Militarized Masculinity and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
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The prevalence of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) amongst soldiers deployed in combat and peacekeeping missions has attracted increased attention in recent years. In Canada, retired Major-General Romeo Dallaire drew public attention to the condition after his service to the UN as Commander of the failed peacekeeping mission to Rwanda during the 1994 genocide (Dallaire, 2003). In the United Kingdom, an estimated ten percent of troops airlifted out of Iraq between January and October 2003 primarily suffered from psychological trauma (Turner et al, 2005). In the United States, disability claims due to PTSD have skyrocketed, with some 34,000 veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan treated at Veteran’s Affairs facilities diagnosed with PTSD (Corbett, 2007; 46). This has prompted some discussion in the Department of Veteran Affairs to revisit the diagnostic criteria for assessing PTSD, with critics claiming the government is trying to find ways to limit the benefits that go to US veterans who have suffered emotional trauma (Vedantam, 2005). One psychiatrist has recently claimed, by contrast, that the US Department of Veteran Affairs has allowed a “culture of trauma” to blossom within its bureaucracy (Satel, 2006).

These debates signal some of the questions that have been raised since psychiatric distress in combat was first haltingly recognized in World War I: is it real and should soldiers who suffer from it be compensated, as they would be for physical injuries sustained during training or combat (Lerner, 2003)? Many militaries have resisted, and
continue to resist, claims of PTSD amongst soldiers; and many soldiers insist that acknowledging they are suffering from PTSD can result in shame, ostracization, and demotion (Greene, 2005). The argument of this chapter is that militaries resist PTSD for reasons more complex than simply avoiding compensation claims. PTSD tells us a series of stories about militarized masculinity; stories that those who support militaries and militarism would prefer we not think about too deeply.

Importantly, the stories that PTSD tells us about militarized masculinity are themselves complex. Feminist analyses of PTSD have already pointed to the way in which some of the first medical accounts of PTSD - reports of “shell shock” in British soldiers after World War I - treated it as a male form of female “hysteria.” Both the condition itself, as well as male soldiers who became victim of it, were dismissed and denigrated through being feminized. As Sandra Gilbert (1983: 447) writes, ‘paradoxically ... the war to which so many men had gone in hope of becoming heroes, ended up emasculating them’ (see also Showalter, 1985; Whitworth, 2004). Part of the argument of this chapter is that PTSD in men lays bare the fragile ground on which militarized masculinity is built; it provides a stark illustration of the illusion of stable gender identities and confirms the malleability of gender. Consequently, it is a story that most militaries are not keen to acknowledge.

But, PTSD also signals another set of stories militaries are equally concerned to keep quiet. These stories emerge when we examine the incidence of PTSD amongst both female soldiers and soldiers of colour. Like their white male counterparts, female soldiers and marginalized men are sometimes reluctant to report PTSD; and all experience the same kinds of symptoms. However, this is where the similarity seems to end. Research
indicates the majority of cases of PTSD in female soldiers results not from witnessing or participating in horrific events in a combat setting and the fear, pain, and anxiety that results but from sexual harassment and abuse experienced within a military setting (Fontana and Rosencheck, 1998). Similarly, soldiers of colour report that their emotional pain is often directly related to their discovery that, once deployed on missions, they were tasked with the most dangerous duties and more often put at risk more than their white comrades.

Thus, differential rates of PTSD tell us a related set of stories about militarized masculinity. One concerns the sense of entitlement inculcated through military indoctrination, and the other points to some of the effects associated with entitlement for specific groups.¹ These are the stories that usually remain invisible within official accounts of soldiering. Male soldiers who experience pain, fear, or anxiety in the face of combat learn they have failed to live up to the military ethos of appropriate masculinity; soldiers of colour and female soldiers learn that their presence within the military has violated an unstated military ethos, one that does not fully recognize their presence in the first place. Whereas white soldiers discover through their emotions that they have not lived up to the norms of the warrior brotherhood, women and marginalized men discover they were never equal partners in the ‘brotherhood’ in the first place.

Making Soldiers²

While some essentialist accounts of masculinity, violence, and warfare suggest young men have a natural affinity for the violence required in armed conflict, critics of essentialism point out that whatever natural instinct some men may have for violence is not nearly as widespread. It is not the trustworthy instinct that most military decision-
makers have felt they could count on to produce the type and quantity of warriors they require. The qualities demanded by militaries, such as the requisite lust for violence when needed and a corresponding willingness to subordinate oneself to hierarchy and authority when needed, must be self-consciously cultivated. Few new male recruits arrive as ready-made soldiers; and as Ehrenreich (1997: 10) notes, ‘The difference between an ordinary man or boy and a reliable killer, as any drill sergeant could attest, is profound. A transformation is required.’

Historically, this transformation has been accomplished in different ways, sometimes through drinking wine or liquor or taking drugs, and in other instances through social pressure or ceremonies designed to urge young men to fight. By the seventeenth-century in Europe, as Ehrenreich (1997: 11-12) describes it, the process had become more organized:

New recruits and even seasoned veterans were endlessly drilled, hour after hour, until each man began to feel himself part of a single, giant fighting machine. The drill was only partially inspired by the technology of firearms. It’s easy enough to teach a man to shoot a gun: the problem is to make him willing to get into situations where guns are being shot and to remain there long enough to do some shooting of his own. ... In the fanatical routines of boot camp, a man leaves behind his former identity and is reborn as a creature of the military - an automaton and also, ideally, a willing killer of other men.
The contemporary practices of boot camp are remarkably similar across most modern state militaries, and they involve the same sets of practices whether focused on male or female recruits. It is a tightly choreographed process aimed at breaking down the individuality of the recruits, and replacing it with a commitment to and dependence upon the total institution of which they are now a part.³

As Christian Appy (1993: 88) describes 1970s-era US basic training: ‘Every detail of life was prescribed, regulated, and enforced. Every moment was accounted for. There was a method and time for every action. Even using the bathroom was limited to short, specified times or required special permission ... Some men went for a full week before they were able to defecate in the time allotted.’ By its end, recruits should conform to the official attitudes of military conduct, be able to follow orders instantly and without question, and commit themselves to the larger group (whether that is co-recruits, barrack, regiment, battalion, military, or state) over any personal or individual commitments they previously held (Arkin and Dobrofsky, 1978: 158).

New recruits are separated from families; undergo tests of physical endurance and sleep deprivation; and are forced to participate in numerous arbitrary, often mundane, and apparently irrelevant tasks. All have similar shaved heads, wear identical uniforms, eat the same food, sleep in the same uncomfortable beds, must conform to the same expectations, and follow the same rules (Gill, 1995: 15). They learn how to march in unison with one another, a task aimed entirely at teaching them that they are no longer individuals but members of a group.⁴ As one male U.S. Marine described it, ‘They tore you down. They tore everything civilian out of your entire existence - your speech, your thoughts, your sights, your memory - anything that was civilian they tore out and then
they re-built you and made you over’ (Appy, 1983: 86). The new soldier also faces the humiliation strategies common to most national militaries. Upon arrival, the new recruit might face a drill instructor who screams in his/her ear, ‘You no good civilian maggot ... You’re worthless, do you understand? And I’m gonna kill you’ (Ibid.).

The tactics used to humiliate and degrade the recruit will vary depending on the military. In some, physically brutalizing new recruits remains an acceptable strategy, whether by officers or more senior recruits. In other militaries where physical punishment in principle is prohibited, drill sergeants often have at their official disposal only the threat of violence and verbal assaults. Here, the new recruit is not only constantly reminded of his or her incompetence but faces a variety of gendered and raced insults crafted to play upon her or his specific feminine or masculine anxieties, including labels such as whore, faggot, sissy, cunt, ladies, abortion, pussy, nigger, Indian, and sometimes simply you woman (Gill, 1997: 15; Davis, 1997: 14; Appy, 1983: 101). Linda Bird Francke (1997: 155-156) notes that the same techniques are also often used to train women. At Fort Jackson in the United States, a 1991 strategy was to shout at female recruits: ‘You wuss, you baby, you goddamn female.’ Reverse psychology, Francke notes, does not seem to work as a female instructor who yelled ‘You boy!’ at a straggler discovered, in the context of basic training, that it sounded more like a compliment than an insult.

It is not by coincidence that the insults most new recruits face are gendered, raced, and homophobic; young soldiers are learning to deny, indeed to obliterate, the ‘other’ within the psyche. Difference can include race or ethnic differences. While it can include being a woman, it can also include simply having attended university or college (Appy,
1993: 100). Soldiers must, in particular, deny all that is deemed to be feminine; and this is accomplished throughout the training process. The practice of shaving heads, for example, not only exposes the new recruit to the discipline and uniformity of military life but is aimed at ‘removing the extra frills of longer hair often associated with individual vanity (vanity believed to be the prerogative of women)’ (Arkin and Dobrofsky, 1978: 159). The chants to which soldiers march, either denigrating women or linking their militarized masculinity to an aggressive and violent heterosexuality, are widely documented, including the call while holding one hand to rifle and the other to crotch: “This is my rifle. This is my gun. This is for pleasure. This is for fun” (Ibid.: 160).

The militaries’ organization in highly explicit and aggressively gendered terms should come as no surprise. Militaries are involved, after all, in the making of a solidaristic group of soldiers; militaries have also long promised to ‘make a man out of you’ (Arkin and Dobrofsky, 1978: 154). Theorists of both militarism and of masculinity have pointed to the intimate connection between military organizations and hegemonic representations of masculinity. As David Morgan (1994: 165) writes:

Of all the sites where masculinities are constructed, reproduced, and deployed, those associated with war and the military are some of the most direct. Despite far-reaching political, social, and technological changes, the warrior still seems to be a key symbol of masculinity. In statues, heroic paintings, comic books, and popular films the gendered connotations are inescapable. The stance, the facial expressions, and the weapons clearly connote
aggression, courage, a capacity for violence, and, sometimes, a willingness for sacrifice. The uniform absorbs individualities into a generalized and timeless masculinity while also connoting a control of emotion and a subordination to a larger rationality.

Thus, the myths of manhood into which the new soldier is inculcated throughout basic training are highly specific and privilege courage and endurance; physical and psychological strength; rationality; toughness; obedience; discipline; patriotism; lack of squeamishness; avoidance of certain emotions such as fear, sadness, uncertainty, guilt, remorse and grief; and, heterosexual competency (Masters, 2005: 115; Arkin and Dobrofsky, 1978: 156). The information conveyed through the rituals of military initiation encode a fundamental connection between masculinity, physical strength, and violence, captured well by a 1990s US military recruiting poster which declared, “Pain is Weakness Leaving the Body.” The hardened body of the soldier warrior is now a real or potential weapon (Hatry, 2000: chapter 4). The new soldier is both physically and emotionally tough, portraying little emotion, with the possible exceptions of anger and aggression (Karner 1998: 215). The soldier learns to ‘deny all that is feminine and soft in himself’ (Goldstein, 2001: 266). As American conservative George Gilder writes: ‘When you want to create a solidaristic group of male killers, that is what you do: you kill the woman in them’ (cited from Francke, 1997: 155). Any who depart from the ideal is neither man nor soldier.

However, at the same time, Charlotte Hooper (2001: 47-48) notes the way in which soldiering also involves many traditional feminine traits such as ‘total obedience
and submission to authority, the attention to dress detail, and the endless repetition of mundane tasks that enlisted men as opposed to officers are expected to perform’. But, these activities are not emphasized in representations of soldiering, illustrating the way in which, for Hooper, ‘it is not the actions themselves but the gendered interpretations placed on them that are crucial in determining which activities count as masculine and valued and which count as feminine and devalued.’

After working to break down new recruits, basic training continues and aims to slowly rebuild. While new recruits have been repeatedly told they are worthless alone, they soon learn that through the military, in concert with drill instructors and fellow soldiers, they can achieve almost any goal. The early litany of insults and complaints from superior officers is gradually replaced with occasional words of praise or encouragement for tasks well done, especially if done in concert with others. As Donna Winslow (1998: 353) writes of the Canadian military’s current strategies, ‘The military does things quite deliberately to intensify the power of group pressure within its ranks as recruits are taught the need for teamwork.’ Individuals who fail will bring down their entire squad, platoon, company, or regiment; but those who succeed do it together as a team (Arkin and Dobrofsky, 1978: 163).

Sanctioned and non-sanctioned initiation rituals break the new recruits’ sense of individuality and accomplish the broader goals of militarized transformation: to enforce obedience, underline the importance of the chain of command, and to promote an intense bonding amongst soldiers who may need to depend upon one another in battle (Harrison and Laliberté, 1994: 22-34). Many recruits report that the emotional bond with fellow soldiers and the military itself is stronger than any relationship they had previously
experienced (Harrison and Laliberté, 1994: 27-28), including familial and intimate relations. Most have come to see themselves as members of a new common family, a warrior brotherhood, which is very distinct from the larger world around them. That new family has its own set of values, prizes stoicism and solidarity, and engages in force when necessary; and it usually supports its members with medical and dental care, housing, and educational services as well as a complex social network. As Harrison and Laliberté (1994: 29-33) note, the ‘caring military community [is] often cherished by members and their families.’

Through these various means, military indoctrination promotes loyalty and conformity to a set of militarized and highly masculinized set of values and behavioural expectations. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder reveals what happens when soldiers depart in any way from these expectations; or when they, in turn, learn how truly empty the promises into which they have been inculcated are.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

Until recently, militaries have largely ignored the psychological impact of combat and combat-like situations on soldiers. Yet, what is now known as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is something that has long affected soldiers. One recent study discovered that almost half the Canadian soldiers who survived the battle of Dieppe during World War II still suffer post-traumatic stress (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation). In the United States, some 30 per cent of male Vietnam war veterans experienced PTSD, while 26 per cent of female Vietnam veterans did so at some point during their lives (Price, 2007). As one soldier recalls: ‘Bodies without heads; bodies without arms and the smell, the horrible, horrible smell of death ... That’s the kind of thing that stays with you.’
A related form of psychiatric distress in battle, Combat Stress Reaction (CSR), constituted 23 per cent of all Israeli casualties in the 1982 Lebanon War (Solomon et al, 1996: 104).

The manifestation of a soldier’s breakdown usually involves a wide variety of symptoms, including acute anxiety, fear of death, anger, depression, nightmares, vivid intrusive reliving of their most horrible experiences, intense distress, hyper-vigilance, exaggerated startle responses, and crying. It is described as a debilitating condition, often leading to breakdowns in personal relationships, unemployment, alcoholism, and even suicide (Novaco and Chemtob, 2002: 123; Calhoun et al, 2002: 133; Solomon et al, 1996: 105; Gibson, 1991: 84; Kulka et al, 1990: 33).

Militaries can accommodate physical injuries, most especially those sustained in battle; but the traumatic reactions resulting from battle or the risks associated with participating in militaries are injuries most militaries find difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile. During World War I, for example, the response was relatively straightforward: ‘A man was shot for cowardice’ and any officers who failed to carry out such executions were themselves arrested (Solomon et al, 1996: 111). When soldiers were not executed for having human emotions, for betraying, and acting upon their fear and dread, they were usually simply ignored.

Most male soldiers, having been trained into the ideals of hyper-masculinity, learn there is little place in the military family for them to raise emotions or reactions that do not accord with those ideals. Even soldiers who suffer PTSD have claimed ‘sometimes I wish I had lost a leg instead of having all those brain cells screwed up’ (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation). Many male soldiers report that although they share closeness
with fellow soldiers that is unmatched the closeness does not extend to discussions of emotional topics, such as relationship difficulties with wives or girlfriends (see Parpart, this volume). It certainly does not extend to discussions of fear and emotional pain. As one US Vietnam veteran commented:

> When you was over there you was a macho figure, that was all you was taught to be, a macho figure, you know, nothing can hurt you, you’re scared of nothing, no feelings, no pain, you know, just kill, okay? And everybody has got that feeling so you don’t relate to the next guy, “Hey man, you know I’m really scared that this is happening,” ... You don’t say that to the next guy because in return he would probably laugh at you, you know, or call you a wimp or puss or whatever and then it gets around and everybody points a finger at this guy, you know, well he’s a wimp or he’s a puss or queer or whatever (cited from Karner, 1998: 217-218).

Soldiers who do experience debilitating fear or anguish during battle or as witness to situations of armed conflict risk ostracization from their brotherhood for betraying the ideals of manhood and allowing ‘the feminine’ within to be expressed. Emotional pain and fear fundamentally contradict the ideals of hypermasculinity so carefully inculcated into the soldier recruit.

A recent Canadian study into PTSD confirms that members of the Canadian Forces with PTSD find little support within their units, and they often face widespread
resentment from colleagues. Soldiers who experienced PTSD said they long resisted coming forward to avoid the humiliation and stigma associated with mental illness. Many will not admit to post traumatic stress out of fear of their brethren’s reaction. As one soldier described it: ‘To be quite honest, I would rather tell my peer group that I got the dose at a whore house than PTSD’ (Marin, 2002: 60). Getting ‘the dose at a whore house’ would not contradict the norms of militarized masculinity; whereas, acknowledging feelings of fear, pain, and trauma would.

Many in the military also refuse to acknowledge they might be ill because, as one psychologist reported, to do so would be to admit you are weak. One soldier commented: ‘Nobody fucked with me, and here I was having a mental health problem. Soldiers aren’t supposed to have that’ (Ibid.: 62 and 91). So concerned about the possibility of PTSD, many soldiers treated colleagues who had come forward and acknowledged their illness as though they might be contagious; in the Canadian military, it is ‘a latter-day leprosy’ (Ibid.: 71). Another said it was as though ‘I was the person with the bubonic plague’ (Ibid.: 70). One senior non-commissioned member described his colleagues’ reactions:

I was completely ostracized by the battalion ... because most of them were afraid to have anything to do with us ... I remember a guy came up to me going, You know ... I don’t want to say this, but I can’t be caught talking to you ...[If I went into the Sergeants’ mess] I would probably be asked to leave ... When I was coming back [from treatment for PTSD], there was a Sergeant Major sitting right there, right
across from me. I looked at him. He looked away ... These were all people I used to work with (Ibid.: 71-72).

Indeed, by unsettling the norm that militarized masculinity is a fixed identity, the risks of PTSD, if not PTSD itself, might well be contagious; once hypermasculine men begin to experience and share feelings of fear and horror, the myth of the heroic soldier warrior is seen as groundless. This may be a more terrifying idea than PTSD.

PTSD is such a profound betrayal of the norms of hypermasculinity that militarized men have been indoctrinated; the stigma associated with it extends to family members. Several spouses of Canadian soldiers told investigators they too were ostracized once their spouse’s condition became known. As one military wife described it: ‘It’s just ugly ... We’re not treated as human beings. We lost all our friends, military and civilian’ (Ibid.: 62). What many members of the military and their families discovered was that the idea of a military family ‘that would look after its own through thick and thin’ did not exist for members with PTSD (Ibid.: 92).

Male soldiers who experience PTSD discover they have not successfully obliterated the feminine other and indeed risk becoming ‘women’. As Lisa Vetten (2002page number?) writes, the masculinity affirmed by the process of most contemporary military training ‘is a fragile one, entirely unable to tolerate traces of femininity.’ When the stoic, tough, emotionless soldier begins to feel and react, when he feels pain, fear, anxiety, guilt, shame, and despair as a result of the activities in which he participated as a soldier, he violates the precepts of his military identity and can no longer fulfill the myths of militarized manhood that have shaped him.
Importantly, studies in the United States of soldiers with PTSD also signal important differences in rates of PTSD between women and men and between white male soldiers and soldiers of colour. Studies of Vietnam era veterans showed a higher incidence of PTSD amongst Hispanic, African American, and Native American veterans (Loo, n.d.). While in the current Iraq War, PTSD rates seem to be markedly higher in female soldiers than in male soldiers (Goldzweig et al, 2005: S85; Scharnberg, 2005; Brant, 2005). What would account for this difference? Are women and marginalized men even more invested than white soldiers in the norms of militarized masculinity that have been privileged through indoctrination techniques and basic training? Or, are they ill-suited to the rigours of military life? Certainly this latter explanation is circulated widely in the United States today by conservative thinkers who see female rates of PTSD as confirmation of the claims that women simply do not belong in militaries.

However, research on female soldiers and soldiers of colour who report PTSD signal another story; and this story is that women and marginalized men discover very quickly that the myth of the warrior brotherhood is not one in which they were ever intended to be included. If the racialized and gendered taunts of basic training aimed at exorcizing ‘the other’ did not already convey this message, female soldiers and soldiers of colour learn the lesson very quickly in combat settings, where women are subject to high rates of sexual assaults and marginalized men are often invited to take on the most dangerous of duties, disrupting forever the idea of a caring military family.

In studies of Vietnam-era veterans, soldiers reported that their ethnicity and race directly increased their exposure to combat, with Native Americans, African Americans, or Latinos often chosen over white soldiers for the most difficult, dangerous, and life-
threatening tasks (Beals et al, 2002). Racialized soldiers were sometimes shot at because they were mistaken as ‘the enemy’ or were harassed and assaulted because they were thought to resemble or symbolize ‘the enemy’ (Loo, n.d.) As a Canadian soldier comments, ‘The best is having the same colour, the same haircut, the same religion, the same colour of eyes, the same height, the same weight. Because everybody outside of that - we don’t like difference’ (Harrison and Laliberté, 1994: 36-37). When it came to actual combat, in other words, the tight-knit military family broke down along racialized lines; and those faced with the contradiction and betrayal were less able to remain the tough heroic warrior they had been trained to be. Soldiers experienced greater emotional pain when the myths they had been trained to believe began to break down in the face of alternative experiences or readings of the war in which they were engaged.

Female soldiers also quickly discover that they are not part of the myths of the warrior ‘brotherhood’, and their presence in national militaries already disrupts at least one of the promises and military indoctrination: the myth of an exclusively male-dominated world (see also Kovitz, 2003: 9). Female soldiers pay a steep price for violating that promise. Current studies in the US indicate that between 43 to 60 per cent of female enlisted personnel experience some form of physical or sexual harassment or violence. Some 90 per cent of female patients at US Veteran’s Administration facilities after the first Gulf War reported experiencing frequent harassment during tours of duty and some 37 per cent reported being raped multiple times (David et al, 2006: 555-56; see also Goldzweig et al, 2006: S85 and Skinner et al, 2000; Corbett, 2007: 45). As one 21-year old female soldier in Iraq describes her reasons for carrying a knife: ‘The knife wasn’t for the Iraqis … It was for the guys on my own side’ (Benedict 2007: B3).
Complaints of rising cases of sexual harassment and assault in the current Iraq war prompted the US Secretary of Defense to create a task force to investigate these cases in 2004; and in 2005, the Department of Defense adopted a confidential reporting structure for victims of sexual assault. In its most recent report, the Department reported that it had received 2,374 reports of sexual assault cases involving its members in 2005 (US Department of Defense, 2006). These numbers are likely very conservative, at least one Department of Veterans Affairs study showed that 75 per cent of assaulted military women never report the crime to their commanding officer (Lyke, 2005). Many women will not report their assaults because to do so would mean ‘they won’t be “one of the guys”’ (Ibid. is there a page number?). Others will not report their assailants because those assailants are their superior officers. Indeed, the difficulty associated with reporting assaults, which can be daunting in any setting, is exacerbated in military environments, because of the strict hierarchy imposed in military settings, the cohesion and solidarity expected amongst military personnel, and because targets of assault and harassment usually must continue to ‘live and work with their perpetrators’ (Street and Stafford, 1; Benedict, 2007: B3).

Studies on female soldiers and PTSD indicate that male and female soldiers respond to both combat related stress and military sexual trauma in very similar ways. Military sexual harassment and assault are highly correlated with PTSD in both women and men. In fact, it seems to be a far stronger predictor of PTSD than the kinds of stresses otherwise associated with military duty, including risk of death (Kang et al, 2005: 193; see also Wolfe et al, 1998). The significant difference, of course, is that far more female soldiers report experiencing sexual harassment, assault, or violence than their male
soldier counterparts. With rising numbers of women participating in many western militaries and a corresponding rising rate of sexual assaults perpetrated against those women, ‘PTSD stemming from military sexual trauma,’ Wendy David et al (2006: 556) point out, is perhaps one of the most pressing mental health concerns facing female veterans today.’

In short, the most important story that PTSD tells is that the promises and myths associated with military training, the promise of turning boys into particular kinds of men, the myth of a male-dominated and exclusively heterosexual world, and the promise of a military family that stands in solidaristic support of its members through all hardship, are precisely that, myths. One way in which the power of militarism is made manifest has been through the effective circulation of these myths. Yet, the modern military is neither exclusively heterosexual nor male; its ranks are filled with the often contested presence of women, gay men, lesbians, and persons of colour. Finally, the solidaristic military family is shown to quickly collapse under the weight of the myths upon which it was built.

Conclusions

There is a basic resistance exhibited by most militaries to the inclusion of the ‘other’ within their ranks, whether they are members of ‘other’ ethnic or racial groups, gay men and lesbians, or women. And, all soldiers are expected to exorcize ‘the other’ from within, most particularly the feminine other. The presence of the ‘other’ makes the strategies of recruitment, basic training, and inculcation of an appropriate militarized masculinity all the more difficult to accomplish; and those involved in recruiting and training have long understood this. Militaries have long resisted racial heterogeneity; and
today, it is the prospect of including women or openly gay men and lesbians that provoke those same forms of resistance (Shilts 1994; D’Amico and Weinstein, 1999). For some observers, the presence of women within militaries is both a symptom and a cause of the decline of the advanced military. By this view, it will be difficult to attract young men to join militaries that include women, gay men, and lesbians and more difficult still to train them to bond with their fellow soldiers. One author notes that by including more women, the American military ‘is now paying a heavy penalty for the folly of the responsible politicians and voters as cohesion suffers, training becomes almost impossible, and some of its best personnel are forced out by sexual harassment claims which may or may not be well founded’ (van Creveld, 2000: 442).

By contrast, the focus of this chapter has been to examine men whose emotional reactions to war and combat lead them to revile who they are, female soldiers who are constantly harassed and subjected to sexual violence, and soldiers of colour who discover they are not comrades but targets. These are all elements of a complex and interrelated story about militarized masculinity. As Judith Stiehm (1989: 226) has written, ‘all militaries have ... regularly been rooted in the psychological coercion of young men through appeals to their (uncertain) manliness’. Militaries replace uncertainty with a hegemonic representation of idealized norms of masculinity which privilege the tough, stoic, warrior who is capable and willing to employ violence to achieve whatever ends into which he may be ordered. Militaries work hard to fix the identities of young men in these terms, and have worked equally hard to deny the fragility of this construction or critical analysis of the consequences. Some of the consequences of that construction are revealed through the sexual violence perpetrated by militarized men against fellow
soldiers and the targeting of racialized comrades, those who do not belong. Some of the consequences also erupt through the treatment of and reaction to soldiers who express feelings of fear, terror, and emotional pain in situations of armed conflict; who do not live up to the ideals of militarized masculinity; and who permit traces of the feminine to re-emerge. Caring, emotive feeling human beings who experience a connection with other human beings are not, it seems, what most militaries want. All of these consequences remind us of the complex ways in which militarism operates, and the myriad of reasons it must continue to be resisted.

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1 Equally important but not examined in this chapter are acts of violence committed outside of military communities, directed at the peoples of countries in which soldiers have been deployed (see Razack, 2004; Whitworth 2004).

2 Large portions of the following sections are drawn from Whitworth, 2004, chapter 6.

3 For an excellent summary of the goals and procedures of basic training, see Harrison and Laliberté, 1994, chapter 1; See also Davis, 1997, chapter 2; Goldstein, 2001, chapter 5; Arkin and Dobrofksy, 1978; Karner, 1998, pp. 214-216; Gibson, 1991, pp. 72-87; McCoy, 1995 and McCoy 1997; Gill, 1997; Enloe 1993, chapter 3.

4 As Gwynn Dyer (1983) notes, it has been over one hundred years since mass formations were any use on the battlefield, but all militaries still make soldiers march in unison, especially in basic training.

5 It is important to underscore the extent to which drawing attention to PTSD is not by itself a necessarily critical intervention. Indeed as Alison Howell has argued, many
current discussions of PTSD are aimed not at a critique of militarism but instead at its reassertion in more effective and apparently more benign form. As Howell notes, through PTSD, “trauma is medicalized, thus focusing attention on the psyches of soldiers rather than the sources of trauma … Ultimately, soldiers are supposed to reconcile their experiences through psychological help, instead of politicizing traumatic events.” (Howell, n.d. chapter 6, 51). See also Edkins, 2003.

6. See van Creveld, 2000 and responses to this article by Elshtain (2000) and Croker (2000).

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