
**FORENSIC AND ETHICAL ISSUES
IN MILITARY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH**



The Coat of Arms
1818
Medical Department of the Army

A 1976 etching by Vassil Ekimov of an original color print that appeared in *The Military Surgeon*, Vol XLI, No 2, 1917

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Art: Courtesy of the Army Art Collection, US Army Center of Military History

FORENSIC AND ETHICAL ISSUES IN MILITARY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

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Foreword

I am pleased to present this volume, entitled *Forensic and Ethical Issues in Military Behavioral Health*, published by the Army Medical Department's Borden Institute. The Borden Institute, part of the Army Medical Department Center and School, is the primary outlet for scholarly and peer-reviewed publications describing observations made and science conducted by the healthcare providers who take care of our Nation's Service Members and Veterans. The Institute's publications do not necessarily represent Army doctrine or the opinion of the Department of Defense or the Army; nevertheless, they represent our providers' best work as they seek to inform future policy and decision-making.

This *Textbook of Military Medicine* addresses the practice of forensic medicine and the application of psychology and psychiatry to questions and issues within the military legal system. The men and women who serve in the US Army responded valiantly to the challenge of terrorism provoked by the events of September 11, 2001. Yet, after more than a decade of combat, this call to duty has left many Soldiers and their Families with the psychological wounds of war. In response, we strengthened our behavioral health system of care and focused on the holistic approach to Soldiers' wounds. Additionally, we continue to build our partnership with the US Department of Veterans Affairs for the care of disabled Soldiers after they leave the Army.

It is important that our care providers document what they have learned during these efforts. This text is an important addition to the body of work identifying the medical lessons learned by the US Army from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The authors help us recognize the necessary approaches to continue helping our current combat veterans, as well as those of the next generation.

Patricia D. Horoho
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Washington, DC
October 2014

Preface

Those who work in the field of forensic psychiatry and psychology apply those sciences to questions and issues relating to law and the legal system. Forensic experts can play a role in determining the competency of a perpetrator to stand trial; in deciding whether an individual is mentally ill; or whether the individual is a risk to himself or herself, his or her family, or society at large. He or she can give insight into factors that may mitigate punishment in those convicted of a crime, including those who are convicted in capital crime cases. They can provide a review of the issues associated with an individual who has committed suicide, evaluating not just the individual—or in some cases, group of individuals—but also the emotional and psychological environment where the event occurred.

The primary role for the forensic mental health practitioner is in the day-to-day evaluation of individuals, very often with those accused of crimes. Yet, many other issues exist where the forensic scientist can play a role. For example, how can soldiers cope with the emotional traumas of combat and return to a life of inner peace? How shall we compensate those disabled with emotional issues that keep them from achieving a fulfilling life? Are there psychological links that join those who commit suicide in the active duty and veteran population? Relevant military issues have brought the science of these experts into new venues and stretched the roles that these scientists play in our justice system.

Military culture directly reflects the American culture. Yet, the culture of the military, by its very nature, requires a greater need to become unified in thought and in action. Forensic psychology and psychiatry focus on the nuances and issues that are often beneath the surface and help the military develop a unified culture. This volume focuses on both traditional military forensic psychiatry and psychology; yet it also deals with newly recognized issues or issues made more prominent during the past decade of war and the terrorism that has become a part of our everyday world since the events of September 11, 2001. The first chapter presents the traditional role of the forensic psychologist and psychiatrist and introduces changes that have occurred in the military culture over the past decade. Many of the issues described in that chapter have leaped from the background of the military culture into the foreground and bear further discussion. Subsequent chapters describe the importance of confidentiality; the recognition of extenuating factors in the defense of a soldier charged with a crime, particularly capital crimes; posttraumatic stress disorder; disability assessment and hearings; the role of psychological autopsies in understanding why suicides occur among military personnel and the ways that suicides can be prevented; malingering; the relationship between mental health issues and disciplinary problems; and the relevance of a single drug, mefloquine, in a soldier's behavior. An introduction to training in military forensic psychology and psychiatry is also provided.

In this book, I have assembled a list of authors who have written about the military's challenges in the field of ethics and forensics. The authors are mainly academic and military forensic psychologists and psychiatrists. This list includes leaders of forensic psychiatry training programs; epidemiologists who specialize in understanding the issues associated with suicide, or outbreaks of suicide; narcotic addiction specialists; toxicologists; and those who serve to define a soldier's psychiatric disability. My intent was to show the constructive value that these individuals add to the military system of justice as we try to understand the psychological struggles that members of our military community face.

I applaud the contribution of these authors. It gives me great pride to present this textbook that shows the impact that forensic psychologists and psychiatrists have on the health of the members of our military. I encourage you to share these chapters with me and appreciate the competence and efforts that these authors have brought to this book.

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