The Green Zone:  
“An Understanding and Appreciation of the United States Military Culture”
“Thoughts While Running”

- Most Military Service Members volunteered post 9-11 knowing they would likely be called upon to enter into direct combat in a foreign land…and possibly die for their country…

- Does there exist across our society a better example of Moral Courage?
“More Thoughts While Running”

- The Military Culture (or brand) is uniquely shaped by a “closed society” consisting of a strict set of values, rules, policies & laws.

- Such a society successfully integrates individual backgrounds, races, religions, professional/social classes (officers and enlisted) & cultural beliefs while maintaining a passionate commitment to Mission, Family & Team.

- Can you identify anywhere else across our society where such a successful integration of human capital occurs on a routine basis?
Thus, as part of the Military Culture, Our Service Members and Veterans may find it hard to .....
...not be understanding when others complain about not getting a good night’s sleep
...not be sympathetic when someone says how hard it is to have a new baby in the house
... not keep from ridiculing someone who complains about the weather
...not control their emotions when they hear someone say the war is all about Oil
... startle to loud noises
...not feel comfortable with a stranger behind them
... not be sensitive to hearing complaints about children being a nuisance
...not easily make new friends
...not forget the things they have seen and done
So Why Do They Volunteer to Do It?

“We Do It For Each Other”

“It is All About Service…Not Personal Gain or Profit”

“We cherish membership as a Band of Brothers & Sisters”

“We prefer “team” over “individuality”

“We recognize there exists something greater in life besides ourselves”

“We care about Our Country and want to Make A Difference”
Long gone are the days where the individual who seemingly could not fit into society was “sentenced“ to join the Military

- Volunteers (less than 1%)
  - Men & Women of Character with a solid social track record
  - Moral Courage counter to current societal norms
  - Educated: 99% possess high school diploma
  - Standards: Less than 8.7% receive waiver to enter service
  - Youth Movement: Maximum age to enlist is 35 (was 42)
The Green Zone:
An Initiative to Support Our Student-Veterans
An initiative to support Student-Veterans by identifying USM Faculty and Staff volunteers who have received training, are knowledgeable about Student-Veterans issues & resources, and prepared to assist such individuals as needed

**Green Zone Training:**

- Educate and provide Faculty & Staff information/resources to understand the issues faced by Our Student-Veterans

- Serve as a resource to other Faculty, Staff or Students who may have questions regarding Our Student-Veterans

- Display the Green Zone identifying moniker to let others know they are available to provide support & information about resources for Student-Veterans
Why Green Zone Training?

- Our Student-Veterans want your care and interest
- They have issues… and will likely not seek help… unless they know someone “get’s it” and cares enough to listen
- You are a respected authority… they trust you (ethos)
- An emerging need exists to better understand Our Student-Veterans
Let’s First “Clear the Air” of Common Veteran Misconceptions & Stereotypes

- Will most likely have combat related PTSD or depression issues
- Their combat experience and related behaviors make them a risk to others
- Only attending school for the VA benefits and not serious about their studies
- Will struggle academically & professionally because they are intellectually inferior to peers
- Are angry, volatile, and dangerous
- Feel entitled & want special treatment

**Our Veterans are:** Service-Minded; Mission Focused; Task-Condition-Standard Oriented; Dedicated to Purpose; Hard Working; Loyal to the Team and Self-sacrificing individuals who possess the life experiences, values and moral courage to “Make A Difference” in all endeavors both inside and outside the military.
A Snapshot of the U.S. Military

- **Branches of Armed Forces**
  - Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force & Coast Guard

- **Military Components**
  - Active Duty, Reserves, National Guard, Individual Ready Reserve, Retirees, Veterans & Families

- **All-Volunteer Force** (Officers from OCS, ROTC and Service Academies…14% of the Force…2% Warrant Officer)

- **Enlisted** (comprise 84% of the Force)

- **Deployment Lifestyle** impacting Service Members and Families
The Average Active Duty Service Member

- Rank: Corporal/Specialist
- Age: 22
- Time in Service: 4-years
- Base Pay: $1,978.00 per month
- Education: High School Graduate
- Martial Status: Married with two children
- Race: 60% Caucasian & 40% Ethnic Minority
- Gender: 85% Male & 15% Female
- Average Time Away from Home: 6-12 months annually
- Average Work Day: Until Mission Accomplished
Oath of Enlistment or Commissioning

I, [name], do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God.

Code of Conduct

Article I: I am an American fighting in the forces which guard my country and our way of life. I am prepared to give my life in their defense. (to wit: All men and women in the armed forces have the duty at all times and under all circumstances to oppose the enemies of the United States and support its national interests. In training or in combat, alone or with others, while evading capture or enduring captivity, this duty belongs to each American defending our nation regardless of circumstances).
Creed (Soldier/Warrior Creed)

- I am an American Soldier.
- I am a Warrior and a member of a team.
- I serve the people of the United States, and live the Army Values.
- I will always place the mission first.
- I will never accept defeat.
- I will never quit.
- I will never leave a fallen comrade.
- I am disciplined, physically and mentally tough, trained and proficient in my warrior tasks and drills.
- I always maintain my arms, my equipment and myself.
- I am an expert and I am a professional.
- I stand ready to deploy, engage, and destroy, the enemies of the United States of America in close combat.
- I am a guardian of freedom and the American way of life.
- I am an American Soldier.
Marine Noncommissioned Officer Creed

- I am an NCO dedicated to training new Marines and influencing the old.
- I am forever conscious of each Marine under my charge, and by example will inspire him to the highest standards possible.
- I will strive to be patient, understanding, just and firm.
- I will commend the deserving and encourage the wayward.
- I will never forget that I am responsible to my Commanding Officer for the morale, discipline, and efficiency of my men.
- Their performance will reflect an image of me.

Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ)

The UCMJ allows for personal jurisdiction over all members of the Uniformed Services:

- Non-judicial punishment (Article 15)
- Courts Martial
- Article 138 Redress
Formal Policies and Traditions (i.e., dress, salute, Retreat)

Core Values:

- **Loyalty** (USMC Semper Fidelis – Always Faithful)
- Duty
- Respect
- Selfless service
- **Honor** (not to be confused with Pride)
- Integrity
- Personal Courage
- Commitment
Military Belief System

- Shared set of beliefs - thinking & behavior
- Self-sacrifice for the team (*Duty-Honor-Country*)
- Shared understanding of the mission
- Self-Image Barriers
  - 65% fear a perception of being perceived as “weak”
  - 63% fear leadership might treat them differently
  - 59% fear others would have less confidence in them
Military Culture: Great Expectations

- Oath
- Code of Conduct
- Creed
- Uniform Code of Military Justice
- Core Values
- Military Belief System
- Formal Policies and Traditions
- Unit History & Standards
- Battle Buddies
But You Also Have Unique Service Member Skills…”In a Single Package”

- Leadership
- Motivation
- Time management
- Organization and Focus
- Strong work ethic
- Stress management
- Age and maturity
- Reliable
- Extensive work experience
- Career focused
- Broader world-view
Contrasts with Civilian Culture & Lifestyles

- Unique Obligation
- Loss of Individuality
- “Around the Clock” Authority
- Limited Choices and Options
- Constrained Freedom (real or perceived)
- Earned Flexibility
- Organization and well-defined Chain of Command
- Few Luxuries
- Fixed Rules, Regulations and Law
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>COMBAT ZONE</strong></th>
<th><strong>HOME</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cohesion with buddies</td>
<td>Withdrawal from others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability and control</td>
<td>Lack of control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targeted aggression</td>
<td>Inappropriate aggression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tactical awareness</td>
<td>Hypervigilance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lethally armed</td>
<td>“Locked and loaded” at home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional control</td>
<td>Detached and uncaring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-defensive driving</td>
<td>Aggressive driving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline and obeying orders</td>
<td>No clear “chain of command”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Post-Deployment Transition Challenges

- Post-Traumatic Stress
- Suicide and suicidal ideations
- Depression
- Anger
- Concentration
- Discomfort in crowds and closed-in spaces
- Feelings of displacement
Real Life Experience (1/2)

“I drive along the highway and as we cross under every bridge I slow up to scan for snipers or possible ambush points. Whereas others see road signs, I see IED trigger points. My wife can’t seem to understand that I still have all this stuff in me and the apprehension is real.”

“That snowstorm is a sandstorm and I’m stuck in it and I can’t get out and somebody’s gonna kill me and I'm looking for them. And that’s what it is to me. To you, it’s a snowstorm; to me it is reliving a combat experience.”

“I grabbed my son by the neck when he started complaining (because we weren’t going out to eat) and before I knew it I was in tears trying to figure out why I hurt someone I love…All this stuff just sticks in your mind and you can’t get rid of it.”
“There’s a lot of things that go through our minds that you don’t even think about. You go into a restaurant and you just think, ‘oh let’s just sit here’ for no casual reason. You just say ‘this is a nice place to sit.’ But for us, we sit with our backs against the wall, you have to look at the door, we know our exits where we’re gonna go if something happens.”

“We completely shut off all emotions we have. We’ve got, what, one emotion: and that’s to be angry, to be mean and evil. At least that’s what people think. To us, that’s just a way to survive all this.”
Thoughts and beliefs:

- "You can't trust anyone."
- "If I got out of control, it would be horrible, life-threatening, or could not be tolerated."
- "After all I've been through, I deserve to be treated better."
- "Others are out to get me," or "They won't protect me."
PTS Warning Signs

Changes in Thought

- “Nothing is working out for me. I am never going to get better.”
- “I’m feeling down. This must mean that I am going to fall into a deep depression again.”

Mood Changes

- “I just don’t feel happy, even when I am around people that I know I love.”
- “My mood keeps changing. In minutes, I can go from feeling happy to really down.”

Changes in Behavior

- “I don’t have the energy to take care of myself in the morning. I haven’t showered for days.”
- “I’ve been drinking more, but just to take the edge off of my feelings a little.”
  “I don’t want to be around people anymore.”
Recognizing PTS

- It can go unrecognized for months or even years
- If you are suspicious something is not right, ask concerned questions
- Avoid being invasive, demanding, or suggestive “something’s wrong"
- Ask questions such as:
  - How well have you been sleeping lately?
  - What occupies your thoughts most of the time?
  - How often do you get angry?
  - Do you have any trouble focusing on studying?
  - Have you been feeling down, bothered, or worried lately?
PTS Treatment Resources

- PTS Support- www.ptsdsupport.net
- Military One Source- www.militaryonesource.com (800-342-9647)
- Information on Trauma and PTS- www.ptsd.va.gov/public/
- VA Health Support Services- http://www.va.gov/health/docs/Print_This_for_a_Vet.pdf
Military Suicide

US Department of Veteran’s Affairs:

- Each month **950** Veterans are treated by the VA for suicide ideation
- Significant increase in Military Suicide since operations in Iraq/Afghanistan
- Service Members *who experienced combat* have taken their lives at rate of more than **30 per 100,000**
- Service Members *who never deployed* have taken their lives at a rate of **25-30 per 100,000**
- Significant increase in recent years (double for combat troops and triple for non-deployers)
Military Suicide

Sometimes a crisis may involve thoughts of suicide. Learn to recognize these warning signs:

- Hopelessness, feeling like there’s no way out
- Anxiety, agitation, sleeplessness, or mood swings
- Feeling like there is no reason to live
- Rage or anger
- Engaging in risky activities without thinking
- Increasing alcohol or drug abuse
- Withdrawing from family and friends
Veterans who are considering suicide often show signs of depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and/or hopelessness:

- Appearing sad or depressed (most of the time)
- Clinical depression: deep sadness, loss of interest, trouble sleeping and eating…that doesn’t go away or continues to get worse
- Feeling anxious, agitated, or unable to sleep
- Neglecting personal welfare; deteriorating physical appearance
- Withdrawing from friends, family, and society, or sleeping all the time
Loss of interest...hobbies, work, school or other things one cares about
Frequent and dramatic mood changes
Expressing feelings of excessive guilt or shame
Feelings of failure or decreased performance
Feeling life is not worth living, having no sense of purpose
Talk about feeling trapped...like there is no way out of a situation
Having feelings of desperation, and saying there’s no solution
The following signs require immediate attention:

- Thinking about hurting or killing yourself
- Looking for ways to kill yourself
- Talking about death, dying, or suicide
- Self-destructive behavior
Suicide

- Visit www.veteranscrisisline.net

- Call 800-273-TALK (8255) to talk to a counselor at a Lifeline crisis center

- Or text to 838255
Promoting Positive Coping Actions (1/2)

Recommend Veterans consider:

- Exercise
- Pursue a hobby
- Volunteer in a Local Mississippi community
- Communicate…Write down thoughts
- Talk with someone (instead of acting)
- Refrain from alcohol and drug use
- Change the pattern "act first, think later" to "think first, act later"
Promoting Positive Coping Actions (2/2)

Recommend Veterans consider:

- Try to replace angry/negative thoughts with something positive
- Reframe thoughts (e.g.: "Others do not have to be perfect for me to be comfortable")
- Find out about available treatment and join a PTS support group
- Increase contact with Veterans and experienced Service Members
- Talk with a doctor, counselor or qualified “trusted agent”
- Get enough sleep and relax (read, watch a movie, listen to music, etc.)
What Can We Do?

- Be an active listener
- Be purposeful
- Be genuine and respectful
- Be unconditionally positive
- Be patient
Suggested DO’s and DON’Ts

DO:
- Thank them for their honorable service…Dignity and Respect
- Listen non-judgmentally with empathy and acceptance
- Be aware the Service Member may be working through adjustment issues
- Make sure they are aware of available services and potential benefits

DON’T:
- Try to “talk the talk.” Nothing will discredit you more
- Give your armchair general or political analysis of the war
- Press for details of a traumatic event; but be prepared to listen
- Tell him/her they are “lucky” to have survived or “things could have been much worse”
Only MDs, licensed counselors and attorneys acting in the capacity of their jobs possess the legal protection of confidentiality.

If a crime is reported to you, you must report it to the university.

If a student is involved, report the incident to the Dean of Students.