 of us? I think six of us ended up with purple hearts and bronze stars; I mean, it was a bad, bad deal the second tour."

While deployed in combat, warriors experience acute traumatic events as well as ongoing stressors. A reality of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is the constant threat of Improvised Explosive Devices (IED's)--insidious and ubiquitous in the stories of veterans of these wars. Officer One told of an IED blast that changed his life:

> 6155 artillery shells wired to 3, 55-gallon drums of diesel, deep-buried about six
> feet in the ground…I opened the door to the Humvee, looked inside at the map
> on the computer…closed the door, and it went off. I got blown up…in '06 when
> I got blown up…my burns were so bad.

Officer Six, currently a patrolman and a former Army lieutenant who had served as a combat engineer while deployed, related the horror of remotely watching his mentor burn alive when "their truck got hit with a 250-pound—RFP—rigid form penetrator; it's made to penetrate our—steel armor. So it blew the truck up and lifted it" into the air. The Military All-Terrain Vehicle (MATV), with 5000-pound doors, had its doors warped and welded shut by the intense blast. The loss was instant and tragic: "Driver died on impact, passenger died on impact. The gunner was ejected and landed…three hundred feet away." The sergeant—the officer's mentor—"was knocked unconscious" then "The

MATV caught on fire from inside…soldiers were tryin' to pull the door off." This officer had to make the call to command the younger, rescuing soldiers to stand down lest they also die from burns and smoke inhalation.

The nature of modern warfare in the Middle East involves possible infiltration by the Taliban and other enemy groups into friendly allies such as indigenous police, army, and civilians; Officer Four recalled:

> it's hard to vet a lot of people there…not like here, where I can get on a computer in a police car and "run" somebody and it pops up. There, who knows who he is, you know? And so it was very easy to get infiltrated, and that's how we get so many inside attacks. And it's just kinda hard ta defeat that, and it's somethin' that you try to battle…

Officer Four described the rationale of men in combat:

> And they have implants too, you know, spies working for the Taliban and the army. And then any chance they kill Americans they do, so my point is, you just never know when you're gonna die. And at night, man I slept with a grenade—a lot of us did. And you know, our mentality was, You're not gonna take me alive. And you're not gonna behead me in front of CNN.

Reported Officer Five, "you just never know…if the ability or the intent is there…so you're always on guard. You know, they teach us always, complacency kills."

Nonstop fighting and very little sleep took a toll on combatants, adding to cumulative depletion of health. Officer Six described it thus:

Exhaustion. Seven days a week, 20 hours a day…you know you become used to it. It's like a way of life. I can't explain to you…if you haven't been over there…how you get used to the fact that you might die. I don't even feel it no more. But it—it's being over there, I knew that I could die today…not a big deal. It's okay. And you know, that becomes a norm for you.

Even back on the FOB (Forward Operating Base) and away from the battlefield, constant threat of death is always a thought. One direction of possible risk described by Officer Five was the presence of "third-country nationals working on the base" who, although usually loyal, could be turned by their family members' being threatened by ISIS and others. Added to this potential danger from infiltration was the targeting of bases by launched missiles. Such is the case detailed by Officer Six:

> when you hear sirens over there, there's a mortar comin'. And the radars detect upward trajectory of projectiles and they, as soon as they detect the trajectory, they sound the siren. It may or may not impact on where your base is, but 99 percent of the time it does. It hits somewhere. And it's just not one or two. It's three or four. So you hear a siren, you, you know, get to the nearest bunker or you're dropping to the ground.

Officer Five summarized: "I think it was just that heightened sense of awareness at all times, you know? From the time we left the base, from the time we got to where we were goin', it was just…it was nonstop."

Ongoing exposure to impacting sights related by interviewees included being required to "load dead bodies up, finding missing parts of other guys and depending on

the helicopter; maybe they can reattach it or not," Officer Six disclosed. Officer One recalled, "And so, you know, I saw the mass graves; that was one of the things on first tour, yeah, the first tour, was we were uncovering a lot of mass graves and stuff like that."

Combat veterans spoke of the mental weight of feeling responsible for others' wellbeing. Officer Two, still serving in the National Guard, volunteered: "And I'm a Captain in the military. I have to lead, you know, thirty-five to forty soldiers and make sure that they're good to go, so just being responsible for myself would be easy." Officer Nine, a former Navy medic, described how protective he had felt towards all of his men on the battlefield:

> I was their corpsman; their medic, so it was a little bit different than the normal infantryman…my responsibility was to take care of them…make sure that they were good to go…so it was a little bit of a different relationship. I loved 'em and I hate to say it this way…but they kinda idolized me. Because I was…their Doc. It's a different type of relationship as far as Doc and infantryman…you're one of the guys but you're not one of the guys. I felt responsible for all of them…from the officer all the way down to the lowest guy on the totem pole…they were my responsibility…my guys. I kept them alive. That was my job.

Still others expressed feeling culpable—at least from their perspective—for others' injuries or deaths during combat time. Officer One related how, when he was drunk one night, he talked a fellow Marine into reenlisting with a group of friends doing

the same even though the second man had "had a bad experience on the first tour…I mean we had been in some hairy situations." Still, he cussed and yelled at his buddy until that friend agreed to reenlist with the others; the second tour they experienced together has now left the buddy in a terrible state with Post-Traumatic Stress so severe that the officer interviewed carries a sense of responsibility for having ruined his friend's life.

Officer Eleven, an Army veteran, while deployed to Iraq, had been driving the lead vehicle in a caravan traversing highly dangerous roads; at one point in his tour, every single vehicle had been replaced in turn due to destruction by IED's. For this particular leg of the journey, he had requested of his lieutenant that he have a reprieve from lead vehicle status since that was inevitably in the vulnerable position and the one that always took IED hits. Rather than re-assign another driver to the front position, the lieutenant himself took the lead and ended up dying in a blast. Knowing the lieutenant left a widow and children behind, the officer fell guilt overwhelm him; not only for this lieutenant's death, but all of the previous deaths where he perceived he had played a part. Even enemies killed by our forces were now a weight on his mind, once he allowed the lieutenant's death to burst the dam of feelings of guilt not previously processed: "There's guilt, um…what kind of families did they have? Were they truly a bad guy or were they being forced to do it? It's things that…you can't get out of your head."

Fitness to fight was crucial. Once an injury of sufficient seriousness was sustained, a warrior's chance of being moved to a non-combat role or even separated from the military increased. Officer Six lamented, "…being hurt and being in the military, you're kinda like shunned. Kinda like the black of the Earth. You're fucked up, you're useless. Get outta here. Go do something POG-y (Position Other than Grunt) or

75

something." One of these places injured troops often found themselves was in a special battalion. "So now they have, they have the Wounded Warrior Battalion." This veteran, burned in an IED blast, described the demoralizing aspect of this: "Hey, putting guys that are gettin' medical care in charge of guys that need medical care—probably not the best thing for the guys." War fighters took a great mental blow when no longer considered physically healthy enough to fight: "oh, you're gonna get…non-deployable status; as an E6 infantryman, I was going back to Fort Benning to be a training battalion. That's it. I was never gonna make First Sergeant; I was done; my career was over."

The twelve interviewees sustained painful and sometimes devastating physical injuries during their combat operations; these ranged from cumulative degradation of knees and backs due to jumping out of airplanes and other infantryman wear and tear to burns, fractures, and traumatic brain injuries. Officer Seven was "shot twice in Iraq and hit by an IED." Officer Eight recounted: "I have several slipped discs. Bulging discs, or whatever they're called. My knees, they're jacked up. My ankle's been broken a couple times. My shoulder's been reconstructed. Uh, elbow's messed up. Uh, physically—that's what I've got." Officer Ten admitted having been "stabbed in the leg" by another Marine during horseplay and also sustaining a back fracture during actual combat. Officer Eleven said "I'd been hit before and that's why I had traumatic brain injury, but I refused to leave my guys. That's who I was." In addition, "On a previous deployment, I had a fractured back. And I spent another month in country, refusing to leave my guys, and ran operations." He related that his knees are now at stage four of a disease that has left him with no cartilage, "But—it's not really treatable without a knee replacement. So I just suck it up…"

Sub-theme: Trauma and injury in law enforcement

All officers in this study had Post-Traumatic Stress diagnoses due to combat experiences, yet trauma, stress, and injury did not stop when they were sworn in as police officers. The capacity to move from a calm or even bored state to sharp, crisis-ready response is taxing, according to Officer Eight: "again, just going from zero to sixty in a fraction of a second as far as stress level stuff" and in this state of alertness "you can—have some pretty intense events."

Although the context is different from overseas war deployments, law enforcement officers back home in the United States face impacting exposure to shocking scenes and events. A man with children of his own, Officer One shared: "And there's been some crazy stuff. Some of my buddies on this department have seen some crazy stuff. We had a lady de-bowel her 3-month-old baby. I mean, cut his guts out all over the place…"

Some interviewees spoke of themselves as caretakers or buffers between the public and danger; it is this sentiment that originated the thin blue line symbol wherein law enforcement officers are the thin blue line that separate citizens from chaos and peril. Officer One explained, "It's—the true evil's out there…and I want it to be that way where the policemen are the only ones that see the bad stuff and everybody else doesn't." Police also know of crimes that would cause panic if the media always had opportunity to broadcast ongoing incidents; Officer One further shared: "I mean there's a mass rapist going on in the medical center right now. This guy's raped like 21 people."

In addition to exposure to violence and tragedy, physical danger to themselves is present continually in the stateside work of veterans-turned-officers. Officer Two, also a police academy instructor, was stabbed in the hand while on duty. Officer One was on a traffic stop when he was struck by a vehicle and, narrowly escaping death after hanging by his hands off an overpass bridge, nevertheless still lost a leg and was fitted with a prosthetic one; he now continues patrol duties just as any other officer does. Officer Nine shot a suspect when that man reached into his coat and said, "I have a gun and I'm going to kill you." The officer was cleared by the investigation procedure but still, a couple years later, elected to leave law enforcement: "Because I didn't—I didn't want to hurt people anymore. It's—it brings back things that you don't wanna remember." Other officers have also been in situations where they had to shoot and kill dangerous suspects; all were cleared following departmental investigations.

Theme: Post-Traumatic Stress

Post-Traumatic Stress, forming part of the literature background for this study and being inquired about in interview questions, naturally played a significant role in the men's narratives. Certain responses were anticipated and others suggested new directions or perspectives. Although they were not asked about this, the men related what events or input triggered their symptoms. Many symptoms were clearly named and others were more subtly described in the veterans' stories. Realities of PTS and responses to it were related in the military environment, some occurred in law enforcement settings, and still others affected the interviewees in their family life. Finally, avenues of support, while not directly asked about, emerged in the officers' narratives.

Sub-theme: Post-Traumatic Stress Triggers

The men interviewed described events, stimuli, or situations that they felt roused symptoms of PTS. Noise, commotion, and people in close proximity at certain times were problematic, as were anniversaries of traumas and incidents involving children and other innocents; this in addition to fear, danger, and scenarios that recall specific occurrences.

Officer Seven, a Chief of Police, said, "If people lit off a whole package of fire crackers that would do it. No, sky rockets don't bother me…but a whole bunch of fire crackers would." Officer Five, a Marine veteran serving as a patrol officer recalled:

> I had noticed prior to getting separated (from the military) that anytime we went somewhere public, like [I] just had a heightened state of awareness. I didn't like to be in public places. I didn't like to be in, you know, crowded atmosphere or anything just 'cause people around me, people behind me and all that, it was just—I felt anxiety, you know?

Even now, following diagnosis of PTS and treatment, he related: "it's still—like I don't even like to be around large crowds."

In this study, one of the twelve officers uses a prosthetic limb following serious injury. This officer disclosed that, during the anniversary month of the police line-of-duty event that cost him part of his leg, he struggled with PTS symptoms. The same man also admitted that another month of the year, the anniversary of the IED blast that left him with severe burns, also brought negative emotions.

Officer Eight, a father of six children, became emotional when he shared his biggest trigger of symptoms: incidents in which children are harmed or killed. "…anything involving children, it really hits me. Especially since I am a father. And so I think that's the only thing that really hit me, negatively." This former Army staff sergeant attributes the origin of this trigger to a trauma he experienced while he was in charge of an investigations office in Korea, when he responded to a call about a child who had hanged himself. He cried during the interview as he related having arrived on the scene in time to cut the youngster down: "I'm doing CPR and he starts breathing again. I'm thinking, I got it! We're good. It's no problem, you know? And, uh, I lost him…See, even like right now, I feel it. It's like, comin'." Later, following deployment and watching a television program with his wife depicting a couple's dealing with the pending death of their infant:

> It was like, it was like a week. It was two weeks, every time the baby did something, the dad was like, Oh, here it comes. I'm gonna lose my son. And so when he said that in the video, I immediately went right back to that room. Right back to—I was on my knees with that kid and it felt so real. And I cried uncontrollably and I didn't know what to do.

One of the twelve officers interviewed resigned from law enforcement work following his shooting of a suspect, where he explained the stimulus to shoot as, "I felt threatened." This feeling of threat, itself, brought on a mental state that disturbed this former Navy corpsman, Officer Nine: "It brings back things you don't wanna remember. And it brings back a state of mind…you're in a situation…where in the military it's an automatic firefight."

Officer Seven told of a compound stimulus of stress feelings: the act of clearing a building or area for suspects and the endangerment of his men (and not himself). He explained that movies that showed realistic-looking scenarios, even if they were fiction or fantasy, recalled instantly the tasks of clearing buildings of enemy combatants on the battlefield. Further, in the present, watching his officers perform these actions on police calls made him feel worried for his men.

> But I mean realistic as far as…they're going through buildings or something like that…I kinda get that feeling in my back. You know, it's like stress returns of—that I'm doing that…not knowing what's around that corner and that you had to be ready for whatever's there…but at the same time, I don't have that problem when…I'm really doing it…only when I'm really watching…someone else do it. If…I'm watching one of my guys get….like we were clearing. We had a guy with a gun. We were clearing the woods over here…I'm looking left and right around my guys. 'Cause I'm stressed out, I mean, about them doing it. It didn't bother me so much. I'd rather they all went back and I went and did it. So that kinda stressed me out.

Officer One had his PTS response triggered by a call involving a Muslim family. An Army veteran who had told about his great bond with the indigenous Muslim peoples on his deployments to the Middle East told of a police call in his city and his reaction to a Muslim man but not for the reason one might expect. A call from dispatch, incorrectly relayed due to a language barrier with the Arabic-speaking citizen making the call, mis-categorized the incident as a domestic situation in which a man had caused his wife to become unconscious by beating her. Upon arrival at the home, the officer saw a

Saudi Arabian man, punched him in the nose, and handcuffed him. Searching the house to find the injured wife, the officer realized that it was the man's mother suffering a heart attack that was the cause of the call; he cleaned off the bloody nose of the man, uncuffed him and apologized even while the EMT's were treating the older woman. This officer's response was based on his thorough acquaintance with the Muslim culture and its mistreatment of women; the wife had been back in Saudi Arabia at the time of this incident.

Sub-theme: Post-Traumatic Stress Symptoms

The men interviewed spoke about signs that they had mental health issues from the impact of combat deployment; they were not asked about symptoms but volunteered all of this information. The police officers in these interviews described symptoms ranging from emotional and mental signs: numbing, sadness, anger, fear, guilt, distrust and cynicism about people, trouble focusing, and general feelings of discontent, stress and anxiety. They also described physical and behavioral effects such as drinking, sleep problems, hypervigilance, and risk-taking.

1. PTS Symptom: Numbing

Officer Two, a former cavalry scout noted that, while chasing a car burglary suspect on foot, he was numb to the danger of the situation, where a loaded gun had indeed been close at hand for the suspect. This was preceding counseling for PTS. He described this lack of feeling: "it was more the not having the normal human fear of like, Hey, you could get killed!" Officer Eleven, who spent fourteen years in the military between active duty and National Guard, and who was medically retired following

sustaining injuries twice, described numbness this way: "our biggest struggle family-wise, and I think it actually helps me in law enforcement, is I don't feel. Like I really don't have a lot of feelings. Um…you're emotionally just so drained over there; when you come home…" Officer Seven, an Army veteran with twenty-three years of service and now a police chief, admitted: "I've worked really hard trying not to react to things…About anything…I mean as a life skill maybe even you'd call it? Not having emotions, not—people being able to read my emotions or what I think." Officer Two reasoned, "Struggle is what makes us human. Struggles are—it's when you're—don't care at all, that's when it's scary. And even when you're tryin' to care, you can't care. That's what's scary…"

2. PTS Symptom: Fear

Officer Eight's wife made him seek counseling due to his sensitivity to sound and startling easily, especially after he would "freak out" and fall out of bed upon hearing loud sounds; this happened more than once. A police chief who is more concerned about his officers' clearing a building than if he were doing it himself, Officer Seven also admitted feeling fear in just relating his experiences to the interviewer: "But…I…when I was in Iraq there was a time when we were under heavy fire and I thought I was about to die. And I'm gettin' shakes just thinkin' about it." Officer Six, a former Army lieutenant and combat engineer, described the impact of auditory triggers: "But things would trigger my memory and it would cause me to go into fear sometimes." He went on to mention tornado sirens as one stimulus: "literal events like that where, 'cause in sirens—when you hear sirens over there, there's a mortar comin'." Not just tornado sirens but other "certain sensory cues and…certain events; I can't tell you exactly what events do it, or a

particular type of event except the noise." This officer explained why he believed fear

returns when he hears these types of noises: "…certain things will trigger…cues in my

memory and I think back to watching Sergeant (names his friend) get burned, and I think

back to getting attacked."

3. PTS Symptom: Hypervigilance

Some officers' symptoms take the form of staying in a constant state of

watchfulness. They are aware of this heightened sense of alertness and they described it:

"I mean, there are certain situations in which I find myself more on edge or more

uncomfortable" said Officer Three, and Officer Four related, of family outings to

restaurants, "(I) Gotta face the door" to be attentive to any potential threats. Officer Five,

who did not like to be around crowds, explained: "you're just constantly looking for

something out there, you know, I feel like I can't focus on one thing, like my—my head's

on a swivel so it's looking around, seeing what's going on." Once in a situation with a

family road trip where he was tasked with simply keeping an eye on the vehicle, kids, and

pets, he said, "I panicked because I felt like had to do so many things at once…there were

so many different things revolving around…everything that was going on at that moment

that I—I feel like I lost it, you know?"

4. PTS Symptom: Sleep trouble

Some officers reported difficulty with sleep preceding diagnosis or treatment of

PTS or presently. Officer Eleven, who had been involved in the invasion of Iraq, shared,

"when you come home, it's hard for them to understand what you're going through. And

I dreamt a lot." Officer Eight had not realized that he had been having nightmares until his wife made him aware that he would "jump out of bed; I'd duck and kind of flash back here."

Officer Five named "Waking up in the middle of the night having nightmares, waking up, you know, seeing my buddies die in front of me" as a reality of those who see hard combat. Officer One, seriously burned when an IED explosion destroyed his vehicle commented, "And you wanna talk about some night mares! That shit will—haunt you!" Officer Two, who is both a police academy instructor and a Major in the National Guard, simply declared: "The nightmares never stopped."

5. PTS: Other symptoms

Other symptoms notable in the men's stories included sadness, such as Officer Eight had expressed when dealing with police situations involving child injury or death. This man, who had tried to save a child in Korea who had hanged himself, expressed of his worst effect from PTS: "And it's not so much fear or anything like that…just—it plays on my emotions and it really gets the best of me. And I've been pulled away, uh, from scenes involving children…because I can't handle it." His response: he cries and takes a few moments following these events to process the sadness.

Some respondents told of attitudes towards other people that seemed to them more negative that their usual stance. Officer Two recalled of his pre-diagnosis experiences: "It was normal to be suspect of everything. It was normal to, not necessarily be negative, but be very pessimistic about how people are," this good-humored academy instructor recalled; he added that he had for a time discontinued his usual pranks and had

become "standoffish." He further described how he had ceased to trust people and he had become cynical about interactions with others.

Officers talked about how, before diagnosis or before they had successfully navigated PTS realities, they engaged in risky or unhealthy behaviors that were not typical for them and that they have now discontinued. These included heavy drinking, driving fast, yelling and losing their tempers, and eating too much out of stress. Finally, the participants remembered feeling depressed and hopeless.

Sub-theme: Post-Traumatic Stress: Stereotypes, Misperceptions, and Expectations

Current American culture has a certain awareness of Post-Traumatic Stress and accompanying assumptions or expectations. Data and depictions to which individuals are exposed are widely varied in quality and accuracy, and this reality lends itself to ignorance or misperceptions in the public in many cases. Examples of this awareness include use of the term "trigger" in a PTS context by many people and also the deletion of "D" from the original PTSD abbreviation that signals the pejorative nature of the word "disorder" in the perception of many; Officer Nine, a medic, explained that he did not like the disorder idea so he sometimes refers to his own diagnosis as "PTS" and Officer Four expressed his preference for this newer expression as well.

Several subtle and unanticipated viewpoints of PTS emerged in the interviews during this research: officers' awareness of stereotypes in the public; officers' opinion of other veterans and police officers with PTS including those who completed suicide attempts; and officers' expectations of what they perceived the investigator was seeking.

They often named their own symptoms in contrast to those they were aware that others had expressed.

Officer Four expressed strong feelings about those veterans who took their own lives, and referred to a recent police call for such an event: "You're talkin' about doin' somethin' crazy…this is happenin' way too often, and you know, it's definitely not worth it. And I see it as kind of a…kick in the face to the guys that died overseas and weren't able" to choose for themselves "'Cause they didn't have that chance to come home, you know?" He admitted "I get kinda angry at some of the…guys…'Cause they never had that opportunity to decide if they were or not (gonna live), you know?" He shared that several veterans from his military unit had already taken their lives, and told of one such recent loss: "he ended up dyin' overnight, and took his pills. Or whatever…we don't know. But, they went to check on him in the morning at his house, his mom did…he was already dead." This officer concluded, "Man you know, to make it through all that, you know? And just die in your mom's basement. It's kinda, it just sucks."

Veterans in these interviews often mentioned symptoms or triggers that they themselves did not have; one often-depicted trigger is fireworks; Officer Seven referred to this stereotypical trigger that did not affect him: "Um, but at the same time it's like, oh, well don't let off the sky rockets." Officer Eight described his symptoms, "It's a mild case of it from what I'm told. Um, and it's not like gunfire sets me off or anything like that." Officer Twelve supplied, "I've never had a flashback, you know? I'm not saying they don't exist, but…maybe I'm just not that…I'm not that severe in my post-traumatic stress." Officer Five had a positive outlook: "I'm fortunate. I feel fortunate. There's a lot of guys in way worse positions and conditions than I'm in."

Officer Four offered, "It doesn't make you trigger happy…I think that's more for the movies…It's not the 'Deer Hunter' type of deal." Officer Nine gave the disclaimer: "I never exhibited violent or suicidal tendencies with my PTSD you know" and bemoaned, "the only time you ever see PTSD in the media is whenever somebody does something really bad; either commits suicide or becomes violent…so I was afraid to…get that diagnosis." Officer Three disclaimed, "but I don't have a debilitating level." Officer Eleven added, "If somebody just went cuckoo on deployment, doesn't mean every soldier's gonna go cuckoo" and "kill people for the wrong reasons." Officer Four said, "I never put my hands on my wife. I never assaulted anyone."

Expectations and comparisons may have caused some officers to procrastinate getting diagnosed. One officer referred to his faith when he stated his own expectation that he should have been able to handle symptoms on his own; Officer Two disclosed, "And I think…the biggest thing for me was, I'm a Christian." He explained: "So I like to think that my faith is strong enough to where, if I'm really dealing with something, and I know I'm dealing with something, I could pray about it, and it'll get better." Officer Ten named the same faith viewpoint as a deterrent to act on his symptoms, "I'd never contemplated suicide seriously, you know? I mean, it, um, my religious beliefs lead me to believe that you go to hell if you commit suicide…" He explained, "That's kind of like the final sin that you can't get forgiveness for. So like I said, I never contemplated it." Officer Four compared himself to previous warriors: "And in Vietnam…now those dudes had some rough times…at least here, people tell us, 'Hey man, thanks for your service'…I'm thinkin', how can I have it? I'm just sayin'—mine…wasn't as crazy as some of the others, you know?"

Very common is the civilian who asks veterans about their combat or officers about policing experiences. Officer Four's experience included responses like " 'Holy crap—I didn't know that you were really in the, like 'in it' you know? Like the stuff we see on TV' Aw, man, how many people did ya kill?' " Referring to his police work, he has been asked, "Hey have ya shot somebody?"

Officer Twelve, an Investigator for an Organized Crime Unit, noted, "there is a preconceived notion that if an officer has PTSD, he's just gonna go out there and start shootin' people. Start killin' people for no reason. He's gonna have a flashback." He has also heard concern that a police officer with PTS is "dangerous, or he's just a wild officer. Rogue cop."

Officer Four lamented that the public often thinks, "Oh, God, he's crazy. He's gonna snap; I don't want people to think I'm gonna flip." Officer Seven, the police chief, summarized: "I REALLY wish that they were better educated about what it is and what it isn't and what it means and what it doesn't.

Sub-theme: Post-Traumatic Stress in the Military

These combat veterans involved in the Iraq and Afghanistan theatres related the continuing loss of life and the short time periods between events engaging with the enemy that allow little opportunity for mentally processing trauma and death. Officer Four recounted this reality:

> …overseas where you know, a guy gets killed, and you don't have time to
>
> process it 'cause you have to keep dealing with what's going on. Ya have to
>
> keep movin' forward and then by the time you go, the next mission comes up

89

and you're gone again. And so-and-so's already been taken back home to be

buried…

While lack of sufficient time to process trauma was mentioned by interviewees, so too was a deliberate mindset to conceal emotion according to Officer Ten:

After talking with…my counselor at the vet center and PD (police department) psychologist that's basically the underlying cause of PTS is not dealing with— you know, not processing that emotion. And in the military, especially in the Marines, emotion is not allowed. I mean, I didn't dare show emotion. You know, they would've jumped on me like a bunch of hyenas on a wounded animal…like I said, I was raised by a single mother…so I never had that male role model. I was raised to freely show emotion. I was raised…with just some more feminine traits. I was very sweet. (Laughs)…you know, and those aren't traits that translate well to the Marines.

Officer Twelve recalled that, readying to depart for his second deployment, he knew something was amiss and he spoke to his first sergeant, admitting he needed to speak with a counselor or get help. He told the sergeant, "I'm not tryin' to get out of the deployment. I wanna go on the deployment. 'Cause these are my soldiers" since he was now in command of troops under his authority; "I now have soldiers. And I wasn't gonna let 'em go to battle without me." His first sergeant replied, "No, there's nothing wrong with you. You're fine. Don't do that; if you do that, it's gonna ruin your career." Later upon separating from the military following completion of his service, this veteran concealed what he knew was a mental effect from his combat, "Because I'm an alpha

male. I'm a strong door-kicker and I go out and I fight. And you know, no one wants to be thought of as lesser than. Especially when it comes from…from our realm."

This thinking prevailed for both physical and mental injuries of those deployed, as recounted by Officer Twelve: "We sprain our ankle or hurt our knee, we're not gonna go to the sick call. We're not gonna go talk to the medic. We're just gonna self-medicate with pain killers and whatever and continue mission." A current SWAT team member, Officer Three, surmised, speaking of trauma and PTS: "We all bring a little back with us when we are exposed to that environment and are returned to a normalized environment."

Sub-theme: Post-Traumatic Stress in Law enforcement

Officers noticed PTS affecting them in a variety of ways on the job. Officer Two described a numbing, a fearlessness that could have cost him his life when pursuing a burglar in a foot chase who later was shown to have had a loaded gun. When asked if it bothered him that this fear was missing, he responded, "Oh yeah. Yes, yes, it bothered me a lot. Because there were definitely some situations where they could've gone South so easily, and they didn't." He told about this chase: "He had reached in his—in his jacket, and I didn't think so much about it" but rather he wondered why they were running so slowly. After the officer ran down the suspect, "He kept his hand tucked in…as I'm puttin' the…handcuffs on him, taking him back to the car; putting him in the car…guys says he's missing some other things out of his…he probably dropped it out of the jacket." This concealed item could have cost the officer his life. He related: "And so I'm walking over there with the investigator, there's a gun, right there." That investigator present told

the officer that the gun had been loaded and he realized, "it was just…that nonchalant attitude towards danger. Most of the time it just…should have a, a good sense of what you're walking into…But…when I got back (from deployment)…stuff didn't matter."

Officers entering law enforcement careers following exposure to traumas in military combat service cope with not only their symptoms but the police culture's response to Post-Traumatic Stress resulting from those traumas. Nearly every officer expressed having felt nervous about getting hired by the police due to a diagnosis of Post-Traumatic Stress. Officer One remembered, "I was very nervous about it" and that during the hiring interview, "I didn't mention my PTSD or anything like that." Officer Two told about why he delayed getting a diagnosis: "The reason I didn't go and get diagnosed…I was scared of that. And I know there's other officers that are the same way. They're afraid of that stigma…even though they continue to say there's no stigma." Officer Four related:

> at first I was like, Oh my God, tellin' 'em…kinda like a stigma to it…I would
> never tell anybody; didn't talk about…deployin' a lot…you kinda get
> the same questions about, Aw, man, how many people did ya kill? And, even as a
> police officer I see, that's one of the first things people ask—Hey have ya shot
> somebody?

The same officer said that he wondered if he were being watched; if people thought he was going to snap and he would therefore be sent for additional psychological assessment based on people's suspicions: "And then, you know, You're outta here….give us your

gun." Another echoed: "A lot of guys I know that are…veterans…former warfighters. They…they don't tell the department about PTSD." He further observed:

> …there is a preconceived notion that if an officer has PTSD, he's just gonna go
> out there and start shootin' people. Start killin' people for no reason. He's gonna
> have a flashback. He's gonna… act on those thoughts. Or he's dangerous, or he's
> just a wild officer. Rogue cop…so a lot of guys don't talk about it. They don't
> talk about it at all. Because they're afraid it could affect promotion. They could
> lose their jobs. That's exactly why.

In addition to concerns about hiring, officers also expressed this cognizance that a PTS diagnosis may prevent promotion. Officer Two admitted that he would not necessarily lose his position, but "…opportunities within the job. They're only required to give you a paycheck; they're not required to give you this assignment—not required to put you on a specialized team. They're required to make sure that you have a job."

Besides hiring and job promotion, officers shied away from disclosing a PTS diagnosis at work due to how they felt the police culture would react; Officer Five admitted: "It's not something I really like to put out there. I don't know if it's just the…A-Type personality where you don't wanna show signs of weakness or what not." Officer Ten, a PhD candidate, confessed, "For many years, I saw it as a sign of weakness." He also related that in a nearby metropolitan jurisdiction there was an "officer a few years ago that…called (names local mental health organization) and asked for suicide help. And he was fired." Officer Ten's conclusion from this event: "So basically if you seek help, you lose your job." Unfortunately, surrounding police departments

changed their policy after tragedies; this officer continued, naming his own city, "and then we had a couple of suicides…and their outlook started kind of changing here."

Officers spoke of experiences talking to counselors about Post-Traumatic Stress; some had visited Veterans' Administration (VA) psychologists and psychiatrists, with mixed results. Men reported that the VA doctors often gave them medications that made them feel foggy and they valued the clarity of mind that police officers rely on more than they wanted the medications. Further, a couple respondents said the VA counselors did not seem personally interested in helping them but were just checking off the boxes. Other officers did, however, relate good experiences in counseling sessions with VA professionals.

Those working for police jurisdictions that had psychology departments or at least dedicated psychologists available to counsel officers reported that they did indeed have positive encounters with those police counselors; when required to speak with them, sessions were helpful and the officers were later glad for the psychological help. The officers related, though, that they and their co-workers were unwilling to take advantage of in-house psychologists even though they trusted them. This is because the counselors were housed within the police offices themselves and privacy was not guaranteed due to the atmosphere being like "a big high school" according to Officer Two, and because "they don't keep their mouths shut" referring not to the psychologists but to fellow officers, supervisors, and staff.

This "fishbowl" image is pervasive and Officer Two stated, "even if everybody that's in the pipeline of mental health has that clear understanding of what to do…to

make sure that the officers are taken care of—somebody still has to bring that person into that pipeline." This officer, who is a police academy instructor, goes on to admit, "There is nothing; doesn't matter how perfect of a system we have. Or any unit has. There will always be that seepage." He continues to explain that he tells his academy cadets to get help through the peer network they have implemented. This officer tells them, "Go through each other. Go through you peers. Figure out how to solve things that way." Officer Eleven disclosed that he'd found a way to conceal his need for counseling so his co-workers and supervisors would not find out: "So my main thing that I do, as a matter of fact, I went to counseling through marriage counseling to get PTSD counseling."

Sub-theme: Post-Traumatic Stress in the Home

Several officers related interactions with their spouses that pointed up symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress, and in many cases it was their wives who spurred them to get help. Officer One, who currently experiences strongest PTS symptoms in the anniversary month of an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) blast that left him with severe burns and PTS said, referring to his wife, "She knows. She knows. She sees it when my PTSD's kickin' in. She knows there's a couple of times a year. She knows that in September, don't fuck with me in September. I will lose my shit. Very easily." He elaborates: "I can show up half drunk and naked in the middle of September. She's not gonna say anything back to me in September. She knows not to say anything to me in September." Officer Two also recalled of his pre-diagnosis days:

> My wife was really—I think she was really more nervous about me than I was
> really concerned with, because I—I love joking around. Anybody who knows me

knows I'm a huge prankster and I love doin' that stuff, but I just, I just stopped

bein' that way. I was more, um, just standoffish. I didn't really wanna deal with a

whole lot of people.

His wife actually told him at one point, "if you don't go see somebody, you know. I don't

think this [marriage] is gonna work out…And I had not seen that side of me, like, ever."

Officer Four had a similar experience: "So, she [wife] had told me, Hey, you need to go

see somebody, and so I went out to the VA thing here and just sat down with the docs,

you know?"

Telling about finally being willing to get diagnosed after putting it off, Officer

Eight admitted,

My wife actually made me go to the doctor and for every appointment nowadays

they make you fill forms out. And it said, Do you have nightmares? Do you—do

you suffer with this or have that? I was always, No, no, I don't have anything.

And my wife told me, You need to start tellin' 'em…I mean, after fallin' out of

bed a couple times. Even simply 'cause like, our neighbor would slam his truck

bed early in the morning 'cause he's a truck driver and I'd freak out. My wife

says, she wakes me up and I startle really easily. I—I—I just already knew it was

comin'.

Perhaps one of the most startling incidents at home was when Officer Nine "woke up, or

my wife woke me up with…I had a gun to her head. And I didn't know about it. I

was…dead out of it. And started realizing that my dreams were because of" his PTS. This

same man credits his family for encouraging him to take prescribed medications for PTS:

I'm not happy with meds, period. Um, they help I guess. My wife and kids won't

let me miss 'em so, um, I guess they do help…I just, I don't like takin' meds.

There's a lot of side effects to 'em. But I do because I seem to be a better person

when I take 'em.

Officer Nine told of noticing PTS symptoms but not acknowledging that they were

unusual: "I just assimilated it into my life. You know? I just—and—and some of the

symptoms are so consistent with what you just see in normal military personnel, and

police officers." It was when his wife pressed him that he sought help: "I wasn't too

concerned about those. Uh, my wife was but…um…but like I said, once I found out that

like the (names city) vet center was up there, I went and got counseling and felt a lot

better."

Officer Twelve, who serves as an investigator of narcotics and other vice

activities credited his wife with his getting diagnosed. "She could see it. And she finally

told me…you need to seek help. You need to find help. And it got so bad to where she

was like, 'you go find help, or I'm leaving you.' " His wife quickly took action: "She

called the VA that night. And the next morning, the Veterans Affairs had me an

appointment. And I went that next day." This officer called in sick to go to the VA and

related, "it just immediately started doing…like a 180. Everything started getting better. I

started getting treatment. Talking to people about what was going on in my life. And

immediately started doing a 180."

Officer Four, whose wife is also a Marine veteran, told of how hypervigilance

plays a part in his family outings:

when we go somewhere to eat, we have to sit—we have 4 kids, so there's 6 of us—and there's almost like a seating chart. And then me bein' a cop doesn't help. Gotta face the door. So there's certain places we have to eat. My wife and my kids know, when they go in, they're like, Okay, we gotta look here. Like, they'll look at people and they'll watch people. And my 4-year-old, she'll point out stuff like, "look at that guy"…So it's almost, it's kinda…part of my lifestyle. The whole dynamics of my family are set by this. And it's kinda crazy. Yeah.

The same officer also noted this watchfulness in some interactions with his wife: "I'm just not paying any attention. And I tell her, I'm hearing what you're saying. I'm hearing things—but I'm also payin' attention to what's goin' on, you know, like, Hey, who's comin', who's goin'?"

Numbing was described by one officer in relation to his family life, as demonstrated in this exchange:

Officer Eleven:…the only thing that's kept my marriage alive and everything, is I realize I don't feel. So I realize that—Hey, you're supposed to love your children. And do these things with them. Because I WANT to be the best dad that I can. It's not a drive internally to have that father instinct. It's something that I know should be there and I force myself to do.

Investigator: So even as of right now.

Officer Eleven: Yeah, I still struggle. That would've been around 2012 I was diagnosed.

Investigator: Okay, so half a decade; and you've had some counseling in there, and you're aware that you should be feeling more…do remember another time in your life

when you did feel more, so you have something in you to compare it to?

Officer Eleven: Yeah, I remember feelin' happy. I remember things makin' me happy. I do. I remember…I started losin' it in 2003. And then by 2008, they (feelings of happiness) were gone.

Investigator: So, your first deployment time, you're saying, you started numbing a little bit…

Officer Eleven: I did. Things we saw…then. It was the invasion of Iraq. Things I saw in 2007. I mean, things that, even in law enforcement; law enforcement officers will never see. Body parts. Pieces of people and…maybe you do get to see it in law enforcement. Children, you know? The enemy puttin' children in front of you. In 2003, it was a big thing. Enemy puttin' families in front of you while they're shooting. Hiding behind a crowd of people and shooting. What do you do? Seriously; what do you do? They are going to kill you by firing Rocket-Propelled Grenades (RPG's) and rifles and they're doing it in a crowd or behind a crowd. What do you do? Know what we did, but what would YOU do? Eliminate the threat, is what you do. I came home from 2007 deployment. I can remember, um, in our outbriefings and everything you have to go through a counselor and see 'em and let 'em clear you. And I laugh about it to this day, because I'm a Pink Floyd fan. My favorite song in the world is Comfortably Numb. (Laughs) And she (counselor) put me in for further review. But that—that sums it up. I'm comfortable. I'm comfortable in my life where I am. 'Cause I don't know how you obtain that stuff back. I know how I obtain it. Through drinking.

This officer does not drink very often, and then only a beer or two when at the lake with his family. "Matter of fact, my wife, used to say: only way I would show my

children emotion is when I would drink. Because then I would just be the most loveable guy." He spoke with sadness: "And it's not that I'm—my kids love me now. I'm—they'll say they're Daddy's girl. But a lot of it is…what I force to come out. 'Cause I'm gonna be that dad."

Sub-theme: Post-Traumatic Stress Support

The law enforcement officers in this study referred to those who had helped them during their experiences with PTS, from feeling symptoms to realizing and convincing them they may need help, and even throughout counseling for those who took advantage of this treatment and afterwards into their present life. The most frequently-named directions of support came from spouses, work buddies, and mental health professionals.

Every interviewee was married at the time of the interviews; this was not a criterion to be chosen for interviews and this was not discovered until the interviews themselves. Officer One said of his wife, "And I can say—whatever I want to say in front of the guys; and that's the other key, is the support. Um, and I don't tell everybody." Whereas for some veterans interviewed there were many in their lives that knew of their PTS diagnosis, Officer Five shared: "Really the only one is my wife. It's not something I really like to put out there." Not only does this man share his PTS symptoms with his wife; he also credited her with helping to educate him:

> if there's anything that gets brought up, she's the first one to get on the Internet, research things, try and figure out other things that are going on. Um, so she's been a great resource for me to have you know? She doesn't brush things off that

I talk about. She's always there to listen to what I have to say. Um, I really just rely on my wife.

Officer Ten divulged that he had hidden his PTS, adding: "Yeah, I would imagine the only person that ever knew I struggled was my wife. Including extended family members like my mom, you know? It was just something I didn't share." He felt that such symptoms were a weakness, "And the only person I let see me in that time of weakness was my wife. You know, she's helped me through many critical incidents and…um…she's the only person that gets to see me in that state." Officer Eight still likes to "talk to my wife about it a lot. 'Cause she's been through everything."

Most of the interviewees in this research spoke often about how many fellow officers were combat veteran themselves, and even those who were not often made understanding work partners and shift colleagues. Officer One's police office handles his PTS in this way: "Everybody jokes about my PTSD at work…something will happen and I'll get pissed off; they'll make a bad decision at work or they'll come up with some crazy ass rule at work and I'll start going off." Rather than show fear of or criticism for the officer, "they'll be like, (names officer) is havin' a PTSD day. And I'll be like, You're damn right! You know?"

Several of the officers mentioned positive experiences with mental health professionals such as Veterans Affairs counselors and police department psychologists. They often credited talks with these psychologists as being turning points for dealing with their symptoms and making an about-face to begin healthier lives.

Theme: Competence

A theme that emerged in interviews and during analysis of data was the officers' belief that veterans who had become police officers brought a decided competence to the work that was not present in those who had attended college and graduated from police academies without prior combat experience. Interviewees related that their military experience had contributed positive skills, good judgment, and expertise to their patrol careers. The officers described widely varied strengths carried over to police work that they directly attributed to the rigors of not just military experience but combat reality.

Sub-theme: Competence: understanding Muslim culture

The operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, plotted in Muslim-populated locales, naturally exposed the United States' combatants to citizens who practiced Islam; officers who now serve on the streets of America and who encounter Muslim Americans and visitors draw on these intercultural experiences. Recall that our troops reported strong bonds with the civilians, local police, and military armies of the Islam faith. Not only that, but being at enmity with the radical factions—that is, exposed to various mindsets within that Middle Eastern religious milieu—seasoned these veterans in interactions with Muslims. Many other American police officers may not have had such exposure to this culture; here in the United States there are many Muslim citizens and visitors so interactions with these men and women happen frequently. Officer One simply stated, "I understand the Muslim culture."

Sub-theme: Competence: police calls involving other veterans

Several interviewees related police calls for incidents involving veterans. As
the responding officers, they had encountered veterans of the Korean, Viet Nam, Desert
Storm, or OEF/OIF wars upon arriving on scenes. These calls often involved mental
health issues such as PTS, as well as substance abuse, domestic violence, or fighting.

Officer One, a combat veteran who wears a prosthetic leg due to a tragic
incident on police duty, considers himself especially suited to deal with calls involving
veterans—perhaps even more so because he understands PTS. He related an incident that
occurred on Veteran's Day when a Viet Nam veteran had begun "flipping out" while
watching John Wayne war movies. The man's Vietnamese wife had called for police
help; both the responding officer and his partner were Army veterans. After inquiring of
the wife what the elder veteran's final rank was, the officer used this and commanded the
man: "Motherfuckin' Specialist, this is Staff Sergeant (says his own name). Better get
your ass the fuck out here right now and your ass out of that fuckin bed, soldier." The
older man responded to this by jumping up to follow orders and, following a physical
scuffle, the officer safely subdued the man and told his officers to take him to the VA for
mental health help rather than to jail. This same officer explained:

> I mean, we arrest soldiers constantly down here. Oh, we're dealin' with soldiers
> with PTSD and all sorts of stuff. I mean, I arrested 3 last month alone. And so I'm
> able to talk to those guys at a level. Like, people will call me: "I got a 'Joe' down
> here and he's acting the fool." I'm on the way. I can go down there and talk to
> that guy. #1, I can determine whether or not he's bullshittin' pretty quickly. And

#2, I tell 'em my story. I tell 'em who I am and what I've done…now…we're on

a respect level. Ya know what I mean? So…It, it evens us out. So I'm able to help

those guys a lot more…

Officer Four shared: "We get calls here all the time, guys that'll call, you know, 911, 'Aw

man, I'm gonna kill myself.' They're a veteran, whatever…a lot of us try to go to those

calls so we can talk to them." He tells about a specific man "that came to the VFW. And

he was sittin' at the bar drinkin'. Some guys that knew him" said "he showed up with a

gun, in his pocket, and sayin' some things…" and by the time the interviewee "got there,

they managed to get the gun away from him. But…it wasn't even my call…so I showed

up there just 'cause I saw the call on the screen, and it was an Army guy and all that." He

continued, "So I showed up and I was like…you're our brother, basically, and you're

talkin' about doin' somethin' crazy. You know, and this is happenin' way too often, and

you know, it's definitely not worth it." This officer explained: "And I see it as kind of a, a

kick in the face to the guys that died overseas and weren't able. 'Cause they didn't have

that chance to come home, you know?"

Finally, Officer Six told why he loved being an officer despite the fact that,

following his military separation, he had made enough money in the stock market to

ensure he never had to work another day in his life: "we deal with disturbances, people

that are mentally 'instable'…suicidal people. And nine out of ten times those are

veterans. And those are calls I enjoy going to the most. Because you can have instant

rapport." He told of a Viet Nam veteran, paralyzed from the waist down and in a

wheelchair, at a rehabilitation center. With no family left, the despondent man had caused

a disturbance. This officer responded to the call and his recollection of it was "there's

nothing more they love, when someone thanks 'em for their service. And shakes their hand…I told him I was a vet and how much I respected him" and credits a successful de-escalation of the situation to the point when "he opened up and started talking, you know." The officer asserted, "They need to realize there's people that care about them still. I enjoy this job more because I get to do that." Finally, "You could pay me a billion dollars a month. I wouldn't trade it…those guys need help. Army don't help them. Military don't help 'em. In general. It's up to me to help those guys. I love it! Every time."

Sub-theme: Competence: Calmness under fire

Some interviewees expressed having a natural confidence in fellow veterans-turned-police in street situations; Officer Four explained: "I guess I can validate in my head that I know what this guy's done. I know his or her training." Referring back to the police academy drill scenario where a female Navy veteran cadet was paired with a non-veteran male cadet, the same officer explained his attribution for the outcome:

> So having trained herself, or been trained to a level or stress, she was able to operate, you know? …her mind was like, Ah, I've been here before. I've been stressed out. Block all this out, and I just do what I gotta do. And she came through, and she carried this dude through…

Officer Six asserted: You can't train for a gunfight; yeah you can shoot at a paper target all day long but when bullets are flying this way too." This experienced combat engineer added, "Things change and you can't determine everyone's abilities until that

happens. Some people react differently. Some people are like, Oh shit, flight or fight. At least you know the veterans that have been in combat, they fight."

Extensive experience interacting with fellow combatants, enemies, authorities, and civilians including indigenous peoples overseas as well as the American public produces well-honed expertise dealing with diverse populations and various human interaction scenarios. These skills are desirable traits in law officers. Officer Eight attributes strong communication skills to his military experience: "I got really good at talking to people…in Iraq; with an interpreter…definitely tests your patience in dealing with actual people themselves so...I speak really well and interact really well with anybody that we came into contact with." He explained that he saw the military as "a big melting pot of just really good people with dirt bags from all over the country" and that one must learn to work with all kinds of people and adapt. This officer, currently pursuing his Master's degree, credits the requirement of interacting with diverse groups with adding a valuable tool for his current profession: "I think that definitely came from the military…that's worked out pretty well in my favor."

This tolerance in potentially frustrating circumstances lends itself to keeping calm in even dangerous settings, thus ensuring the safest outcome for all involved. A former Army Staff Sergeant, Officer Eleven, asserted that it is an "absolute pro to have somebody with combat experience…they're gonna be more highly trained than…law enforcement…when you're goin' in and clearing a house…their blood pressure's not gonna shoot up through the roof where they're actually gonna shoot…the wrong person."

He went on: "We're a lot more laid back," speaking of going on calls with a threat present and "people are losing their mind and you're just like, Calm down. Chill out." He explained his mindset even after altercations: "Or you just get in a fight with a guy. A knock-down, drag-out with a guy. You put him in the police car. It's done." This officer offered his advice: "Don't stay in that hypervigilance…let's put that behind us" and even explained why combat veterans may bring this approach to policing: "We've seen enough crap. I think we're a lot more likely to talk someone down. Instead of getting in that violence." He also credited his maturing as an officer with this calmer stance. "When I was a rookie, it was new. But the longer I was in it, with the military experience, it was like, Why? Why not just talk 'em down?" Applied to protecting America's streets and effectively responding to perpetrators while not harming innocents, this officer explained that they are "so used to bein' in a hypervigilant state where, if you know that it's a convicted felon who's been—slingin' dope or somethin'…you walk up to the car, you're not like, Oh my gosh, oh my gosh."

Sub-theme: Competence: knowledge base

Officer Eleven advocated for using combat-experienced veterans in more than just the obvious tactical teams, such as SWAT teams, which utilize shooting skills for example. He delineated particular areas of tactical experience combat veterans can bring to various police actions such as expert tracking abilities, and bemoaned the practice of keeping patrolmen on the perimeter of, say, an active shooter situation while waiting for the SWAT team to arrive. The officer explained that combat veterans, trained and practiced in eliminating the threat, could save precious time and perhaps lives by entering the center of the situation rather than being relegated to perimeter duties. He wondered,

"Why are we not using military guys in more of a role? I think I would—I've thought about it several times: be an advocate for that." Officer Four asserted:

> they were gettin' away from hirin' veterans…that's a horrible mistake. You're really missing the mark because you have men and women that have an awesome training already. You don't have to instill that—the military already instilled that in them. You just basically have to add to it; add tools to their toolbox as we say, and send 'em on the street and they'll be able to handle a call because they've already been trained to that stress level. So they've been there; their psyche says, Oh, I've been here before. I can deal with it, you know?

Officer Eleven disclosed that his police chief recognizes the great number of hours of both training and experience that combat-seasoned veterans have compared to even the most practiced special-teams police officer; he related that the chief plans to apply this officer's skills to adding training for non-veteran police officers. A full-time SWAT officer, Officer Three, named specific skills where combat veterans have been shown to be especially practiced: "warrant service, raids…reconnaissance and surveillance of a target—watching people—tactical interrogation or tactical questioning…it flows pretty well hand-in-hand."

Officer Six weighed in on a contrast between former military and non-military police:

> And the civilian counterparts—all they know is what they were taught in the academy. They were taught six months' academy…And I live and breathe combat for five years in active duty. That's what we did. All day. My job was

close in on the enemy and destroy him. That's what I did. So when it comes to tactical proficiency, I'm a lot better than them. And of course, practice makes perfect. But tactical considerations…I'm a natural leader. Because of the military. And when we get to a scene, I naturally take over and they understand. They know that, okay well, (names himself) knows his shit. If I didn't know my shit…

Officer Twelve clearly stated why veterans' becoming police officers is good for the American public: "We understand the difference between a target and a civilian." He makes this claim due to the sheer volume of experience and seasoning in this practice of target identification: "Years and years of practice. Even before I became a cop." Officer Eleven echoed this view of expertise in target recognition: "Targeted identification…They (combat veterans) are a LOT more highly trained." Officer Eleven summarized:

combat veterans have a knowledge base to pass on. Just because they don't have an instructor role; just because they don't have that firearms role, they have the experience and they have been highly trained in there. They have the knowledge to pass on. Use them in training. Use them to pass on their information. Use them to help other officers. And the thing is, don't discriminate.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Methodology and Reflexivity

Building on a conceptual framework stemming from the Constructionist

epistemology, which informs the theoretical perspective of Interpretivism, the qualitative

research methodology of phenomenology utilized interview methods to collect data

followed by interpretive methods to analyze the data. Data was categorized under themes

and sub-themes that emerged during analysis; further synthesizing of sub-themes and

concepts into complex relationships produced a unique composite portrait of the

individual in this study.

Because this research delved into a mental health issue, great care was applied in

planning and conducting interactions with the men who volunteered to participate and

share their stories, both in assuring confidentiality and choosing wording to use. Yardley

(2000) advocated awareness of the balance of power in interview settings. Since the

interviewees were males and the investigator was female, some of the gendered power

concerns often acknowledged to exist did not come into play. One forethought towards

sensitivity was the fact that the researcher was a PhD student and it was likely that the

men being interviewed would not all have had higher education experience and

achievements; to offset this potential awareness in the men, the second recruitment

method inserted particular verbiage into the video deferring to the officers' experience and expertise.

The investigator related in the video, addressed to viewers in the second person, that she would "value your contribution" to this study. She also disclosed that she desired to spend her "career serving veterans as well as police officers and other first responders, particularly those who may have experienced trauma." To enlist their help, she explained: "that's your world, so I need you to help educate me about that reality." Finally, the video message concluded, "You are the expert of your own story, and that is the heart of my research."

The interviews in this study, while designed to extract stories from the men who had lived the phenomenon of transitioning from military to police work with Post-Traumatic Stress (PTS), were also opportunities for them to share their experiences. Remaining faithful to research goals and attempting to answer research questions was the procedural and scholarly priority but the ethical responsibility to allow the men to talk in what may have been, for some, the only such session where they would ever formally do so was crucial. Biddle had advised that such interviews might be a person's "first or only opportunity to tell" their story (2013, p. 357). This meant that if they departed from the line of questioning or spoke at length even after an interview question was answered, sensitivity and patience were applied in an effort to "make skillful judgments about when to terminate interviews and when to continue" (p. 361). These conversations, while key in this research, had the potential to be "cathartic" for the men, and it is possible that following these sessions they too, just as the people in Biddle's mental health interview study, might have described the interviews as "both uncomfortable and therapeutic" (p.

357). This was evident in the way the men laughed with the interviewer, disclosed tragic stories that they may never have shared before ("I don't know if my wife knows this story"—Officer Eleven), and numerous times cried during interviews, right along with the researcher. Officer Eleven was just one of the men who apologized for crying, saying, "Sorry…I don't mean to get emotional."

Discussion of Results

Analysis of themes and subthemes that emerged from interviewing the twelve veterans yielded not just clearer pictures of the individual components of the contexts, conditions, and transitions being studied but striking revelations about the complex interactions of these items, thus conjoining thematic entities; below are the three prominent compounded products. The first demonstrates the relationships among PTS symptoms, triggers and stigma; the second synthesizes relationships with indigenous peoples, competence (cultural), and police culture; finally, the third reveals relationships among masculinity in military and police culture, PTS symptoms, stigma, and trauma.

Post-Traumatic Stress: Symptoms, Triggers, Stereotypes, and Stigma

The officers being interviewed appeared to be aware of particular expected symptoms and public perception of Post-Traumatic Stress and triggers. This could be attributed to many causes including depictions of PTS in entertainment and other popular culture outlets; ongoing research and published reports in numerous realms including domestic violence; mindful efforts on behalf of mental health practitioners and their clients who desire to remove stigmatic misperceptions and labeling; and military studies and screening procedures that highlight the prevalence of PTS in current troops and

veterans. One possible reason for some of their wording in certain responses was that, in anticipation of these interviews, the officers may have tried to predict what they would be asked about or what they would be asked to describe; it seemed that they were referring to common perceptions of what "standard" symptoms are, before going on to name their own. Some began descriptions with disclaimers about symptoms they did not have.

Officer Three, responding briefly to questions, stated, "Sorry if these answers are short" and Officer Five reflected, "I don't feel like it's gotten as bad" referring to other cases about which he had heard. A stereotypical picture of the person with Post-Traumatic Stress often includes drastic emotions that can lead to violence. Officer Six said bluntly, "I don't become violent." He went on to explain: "I think guys with PTSD...are non-violent, non-aggressive. They don't have volatile behaviors; they don't go out and destroy stuff." This officer put emotions and responses in perspective: "Everyone's scared, or happy, or excited at some point. Many times in the day. As long as that does not interfere with the way you perform your duties to your brothers and sisters and citizens, you know?"

Officer Ten located his symptoms: "I never exhibited violent or suicidal tendencies with my PTSD you know?" He critiqued, "The only time you ever see PTSD in the media is whenever somebody does something really bad; either commits suicide or becomes violent." Officer Seven called current public perception "This whole bigger Hollywood idea of PTSD."

Whereas the interviewees spoke overtly about stigmas present in the military or law enforcement, their more subtle disclaiming of symptoms they did not have and their

comparing of themselves to others who "had it worse" plotted their cognizance of their own PTS diagnosis in a bigger picture than even the military or police worlds. This may demonstrate that although efforts in recent years have brought about awareness of Post-Traumatic Stress, this does not necessarily yield productive application of information that could lead to removing stigma, for example. Awareness without understanding, such as the understanding produced by this study, may be merely lip-service and can be not only empty but actually contribute to stereotypes and stigmas.

Competence: Protecting Civilians of All Cultural Backgrounds

Three of the themes or subthemes generated from interviews were: relationships with indigenous peoples, police culture, and a cultural competence in understanding and working with the Muslim culture as an example of Americans' regarding others' humanity even in the midst of war. While initiation of these interactions was utilitarian such as our deployed troops' training local police forces, working with national armies, or patrolling villages of civilians, friendships and feelings of protectiveness nevertheless grew among our military forces and local men, women, and even children. This was an unexpected outcome of their deployment to Iraq and Afghanistan that would later be applied to their police work.

Working extensively with the indigenous in various tasks wrought patience and appreciation in American troops; they not only protected locals but actually had to depend on native Iraqis and Afghanis to help them complete their missions. Officer One recalled how, in Iraq, he had been in "charge of…some hundred different police stations and like ten different SWAT teams; training them and then working with the local police

departments" and he even "went out and did missions with those guys and, and trained them up; I actually got tons of pictures of me in there…one of our best SWAT teams." Officer Four shared: "we were training Iraqis and Afghanis on both deployments. Which was quite the feat" and Officer Eight highlighted the challenge and reward of these interactions: "having to talk to…people in Iraq with an interpreter definitely tests your patience in dealing with actual people themselves" which led to his feeling that "I speak really well and interact really well with anybody that we came into contact with."

Feelings of closeness to the locals were freely expressed and demonstrated compassion; Officer Eleven spoke with sorrow when he told of a local interpreter who had died along with American soldiers. Officer Twelve shared: "Yeah, I still have a deep, deep…care for 'em. And feel sorrow for 'em 'cause what they're goin' through."

Not only did US troops care for the native peoples of the countries in which they fought; the citizens returned that affection: "Northern Iraq? They loved us up there" recalled Officer One. Officer Four told of how the young Afghani men admired the American servicemen: "we had a good relationship with some of the Afghans…young Afghan military guys, and they kinda took to the Marines really well, and they wanted to be like us…they wanted haircuts like ours."

Following separation from the military these veterans brought home this competence of working with and protecting others with whom they shared very little background, ethnically, religiously, experientially, linguistically, or culturally. As reported by the men in this study, they had joined the military for varying reasons but most mentioned desiring to fight the enemy for their country. They did not anticipate

115

forming warm bonds with the innocents in the theatres in which they fought but these connections impacted them greatly.

Concern about police use of force, particularly among ethnically diverse communities such as African-Americans, has amassed much focus in the United States in recent years. Groups such as Black Lives Matter have responded to what appear to be alarming trends of racially biased treatment by using activism to keep the message in the forefront of media reporting and public interest. Hispanic Americans are another population that feel they are targeted by police.

A culturally aware and practiced police force is a desirable goal in light of these grave concerns. Veterans in this study shared how their close relationships with the indigenous civilians, police forces, and armies in Iraq and Afghanistan actually contributed to the trauma they later experienced when these ties were taken advantage of by extreme groups from the same religious and ethnic backgrounds as the innocents our forces were protecting; such were the bonds that betrayal compounded the traumas described by the men. This demonstrates the ability of these warriors to care for and become involved in the lives of Muslims, in this case.

The United States' troops' enmity was not with a people group or a religion but with those biased against Americans and Western ideas and who were taking action to attack such institutions as well as ravage their own people in so doing. These same veterans, when they returned to the United States, were perhaps especially practiced in caring for people of different ethnicities, religious beliefs, and practices; indeed, many serve in and protect communities with large populations of Americans of different ethnic

backgrounds than the officers themselves, which in this study included Caucasians, Hispanics, and Chinese. Their ability to differentiate extreme, threatening, or illegal behavior from that of innocent people from the same background as the suspects is an expertise refined in the crucible of the battlefield where not only were their own lives at stake but they actually lost fellow warriors to these extremists. Not one of the twelve interviewees spoke with anything less than neutrality when describing the innocent nationals they had protected and with whom they had worked.

Police officers have described themselves as reactive, and not proactive, in that they do not have time to dedicate to tracking down groups of people. Combat veterans who become police officers expressed that they are especially reasonable in judging how much force is necessary to subdue a suspect. Compared to some non-veteran police, Officer Eleven offered: "We're not as high-strung. We're a lot more laid-back. If there's a threat, we're likely to go up there and handle it…not a lot scares us…we're reasonable. There's no reason to go treat someone like crap." The police officers interviewed showed a strong sense of right and wrong; Officer Nine was so convinced that killing a suspect was different from warfare, even when warranted, that he resigned from law enforcement after he explained: "Well, yeah, because like me, I felt threatened, I shot a guy. That was not the right thing to do. In the law enforcement world." He further qualified his decision to resign: "Um, but in the law enforcement world you did everything you could do to keep FROM bein' violent."

Officers did comment on the changes in their procedures and morale following recent media attention to tragic shootings that have many Americans acutely concerned about use of force by police officers. Officer Six disclosed: "you know, LE (Law

Enforcement) is something that is ever-changing. Just three years ago, LE was very different." He continued, "Politically. Before the Michael Brown shooting. Very fundamentally different. I had a lot of fun when I first started." Officer One commented on this shift: "It's, you know, hearts and minds, well that's gonna start getting' a lot of policemen hurt." Officer Eleven hesitated but then shared: "I've pulled back from giving tickets. I've told my rookie not to fall into that trap. I don't want to be labeled racist when I'm not. I can't see you when you're driving seventy miles per hour past me."

In "An Empirical Analysis of Racial Differences in Police Use of Force," Fryer reported, "On non-lethal uses of force, blacks and Hispanics are more than fifty percent more likely to experience some form of force in interactions with police" and this is in line with public opinion and the concerns of policymakers. The finding on shootings, however, was stated as: "On the most extreme use of force--officer-involved shootings-- we find no racial differences in either the raw data or when contextual factors are taken into account" (Fryer, Abstract, 2016). Veterans with vast experience in protecting people from backgrounds different from their own and remaining calm in threatening situations could contribute knowledge and awareness that could help to unravel the poor practices behind disturbing statistics in some scenarios and incidents.

Officer Eleven's statement offered support for why combat veterans' seasoned experience and exposure to long-term battle could indeed inform study into some use of force and even shooting incidents: "I was used to people tryin' to kill me. I'm not worried about a guy with one pistol." Finally, Officer Ten, currently writing his dissertation on Public Administration, admitted of his years of interaction with indigenous Middle

Eastern citizens in combat and American citizens: "I've had to learn patience, probably more patience with the civilian world than most."

Masculine Culture, PTS Symptoms, Stigma, and Trauma

Themes of masculinity in military and law enforcement environments and symptoms of PTS in these settings suggest a complex interaction. The interviewees referred often to facets of military and law enforcement culture centered around masculinity and its negative effect on mental and emotional recognition and expression; these aspects as described by the men suggest dichotomies: toughness vs. weakness, processing vs. suppression of emotion, and disclosure vs. concealment of mental health symptoms and diagnoses.

Literature had predicted the description of these individual environments as masculine and stoic, and also pointed to the likelihood that suppression of emotion would result from that stance. Hoge (2004) asserted that military leaders may discourage disclosure of mental health concerns to prevent this from reflecting badly on those leaders themselves, and participants spoke about leaders' telling them directly not to talk about symptoms of PTS. Relating to law enforcement work, most police officers disclosed that they had been fearful of a diagnosis of PTS affecting their hiring, assignments, or promotion. Officer One referred to his concern about getting hired in LE with a diagnosis; he stated bluntly, "I was very worried about it. I was VERY worried about it." Officer Two told of sharing his diagnosis: "I was scared of that. And I know there's other officers that are the same way. They're afraid of that stigma that goes with it."

Also abundant in publications were PTS symptoms that both veterans and police officers experience. The men in this study listed varying symptoms, and none of these was unexpected: numbing, fear, anxiety, sleep problems, increased alcohol consumption, and hypervigilance; symptoms such as these had been described by, among many sources, Asmundson and Stapleton in "Between Dimensions of Anxiety Sensitivity and PTSD Symptom Clusters in Active-Duty Police Officers" (2008). Interviewees spoke of ongoing anxiety and alertness, termed hypervigilance by Tovar and others (2011). Stigma surrounding a mental health diagnosis, prominent in the literature, was named specifically by some interviewees and at least described by all.

Carlier et al. (1996) asserted that symptoms resulting from suppression of emotions following trauma could be predicted and Papazoglou suggested this might take the form of "introversion and their difficulty in expressing their emotion" (2012, p. 198); indeed Officer Two noticed his symptomatic standoffishness predating his successful counseling session and Officer Eleven admitted, "I kinda push people away" while Officer Eleven expressed sadness when telling of how he did not feel anything, even with his young daughters whom he loves very much.

What emerged in this study beyond discrete subjects published in the literature was the intricacy of the process of the officers' not only living in one of these environments and processing trauma with the sociocultural limitations of prescribed masculine behaviors but in the progression into yet a second such setting but with different rules of engagement, then being exposed to further traumas and continuing restrictions and expectations. Recall Papazoglou's Police Complex Spiral Trauma (PCST) model (2012) in which just the years of service for a law enforcement officer can

carry a mental health and trauma complexity of their own. When embedded in the trajectory of a veteran with predating PTS, this draws a convoluted pattern indeed.

Limitations

PTS diagnoses are not all equal; different instruments may have been used by various mental health professionals in the military or civilian arenas so these veterans diagnosed with PTS may have had widely varying symptoms and effects. PTS affects individuals in variable ways including onset time, symptoms, and response to treatment such as medication and counseling. Law enforcement jurisdictions may create cultures that are stigmatizing to PTS diagnoses and this could have caused reluctance on the part of interviewees to disclose information in interviews fully, even those who chose to participate. Finally, a PTS diagnosis was self-reported by respondents.

This study investigated only males so there may be gender-biased data. This study was conducted by a female, civilian investigator and that fact could have caused reticence on the part of the male, veteran, police officer interviewees to share all relevant aspects of their experiences. At present, few jurisdictions preclude PTS-diagnosed veterans from police force employment as a matter of policy; however, most jurisdictions approached were reluctant to take part in the study because they did not want to acknowledge that they employed individuals known to have PTS diagnoses.

Choosing only those who had served two or more years on patrol may have eliminated those who encountered problems earlier and quit and their potential input may have been lost. Data collected in this study therefore may be heavily weighted towards those who navigated this military-to-police transition successfully. Further, those who

self-volunteered for an interview may be by nature those who tend to willingly share their stories verbally. There may have been potential interviewees with equally informative experiences who were not comfortable either expressing such personal and sensitive experiences or who were not at a place in their progress where it was time to share yet.

Problems Arising During Research

A change in recruitment methods was necessitated by lack of response from administrators in fourteen of fifteen police jurisdictions approached under this process; all but one that had initially consented to take part eventually withdrew before emails could be sent to potential interviewees. The one police department that did not decline to follow through under this recruitment procedure, and which produced four interviewees, may have participated due to the contact person's understanding of how confidentially this research would be conducted because this person was a graduate of the same college and university as the investigator and was well-versed in the crucial nature of the protection of participants' privacy.

Further, the administrators' early agreement followed by their declining to participate could be ascribed to law enforcement's reticence to admit to the presence of Post-Traumatic Stress in its ranks, even if their stated stance is concern for their officers' mental health. Officers in interviews referred to such a hypocrisy in the law enforcement world, where hiring policies often state non-discrimination based on a PTS diagnosis but where promotion and other desirable assignments may be denied; this causes officers to conceal their PTS very often. This early interest followed by subsequent withdrawal from participation is in itself informative and confirmatory of police culture's stance towards mental health issues. It is understandable, in the current climate of angst towards police

officers that the jurisdictions' Public Information Officers (PIO) and others taxed with upholding the reputation and public image of the department may shy away from projects such as this even though confidentiality is assured. One such PIO in a substantial metropolitan area initially showed interest in allowing the investigator access to his police office but eventually refused participation.

This disconnect (stated attention given to officer mental health vs. admission of problems) therefore was not surprising, nor was change in recruitment of interviewees; a back-up method had been prepared in the event that it was needed. This is because when the investigator approached some police officials in the planning stages of this research, some did not want to admit that their officers might have PTS. The first approach had been chosen initially because it did not utilize social media and appeared to be the more scholarly of the two.

When the second method using a video posted on YouTube and announced on Facebook was approved by the Institutional Review Board and subsequently brought the remaining eight officers needed into the research, two inadvertent but helpful results emerged: 1. Since previously only officers whose administrators permitted the email to be sent would have been exposed to recruitment, this limited the number of potential police departments from which to draw. Later posting of the video to social media made possible the direct recruiting of officers from a wider variety of jurisdictions, and not only those whose administrators were amenable to the research. In fact, an interviewee no longer working in law enforcement was recruited at this point to "correct or expand aspects of" the evolving description or even, in this case, "challenge the initial description" being created (Polkinghorne, 2005, p. 140). This veteran, Officer Nine, was

the man who, after shooting and killing a suspect in a procedurally justified action, resigned from police work because his conscience was so impacted by this event. His strong feelings about veterans with PTS becoming law enforcement officers was, "I agree with guys not bein' on the force with PTS." Officer Nine, who had also served in the Army, spent much time as a Navy Medic, tasked with saving the lives of wounded men on the battlefield. While many other servicemen had served in the infantry and taking the lives of others was not uncommon for them, the medic, although trained on firearms and comfortable with them, had as his purpose saving lives. This could account for the difference in views, for other officers in this study have shot suspects in the line of duty and although they expressed regret, they did not resign.

2. The second result was that whereas earlier recruitment utilized the organizations' internal email system and officers may have felt that this prevented their communications such as responding to the investigator from being completely private, the social media method allowed communications to take place completely separated from a company email system, thus preventing jeopardizing feelings of privacy in the officers.

This protecting of the image of the police departments by administrators who declined in the case of responding to this mental health research could be considered an example of gatekeeping; this is unfortunate, for "excessive gate-keeping could prevent some individuals from gaining the beneficial effects of participation" where "some respondents will derive benefit from being able to express emotion and bring closure to their account" (Biddle, 2013, p.361). Expressed aptly by Officer One: "…you know

what? To me this is the best medicine. For me. Talking about it, reliving it." This was confirmed when officers freely showed a variety of emotions during interviews.

Implications for Practice

This study provides deeper insight into the intersection of combat-caused PTS and patrol officer work, acknowledging the masculine aspect of both the military and LE cultures and the impact of relationships on the men studied. Practitioners in the fields of psychology, workforce development, military, and law enforcement research, practice, and training could benefit from understanding the dynamics investigated in this research. Implications for practice fall into several areas that provide actionable recommendations. Below are three recommended applications of knowledge generated by this study.

1. Counselors who work with veterans or police officers could use these fresh insights from the officers themselves to underscore how PTS symptoms such as high alcohol consumption or numbing may be overlooked or mis-categorized as standard behavior among military and law enforcement members. Officer Nine articulated this reality: "the symptoms came on so gradually, I just assimilated it into my life…and some of the symptoms are so consistent with what you just see in normal military personnel, and police officers."

Recommended action: Materials to educate dedicated police psychologists could be developed using this and similar research; this knowledge could serve to construct guidelines for those perhaps accustomed to serving law enforcement officers but not thoroughly acquainted with the additional considerations of prior combat experience and preexisting Post-Traumatic Stress.

2. Awareness of suicide vulnerability among veterans and first responders is rising, spurred by frequent reports of completed suicides among veterans, police officers, fire fighters, paramedics, and others; those who interact with these workforce segments, whether in counseling, human resources, job recruitment, training, certifying, or other aspects, could educate themselves about perhaps a more complex picture of the background of PTS often leading to suicidal ideation. Multiple, successive careers with inherent trauma-intense stressors could pose greater potential for tragic outcomes, particularly if these careers perpetuate masculine postures towards help seeking in mental health areas, thus preventing timely intervention.

Police psychologists who work within a jurisdiction must be made aware that although officers who utilize in-house mental health services report positive interactions and helpful progress, there are many officers who will not approach these counselors in the first place. Confidentiality, shame, and concerns about threats to their job or promotions prevent such help-seeking. Officers often will talk to fellow officers in formal and informal peer networks; one jurisdiction in this study offers both formal psychology services with counselors and a peer network developed to encourage officers to confide in fellow police.

Recommended action: Psychologists and others who provide mental health services to police departments should identify and invite key people in these networks to share with counselors fears, concerns, and misperceptions among the officers that would prevent them from seeking formal help. Knowledge and insights gained from such interactions should be incorporated into future measures, policies, and influencing of police culture within those organizations.

126

3. Additionally, social scientists, politicians, minority advocates, and all those who have taken an interest in the conduct of officers on the streets would do well to equip themselves with facets of the interactions they may not have previously considered. For instance, veterans' ability to relate to people from backgrounds drastically different from that of most military personnel could be applied as an asset in the stateside workforce, particularly for those who patrol America's streets. Recommended action: Combat veterans with extensive exposure to native populations could address police academy classes to educate the men and women cadets about interacting with others of varying ethnicities, faiths, and cultures. Further, curricula could be developed by curriculum specialists in consultation with combat veterans and intercultural experts possessing extensive intercultural interactions; this could form a segment of mandatory instruction in police academies.

Recommendations for Further Research

Qualitative—Women

A similar qualitative study examining women veterans who have become police officers could further enlighten research into post-military law enforcement careers, particularly those officers with PTS. Johnson (2013) specifically examined women military-to-LE (law enforcement) officers stating, "Like their male counterparts, many women who elect to pursue post-military careers in law enforcement may have an undiagnosed condition" (p. 45). Post-military deployment PTS clearly affects both men and women who, after departure from the military, transition to law enforcement careers so continued research investigating other demographics would help to enrich the

understanding of this growing segment of the workforce. Especially interesting would be the impact of the masculine cultures on women and those with varying gender identifications serving in these arenas.

Quantitative

Due to statistically supported high numbers of military veterans serving as law enforcement officers, it would be practical to use the data from this study to create a quantitative research instrument to distribute to greater numbers of officers who fit this demographic. Findings from such an effort could be applied to constructing a model of the unique and complex dynamic investigated in this study. Examples of possible hypotheses are: 1. OEF/OIF combat veterans serving as patrol officers will have fewer unjustified use of force incidents than non-military-veteran police officers; 2. OEF/OIF combat veterans serving as patrol officers will be responsible for fewer fatal shootings than non-military-veteran police officers; and 3. OEF/OIF combat veterans serving as patrol officers will have fewer on-duty shooting incidents (that are declared unnecessary following investigation) than non-military-veteran police officers. Findings would be compared to existing statistics on use of force incidents including shooting and non-shooting categories.

Data from a quantitative study would be applied to building a model of the phenomenon investigated in this research. Incorporating existing theory and models into the dynamics depicted in an emerging model from this study could enlighten the trajectory of the increasing numbers of men and women who transition from military deployment to law enforcement work. Men and women who choose non-civilian, serial

service situations position themselves for repeated exposure to and involvement in traumatic events. The ethic of caring for and protecting civilians and others, solidified by battlefield seasoning that lends sharp judgment and calmness to those situations, also makes officers vulnerable to recurring stressors. Papazouglou's Police Complex Spiral Trauma model (2012) could perhaps be extended retroactively in a combatant's history to visualize preexisting trauma exposure that predates even the beginning of one's policing work. Such a clear visual model would be useful in educating counselors and others about the complexity of mental impacts in serial servers, particularly with the awareness of suicidal ideation potential. More complete histories of officers' trauma exposure, leading up to initiation of stateside law enforcement service, could serve to predict probability of those who may need intervention.

Qualitative and/or Quantitative—Outside of the United States

Several publications cited in this research pointed to the incidence of non-United States troops, such as those in Great Britain, who have also experienced the unique dynamics of the veterans described in this research including multiple deployments and insufficient recovery times between those deployments to the Middle East (Walker, 2010; Green et al., 2008). A parallel qualitative study or distribution of a later quantitative study instrument to populations outside of the United States who have also participated in the Wars on Terror could glean informative support for the Americans' experiences or contrasting insights into differences.

Further inquiry into the incidence of officers' reticence to consult available counselors for mental health issues could be crucial in continuing the conversation of

preventing suicide and personally destructive, mental-health caused behaviors in the LE profession; such inquiry should include concepts of privacy and confidentiality concerns in the police offices as well as possible gatekeeping practices by administrators and public information officers in the police culture.

Pursuing police conduct understanding such as use of force incidents currently causing concern in the United States would be a worthy direction of study. It might be revelatory to consider the added dynamic of cultural competence in the officers involved and the potential of enhancing this aptitude by drawing on the experience of those who have practiced it successfully in the harshest of conditions and threats with people from varying backgrounds.

Significance of the Study

Nearly a decade ago Green et al. noted that there were "very few studies" or even a "dearth" of the type of inquiry that approached OEF/OIF warriors directly to conduct in-depth qualitative research (2008, pp. 4-5). They were referring only to combat veterans. While more qualitative studies have been conducted in the intervening years among this population, there have nevertheless been no known phenomenological interview studies to investigate the intersection of this population (carrying a Post-Traumatic Stress diagnosis from combat), with those who have served as police patrol officers for at least two years following separation from full-time military service.

This investigation could enhance understanding of the challenges of working as a patrol officer with PTS that resulted from combat experiences. The awareness of PTS in veterans-turned-police may help to destigmatize the PTS known to exist in non-military

police officers who developed it as a result of trauma in their policing work. Combat-experienced police officers may recognize PTS symptoms in their non-military fellow police officers who have not yet sought counseling help and who may not even be aware that they have symptoms; they may be able to encourage their fellow officers to seek help. This may result in the stateside law-enforcement cohesion and dependence that warriors had on the battlefield, which many sought in becoming police officers, and that may be beneficial to all police officers.

This research treated this demographic and went beyond examining the individual components to following the qualitative aim as described by Carreiras and Alexandre's description of linking concepts in order to view the unfolding of "a system of relationships, looking at the way things hang together in a web of mutual interdependence" (1996, p. 98). This synthesizing of data in such a way as to record the emerging picture of the dynamic matrix of this phenomenon suggested that there is a direction of inquiry, representing a not insignificant segment of the population, that is worthy of attention.

There is ample evidence that professionals from the worlds of psychology, police research, politics, veteran advocacy, social justice, and workforce development are interested in these aspects. Witness the number of contemporary publications, reports, and legislation measures addressing veteran transition, use of force in police, suicide among veterans and police, and other issues that constitute current concerns for these practitioners and the public.

Conclusion

This study increased understanding of the growing phenomenon of military-to-police transition for individuals diagnosed with PTS prior to their law enforcement employment. This complex dynamic, played out over time, in varying culture settings, and with trauma introduced in one of those settings and transported to the second, represents an emerging model. This includes interacting components, worthy of further research, thoughtful discussion, and attention by professionals in the areas of psychology, police research, military studies, and social justice.

Application of analysis could highlight strengths that militarily-trained police officers bring to patrol work and contributions of the military mindset and procedures in general to the civilian peacekeeping aspect of police work. The United States Department of Defense, a government entity, has applied tax revenues collected from American citizens to fund thorough training of its troops. The veterans interviewed in this study related extensive experience applying that training during many months of deployment. They gained practice not only in discrete skills such as firearms use, strategic battle planning, and performing battlefield medical measures but also seasoned target recognition judgment, cultural flexibility and competence, and calmness in dangerous situations.

Policy concerning screening, hiring, supporting, or monitoring officers who fit this study's demographics may evolve to govern this sector of workforce development and to utilize the knowledge base combat veterans possess to educate, inform, and help to train police recruits in areas of tactical and cultural expertise.

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Appendix A

Tally of selected officer demographics

Military Branch	Number of Combat Deployments	Where Deployed in OEF/OIF	Current Law Enforcement Capacity	Currently in National Guard Reserves
-Army—7 -Marines—4 -Army and Navy—1	-1 deployment—3 officers -2 deployments—5 officers -3 deployments—3 officers -5+deployments—1 officer	-Iraq—4 officers -Afghanistan—4 officers -Iraq & Afghanistan—3 officers -Middle East & other locales—1 officer	-Patrol officer—6 officers -Patrol officer & academy instructor—1 officer -Full-time SWAT member—1 officer -Resigned from law enforcement—1 officer -Patrol officer & specialized task force—1 officer -Chief of Police—1 officer -Investigator with - Organized Crime Unit—1 officer	-4 officers

Appendix B

Key Quotes on Themes and Sub-Themes

Motivation for joining military	There was somethin' about the Marine Corps, you know?	My goal in life was to die for my country, really and truly. No one in my family had ever done it before.	I'm very grateful and I feel that I have to do something to serve. So that was my calling.	After September 11th I felt I needed to do more
Motivation for joining law enforcement	This is what I want to do. You know, a public servant. Be out there to help people.	serving the community and the greater good	You are kinda chasin' a couple things…Brotherhood and the camaraderie	I missed the camaraderie that we had when I was in Iraq.
Stigma	The reason I didn't go and get diagnosed…I was scared.	It's not something I really like to put out there. I don't know if it's just the…A-Type personality where you don't wanna show signs of weakness or what not.	For many years, I saw it as a sign of weakness.	So basically if you seek help, you lose your job.
Post-Traumatic Stress Triggers	Anything involving children, it really hits me. Especially since I am a father.	If people lit off a whole package of fire crackers that would do it. No, sky rockets don't bother me…but a whole bunch of fire crackers would.	It's still—like I don't even like to be around large crowds.	I felt threatened. It brings back things you don't wanna remember. And it brings back a state of mind…you're in a situation…where in the military it's an automatic firefight.
Post-Traumatic Stress Stereotypes	I don't become violent.	They don't have volatile behaviors, they don't go out and destroy stuff.	I never exhibited violent or suicidal tendencies with my PTSD you know.	This whole bigger Hollywood idea of PTSD.
Law Enforcement Competence	You can't train for a gunfight; yeah you can shoot at a paper target all day long but when bullets are flying this way too. Things change and you can't determine everyone's abilities until that happens. At least you know the veterans that have been in combat, they fight.	We understand the difference between a target and a civilian. Years and years of practice. Even before I became a cop. Targeted identification…They (combat veterans) are a LOT more highly trained.	Why not just talk 'em down; so used to bein' in a hypervigilant state where, if you know that it's a convicted felon who's been—slingin' dope or somethin'…you walk up to the car, you're not like, Oh my gosh, oh my gosh.	You don't have to instill that—the military already instilled that in them. You just basically have to add to it; add tools to their toolbox as we say, and send 'em on the street and they'll be able to handle a call because they've already been trained to that stress level.

| Cultural Competence | I understand the Muslim culture. | I got really good at talking to people…in Iraq; with an interpreter…definitely tests your patience in dealing with actual people themselves so…I speak really well and interact really well with anybody that we came into contact with. | we were training Iraqis and Afghanis on both deployments. Which was quite the feat. | Yeah, I still have a deep, deep…care for 'em. And feel sorrow for 'em 'cause what they're goin' through. |

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- Carry the Load 2.2 Walk; suicide awareness veteran event photographer