

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**BAND OF BROTHERS- WARRIOR ETHOS,
UNIT EFFECTIVENESS AND THE ROLE OF
INITIAL ENTRY TRAINING**

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ABSTRACT

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Initial Entry Training in the U.S. Army provides volunteers with basic skills essential for success as soldiers on the battlefield. Integral to continued professionalism of the Army is developing cultural attitudes, beliefs and behaviors of a Warrior Ethos, the culture of disciplined initiative, teamwork, determination, sacrifice, and self-reliance that guides our soldiers. The environment of IET is most critical for establishing bonds and cohesion among new soldiers necessary for a strong Warrior Ethos and unit effectiveness. Horizontal bonding contributes to a soldier's commitment to his peers and his sacrificing self-interest for collective goals. Vertical bonding establishes faith in leadership, allowing new soldiers to become valued members of the team who demonstrate initiative. Organizational cohesion creates in new soldiers an intense determination to excel, confident in their ability, their equipment and their unit. Societal cohesion links soldiers to the values of the nation they serve. Emphasis on bonding and cohesion provides a strategy to more successfully imbue a Warrior Ethos in soldiers during IET and enable their contribution to unit effectiveness.

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BAND OF BROTHERS- WARRIOR ETHOS, UNIT EFFECTIVENESS AND THE ROLE OF INITIAL ENTRY TRAINING

We few, we happy few, we band of brothers; for he today that sheds his blood with me shall be my brother.

—William Shakespeare

Initial Entry Training (IET) in the U.S. Army is designed to provide volunteers with basic soldier skills essential for success as soldiers. IET is but the first step of an extensive individual and collective training program that contributes to the technical expertise and professionalism of the U.S. Army. Recent battlefield success in Afghanistan and Iraq demonstrates the effectiveness of this training.

A requirement for successful soldiers and effective units, and a perceived problem in the current force, is a strong Warrior Ethos. There is concern among leaders, soldiers, and outside observers that Warrior Ethos is lacking in today's Army, or is somehow in decline or insufficient. Analysis of the Warrior Ethos, future force requirements, behavioral and social theory suggests that IET is most critical for developing desired cultural attitudes, beliefs and behaviors.

This paper will show that the environment of IET is most critical for establishing bonds and cohesion among new soldiers necessary for a strong Warrior Ethos and unit effectiveness. Horizontal bonding contributes to a soldier's commitment to his peers and his sacrificing self-interest for collective goals. Vertical bonding establishes faith in leadership, allowing new soldiers to become valued members of the team who demonstrate initiative. Organizational cohesion creates in new soldiers an intense determination to excel, confident in their ability, their equipment and their unit. Societal cohesion links soldiers to the values of the nation they serve. Emphasis on bonding and cohesion provides a strategy to more successfully imbue a Warrior Ethos in soldiers during IET and enable their contribution to unit effectiveness.

THE PROBLEM- WARRIOR ETHOS IS LACKING

Warrior Ethos is lacking in today's Army, or is somehow in decline or insufficient. Major General (Retired) William Moore claims the very identity of warriors is under attack. "The American military culture, established through two centuries of tradition, is under attack like it has never been before. The warrior is being overtaken by the technologist, and in the pursuit of opportunity for all, the fighting elites are now being targeted as no longer relevant to accomplishing the objectives of war."¹ This perception that Warrior Ethos is either lacking or

insufficient has grown in recent years. The commanding general of the Army's Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), General Byrnes, believes soldiers today have a lack of common identity. "We've become too specialized. Ask a junior enlisted who they are, and they'll tell you, 'I'm a mechanic,' not a soldier. We need to change that culturally in the Army."²

General officers are not the only outspoken critics. A leadership survey of field grade officers conducted in 2000 at the direction of General Eric Shinseki, Army Chief of Staff (CSA), cited concerns among mid-career officers for a disappearing Warrior Ethos based on growing numbers on peace operations and an increasing focus on technology.³

David Hackworth, a syndicated columnist and self-avowed champion of junior officers and noncommissioned officers (NCOs) has written often in the last several years regarding the demise of our Warrior Ethos. Colonel (Retired) Hackworth cites numerous active duty soldiers providing examples of an ethos in decline. This decline is generally attributed to "technocrats, social engineers, do-gooders and incompetent or uncaring senior leaders" who emphasize bureaucratic administration over warrior attitudes, beliefs and behaviors.⁴ While his editorials are based more on passion and less on science he does have a large audience and is a recognized voice for at least a portion of soldiers who feel their senior leaders do not fully appreciate their concerns.

This concern regarding Warrior Ethos must be addressed if our Army is to continue to meet our nation's security requirements. However, a definition or description of Warrior Ethos is required before a solution can be approached.

WARRIOR ETHOS DEFINED

Warrior Ethos has many definitions, descriptions and interpretations. Webster's New World Dictionary defines a warrior as "a man taking part in or experienced in conflict, especially war."⁵ Ethos is defined as "the characteristic and distinguishing attitudes, habits, beliefs, etc. of an individual or group."⁶ Like many terms and concepts within the Army, dictionary definitions of Warrior Ethos fail to completely grasp meaning. Unfortunately, there is no single definition in Army doctrine or policy that defines Warrior Ethos, although one can be derived from multiple sources, including the Code of Conduct, the U.S. Army Soldier's Code, and the Seven Army Values.⁷

The distinction between a soldier and a warrior also provides fertile ground for debate. What, if any, are the differences between a soldier whose duty requires him to close with and engage the enemy in close, brutal combat as a matter of routine, and a soldier whose duty

requires the completion of difficult tasks under conditions of stress and fatigue, but not the routine engagement of close combat? Lieutenant General (Retired) Richard Trefry, for example, writes at length about the universal courage, sacrifice and dedication of American soldiers while observing that “the warrior represents only the small portion of the force that is called upon to do the actual fighting. That is why we cheapen both words when either one or the other or both are used out of context.”⁸

To narrow the range of definitions of Warrior Ethos from the possible to the practical we turn to TRADOC, which describes Warrior Ethos as “the foundation for the American Soldier’s spirit and total commitment to victory, in peace and war, always exemplifying ethical behavior and Army Values. Soldiers put the mission first, refuse to accept defeat, never quit and never leave behind a fellow American. Their absolute faith in themselves and their comrades makes the U.S. Army invariably persuasive in peace and invincible in war.”⁹ This description links an individual’s attitudes, beliefs and behavior with faith in his comrades (horizontal and vertical bonding), and commitment to victory and values (organizational and societal cohesion). General Byrnes further refines the description of Warrior Ethos as “the culture of disciplined initiative, teamwork, determination, sacrifice, and self-reliance that guides our soldiers today and tomorrow.”¹⁰ This description of the cultural attitudes, beliefs and behaviors of Warrior Ethos, applicable to all soldiers and affecting their unit’s effectiveness, serves as the basis for the remainder of this study. It provides context for both examining the importance of Warrior Ethos in the future force, and exploring the challenges of imbuing a Warrior Ethos in volunteer soldiers during their initial entry training.

IMPORTANCE OF WARRIOR ETHOS IN THE FUTURE FORCE

General Eric Shinseki, former CSA, emphasized the importance of a Warrior Ethos for a transformed Army. In a memorandum to the field dated 3 June 2003, just days before his retirement, he described his vision for a Warrior Ethos in the future force.

Every organization has an internal culture and ethos. A true Warrior Ethos must underpin the Army’s enduring traditions and values. It must drive a personal commitment to excellence and ethical mission accomplishment to make our Soldiers different from all others in the world. This ethos must be a fundamental characteristic of the U.S. Army as Soldiers imbued with an ethically grounded Warrior Ethos who clearly symbolize the Army’s unwavering commitment to the nation we serve. The Army has always embraced this ethos but the demands of Transformation will require a renewed effort to ensure all soldiers truly understand and embody this Warrior Ethos.¹¹

General Shinseki's vision echoed that of his predecessor a generation earlier, General John Wickham, who envisioned a "highly motivated, technically proficient, resourceful fighter" in his 1984 White Paper on Light Infantry Divisions.¹² The strength and capability of these new light units revolved around soldiers who "should know how to behave correctly in accordance with ethical and military standards, and would so behave in the absence of orders or supervision."¹³

The current CSA, General Schoomaker, also views Warrior Ethos as critical to the continued relevance and readiness of our Army. The Army recognizes the requirement to develop soldiers with Warrior Ethos as a focus area within the core competency of training and equipping soldiers and growing leaders.¹⁴ General Schoomaker approved a Soldier's Creed that contributes to his concept of Warrior Ethos, providing more detail to General Shinseki's vision. The creed defines a soldier, in part, as a Warrior and a member of a team who places mission first, never quits, never accepts defeat and never leaves a fallen comrade on the battlefield.¹⁵ This Soldier's Creed focuses in large part on the cultural attitudes, beliefs and behaviors expected of all soldiers.

TRADOC, as the agent of change for Army transformation, recognizes the continued importance of Warrior Ethos in the future force. "Decisive tactical combat, based on small unit excellence and well-trained soldiers, imbued with the warrior ethos, will always dominate action at the point of the spear...."¹⁶ This linkage of an individual's Warrior Ethos and a unit's effectiveness in combat is important. After all, why do soldiers fight?

WHY SOLDIERS FIGHT

Studies of combat motivation often identify the importance of primary group dynamics and group attitudes, beliefs and behaviors to explain in part why men fight when they might not otherwise. Most notably S.L.A. Marshall in World war II, Roger Little in the Korean War, and Charles Moskos during Vietnam War all observed the importance of strong group ties and interpersonal relationships within the primary group on behavior and attitude of soldiers in combat.¹⁷ Nora Kinzer Stewart's examination of both British and Argentine forces in the Falklands conflict reinforces the primacy of cohesion, morale and motivation in small unit performance in battle.¹⁸ More recently, a study of combat motivation among U.S. Infantrymen and Marines in Operation Iraqi Freedom concludes that "cohesion, or the strong emotional bonds between soldiers, continues to be a critical factor in combat motivation."¹⁹ Although these studies included exclusively male units, the role of primary group influence and horizontal bonding is assumed to have similar effects in female and mixed gender units.

A less immediate but no less important aspect of small unit cohesion and success in battle is a cultural trust of the army as an institution and commitment to the moral validity of the fight. This appears to be especially true of professional armies. The survey of soldiers in Iraq concludes that “because our soldiers trust the Army as an institution, they now look to the Army to provide the moral direction for war.”²⁰ Research of Israeli and American combat stress casualties suggests that soldiers “committed to a principle of patriotism, a just war, an ideology, or a belief in the nation’s principles” are more likely to withstand the stress of combat.²¹ Loyalty and patriotism to national objectives, or societal cohesion, were observed as contributing factors for both belligerents during the Falklands conflict.²²

Strong bonds among soldiers; faith in comrades and commitment to unit goals; and a culture of trust in institutional values are critical to success on the battlefield. The cultural attitudes, beliefs and behaviors of Warrior Ethos – disciplined initiative, teamwork, determination, sacrifice – enable unit effectiveness. A review of other armies and services informs our understanding of how cultural attitudes, beliefs and behaviors contribute to Warrior Ethos and unit effectiveness.

WARRIOR ETHOS EXEMPLIFIED

Several armies provide examples of a strong Warrior Ethos. Among the nations of antiquity Sparta is recognized for her fine warriors. While Spartan soldier skill, discipline and field craft were exemplary their superior force on the field of battle was based on loyalty and commitment to one another and to their cause- bonding and cohesion. The historic novel Gates of Fire eloquently describes how 300 Spartan warriors and their allies delayed an invading Persian army at the pass of Thermopylae in 400 B.C., though outnumbered greatly and facing certain death. Steven Pressfield describes how fear of dishonor was greater than fear of death among Spartan warriors, how at the time of battle they fought not for themselves but for the man at their shoulder, how this bond was developed over months and years of drill and discipline. He also describes how these warriors fought as free men to defend their nation’s way of life against those who would enslave them.²³ Bonding among warriors and societal cohesion with the nation they served marked Spartans as exceptional fighters.

Among modern armies the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) is noted for a strong sense of Warrior Ethos. IDF soldiers adhere to values and traditions that require them to “persevere in their missions resolutely and thoughtfully even to the point of endangering their lives” acting out of “fraternity and devotion to their comrades.”²⁴ This ethos supports basic Israeli societal values of defense of the homeland, love of country and protection of human dignity.

The United States Marine Corps also has a well-deserved reputation for developing a strong sense of Warrior Ethos among her Marines. New recruits are trained in six basic combat skills during a 12-week program where they are “forged in a furnace of shared hardship and tough training.”²⁵ Marines incorporate the core values of honor, courage and commitment in recruit training to create “not just a basically trained, morally conscious, Marine, but also a better American citizen who will return to society following his or her service to this country.”²⁶

Consistent among these examples of Warrior Ethos are the ideals of sacrifice and self-less service, the bond among soldiers, and cohesion with the unit and nation they serve. Horizontal bonding among soldiers, vertical bonding with leaders, organizational cohesion with the service institution, and societal cohesion with the nation produces Warrior Ethos and enables unit effectiveness. How effective is the U.S. Army today in facilitating cultural attitudes, beliefs and behaviors of a similar Warrior Ethos among soldiers in IET?

CURRENT APPROACH TO TRAINING WARRIOR ETHOS IN IET

TRADOC Regulation 350-6, Enlisted Initial Entry Training (IET) Policies and Administration, states that “the mission of enlisted IET is to transform volunteers into technically and tactically competent soldiers that live by the Army Values, understand the importance of teamwork, and are prepared to contribute on day one in their first unit of assignment.”²⁷ This mission statement does not address imbuing a Warrior Ethos in new soldiers, although the very nature of transforming volunteers into soldiers is the cornerstone of changing attitudes, beliefs and behaviors. The effects of horizontal and vertical bonding, and organizational and societal cohesion are not currently linked in IET.

Recent reviews of the current IET process provide insight to the challenges of changing social attitudes, beliefs and behaviors of new recruits for successful service in the Army. Tom Hayden’s review of organizational socialization in IET and Chris DeGraff’s examination of developing soldiers to be adaptive learners are most useful to understanding today’s IET environment. These studies highlight the importance of bonding and cohesion in IET while identifying shortfalls in the current system.

Tom Hayden examined IET from an organizational behavior perspective to determine possible reductions in attrition of first term soldiers, which had risen to unacceptably high rates (35% to 39%) in the late 1990s. Clearly, organizational cohesion to the Army as an institution was not strong if more than one third of new soldiers failed to complete their initial term of service. Hayden portrays the current IET soldierization program as a form of organizational socialization, described as the “process by which a new member learns the value system, the

norms, and the required behavior patterns of the new organization."²⁸ A detailed examination of the stages of socialization and various tactics for affecting social change supports the institutional intent to produce a custodial response in soldiers who "subsequently perform in ways that preserve and continue the prevailing culture."²⁹ Hayden saw the importance of developing organizational cohesion in new soldiers during IET as critical to successful service in units.

Hayden observes that the critical factor to successful socialization is the function of the role model, served in IET primarily by the Drill Sergeant. Drill Sergeants perform "three critical functions; they transmit the culture of the Army; they role model desired behaviors; they educate and train the newcomer in the required skills."³⁰ Anyone who has experienced or observed Army basic training understands the singular importance of Drill Sergeants to the lives of soldiers in training- as trainer, disciplinarian, coach, teacher and mentor. It is through the function of a role model that the Drill Sergeant most greatly affects changes in attitudes, beliefs and behaviors. The role model, the Drill Sergeant, is critical to imbuing Warrior Ethos through vertical bonding and organizational cohesion.

Chris DeGraff analyzed IET from the perspective of adult learning. Analysis of behaviorist, cognitivist, humanist, social and situational learning orientations shows that learning in IET is currently based primarily on behaviorist and cognitive approaches.³¹ DeGraff suggests that this approach is effective in producing desired behaviors in individuals, but does not support bonding or cohesion in groups. DeGraff recommends that IET be conducted in operational units, maximizing the benefits of training as a team that deploys to combat, and minimizing the need for a separate institutional training cadre.³² This notion of conducting IET in operational units supports development of horizontal and vertical bonding for new soldiers in new units, but may restrict organizational cohesion to the battalion, brigade or division and not to the larger Army, given the distinct character of the Army's various operational units.

The current soldierization program in IET provides a basis for transforming volunteers into soldiers. Analysis of small group dynamics and behavior theory provides insight on how IET can more effectively move toward developing a Warrior Ethos in soldiers and enabling their subsequent unit effectiveness through linking horizontal bonding, vertical bonding, organizational cohesion and societal cohesion.

TOWARD A WARRIOR ETHOS THROUGH BONDING AND COHESION

Primary group attitudes, beliefs and behaviors are the essence of Warrior Ethos and impact unit cohesion and effectiveness. The nature of military cohesion and effectiveness can

be described as a function of “horizontal (peer) bonding, vertical bonding (leadership), organizational cohesion (moral solidarity), and societal cohesion (civic consciousness).”³³ Analysis of these four areas suggests ways in which IET can better produce lasting, effective changes in soldiers to reflect the Army’s Warrior Ethos and enable unit effectiveness.

HORIZONTAL BONDING

The very nature of Army IET demands soldiers in training to work together to achieve a common goal: graduation. “Horizontal cohesion develops from shared experiences and interdependence in achieving commonly valued goals.”³⁴ Platoons of 50 to 60 soldiers, living in open bays and sharing limited latrine facilities, cannot maintain a clean and orderly barracks to expected standards without teamwork and cooperation. Additional duties such as fire guard and charge of quarters, range details in support of training, and sharing heavy loads on foot marches require each soldier to contribute to the group’s success. However, horizontal bonding required of units in combat is more than simply cooperate and graduate. “Disparate men from varied socioeconomic backgrounds, of different ethnic origins and levels of education are expected to become not just a collection of individuals but a unit in which an individual will sacrifice his life and die in order to preserve the group.”³⁵

Soldiers in IET, as a matter of routine, are not faced with life and death decisions as they may be faced with on the battlefield. Unfortunately, the horizontal bonds developed in Basic Combat Training (BCT) are often lost with graduation as soldiers depart for Advanced Individual Training (AIT). Soldiers in the Infantry, Engineers, Artillery and Armor have the advantage of One Station Unit Training (OSUT) that combines BCT and AIT, allowing soldiers to complete IET as one cohesive group. Again, their bond is lost with assignment to operational units. How can the Army leverage this bond developed in IET for application in the field Army, enabling unit effectiveness?

DeGraff recommends that if operational units conducted IET then forming-breaking-reforming of teams would be eliminated and learning would be enhanced. The Army tested a similar concept in the 1980s. COHORT (COHesion, Operational Readiness and Training) was “a system of recruiting, forming, stabilizing, training, and deploying cohesive units.”³⁶ This experiment showed initial success in developing high performance units, but eventually failed because of problems with “internally and externally generated pressures, and in basic cultural assumptions and leadership practices in the Army about how soldiers should behave toward one another.”³⁷ The Army is currently experimenting with a Unit Manning Initiative designed to stabilize soldiers and leaders for three years as it fields the next Stryker Brigade in Alaska. The

Infantry School has used Buddy Team assignments for about four years, designating two-man buddy teams who complete Infantry OSUT and are assigned to operational units together, preferably to the same squad or platoon. The strength of horizontal bonding developed in IET, and its contribution to our Warrior Ethos, could be exported by any of these concepts that assign small groups of new soldiers (buddy teams, sections, squads or platoons) to operational units.

Horizontal bonding in IET develops a sense of collective responsibility among peers. This strong peer bonding must be linked to the goals and values of the organization. The responsibility for establishing the connection between the individual and the small group to the larger organization falls on the IET cadre, the basic training soldier's link to vertical bonding.

VERTICAL BONDING

Individuals and groups within the Army are linked to the organization through a chain of command. "Vertical cohesion is a product of interactions between subordinates and their leaders."³⁸ During IET the soldier's immediate leader is the Drill Sergeant. However, the company and battalion commanders are critical to establishing an effective vertical bond. "The single most important element in developing bonds between and among the ranks is caring, nurturing officers and NCOs."³⁹

Commanders in IET must establish an environment that enables their Drill Sergeants to develop in their new soldiers an intense desire to excel and not a fear of failure if they are to create a "culture of disciplined initiative, teamwork, and determination," components of our Warrior Ethos.⁴⁰ The soldiers in basic training have volunteered to serve the colors of their nation. They want to be accepted and contribute to the team. The IET environment must reward excellence and encourage initiative, not intimidate people into avoiding challenges. Analysis of COHORT units conducted by the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR)

clearly shows that vertical cohesion develops in COHORT units to the extent that leaders convince their subordinates they are competent to lead them through danger, that they respect their subordinates and will take care of them and that they share their subordinates' dedication to the mission. Identity of purpose, mutual commitment, and the soldiers' belief that they are valued by their leaders are the foundations of vertical cohesion.⁴¹

The ability of a commander, both in technical skills and leadership, develops with experience. An officer's dedication to mission and commitment to shared goals and values is enhanced with confidence in his ability. Company commanders in IET, with the critical responsibility of creating a positive environment, should be selected based on proven leadership

abilities. The importance of instilling faith in Army leadership, enabling vertical cohesion during IET suggests that IET company commanders should be selected from exceptional commanders of line companies. IET companies should be second commands for outstanding captains.

The Army must continue to select quality NCOs to serve as Drill Sergeants, proven leaders of squads and sections who can inspire in their soldiers faith in leadership and confidence in themselves, their equipment and their unit. Drill Sergeants who cannot inspire faith in leadership cannot contribute to vertical bonding and must be removed from duties. Unfortunately, current policies suggest that NCOs removed from the Drill Sergeant program jeopardize their potential for continued service and advancement. NCOs removed from duty as Drill Sergeants because of an inability to transmit the culture should not be prejudiced. Certainly those few NCOs who violate policies of conduct or articles of the UCMJ should be punished accordingly.

Another aspect of developing vertical cohesion during IET involves peer leaders. Current procedures involve assigning soldiers in training to leadership positions within the training platoons- platoon guides, squad leaders. This process allows new soldiers to experience the demands of leadership and develop an appreciation for the function and importance of the Army's chain of command. The concept of peer leadership could be expanded in IET by recognizing graduates who clearly demonstrate the desired Warrior Ethos. These select soldiers could be retained at their BCT and OSUT units as cadre and assigned as squad leaders for a subsequent training cycle. Their immediate experience and success could serve as a bridge between new soldiers and Drill Sergeants, enabling the development of vertical bonding and enhancing transmission of Warrior Ethos.

ORGANIZATIONAL COHESION

Organizational cohesion "describes how a soldier bonds to the military institution."⁴² This cohesion is arguably the greatest component to establishing the desired Warrior Ethos. "There is more to training than learning soldierly skills. Those are usually easily taught and easily learned, especially in a volunteer force. More difficult to transmit is the military ideology, the *raison d'etre* of the army."⁴³ Educating new soldiers on the Army's heritage, customs and courtesies is important for development of organizational cohesion. Recitation of Army Values and the Soldiers Creed before each exercise during Physical Readiness Training, by both cadre and soldiers in training, is an effective technique for developing pride and cohesion. The Drill Sergeant as a role model is key- when new soldiers understand that their leaders are part of the team, and not an obstacle to success, then morale, pride and performance soar.

The combined writings of psychologists and military authors on morale suggest that a high-morale group is cohesive with high levels of *esprit de corps* and unit pride. It has a clearly defined goal to which its members are totally committed.... They cling to ideals like patriotism, honor, and loyalty which are bound up somehow in the group's goal.... Disciplined and self-confident, they willingly sacrifice themselves for the welfare of the group."⁴⁴

The organizational bond developed in IET may be stressed, however, when soldiers graduate and move to a new organization. This stress could be reduced by having highly successful squad or section leaders from operational units detailed to serve as assistant platoon sergeants during one IET cycle, providing a bridge between the institutional training organization, represented by the Drill Sergeant, and the gaining operational unit.

SOCIETAL COHESION

Societal cohesion describes the extent to which a nation's Army reflects the values of its society.⁴⁵ The extent to which our all-volunteer Army reflects accurately the nation's society has long been a concern. Hayden cites research showing that the majority of new soldiers come from the roughly 40% of American men who do not attend college.⁴⁶ Demographics in September 2002 show that 27.5% of enlisted soldiers were black⁴⁷, compared to 12.3% of the American population; 15% of soldiers were female, compared to 51.1% of the population; and 10.4% of recruits were Hispanic, compared to 12.5% of the total population⁴⁸. While the demographics of soldiers might not precisely mirror the society they serve it is essential for societal cohesion that they share overarching values. Horizontal and vertical bonding and organizational cohesion within an army are related to each other and dependent on the "norms, values, mores, and cultural ethos" of the society the army serves.⁴⁹

Methods for enhancing the societal bond between soldiers in IET and American society involve communities. Civic leaders speaking to new soldiers could relate common values such as loyalty, responsibility, and integrity. Veterans speaking on topics such sacrifice, courage and commitment could help develop respect and honor in new soldiers. And soldiers recently returned from campaigns abroad could inspire pride and devotion in young soldiers eager to serve. Presentations by civic leaders and veterans, old and new, could provide new soldiers with a valuable association between the Warrior Ethos culture and the nation our Army serves, strengthening societal cohesion.

Horizontal and vertical bonding of soldiers along with organizational and societal cohesion contribute to establishing cultural attitudes, beliefs and behaviors of a Warrior Ethos.

Each aspect is important to the ethos, as history shows how incongruent goals and values can contribute to good soldiers going bad.

PRIMARY GROUPS GONE BAD

The strength of primary group cohesion is not always focused in positive directions. Bruce Watson's study of six major incidents of unacceptable behavior on the battlefield, from the Indian Wars through Viet Nam, shows that while some individuals might fall from acceptable conduct "aberrant behaviors also result from the social disintegration of the units involved."⁵⁰ Watson explains how vertical cohesion in Company C, 1/20 Infantry was undermined in part by its commander, CPT Medina, who "regularly belittled [2LT William] Calley in front of his men, constantly referring to him as 'shit-head.'"⁵¹ A sense of hopelessness descended on the men with each unsuccessful patrol and mounting casualties, eroding organizational cohesion. "At the same time, and intense group identity developed that transcended military norms as the company became a kind of family, one facing the stark reality of possible extinction, a crisis from which the men sought escape. There was a problem: the source of the crisis was the U.S. Army."⁵² Unable to strike at the Army, who they felt had forgotten them, the men struck at the inhabitants of *Mai Lai 4*, a hamlet in the *Quang Ngai* province. The result was the massacre of over 400 noncombatant men, women and children.

Incongruence between horizontal bonds and organizational cohesion is not limited to the battlefield, as the United States Military Academy found in the spring of 1976. Cadets were found in violation of the academy's honor code (A cadet will not lie, cheat or steal, nor tolerate those who do) regarding a take-home exam in Electrical Engineering. A commission led by Frank Borman found that, among other factors, the intense bond between cadets contributed to the scandal. Specifically, the requirement for cadets to not tolerate honor violations of fellow cadets created a tension between their horizontal bonding and organizational cohesion with the Academy and its goals. The commission found that "many individuals are reluctant to place duty to community over loyalty to friends. This dilemma is particularly acute at West Point, where loyalty to friends is emphasized in other aspects of Academy life."⁵³

Failures at *Mai Lai* and West Point resulted in part to breakdowns between the attitudes, beliefs and behaviors of the small group and the organization. Organizational cohesion must complement horizontal and vertical bonding to produce the Warrior Ethos desired of soldiers, today and in the future.

CONCLUSION

Initial Entry Training in the U.S. Army provides volunteers with basic skills essential for success as soldiers on the battlefield. As the first step of an extensive individual and collective training program IET is critical to the continued professionalism of the Army. Integral to professionalism is developing cultural attitudes, beliefs and behaviors of a Warrior Ethos, “the culture of disciplined initiative, teamwork, determination, sacrifice, and self-reliance that guides our soldiers today and tomorrow.”¹⁵⁴ The environment of IET is most critical for establishing bonds and cohesion necessary for a strong Warrior Ethos. Horizontal bonding contributes to a soldier’s commitment to his peers and his sacrificing self-interest for collective goals. Vertical bonding establishes faith in leadership, allowing new soldiers to become valued members of the team who demonstrate initiative. Organizational cohesion creates in new soldiers an intense determination to excel, confident in their ability, their equipment and their unit. Societal cohesion links soldiers to the values of the nation they serve. Emphasis on bonding and cohesion provides a strategy to more successfully imbue a Warrior Ethos in soldiers during IET.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The U.S. Army Human Resource Command should examine methods to assign small groups of soldiers (buddy teams, sections, squads or platoons) to operational units upon graduation from IET. This group assignment strategy will export the strength of horizontal bonding developed in IET to operational units, enabling unit effectiveness.

TRADOC should select exceptional company commanders from line units to serve second commands in IET. These proven leaders will inspire faith in Army leadership and are best prepared to enable vertical bonding and organizational cohesion among new soldiers. TRADOC should establish procedures to remove NCOs who fail to successfully transmit the Warrior Ethos from the Drill Sergeant program without prejudicing their careers. TRADOC should assign IET graduates who display exceptional Warrior Ethos as squad leaders in a subsequent training cycle to facilitate organizational cohesion among new soldiers in training.

Operational units should detail exceptional squad or section leaders from gaining units to serve as assistant platoon sergeants in IET for soldiers designated for assignment to their unit. Their presence as leaders will enhance organizational cohesion and better enable their unit effectiveness when IET graduates arrive at their gaining unit.

IET units should incorporate civic leaders, veterans and young soldiers with recent combat experience to speak to new soldiers during IET about service to the nation.

Presentations by citizens, retirees and young, experienced soldiers will strengthen the societal cohesion between the Army's newest soldiers and the nation.

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ENDNOTES

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¹⁶ Department of the Army, *The Army Future Force: Decisive 21st Century Landpower*, TRADOC (FT Monroe, VA: U.S. Department of the Army, August 2003), 5.

¹⁷ Leonard Wong et al., *Why They Fight: Combat Motivation in the Iraq War*, Strategic Studies Institute Monograph (Carlisle Barracks: U.S. Army War College, July 2003), 2-3.

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²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Stewart, 24.

²² Ibid., 82-83 .

²³ Steven Pressfield, *Gates of Fire* (New York: Bantam Books, 1998).

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⁴⁴ Stephen J. Motowidlo et al, *Motivation, Satisfaction, and Morale in Army Careers: A Review of Theory and Measurement* (Arlington, VA: U.S Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, December 1976), 48-49.

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