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# LOYALTY AND THE MILITARY PROFESSION

by

Issac G. Gipson, Lieutenant Colonel, United States Army
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Advisors: Gene Kamena, Colonel (Retired.), United States Army

Colonel Adam Stone, United States Air Force

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## **Biography**

Lieutenant Colonel Issac G. Gipson entered the Army in 1997 as a graduate of the Southern University and A & M College Army ROTC program. He is an Air Defense officer who has deployed on 4 occasions to Southwest Asia. Following his initial assignment in Ansbach, Germany, LTC Gipson commanded an Air Defense Battery in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003 and became the most northern Patriot Firing battery in Iraq. Upon redeployment from Iraq to Fort Bliss, TX, he was selected to serve as the Aide-de-Camp to the Commanding General of Fort Bliss. After completion of his tour as the Aide, he served as a Board Recorder for Officer Selection Boards in the DA Secretariat at the Human Resources Command in Alexandria, VA. In 2007, LTC Gipson was conferred a Masters Degree in Defense Analysis from the Naval Postgraduate School. He then continued his military education at the Army's Command and Staff College in Fort Leavenworth, KS. From 2009-2011, LTC Gipson served as the Battalion Operations and Executive Officer of the 1-44 ADA BN at Fort Hood, TX, and deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in 2010. In 2011, LTC Gipson was assigned to Department of the Army Inspector General Agency at the Pentagon. While serving in the Pentagon, LTC Gipson was selected to serve as the Assistant Executive Officer to the Director of the Army Staff in 2012. Most recently, LTC Gipson commanded the 4-5 ADA BN, Fort Hood, TX, from 2014-2016 and deployed the unit in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (2014-2015). He is currently a student at the Air War College, Maxwell Air Force Base, AL.

### **Abstract**

The paper presents an in depth study of loyalty in the military. Among the virtues a service member possesses, the author asserts that loyalty is the cornerstone for successful service. Military loyalty extends beyond commitment and trust. It necessarily traverses the boundaries of family, friendship, country, and religion by requiring the service members to subordinate themselves to a higher level of allegiance. The oath of office inspires or demands service members' loyalty while the military leaders must ensure it is given. Therefore, a sound understanding of loyalty is essential to understanding its role in the profession of arms. Ten readings from various disciplines are used to explore important nuances of loyalty, such as to whom or what is it owed, its limits, how to build it, and its vices. Finally, an analysis of the common trends displays the role military loyalty plays in the profession of arms as key to successful military operations in peace and at war.

## Loyalty and the Military Profession

I don't know what awaits us on the other side of that berm, but I'll tell you this. If I have to give my life for any of you I will do it in a heartbeat.<sup>1</sup>

These are the words of 22 years old, Lieutenant Joe DeSilva, who took over his first platoon just hours before he had to lead them in the invasion of Iraq.<sup>2</sup> His statement speaks volumes about the reliance Soldiers place upon loyalty to one another, the mission, and the military. Lieutenant DeSilva assumed command and immediately provided assurances to his troops that he would be loyal to them by making the ultimate sacrifice of his own life. Even more intrinsic than the promise to value their lives above his own, he proclaimed unwavering loyalty to a mission with an uncertain outcome. His words were those of authority, remembrance, and inspiration. Lieutenant DeSilva reminded his troops they were embarking on a mission out of allegiance to the Nation and inspired them to stay loyal to it and one another.

#### Introduction

The United States military takes great pride in instilling core values in its Soldiers,
Sailors, Airmen and Marines. Each service focuses on distinct values to be the foundation of
how each service member serves; whether it is selfless service, integrity, or honor one of the
common virtues that bind all service members together, and that is loyalty. Upon entering the
military, a person must first be administered the oath of enlistment or the oath of a commissioned
officer. The candidate for service is required to state:

I, \_\_\_\_\_, having been appointed an officer in the Army of the United States, as indicated above in the grade of \_\_\_\_\_ do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign or domestic, that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I

take this obligation freely, without any mental reservations or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office upon which I am about to enter; So help me God.<sup>3</sup>

This requires more than a mere promise. It is a thoughtfully made pledge of empowerment to prevent attacks against the freedoms our country holds dear. Military loyalty matches and raises basic loyalty through the employment of trust and commitment.

#### **Definition**

A variety of definitions exists for the term loyalty across myriad communities, but the most complete is John Kleinigs in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

Loyalty can be characterized as a practical disposition to persist in an intrinsically valued (though not necessarily valuable) associational attachment, where that involves a potentially costly commitment to secure or at least not to jeopardize the interests or well-being of the object of loyalty. For the most part, an association that we come to value for its own sake is also one with which we come to identify (as *ours*).<sup>4</sup>

The definition embodies the expectation specified in the Oath of Office. With right hand raised, the service member immediately accepts the military Profession of Arms as one of the utmost priorities in his life. He has made a commitment, which Merriam-Webster defines as "an agreement or pledge to do something in the future." Further, he agrees to confer trust in his fellow brethren, which is defined as the "assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something." The Soldier signed a contract to perform his duties, but this verbal commitment of allegiance and trust, made in the presence of witnesses, goes beyond that contractual obligation. Military loyalty is unique and may require actions that go against one's own interests or even beliefs, which the service member pledges to do in his support and defense of the U.S. Constitution against all enemies. For the military, loyalty is trust and commitment

raised to the highest echelon and used to compel actions under the umbrella of governmentsanctioned orders.

### **Loyalty and the Military Profession**

Service members, because of their sworn duties may miss the birth of their first-born child, be unable to attend the funeral of a loved one, enter a foreign country to fight for an uncertain cause, or cross a berm without knowledge of what awaits on the other side – all out of loyalty to the profession of arms. Can the oath of office ensure one does all of this? Unlikely. Rather, it is insufficient in and of itself but serves as part of the cornerstone of loyalty in the military. Loyalty and the military profession go beyond the basic human elements of trust and commitment. It necessarily traverses the boundaries of family, friendship, country, and religion by requiring the service members to subordinate themselves to a higher level of allegiance, without which the military would not be successful. The oath of office inspires or demands service members' loyalty while the military leaders must ensure it is given. Therefore, a sound understanding of loyalty is essential.

This research paper presents an approach by offering 10 readings to provide a substantial understanding of loyalty and how to build upon it. Intrinsic in this undertaking is an analysis of to what and to whom loyalty is owed and whether there are limits to one's loyalty. An understanding of the conflicting and competing values service members may possess because of religion, family, friends, and country will provide unparalleled insight for the leaders into the balance they must strike when strengthening loyalty to the profession and cultivating military operational loyalty. The first part of this paper provides a brief précis of prominent works on the topic of loyalty. In the second part, a diagram illustrates common themes and trends in the

literature. Finally, the third part presents an analysis to show how a firm grasp of the notion of loyalty is vital to understanding its applicability to the profession of arms.

#### Research

Much has been written on loyalty; however, a quick internet search on the topic illustrates the majority of the literature deals with loyalty in the realm of business and marketing and the remaining are philosophical in nature with very few specifically addressing military concerns. The disparity may be because loyalty easily lends itself to discussions in the economic arena since manufacturers want consumers to be loyal purchasers. A buyer that consistently purchases the same products on a weekly basis is any manufacturer's ideal consumer. Yet, loyalty is an abstract term, not easily defined, dissuading most people from considering the subject in other areas. Philosophers enjoy peeling the layers back and contemplating what lies beneath to determine its true essence. For them, loyalty is a concept to be explored and studied in an effort to define. When it comes to military service members or civilian authorities, the lack of literature tends to make one believe that there exists no question of loyalty in the military. It could easily follow that there is very little literature because loyalty is not a relevant issue. Alternatively, perhaps it is just the opposite: there is not an abundance of material on loyalty in the military because many people fear being disloyal.

The following ten summaries on loyalty encompass the perspectives of economists, philosophers, sociologists, and military strategists to develop an enhanced baseline understanding of loyalty. These readings are comprised of scholarly articles, which illustrate similarities and differences in the authors' views on loyalty across their respective disciplines. Several authors addressed military loyalty, discussed its place among the virtues, and considered its vices. Overall, the readings traverse topics such as, to whom loyalty is owed, whether there

are competing loyalties, and how the military uses loyalty to convince people to commit moral wrongs.

# 10 Readings on Loyalty

#### Loyalty and Virtues, by R.E. Ewin

In his article Loyalty and Virtues, R. E. Ewin takes the position that there is a core value to loyalty and understanding it is critical to understanding the virtues despite the fact that loyalty is not one of them because loyalty is the raw material of the virtues as well as the vice of them.<sup>7</sup> Reminiscent of Aristotle's Doctrine of the Mean, Ewin discusses the problems associated with loyalty being considered one of the virtues, with the primary concern being that it lends itself to excesses, such as the perversion of loyalty exhibited by the ever-loyal Nazi. Ewin presents noted philosopher John Ladd's theory that "loyalty demands what is morally due of the object of loyalty" and, then, Ewin quickly argues it is flawed because *loyalty* must be called upon to explain what is owed. He contends that such a circular argument dismisses too quickly the excesses of loyalty that lead to its perversion. Ladd's theory of loyalty is further expounded upon to address the factors of judgment, commitment, duty, gratitude, respect, and pride, illustrating why they are both a virtue and vice of loyalty. Because loyalty requires the complete subordination of one's private interest, in favor of giving what is due, even to the exclusion of other legitimate concerns, then judgment is necessarily used at the onset to determine its object.8 Additionally, loyalty requires an emotional commitment that extends beyond the contractual ties of duty and the judgment required in this instance is to determine the adequacy of the basis for the emotional tie. Gratitude has elements of both a contractual obligation and an emotional tie. Referred to as a debt of gratitude, the loyalty that is inspired begins with a specific action but no specific act is required in return. Like gratitude, pride goes hand in hand with loyalty; a person

gives loyalty to the group when there is something of value in which he has pride. <sup>10</sup> The problem arises when the object of loyalty is a morally bad choice, as in the loyal Nazi, which for Ewin cannot be overcome by consideration of the factors of loyalty. There must be a willingness not to follow good judgment for loyalty to exist. Loyalty exhibited through gratitude, pride and respect for others can lead to acts of cruelty one would not otherwise commit. It involves setting aside good judgment, at least to some extent, which Ewin suggests prevents it from becoming a virtue in its own right. <sup>11</sup>

#### Organizational Loyalty by John H. Fielder

Organizational Loyalty by John H. Fielder was a critical examination of recent writings on the ethical obligations of loyalty owed by employees to the organizations that employ them. Written from the business perspective, Fielder first discusses the law of agency as an extreme example of the traditional concept of employee loyalty. As a contractual matter, the employee owes undivided loyalty and has the duty to act in good faith at all times by virtue of one's status as an agent of the organization. 12 Ethical obligations of loyalty dictate the employee must obey all lawful instructions but may refuse anything unlawful. However, there the law of agency also prohibits the disclosure of such unlawful requests, which would effectively brand any type of whistleblowing as disloyal. 13 Any other actions that go against the decisions of the organization are likewise considered disloyal under this model. The objections to the type of servitude expected under the law of agency guised in terms of loyalty are also considered. Fielder urges that it undervalues any type of employee autonomy and argues that boundaries should exist that allow employees to maintain a private life with minimal consideration to the organization.<sup>14</sup> Employees should not be required to automatically subsume their own ethical obligations in favor of that of the company for which they work.

Fielder further contemplates organizational loyalty through examinations of the employees' bond to the organization. Employees sometimes have stronger ties of loyalty to their colleagues and work than to their families; often times, they work overtime when they would rather spend time elsewhere, or they inform the company of facts that may adversely affect its interest but would keep silent if the matter were related to their family. Self-sacrifice, as envisioned here, is often grounded in obedience. Contemplating the writings of De George, Fielder determined obedience could be required of employees, but loyalty cannot; it must be developed, encouraged, and ultimately earned. In contrast, his analysis of the writings by Baron deals with loyalty in terms of a shared responsibility for the group. <sup>16</sup> A commonality of both is that organizational loyalty is two-fold: the first concerns loyalty to the organization's goals based on the employee/employer role, and the second type of loyalty concerns identification with the group/organization. Fielder considers the writings of De George and Baron, but ultimately finds that Oldenquist provides a more comprehensive analysis of loyalty. Accordingly, loyalty requires the employee to feel the organization is family, and therefore, when it prospers the employee feels pride, when it declines shame and anger when it is harmed.<sup>17</sup> Loyal commitment like this will result in moral conflicts between the needs of the organization and an employee's private life. The conclusion of Fielder's article explores the conditions required for the occurrence of group identification, contending that without some shared goals it will never be met.<sup>18</sup> Additional conditions for group identification include perceived fairness, distribution of benefits and burdens of the group, recognition by others, and a sense of accomplishment. As this process develops, the goals of the employee are met by participation in the group and the organization earns loyalty.

### The Problems of Duty and Loyalty by Stephen Coleman

The Problems of Duty and Loyalty illustrates the conflict between military duty and loyalty through the exploration of ethical problems and decision-making. The author, Stephen Coleman, a senior lecturer at the Australian Defence Force Academy, argues "a true understanding of loyalty and disloyalty means that the demands of loyalty can never legitimately override a genuine duty to follow orders." Accordingly, Coleman contends ethical problems fall into one of two categories – an ethical dilemma or a test of integrity. Further, performing one's duty is an ethical decision that is deduced following either an ethical dilemma or a test of integrity. An ethical dilemma, also referred to as a test of ethics, is a situation where the difficulty lies in knowing what the right thing to do actually is, while a test of integrity occurs when it is reasonably obvious what the right thing to do is, but for whatever reason, it is difficult to actually do the right thing.<sup>20</sup>

According to Coleman, even when the right thing to do seems obvious, the demands of loyalty, if not understood, can make the decision more complicated, making a test of integrity appear to be an ethical dilemma. He contends that the problem lies in the Army's expectation that the virtue of loyalty is to be balanced by the virtue of integrity but failing to provide academic guidance on what it means to be a virtuous person or a person of integrity. When duty pulls in one direction and loyalty in another, it may then seem like doing one's duty is not the ethically correct thing to do, but Coleman explains that the decision maker is often aware of the wrongdoing and chooses to ignore, collude, or cover-up based upon some bond of loyalty. Therefore, considerations of loyalty cannot turn a test of integrity into an ethical dilemma because the decision maker still knows what the right thing to do actually is. Loyalty will not transcend the duty to obey orders. Further, Coleman argues that inherent in the duty to follow an

order is the duty of those who issue the order to ensure it is legal and to consider certain moral implications. He contends that if the reasoning behind an order is understood, one is more likely to recognize it as legal, understand the limits of loyalty, and choose to follow the order.<sup>23</sup>

Coleman explores the differences between an ethical dilemma and test of integrity through a scenario wherein a law professor, tired of what he perceives as student laziness, instructs his students and graduate student aid that no late papers will be accepted. If the assignment is not submitted in the receptacle by 4:00, on the dot, the student will immediately fail the course. He then provides instructions to the aid to collect the assignments from the receptacle at the given time and deliver them to his secretary in a sealed envelope. The aid collects the assignments at the specified time and all but two students have turned in their papers. She recognizes them both; one student is a known slacker and the other is conscientious. The lazy student wanders up and tries to turn in his assignment, nonchalantly explaining that he was talking to a girl and lost track of time. The aid is about to remind him no late assignments will be accepted when she notices the student is also trying to pass her \$20. Shortly after he leaves, the hard-working student runs up with dried blood on her forehead and pants, explaining that for the last two hours she was assisting in a serious car accident that occurred on her way to drop off the assignment. She was a first responder on the scene, performed CPR all the way to the hospital and was required to provide an administrative report because she is a police officer.

The decision made by the teacher's aid in each scenario is not identified, rather, the case is used to illustrate the difference between an ethical dilemma and test of integrity in the decision making process. In the case of the lazy student, it is clear that he is trying to bribe the aid, and Coleman explains a bribe would not be necessary unless one is being asked to do something wrong. The scenario thus represents a test of integrity. Coleman explains that "the difficulty is

not in deciding what the right thing to do is, but in actually doing it.<sup>24</sup> He changes the scenario to have the lazy student offer the aid \$1,000 instead, to make the bribe more appealing to a struggling teacher's assistant. She still knows she is being asked to do something wrong but she must choose to overcome the pressure and do the right thing. Conversely, as Coleman explains, in the case of an ethical dilemma, represented by the conscientious student, "the difficulty lies in deciding what the right thing to do is."<sup>25</sup> The aid knows the instructor said no late submissions should be accepted but she is faced with competing factors that cause her to evaluate whether she should accept the paper. She naturally considers whether the delayed submission was out of the student's control; whether off duty police officers have a duty to assist; whether saving a life has more value than other responsibilities; and, whether this was the type of infraction the professor sought to punish with the rule regarding late submissions. The situation with the conscientious student illustrates a test of integrity that was elevated to an ethical dilemma by the instructor's failure to consider moral implications when he issued the order. Coleman relates this scenario to Army orders where the infraction may not appear to fit the punishment, such as a cadet missing curfew, where a misunderstanding of loyalty could lead to a decision to do wrong. He concludes that commanders have a duty to ensure personnel understand the reason behind the orders to allow them to recognize a test of integrity versus an ethical dilemma and understand the limits of loyalty imposed in the scenario.

## The Moral Status of Loyalty by Marcia Baron

The case of Kermit Vandivier, a BF Goodrich engineer at a the Ohio plant, who was told to "fudge" data rather than delay production and risk losing a sale by re-designing the four-disc brake system in 1972 is presented by Marcia Baron in *The Moral Status of Loyalty*. Vandivier buckled under the pressure of his superiors and issued a fraudulent report, but his subsequent

resignation indicated it was impossible for him to continue working "in an atmosphere of deceit and distrust." <sup>26</sup> Even though he extended the customary two-week notice, the chief engineer decided the resignation was effective immediately due to Vandivier's disloyalty. Luckily, Vandivier and Goodrich's deception did not cause injuries. In contrast, Lee Iacocca and Ford engineers failed to disclose the Pinto's faulty design and it resulted in more than 500 burn deaths. <sup>27</sup> Accordingly, Baron contends that while loyalty is a significant issue for everyone, it is of paramount importance for engineers because the impact of their decision to put loyalty to the company before other moral demands can have life and death consequences.

Baron's article answers the two basic questions responsible engineers should ponder: 1) what, if anything, is good about loyalty; and 2) what to do if there are conflicting loyalties. She follows the popular philosophers Ladd's and Oldenquist's school of thought, and rejects Royce's, that the object of loyalty cannot be an ideal. Loyalty is therefore owed to people, and Vandivier was accused of being disloyal to his coworkers and superiors when his resignation was immediately accepted.<sup>28</sup> The problem with loyalty, though, is that it invites unfairness, asks one to put aside reliance on good reason, and encourages irresponsibility. Baron explores several interpersonal relationships to explain the importance of loyalty as a binding feeling and the action it prompts. She equates the parent-child and close friend relationships to those of the employee and employer and Soldier to country relationships whose loyalty is expected to extend beyond employment. In the case of engineers, the question becomes one of competing loyalties, for the National Society of Professional Engineers code of ethics provides they "will be honest and impartial, and will serve with devotion [to] his employer, his clients, and the public."<sup>29</sup> To answer the question of what to do when loyalties compete, Baron draws a distinction between duties of justice and duties of benevolence. She acknowledges the difference between the two

are matters of degree, but a duty of justice includes, among the duty to be fair and honest, the duty to avoid inflicting needless harm on others.<sup>30</sup> In contrast, benevolent actions may result in harm, but if it does not violate a person's rights, then the duty remains one of benevolence.<sup>31</sup> Baron presents a lengthy argument in support of her contention that the claims of loyalty are overridden by duties of justice, concluding that loyalty, for the engineer, is grounded in the concept of what is right.<sup>32</sup>

#### Military Loyalty: A Functional Vice? By James M. Connor

Written by a sociologist, James B. Connor indicated at the onset that he is not interested in abstract questions of whether loyalty is right or wrong. Rather, his interest lies in defining what loyalty is; how it changes, directs, and enables action; why we have such a strong cultural reliance on it; and what purpose it serves.<sup>33</sup> These questions are considered in regard to the military to explore why loyalty is fundamental to doing wrong and may predispose Soldiers to criminality. Connor draws upon the works of prominent academics, such as Keller, Prinz, and Huntington to quickly define loyalty as an emotion that is central to group and individual identity formation, which is crucial to social action and operates at different levels/layers.<sup>34</sup> Without an emotional investment, there can be no loyalty. Morals, likewise, must be emotional because we feel what is right or wrong and deliberate over actions by pitting emotions against emotions.<sup>35</sup> Consequently, the notion that Soldiers must have one another's back to be effective in combat speaks to the loyalty they have for one another that causes them to act, sometimes immorally.

Connor recognized the reverence attributed to loyalty in the military by movies such as *Band of Brothers* and *Saving Private Ryan* has led to claims that loyalty in the military results in a moral good. He argues the opposite; the manipulation of Soldiers into battle using sentiments of loyalty creates the pre-conditions for moral wrong, for loyalty is the military's answer to the

problem of "how shalt thou kill?"<sup>36</sup> Therefore, committing a moral wrong is always the goal of loyalty in the military. Cultivating military loyalty requires the deployment of socialization techniques to separate Soldiers from previous social circles. An interdependent bond must be formed, based upon loyalty, obedience and, most of all, subsuming of one's individual desires to the needs of the group.<sup>37</sup> Cultivating strong emotional ties to the platoon, the battery, the battalion, will necessarily create the family unit required to suppress competing emotions of right and wrong in battle. Since loyalty motivates Soldiers to act in a particular way, Connor also provides examples of systematic military abuse, violence, illegal activity, and cover-ups. Loyalty to the unit can overwhelm other emotional responses, such as fear, disgust, anxiety, and shame, which are central to maintaining normative positions.<sup>38</sup> Consequently, Connor concludes with an example of the loyal Nazi to illustrate that the motive behind one's loyalty may be good, but the action expressed may be morally wrong.

### Loyalty in the Military: Some Preliminary Reflections by Mitchell Jones

The view of loyalty depicted by Mitchell Jones in *Loyalty in the Military: Some Preliminary Reflections* is concerned with the role military loyalty plays in nation states and what is deemed acts of disloyalty against the same. He first provides a brief discourse on the nature of military loyalty that is characterized in both historical and contemporary terms. More than 100 years ago, the profession of arms was described as having a single duty, which was to encounter and destroy the enemy on behalf of the state. More recent schools of thought, however, suggest that the paramount duty of the military profession is to promote the safety and welfare of humanity. Ommon to both characterizations is the commission of state-sanctioned violence that places the Soldier at risk for grave danger, an act that can only occur if its members develop strong loyalties to each other and to the service.

Jones provides further analysis evaluating to what or whom loyalty is owed, examining the Australian and United States government systems. He finds that both illustrate an ultimate loyalty is owed to the Constitution, even though it may be through a symbolic head of state, such as the Queen, or Commander-in-Chief, such as the President. Mediating loyalties exist in an obligation of obedience to the legislative process that must be adhered to relating to the conduct of armed forces, as well as to the issuance of lawful orders by superiors. 41 Consequently, Jones examined whether a Soldier illustrates loyalty with blind allegiance when he unquestioning follows orders under the belief that if an order is made, then it must be lawful. The "Soldier's Dilemma" is whether to make an independent judgment or not based upon the lawfulness of orders that a superior has issued.<sup>42</sup> However, the military is a separate society with its own justice system of punishment for disloyalty, deemed as insubordination, failure to comply with a lawful order, and even treason, and does not give the Soldier much latitude to question authority. The penalties for disloyal actions range from extra duty assignments, monetary fines, demotions, discharge, and imprisonment. 43 Jones illustrates through three case studies military courts consider issues related to being "absent without leave" and "the right to resign" disloyal, and the decisions have been upheld by the United States Supreme Court. Additionally, bad conduct discharges in the U.S. could be a bar to veteran's benefits and hinder civilian employment. In contrast, the accused can use the "good soldier defense" to attain an acquittal before trial with evidence that the she had good military character evidenced by loyalty, obedience, conformity, courage, and subordination.<sup>44</sup> The law protects Soldiers, if they remain loyal, despite their criminal acts. Therefore, Jones' reflections lead to the conclusion that not much latitude is given for a subordinate to independently assess the lawfulness of an order and act accordingly.

### Rethinking 'Loyalty': What is its value? by LtCol J.P. Hesford

Retired United States Marine Corps officer LtCol J. P. Hesford Jr. writes "a misguided sense of loyalty can thwart initiative, stifle valuable dissent, and lead otherwise stellar Marines into poor decision-making" in *Rethinking 'Loyalty': What is its Value?*". <sup>45</sup> Loyalty is a recognized leadership trait, described by Marine Corps doctrine in terms that exclusively hold positive connotations. Hesford described loyalty in schools as, "the quality of faithfulness to country, the Corps, to one's seniors, subordinates and peers". <sup>46</sup> The doctrine is exalted in the Marine Corps Creed of "Always Faithful", which underscores the quality of faithfulness required. Yet, an argument is made that traditional interpretations of loyalty that center upon unquestioning obedience are the antithesis of a student of the profession of arms, which encourages intellectual and mental agility. LtCol Hesford advises that loyalty should be removed from the list of Marine Corps leadership traits. Further, the military education curriculum should be adjusted to diminish the importance of loyalty and discuss its perils.

LtCol Hesford asserts that loyalty can be healthy, but it will emerge naturally as a product of leadership, esprit de corps, and personal character, rendering the teaching unnecessary. <sup>47</sup>
Loyalty is attributed to the functioning of successful units, and it is recognized as the factor that motivates Soldiers and Marines to fight to the point of death. Likewise, the same bonds of brotherhood can illustrate the downside to loyalty, when used as an excuse for inaction or silence. An example of the stifling effects of loyalty was the J-5 Director's resignation of his commission four months prior to the invasion of Iraq. Three years later, the former general, wrote a scathing article entitled, *Why the Iraq War Was a Mistake*, wherein he "regrets that he did not do more, sooner, to make known his opposition to the war." He now urges that his loyalty to the country should have warranted a more forceful dissent, made while wearing the

uniform, rather than refusal to participate. Another example utilized is that of the silent observer of torture or fraud, who shuns being branded disloyal. LtCol Hesford concludes that both cases illustrate possibilities of unforeseen damage to the Corps fostered by a reliance on loyalty as a leadership trait.

#### Loyalty, Honor, and the Modern Military by Captain Michael O. Wheeler

Captain Michael O. Wheeler sets the stage for his article *Loyalty*, *Honor*, and the Modern Military with the presentation of the problem the modern military contend with due to the distorted idea of loyalty. He acknowledges loyalty is an abstract concept that has different connotations for various people and has been employed to illicit different actions. Wheeler utilizes the example of Nazi leader Himmler's watchword for his SS-men, "My honor is my loyalty" as the basic problem of loyalty in the military profession – "one who gives his unthinking consent to all orders issued to him, whose very honor is a function of his unquestioning obedience." Like Himmler's men, Wheeler suggests modern American Soldiers have aided in some of the most atrocious acts against humanity by falling in line with the stereotyped idea of the military mind that unthinkingly obeys orders (e.g., Mi Lai, Abu Ghraib). Further, Wheeler advances that there still exists "a certain reluctance on the part of any thoughtful man to condemn a Soldier for sincerely following orders and remaining loyal to his superiors."50 The question for the military professional then becomes how to strike a balance between loyalty, a military requirement, and the goal of our free society, which is to have every citizen become morally sensitive human beings.

Wheeler argues that a proper view of loyalty will end any notion of incompatibility between loyalty, honor (regarded as moral integrity), and military success. His thesis, "loyalty is primarily a function of trust, and that trust is usually given if integrity is perceived in the object

of one's trust," is supported by a case study on George C. Marshall.<sup>51</sup> Wheeler examines the thesis in two parts, with the first providing an analysis of loyalty as it relates to military leadership. Machiavelli's advice that subordinates do not need to love their leader but should fear them is pitted against Rousseau's belief that obedience fueled by fear is a weak and fleeting action, but one based on loyalty to the leader is a stronger stimulus which ensures more lasting actions. Wheeler admits loyalty based upon personal charisma can be dangerous as was the case with Himmler whose dictate to his men was that their honor was their loyalty.<sup>52</sup> In contrast, the second part of the article illustrates how loyalty can be inspired in a manner that pays homage to military discipline and morally sensitive men. This concept of loyalty is inspired by trust, wherein trust resides in the moral integrity of the commander – a virtue attributed by Wheeler to Marshall.<sup>53</sup> Marshall's success is heralded by his possession of an impartial point of view, an active concern for others, and a disciplined attempt to have his words match his actions. Finally, Marshall's blend of loyalty, honor and military success is offered as the viable perspective on loyalty for the current military. Written in the 1973 Make Love, Not War post-Vietnam Hippie Era, Wheeler acknowledges the large gap between the values of young Americans and the values required for effective military service, but proposes that trust inspired by a man of integrity will bridge the gap. He explains that young Americans question morality and war, are suspicious of bureaucracy and its ways, and do not always accept established traditions without question.<sup>54</sup> He urges that these men will recognize integrity in their commander and thus be inspired to trust him, closing the gap in a morally responsible manner. Wheeler closes with the modern Soldier's revision of Himmler's phrase as "my loyalty resides in a man of integrity, to whom I give my trust."55

### National Loyalty, Identity, and the International Soldier by Henry V. Dicks

The position taken by Henry V. Dicks in *National Loyalty, Identity, and the International Soldier* is that "it is a fundamental of collective action that for any group to be effective in pursuing its object, its members must be reasonably free from crises of loyalty."<sup>56</sup> In support of this thesis, he draws upon the long-recognized theory, popularized by Napoleon, that an armed force in action is only as strong as its group morale. Expounding upon Napoleon's thoughts, military thinkers formulated the conditions governing military morale and provide the framework for Dicks to present the potential conflicts, as well as review the methods to ease and prevent conflicts, of national loyalty and identity that threaten an international peace force.

With a focus on the first four factors of fostering military morale, Dicks indicates Soldiers in an international force, such as the hypothetical United Nations (UN) Force must: 1) share a belief in the cause for which they are asked to fight and die; 2) possess conviction of personal and group worth, solidified by the esteem for which the community and the higher command holds them; 3) have confidence in the leadership, especially those to whom they answer directly; 4) have resulted from the respective Soldier's good selection to the force based upon the tasks and demands required by the unit's role according to the personal aptitude of the Soldier.<sup>57</sup> The first two factors of good morale are interwoven in that (at the time of the writing in 1963) the recent wars have been fought in the defense of or for the greater glory of the nation state.<sup>58</sup> Either of which could be considered a good cause that the Soldiers will believe in and the community will stand behind. A distinction between national loyalty and nationalism is drawn because a Soldier's identity could be an impediment to the formulation of an UN force, particularly in regards to the latter two factors. Contrary to popular belief, Ewin opines that a Soldier may possess national identity, referred to as pride in one's nation, and still be capable of

belonging to the UN force. However, militant nationalism would not be compatible for it refers to one that is unsure of his personal identity, which indicates secret feelings of inferiority and narcissistic self-assertion.<sup>59</sup> Drawing upon the writings of military theorist Morris Janowitz, Dicks asserted that national loyalty in and of itself can be overcome through the proper selection of Soldiers. The professional Soldier has nearly universal attitudes toward his role and certain personal values that lead to his loyalty to the commander-in-chief and the acceptance of a brotherhood of disciplined men, whether at the national or international level. <sup>60</sup> Accordingly, the Soldier will necessarily recognize the authority and have confidence in his face-to-face leadership. To ensure international loyalty of the force, the Soldiers should be selected from diverse cultures, races, and nationalities brought together and held together by a common task commitment. <sup>61</sup> Lastly, the UN force should be ad hoc, such as those used in Gaza and Congo, comprised of Soldiers from smaller countries of non-competing powers to lessen any conflict between national and international loyalties, which will further encourage the requisite group cohesion and morale necessary for success.

### Loyalty in the Modern World by A.A.M. Kinneging

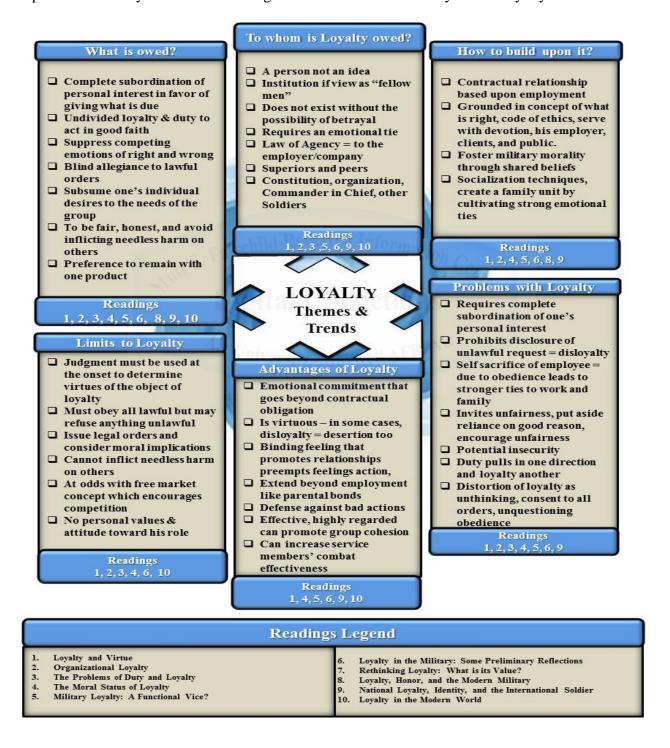
A. A. M. Kinneging answers two questions in his article *Loyalty in the Modern World* – what is loyalty, and what is the value of loyalty. He points out, quite ironically, that there are hundreds of books and articles published each year on loyalty and virtually all of them belong to the "useful but not very noble discipline of marketing." As a sub-discipline of economics, the subject of loyalty is foreign to its basic tenets. He contends the free market, which encourages the buyers and sellers to compete for customers, is fundamentally at odds with consumer or brand loyalty. The market is a system of competition and the more competition, the better. Marketing experts will try to sway consumers to remain loyal and continuously strive to meet

consumer needs to ensure there is not a shift toward the competitor and, thus, brand disloyalty. Furthering his argument that loyalty is contradictory to the market systems, Kinneging notes that, "only a crank would speak in terms such as disloyalty – or betrayal, defection, unfaithfulness, treachery" when related to consumer choice.<sup>64</sup> Kinneging purports, "loyalty is loyalty only when there is a possibility of betrayal" and, because there is no room for betrayal in economics, it makes no sense to speak of loyalty.<sup>65</sup> He nevertheless admits that secondary loyalty, a term coined by St. Thomas Aquinas, is a consumer's preference to stay with one product.

Intrinsic in both consumer-loyalty and brand-loyalty is the establishment of a bond, which is also seen in the full sense of the word loyalty. Kinneging urges loyalty is an unbreakable, holy bond between human being and human being, not between human being and a thing or animal. 66 He further discusses whether someone can be loyal to a church or state depending upon how the person views such institutions. If one views it as an idea, then true loyalty cannot be given. On the contrary, if one views the institution is as a group of "fellow-men," then true loyalty can exist. Nevertheless, the modern view of loyalty, according to Kinneging, follows the economic perspective because it centers on the "I" rather than the "we" as in the political pre-modern world view. 67 Kinneging explores the pros and cons of both world views; the modern, economic view focuses on obligations owed to one person while the pre-modern, political view concentrates on a sense of community and helping those that belong to it. Through this discussion, Kinneging concludes that loyalty is a vital virtue but not a categorical imperative. There are limits to the duty to be loyal and Kinneging finds that in certain circumstances disloyalty, desertion, and treason would have been equally as virtuous. 68

# **Key Themes and Common Trends**

Although the readings encompassed perspectives on loyalty from varying disciplines, key themes were prevalent throughout. A diagram illustrates the common trends amongst the themes o provide a cursory view of the readings and a macro-view of analysis into loyalty.



# **Trend Analysis**

Overwhelmingly, the majority of the readings indicate that loyalty is a bond formulated through an emotional attachment. On the surface it appears that loyalty cannot occur between inanimate objects or intangibles, and Kinneging seems to indicate that loyalty only runs between people for loyalty cannot exist without the possibility of betrayal. This view is problematic for the United States military, whose members pledge to support and defend the Constitution against all enemies. However, Kinneging further explains that if a person views an institution, such as a state or church, as a collective group of people, then it can be the object of loyalty. The leaders and members, together, comprise the institution, and the members trust that the leaders' actions will be in the best interest of the institution and further its goals. In the case of the military, another exception to the basic consensus that loyalty is between people exists because there is a contractual obligation. Both Fielder and Baron indicate that the contract controls to whom or what loyalty is owed. While Fielder looks at the commitment between employer and employee under the law of agency and Baron focuses on the code of ethics a professional must abide by to maintain licensure, the analysis of both illustrates that loyalty can be owed to an idea and an organization based on the obligation in the contract. Therefore, the argument that loyalty is not intrinsic in the military because it must be between people is flawed and the focus then becomes what military loyalty requires.

The military service members' contract, or oath of office, identifies defense of the nation as the utmost priority and he, therefore, owes undivided loyalty when acting in furtherance of that goal. Ewin described the priority level a person must ascribe to loyalty as the complete subordination of personal interests.<sup>69</sup> When given a choice between doing what she wants to do or what the military asks of her, loyalty dictates that the Soldier choose the military. Implicit in

the duty to give what is owed in accordance with loyalty, is the duty to act in good faith in all actions and inactions, for the law of agency dictates that the employee must obey all lawful instructions but may refuse anything unlawful. As an agent, the employee is required to act in the best interest of the employer. John Kleining writes in *On Loyalty and Loyalties, the Contours of a Problematic Virtue*, "if an organization wants you to do right it asks for your integrity, if it wants you to do wrong it demands your loyalty." Military operational loyalty does both. It transcends the normal parameters of loyalty by requiring the duty to act with integrity and demanding actions that may be morally wrong, such as taking the life of another.

The oath of office, alone, cannot ensure service members meet the demands of military operational loyalty; the oath merely provides the seeds to build loyalty. The commitment to the organization begins here, as well as a sense of duty to uphold its principles. The military is an organization viewed as a group of "fellow-men", and the oath charges the people within the hierarchical framework people with defense of the nation. The principle of organizational loyalty is two-fold. The first, which the oath establishes, stems from duty based on the employee's tie to the organization and its goals based on employment, while the second is loyalty derived from the employee's identification with a group of people within the organization. The duty to obey does not extend beyond the commitment established through employment with the organization, but loyalty due to a shared group identity does. The organizational framework of the military allows a family unit to form by separating service members from previous social circles through socialization techniques to create strong emotional ties to the military platoon, battery, battalion, and brigade that they now belong. Connor finds that cultivating familial ties is necessary to motivate Soldiers to act in particular manner, especially when faced with competing loyalties.<sup>71</sup> In the Army this process begins in basic

training when the enlisted Soldier is removed from his community and restricted from speaking with them during the first phase, when the recruits are subjected to "total control." During these five weeks, the military instructors constantly monitor and correct the recruits, not only for their actions but also for those of the group, to teach group identity. Accordingly, when one recruit receives punishment for an infraction, they all often suffer the same punishment. The shared camaraderie over the physical and mental challenges during the initial phase of basic training and the remaining five weeks provides an emotional attachment that is often unparalleled.

The loyalty that a Soldier feels toward his peers does not necessarily carry over to his commanders. Loyalty, according to Fielder, must be developed, encouraged, and ultimately earned by military leaders. The Further, CPT Wheeler asserts that military loyalty is a function of trust, which the service member will give if he perceives integrity in the commander. Then the commander must inspire loyalty through his own moral integrity. CPT Wheeler finds that successful leaders have accomplished this through an impartial point of view, active concern for others, and a disciplined attempt to have their words match their actions. Without loyalty to the commander, the duty to obey that is owed to the organization may be met, but the ultimate demand to fight to the death in defense of the country is at risk. The Nation depends on its leaders to cultivate military operational loyalty, to elevate the trust and commitment established within the military family to enable Soldiers to kill and be killed in its defense.

The service members' affinity to his peers creates a brotherhood that, while necessary, competes with loyalty to the organization and represents the only self-created limitation. The commitment inherent in loyalty requires one to act in good faith and thereby limits actions to those that the service member reasonably believes will benefit the organization. The duty to follow an order, as asserted by Coleman, has a corresponding duty for those who issue the order

to ensure it is legal and consider its moral implications.<sup>75</sup> Consequently, a service member does not, and cannot, unthinkingly follow orders that her superiors give. This contradicts traditional interpretations of loyalty, which indicates loyalty requires blind obedience. The modern view debunks that theory and instead clarifies that judgment is used at the onset to determine if the object of loyalty is worthy because, thereafter, loyalty will requires him to subsume competing interest in furtherance of the desires of loyalty. Therefore, moral considerations, such as religion, pride, prejudices, and ideas of right and wrong, compete with and limit loyalty. The service member willing puts aside actions that many would may consider in keeping with "good judgment" when he decides to give loyalty. In the case of the military, killing or acts of torture may be moral wrongs that service members must overcome in defense of the nation. The competing loyalties found in moral considerations will not limit military operational loyalty if socialization has established successful bonds to the organization and the leader is one of integrity that has obtained the highest level of trust and commitment from the subordinates. However, without the leader to strike a balance between the duty owed to the military and loyalty to the organization, the group identity created during socialization creates a bond among Soldiers that can compete with the needs of the military. The duty to obey may pull in one direction and loyalty to fellow brethren in another.

If the value of military loyalty were based solely on the quantity of advantages to disadvantages, there would be no place for it in the military. Loyalty has been seen to make Soldiers ignore wrong-doing, collude, and cover-up in a show of solidarity with a fellow Soldier. This abuse of loyalty is not limited to secret actions among Soldiers. Rather, as Connor explains, military loyalty enables systemic abuse, violence, and illegal activities because it overwhelms other emotional responses, such as shame, fear, disgust, and anxiety. While one must necessarily

subsume his own desires in favor of the group, loyalty lends itself to excesses. The world has witnessed egregious distortions of loyalty in actions of WWII Nazi Soldiers and American Soldiers at Abu Ghraib. Ironically, Connor notes that just as loyalty enables Soldiers to act in a manner that is fundamentally wrong, it is also the way the military convinces them to overcome the problem of "thou shalt not kill." Consequently, it is vitally important a service member judges the object of loyalty properly because she subsumes her own desires when she gives loyalty. Jones, however, points out that Soldiers are not given much latitude to question authority as it is considered disloyal, and LTC Hesford further argues this is a problem with loyalty because it is in direct contrast to the profession of arms, which encourages intellectual and mental agility. 77 78 LTC Hesford contends the U. S. Marine Corps should remove loyalty from the list of core values and discuss its dangers more than its value during military education courses.<sup>79</sup> He does acknowledge that loyalty will occur naturally, which explains why it cannot be ignored. People will form bonds and making decisions according to those relationships ties, whether the decisions are ethically right or morally wrong. Coleman rightfully asserts that if military service members understand the reasoning behind an order, they are more likely to recognize it as legal, understand the limits of loyalty, and choose to follow the order in the face of competing loyalties. 80 This leadership tool represents part of the balance that needs to be struck between loyalty and the desire to have a morally sensitive military force as described by CPT Wheeler.<sup>81</sup> A man of integrity will inspire trust that the orders given are legal and in consideration of the moral implications as required by loyalty. Dicks explains the result is an effective, highly regarded military force – an example of group cohesion. 82 Group loyalty under the guidance of a skilled leader is a clear advantage of military operational loyalty, enabling

service members to fight to the death, which is an advantage of military loyalty whose quality cannot be eroded by the quantity of disadvantages that the virtue may also pose.

#### Conclusion

Military loyalty is commitment and trust raised to the highest echelon. It is one of the cornerstones of military service and successful operations are dependent upon military operational loyalty. Commitment starts with the agreement to serve, pledged in the Oath of Office. Immediately thereafter, service members establish bonds of trust amongst each other as they formulate a group identity during basic training, where a service members competing loyalties are suppressed through socialization techniques. This is a necessary component for loyalty but it is essential for military loyalty. The nation must take precedence over all other interests. Furthermore, military loyalty is a key component to military operational loyalty, wherein the service member has subsumed all competing interests and will even kill in defense of country, committing what some consider an established moral wrong. Only a leader of integrity can develop utilize a service member's loyalty to the military profession and develop operational military leadership. This leader must match his words with his actions, to inspire loyalty as he directs operational missions. Further, he has a duty to render legal orders, that are in good faith and support the Nation's defense. Likewise, the service members have a duty to follow orders. Military operational loyalty is what makes forces successful. Leaders must balance the loyalty that begins with right hand raised and cultivate a willingness to subsume all competing interests, particularly when established social norms may indicate the ensuing service members must take are morally wrong.

### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Bill Murphy Jr. 17 Inspiring Quotes About Military Leadership for Veterans Day accessed on 27 October 2016, http://www.inc.com/bill-murphy-jr/17-inspiring-quotes-about-military-leadership-for-veterans-day.html
  - <sup>2</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>3</sup> Oath of Commissioned Officers, accessed on 27 October 2016, https://www.army.mil/values/officers.html.
- <sup>4</sup> John Kleinig, "Loyalty", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2013 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <a href="http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2013/entries/loyalty/">http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2013/entries/loyalty/</a>.
  - <sup>5</sup> https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/commitment.
  - <sup>6</sup> https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/trust.
- <sup>7</sup> R. E. Ewin, "Loyalty and Virtues." *The Philosophical Quarterly* (1950-) 42, no. 169 (1992): 403-19. doi:10.2307/2220283, 403.
  - <sup>8</sup> Ibid., 405.
  - <sup>9</sup> Ibid., 407.
  - <sup>10</sup> Ibid., 409.
  - <sup>11</sup> Ibid., 415.
- <sup>12</sup>John H. Fielder, "Organizational Loyalty." *Business & Professional Ethics Journal* 11, no. 1 (1992): 71-90. http://www.jstor.org.aufric.idm.oclc.org/stable/27800872, 72.
  - <sup>13</sup> Ibid., 72.
  - <sup>14</sup> Ibid., 73.
  - <sup>15</sup> Ibid., 76.
  - <sup>16</sup> Ibid., 78.
  - <sup>17</sup> Ibid., 80.
  - <sup>18</sup> Ibid., 82.
- <sup>19</sup> Stephen Coleman, "The Problems of Duty and Loyalty", Journal of Military Ethics, 8:2, (2009): 105-115, DOI: 10.1080/15027570903037982. 105.
  - <sup>20</sup> Ibid., 106.
  - <sup>21</sup> Ibid., 112.
  - <sup>22</sup> Ibid., 112.
  - <sup>23</sup> Ibid., 114.
  - <sup>24</sup> Ibid., 108.
  - <sup>25</sup> Ibid., 108.
  - <sup>26</sup> Marcia Baron, The Moral Status of Loyalty,
- http://ethics.iit.edu/publication/Moral\_status\_loyalty\_Baron.pdf, 1.
  - <sup>27</sup> Ibid., 2.
  - <sup>28</sup> Ibid., 5.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid., 2. Marcia Baron refers to the National Society of Professional Engineers without providing additional citations.
  - <sup>30</sup> Ibid., 12.
  - <sup>31</sup> Ibid., 13.
  - <sup>32</sup> Ibid., 25.
- <sup>33</sup> James M. Connor, "Military Loyalty: A Functional Vice?" *Criminal Justice Ethics* 29, no. 3 (12, 2010): 278-290.

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         <sup>34</sup> Ibid., 279
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         <sup>37</sup> Ibid., 282
         <sup>38</sup> Ibid., 286
         <sup>39</sup> Mitchell Jones, "Loyalty in the Military: Some Preliminary Reflections." Criminal
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         <sup>41</sup> Ibid., 292.
         <sup>42</sup> Ibid., 293.
         <sup>43</sup> Ibid., 295.
         <sup>44</sup> Ibid., 296.
         <sup>45</sup> J.P. Hesford, "Rethinking 'Loyalty': What is its Value?" Marine Corps Gazette95, no. 8
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         <sup>47</sup> Ibid., 33.
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         <sup>49</sup> Captain Michael O. Wheeler, "Loyalty, Honor, and the Modern Military", Air
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         <sup>50</sup> Ibid., 1.
         <sup>51</sup> Ibid., 3.
         <sup>52</sup> Ibid.,.4.
         <sup>53</sup> Ibid., 4.
         <sup>54</sup> Ibid., 5.
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<sup>56</sup> Dicks, Henry V. "National Loyalty, Identity, and the International Soldier." International
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         <sup>58</sup> Ibid., 426.
         <sup>59</sup> Ibid., 426.
         <sup>60</sup> Ibid., 429.
         <sup>61</sup> Ibid., 437.
         <sup>62</sup> A.A.M. Kinneging, "Loyalty in the Modern World." Modern Age 46, no. 1
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<sup>71</sup> James M. Connor, "Military Loyalty: A Functional Vice?" *Criminal Justice Ethics* 29, no. 3 (12, 2010): 278-290.

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid.,32.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>65</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup> Ibid., 68.

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