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Improving Spiritual Care by Chaplains for Service Members Who Witness Death

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IMPROVING SPIRITUAL CARE BY CHAPLAINS FOR SERVICE MEMBERS WHO WITNESS DEATH

BY

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DEDICATION

To the soldiers of the 225 FSB, *Strike Lighting,* 2d Brigade, 25 Infantry (L), that we left behind in the war-torn desert and the family that brought me home: Joshua, Molly, Karl, and Jack

ABSTRACT

IMPROVING SPIRITUAL CARE BY CHAPLAINS FOR SERVICE MEMBERS WHO WITNESS DEATH

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This research studied the experience of military and Veteran Affairs chaplains who work with a spectrum of military veterans. The purpose was to better understand how chaplain training prepared or failed to equip spiritual care providers to minister to service members during and/or after the initial experience that they identified as traumatic.

The researcher asked nine open-ended questions to encourage and facilitate reflective responses. After grouping responses with similar answers, the researcher coded the chaplains' responses to determine themes that would describe and somehow encompass the phenomenon of serving as a chaplain in a war theater. Throughout the study, the researcher was guided by the theology developed primarily by Paul Tillich. Enriching Tillich's understandings were the writings of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, SJ. Taken together, their writings and insights offered a spectrum of possibility that not only drew from the spiritual care training provider but also extended that training to the broad experience of service chaplains serving in war theaters.

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This research project was inspired by my service as a deployed chaplain, responsible for caring for the dead and consoling the living in a war theater. In addition, as a chaplain, my responsibilities included witnessing the terrible burden of war that kept the conflict alive in the hearts of men and women who were unable to find resolution to the suffering of war and their participation in it. The experience compelled me to explore how other chaplains reconciled their training as ministers with their experience of war—and its aftermath. J.D. Salinger captures some of the trauma in an unpublished short story *The Magic Foxhole*:

> There wasn't nothing on the beach but the dead boys of 'A' and 'B' Company, and some dead sailor boys, and a Chaplain that was crawling around looking for his glasses in the sand. He was the only thing that was moving, and eighty-eight [artillery] shells were breaking all around him, and there he was crawling around on his hands and knees, looking for his glasses. He got knocked off....That's what the beach looked like when I come in. (Alsen 2018, pp. 49-50)

Statement of the Problem

In a 2009 survey conducted by Veterans' Affairs Department, ninety-five percent of those service members diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) stated that the number one combat stressor is "seeing a dead body." The men and women currently serving in the Volunteer Army lack the life experiences sufficient to encounter death and, unlike previous generations, also lack the necessary religious vocabulary to contain a spiritual experience.

Table 1. Combat Stressors revealed by service members diagnosed with PTSD

Combat Stressors		Seeing dead bodies	Being shot at	Being attacked/ ambushed	Receiving rocket or mortar fire	Knowing someone killed or seriously injured
Locale	Service Branch	Percent Affected by Event Type				
Iraq	Army	95%	93%	89%	86%	86%
Iraq	Marines	94%	97%	95%	92%	87%
Afghanistan	Army	39%	66%	58%	84%	43%

(Veterans Affairs 2020)

A military chaplain's role blurs depending upon the politics of the time. The American Army Chaplain Corps generally claims George Washington as its founding authority in 1775, although Washington's letters suggest an earlier impetus during the French and Indian War (1755-63). His reasons were not associated with grieving and dying soldiers but rather were used as a means to develop a cohesive society. Washington wrote that the chaplain was to be, "A gentleman of sober, serious and religious deportment, who would improve morale and discourage gambling, swearing and drunkenness" (Davis 2000, p. 81).

Washington, who held a Reserve commission in the British Royal Army, followed the English system of bringing along his own clergyman and funding him out of pocket, but he appeared conflicted by the practice,

> The want of a chaplain does, I humbly conceive (sic), reflect dishonor upon the regiment, as all other officers are allowed. The gentlemen of the corps are sensible of this and did propose to support one at their private expense. But I think it would have a more graceful appearance were he appointed as others are. (Honeywell 1958, p. 23)

As a natural consequence of such a policy, the Chaplain Corps failed to gain genuine footing until the twentieth century, perhaps because of the American military complex—an irony in and of itself, better left for discussion another day.

In the New England colonies, religious support for chaplains was the purview of the local Congregational Pastor who was expected to bless the town's mustered troops. Pulpits were often rallying sites where clergy read the military announcements. This tradition would seem strange by the political standards of the twenty-first century in most mainline Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish congregations.

Other means for appointing chaplains included: state legislatures, and brigade votes; some appointees even appeared on the rolls as surgeons. The chaplaincy founding date of 29 January 1775 has been determined by the date when the monthly pay of $20.00 was approved by the Continental Congress. The chaplaincy appointment carried the rank of Captain (Honeywell 1958, p. 37).

The chaplains serving in the Continental Army were not charged with the same obligations as current chaplains. For example, early chaplains were all male. They were often required to meet demands of their denomination and provide for all others in their formation. Early in the country's history, chaplains were specifically recruited to be like-minded leaders. George Washington maintained that,

> The resolution which gave only one chaplain to a brigade point out that the arrangement of the preceding year which assigned each chaplain to two regiments had worked badly in several ways. He stated that the brigade commanders were unanimous in the opinion that the new plan could not be followed without great dissatisfaction. He felt that the adequate service to the brigade was too great a task for one man but placed major emphasis upon the danger of rousing discord and jealousy by forcing the men to participate in a form of worship they did not profess (Honeywell 1958, p. 39)

It is clear that the military chaplain's role has been loosely contained as demonstrated by the common indicators of pay, position, and practice. Chaplains not only struggled with a professional identity that was vulnerable to the whims of the times, but chaplains were also subject to reduction in numbers with the ebb and flow of American politics and armed conflict(s). For example, at the end of the War of 1812, only one chaplain remained on active duty. He was assigned to the Military Academy at West Point as a professor because education was considered a common function for chaplains. "For many years, the army posts had no chaplains except those chosen informally and paid by voluntary contributions" (Honeywell 1958, 79).

The American Chaplaincy was the target of a growing diversity of support as the nation expanded westward. The first recorded challenge to chaplains occurred March 13, 1849 when the Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives concluded,

> The spirit of Christianity has ever had a tendency to mitigate the rigor of war, if as yet it has not been entirely able to prevent it; to lead to acts of charity and kindness; and to humanize the heart.(Department of Defense 1977, p. 77)

The number of chaplains grew substantially on both sides of the Civil War. The most dramatic development being the placement of chaplains in the growing number of hospitals. At the direction of Abraham Lincoln, via General Order No. 78, 1862, the hospitals were erected to care for wounded service members

During the Civil War, with the appointment of the first Catholic Chaplain—to care for Irish soldiers under the command of General Polk—the tide towards diversity in chaplaincy began. Other religious leaders, particularly non-Christians, would be under-represented until the Act of 6 October 1917, which authorized the president to appoint twenty chaplains from unrepresented groups. Overall, the number of active duty

chaplains grew from seventy-four to 2,363 chaplains as America sent more men to Europe during World War I.

In the years to follow came the establishment, in 1919, of a chaplain school for 600 chaplains, at the direction of General John J. Pershing. Next, in 1920, came the appointment of the first Chief of Chaplains with the promulgation of the National Defense Act. Previously, on 2 March 1899 and 2 February 1901, Acts of Congress mandated that denominational endorsement was required. The Roman Catholics were the first to appoint (on 24 November 1917) an Endorser, Auxiliary Bishop Patrick Hayes, of New York. Other denominations were quick to follow. With the rise in numbers of chaplains and their varied deployments came the need for military doctrine to be codified. It came in the form of the *Handbook of the Army Chaplaincy* published in 1971.

George H. Williams concluded his survey of the American Chaplaincy with a lucid observation that speaks to the state of military spiritual care today,

> Chaplains, engaged in a very taxing ministry, complicated further by the enormous range of denominational differences in this country, in which church and state are to be separate, have had to sort out in very difficult and often personally hazardous circumstances of war or preparation; therefore, a whole range of shifting models: the soothsayer, the officer's chaplain, the enlisted man's padre, the fighting parson, the specialized counselor, the cheerleader, the charismatic mascot or talisman for scared unbelievers, the morale officer, and now perhaps even the prophet. (Williams 1972, p. 57)

It is little wonder, following this brief survey on the evolution of military chaplaincy, that pastoral identity and authority have proven to be elusive—and that the required spiritual care that may have mitigated the suffering of service members was not available, despite the hundreds of chaplains who were deployed to care for soldiers. Military chaplains navigate the tension between the inner needs for spiritual care of service members and the

outer requirements of their own ego, as well as the institutions that they serve. The military has a long tradition of understanding that death is an existential event, and it tasks the chaplain with providing meaning for those who survive. For, example in Faust's landmark study, he writes of the Civil War:

> The war encouraged not just the performance of the traditions of *ars moriendi* but their dissemination. Chaplains North and South saw this instruction as perhaps their most important obligation to the soldiers in their spiritual charge, a duty Catholic father William Corby described as "the sad consolation of helping them…to die well." (Faust 2008, p. 16)

Purpose of the Study

This study seeks to describe the overall experience of chaplains who have served in a war theater so that this transcendent experience can shed light on chaplains' educational needs and reveal possible opportunities that could improve the lives of service members who return home.

For this study to determine chaplains' war time experiences, chaplains who had, in fact, served in a war theater were asked to share their experience of caring for dying soldiers and civilians during their deployment as chaplains in a combat zone. Additionally, the study explores the space between the requirement to bury the dead and provide meaning—as noted in the resources provided by the U.S. Army Chaplain Center & School—and the chaplains' failures as perceived by soldiers:

> The mission of the Army Chaplain Corps is to provide religious support (RS) to the Army across the range of military operations by assisting commanders in providing for the free exercise of religion and providing religious, moral, and ethical advisement and leadership. The Army Chaplain Corps possesses three core competencies (nurture the living, care for the wounded, and honor the dead) executed through two required capabilities: provide and advise. Competencies must be developed, sustained, and progressively improved through education, training, and experience. Within the two required capabilities, chaplains fulfill three basic core competencies.

- Nurture the living. In preparation for missions… and during the execution of those missions, chaplains and religious affairs specialists develop and execute a RS plan that seeks to strengthen and sustain Soldiers and Family Members.

- Care for the wounded. During the execution of decisive action, chaplains and religious affairs specialists assist in the healing process by bringing hope and strength to those who have been wounded and traumatized in body, mind, and spirit. Chaplains and religious affairs specialists also provide RS, pastoral care, comfort, and hope to the dying. Through prayer and presence, the chaplain section…provides the Soldier with courage and comfort in the face of death.

- Honor the dead. Our nation reveres those who have died in military Service. RS honors the dead. Memorial ceremonies, services, and funerals reflect the emphasis the American people place on the worth and value of the individual. Chaplains conduct these services and ceremonies, fulfilling a vital role in rendering tribute to America's sons and daughters who paid the ultimate price serving the nation in the defense of freedom.

These three competencies provide the fundamental focus and direction as the Chaplain Corps executes its mission of ensuring the right to free exercise of religion for Soldiers. (Headquarters. Department of the Army 2019, pp.1-4)

Research Questions

To determine how effectively chaplains performed in a war theater and later for service members at home, it was necessary to ask the chaplains themselves. Nine open-ended questions, noted here, sought to discern what was effective and what was lacking in chaplains' training:

1. What guided you (the chaplain) as a spiritual caregiver tasked with honoring and burying the dead?
2. How did caring for the dying and dead impact you (the chaplain) spiritually?
3. How did caring for the dying and dead impact you professionally?

4. How did caring for the dying and dead impact you (the chaplain) in your familial, personal, and collegial relationships?
5. Reflecting on your experience, what was missing, if anything, in your training that would have better supported the pastoral care you provided?
6. Was any of your training especially helpful in caring for the dying and dead?
7. Has this new understanding of caring for dying soldiers sustained you in your work? Please describe.
8. How does your experience impact your pastoral care today?
9. Have you shared all of the significant reflections of your experience as a chaplain caring for the dying?
10. What else should I have asked?

Methodology

This existential phenomenological research project explored the perceived readiness that chaplains felt when providing spiritual care for service members who had experienced trauma. It also asked if some further training could have helped them be more effective, and it inquired about what would help them maintain resiliency in the face of repeated experiences of trauma—both in others and in themselves.

This project represents a *qualitative* rather than a *quantitative* study. It was designed to get to the core of the chaplain's experience when caring for dying soldiers. Because the issue at hand, death, is at the heart of the existential crisis of the human condition, additional means must be used to make the reader understand the depth of the chaplain's experience in a war theater when serving the dead and dying service member

as well as those needing spiritual care back home. One objective was to make the study useful for other chaplains who may serve in combat.

The possibility of "conceptualization" seems of critical importance given this project's research interest as it applies to chaplains and death. Ronald Valle and Steen Halling flesh out Colaizzi's phenomenological principles in their 1989 book recalling Colaizzi's counsel to the researcher offering three courses of action:

> 1. Gather a number of naïve descriptions from people who are having or have had the experience under investigation.
>
> 2. Engage in a process of analyzing these descriptions so that the researcher comes to a grasp of the constituents or common elements that make the experience what it is.
>
> 3. Produce a research report that gives an accurate, clear, and articulate description of an experience. The reader of the report should come away with the feeling that 'I understand better what it is like for someone to experience that.' (Valle 1989, p. 15)

Ultimately, the researcher hoped to improve spiritual care for Service Members, thereby resulting in better trained military chaplains. This hope included a result of more relevant and effective treatment for trauma.

Importance of the Study

Trauma, or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), as the phenomenon is commonly referred to in the military, is a spiritual issue. PTSD as a spiritual issue considers the complaint of Service Members who recognized 'death' as the trigger for their condition. In the recent past, however, PTSD has been treated as a behavioral health issue and received a minimum of spiritual care.

William Mahedy, who served as a Catholic Chaplain during the Vietnam conflict was one of the founders of the Vet Centers organized and run by Veterans. He wrote,

> Nor has a nation which prizes an upbeat optimistic mood yet recognized that many of its vets inhabit a world of spiritual bleakness—a "dark night of the soul." America still denies kinship with its sons and daughters in their pilgrimage through difficult spiritual terrain. But their journey is America's, their darkness is ours as well and so too is the path they have begun to travel in their journey out of the night. (Mahedy 2004, p. 16)

According to a timeline of United States military operations, as reported by the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), there has not been a time between the founding of America, that began in 1775, until the current day that an American soldier was not fighting on behalf of his or her country (See Appendix E). The escalating rise of veteran suicides and occurrences of PTSD among service members, coupled with a nation that demonstrates a sustained capacity for conflict, make this study critical. The overemphasis on behavioral health and the neglect of spiritual care is contributing to the caregivers' failure to provide relief. Chaplains can improve outcomes for soldiers who survive combat if the soldiers are given relevant spiritual care on the battlefield where the trauma first happens.

> Pastoral care, though, is not usually the primary or safe method of treatment for PTSD but rather is used to supplement other evident-based psychotherapies and medical treatments. One reason for it not being used as a primary treatment for PTSD is the non-existent evidence base for the effectiveness of pastoral care in the treatment of PTSD and the severe consequences that often result, including suicide. There is research, however, that shows pastoral interventions by chaplains are quite helpful at least in medical settings. (Koenig 2019, p. 234)

Background and Role of the Researcher

I am an Episcopal priest, now retired from thirty-six plus years of service and twenty-two years of active commissioned service as a chaplain. I enlisted in the Army as

a Private to support myself and enter college when I was 21. I have served as an enlisted soldier, as a combat medic, and radio operator for HAWK Missiles, Air Defense Artillery. I was commissioned following Reserve Officer Training (ROTC) as a Second Lieutenant in the Administration Corps but joined the Navy and later the Marines as a Chaplain Candidate. While in Seminary, I completed my Master of Divinity degree in May 1989 at the Episcopal Seminary, Alexandria, VA.

I was the first female to serve as a Battalion Chaplain for an Infantry Battalion. Likewise, I have been assigned as the sole chaplain for a military correctional facility in Oklahoma. I served one hardship tour with the Combat Engineers in the Republic of Korea, and one extended tour of twelve plus months with a Light Infantry Brigade, Forward Operating Base, Kirkuk, Iraq. If you are asking if I am an advocate of the military, I am not. I recognize that many service members recognize the Armed Services as an option that would provide a better life than was their birthright.

I was stationed at Fort Meade, NSA during the September 11, 2001 (9/11) Attack on the Pentagon and was assigned to Next-of-Kin Notification Duty. I deployed with an Infantry Brigade to Kirkuk, Iraq, and served as a Forward Surgical Team Chaplain. Later, I returned as the Theater Chaplain, Schofield Barracks, and deployed other chaplains and assistants to war.

I currently serve as a Certified Educator (CE) and serve as Association of Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE) Manager in the Providence Health System, St Peter Hospital, Olympia, Washington. My current job requires me to better equip junior chaplains to care for patients, some of whom are veterans, who may be suffering the effects of trauma.

Limitations and Delimitations

This project neither argues for nor against the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps but rather focuses on the effectiveness and/or ineffectiveness of the Chaplain Corps' ministry, especially as it pertains to war theaters and the PTSD that often results.

This study is not an effort to produce a systematic theology but rather a practical theology that will be immediately available to further equip those chaplains engaged in trauma ministry. (For readers who may be unfamiliar with the terms used in this study, See the Definition of Terms following the References at the end of the project report.)

Further, this study recognizes that women soldiers experience trauma in combat differently from men, as Svetlana Alexievich brilliantly established in her Nobel Prize work,

> Whatever women talk about, the thought is constantly present in them: war is first of all murder, and then hard work. And then simply ordinary life: singing, falling in love, putting your hair in curlers…In the center there is always this: how unbearable and unthinkable it is to die. And how much more unbearable and unthinkable it is to kill because a woman gives life. Gives it. Bears it in herself for a long time, nurses it. I understood that it is more difficult for women to kill. (Alexievich 2017)

The study of women, particularly women chaplains, needs to be told, but as yet the pool of women chaplains is too small for such an effort. Perhaps another will ask why such shallow water?

I also recognize that this research proposes an evolving challenge. That is, if the Spirit is within and without, is the wound that is suffered by the individual in trauma inflicted on the *Anima Mundi*, the soul of the world? Events that shape the media reports from climate change to massive migrations of cultures suggest a shift beyond the

individual. This research addresses merely the individual in that larger global human process.

Summary

Service Members have self-identified that the genesis of their suffering came from seeing a dead body; as such it is the most traumatic event that led to their PTSD. The National Center for PTSD identifies "seeing dead bodies" as the number one combat stressor for the Army at 95% and the number two stressor for Marines at 94% (See Table 1).

The medical field has argued that spiritual care is the missing element in the effective treatment of trauma and the alleviation of suffering. One reason given for this void in medical care is that military chaplains are not effectively trained to treat trauma victims.

The Association of Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE), sometimes shortened to CPE, has a long and proven track record (based in an educational model that provides a level of objectivity) that approached the collective requirement of the complex and diverse military demographic. CPE teaches the required competencies in a safe and challenging controlled environment (see Appendix D for list of CPE competencies).

This chapter examined the project's historical context, named its purpose, and outlined the questions that guided the study. It also noted study limitations, identified the study as an existential phenomenological project, and delineated some of the biases that may affect interpretation of the participants' experiences. The researcher's credentials were also presented. The next chapter considers the theological reflection undergirding the study.

CHAPTER 2

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Introduction

This chapter develops the theological reflection that underpins the study. It begins with an interpretation of Paul Tillich's understandings—specifically as he considered death. It adds the insights of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin SJ, as he expanded theological thinking cosmically. Tillich was a systematic theologian, Teilhard de Chardin was a paleontologist and priest. Arising from her experience as a military officer, an ordained priest, and a supervisor charged with preparing other chaplains for service in the field, the researcher conducted conversations with multiple theologians before summarizing these theologians' work.

Paul Tillich and Death (A Systematic Approach)

Working within the tension of opposites is not unique to military chaplains. The early Christian Church found itself in crisis when faced with the Arian controversy regarding the divinity and/or humanity of Jesus. The dualistic nature of the Western world was exacerbated by its growing Greco-Roman influences on Christianity.

Paul Tillich would express this problem as the tension of the finite trying to contain the infinite. He would also suggest that the Protestant response, or the Protestant Principle, was to look for G-d out there. From this hermeneutic, a position of "G-d out there" developed into a moral theology that was stifling and restrictive. Such a theology was governed by rules without heart, and laws devoid of spirit. Tillich argued that the relationship of the finite and infinite must be understood in a way that is seemingly

counterintuitive to the method of his generation, *and* it must be a way that points to a greater understanding in the future.

Tillich wrote, in recalling Nicholas of Cusa and the power of mathematical thinking, which expressed the cosmos as differentiated from the arithmetic that marked religion.

> His (Nicholas of Cusa) main principle was the '*coincidentia oppositorum'* (the coincidence of opposite), the coincidence of the finite and the infinite. In everything finite the infinite is present, namely, that power which is the creative unity of the universe as a whole. And in the same way the finite is in the infinite as a potentiality. In the world the divine is developed; in God, the world is enveloped. The finite is in the infinite potentially; the infinite is in the finite actually. They are within each other. (Tillich 1967, p. 23)

If the old adage is true that for every question that theology answers ten more are raised, then Tillich presents a myriad of theological issues in this statement. Yet, for a soldier who has identified the trauma of seeing death/dying as the catalyst for trauma, important points are addressed; namely, the collision of the finite and the infinite where the tension is disturbed in an apparent break, and death is revealed.

Theologians, and in particular military chaplains, have practiced an "arithmetic theology" that sought formulas to explain experience. Scripture and prayer became mechanisms to exact an outward event best made manifest in deeds that could be observed by others, in particular the community of faith. Spiritual experience became less a way of being and more a way of doing. Insights, therefore, are given in the form of doctrine and right behavior.

Tillich commented on the disastrous consequences of this stand when reflecting on his service as a chaplain in the German Army during WWI. He came to understand "feeling" not as sentimental but rather as a nudging by the Universe, perhaps even the

experience of the finite in a sensory encounter with the Infinite. Understood in this way, feelings that may feel new in fact are—and potentially marvelous. Tillich wrote:

> But 'feeling' in Schleiermacher should not really be understood as subjective emotion. Rather, it is the impact of the universe upon us in the depths of our being which transcends subject and object. (Tillich 1967, 96)

Karl Rahner countered this outer faith systematically:

> Indeed, the statement that we have to do with God in his own self and in absolute immediacy bids us give ourselves over unconditionally to the nameless. One, to the unapproachable light which has to appear to us as darkness, to the holy mystery which appears and remains all the more as mystery the nearer it comes. Indeed this statement bids us see all paths as leading to where there are no paths, to ground all reasons where there is no ground, to understand all proofs as pointing to the incomprehensible, and never to think that we can establish once and for all some point around which we could organize an absolute system of coordinates which incorporates everything. (Rahner 2015, 125)

Tillich developed a theory of *synthesis* to bring the outer world, systematic, and the inner world of the *mystic* into relationship where the finite and infinite meet so to speak. He mused,

> It is impossible for me to understand how we could ever come to a philosophical understanding of religion without finding a point in the structure of man as man in which the finite and the infinite meet or are within each other. (Tillich 1967, 231)

Even so, Panikkar understood that the mystic stands apart from the systematic theologians because the experience is all that is needed when the need for explanations fades away. In fact, Panikkar applied a dynamic understanding of all creation that would lead him to what he called a "Cosmotheandric Experience" or a newly realized unity that is:

> The cosmotheandric vision characterizes the third moment, the new innocence, which itself appears as an unbelievable faith in a center that is not in God, nor in the cosmos, nor even in Man. It is in a moving center that can be only found in the intersection of the three. (Panikkar 1993, 77)

Most alarming, and perhaps the unconscious awareness that service members who have experienced trauma already know, is the inherent danger present in our insistence on demythologizing creation and life. Panikkar wrote in this regard:

> The modern western world has undertaken a thoroughgoing deanthropomorphization of the meaning of the word 'God'. It has also tried to deontologize God. In the same process, Man has equally devitalized the Earth. The Earth has been left for dead by the same token that Heaven has been deserted. (Panikkar 1993, p. 149)

This suggestion begs the following question: Does the trauma that is experienced by service members, with proper spiritual care that walks through the door that trauma has opened, offer the possibility to heal creation? That is, is there something that can be learned from war veterans that could heal all of us, if we could just pause long enough before slamming shut the door of their experience, which is so different from the norm? If so, it will take a chaplain well enough acquainted with trauma to leave the door unhinged and one still grounded enough in faith to behold the mystery. Ewert Cousins argued persuasively along these lines that,

> Instead of engaging in demythologizing and radical criticism, theologians will be called upon to bring to light the richness of their tradition. Having long been alienated from the mystical, cosmic, and mythic levels of consciousness, contemporary persons must now open themselves to the depth and power of these levels and integrate these resources into their full, conscious life. It is in this process of rediscovery, reintegration, and expansion that theologians can make a special contribution. (Cousins 1998, p. 43)

Into this void stepped an alienated Jesuit priest, paleontologist, and WWI veteran who served with the French as a litter bearer. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin lacked the benefit of developing his theology in conversation with other theologians, partly because of his rejection by Church authorities, but more importantly because of his overwhelming experiences in war that challenged previous theological categories and made him a

mystic, or as Cousins might have suggested, a theologian who made "a special contribution."

Teilhard de Chardin experienced love in the brokenness of armies at war and discovered a God who would no longer be contained. I speculate that his training as a Jesuit and, perhaps more importantly, the wonder that he held in nature, protected him from the sort of trauma that is debilitating. Rather, it lifted him to a higher realm of awareness. The heights to which he soared in theological grandeur were grounded in the depths of extreme agony. Teilhard shared the following in a letter home from the frontlines, 23 August 1916,

> What I regret is not having been sufficiently competent, perhaps, to hearten or comfort this or that one of my friends. But until you suddenly learn that they've had a bullet through the head, it seems so unlikely that men whom you see hale and hearty in the line, should meet with so swift an end, that you feel embarrassed at speaking bluntly about its nearness…I don't know what sort of monument the country will later put up on Froideterre Hill to commemorate the great battle. There's only one that would be appropriate: a great figure of Christ. Only the image of the crucified can sum up, express, and relieve all the horror, and beauty, all the hope and deep mystery in such an avalanche of conflict and sorrows. (Teilhard de Chardin 1965, pp. 119)

Teilhard would ultimately understand his experience as a small expression of the evolution and the convergence of all love into the Omega Point.

Death and Teilhard (A Mystic Approach)

Mysticism has come into vogue in ways that seem more cliché than substantive. It is, for example, the quip of a young soldier who says, I am spiritual, not religious. It is an idea imagined, or perhaps remembered, that is not fully formed in a way that joins. In this regard, mysticism has served to sever communities, empty pews, and make us lonelier than ever.

Teilhard captured the error of Christianity completely when he noted,

> Simply to present the teaching of Christ as an awakening of man [sic] to his personal dignity or as a code of purity, gentleness and resignation, or again as the starting point of our western civilization, is to mask its importance and make its success incomprehensible by ignoring its characteristically new content. (Teilhard de Chardin 1969, p. 156)

Teilhard was trained as a scientist, even though by vocation he was a Jesuit priest. It could be argued that science provided the hospitality that Teilhard required to free his imagination to encounter the mystical. Science also gave Teilhard a vocabulary to reveal his experience in terms that the scientific community could understand, even though at the same time alienating him further from Rome. It is perhaps unfortunate that Teilhard's isolation denied his work the critical eye that dialog with other theologians would have provided, though one has to wonder if the vocational wilderness that Teilhard endured over the course of his adult life provided a measure of suffering that inspired his writings. It would be science again that would provide the bridge that allowed future generations to cross.

Ilia Delio recognized the clarity that quantum physics offered Teilhard,

> From his conversations with De Broglie and others, Teilhard reflected on the primordial reality of energy and the physical world of mass-energy where there is an inherent force of attraction within all dimensions of cosmic life. He was impressed by the levels of attraction in nature whereby elements unite center to center, leading to more being and consciousness. Teilhard called this fundamental force of attraction. But there is another type of energy active in the universe, a force of attraction that also functions in matter. This attractive force is what Teilhard called this force of attraction "love energy" because it is the primordial energy of union by which new complex entities emerge. Love energy undergirds the process of attraction between particular entities in the openness toward greater union and is present from the Big Bang onward, though indistinguishable from molecular forces. (Delio 2018)

Teilhard himself would characterize the energy force at the core of all creation in this way:

> For me, Matter was the matrix of Consciousness; and, wherever we looked, Consciousness, born of matter, was always advancing towards some Ultra-Human. In other words, a second species of Spirit was emerging—and this species was no longer directly above our heads—it lay transversely, appearing, we might say, on the horizon…in the inmost depths of my soul (18) a struggle, between the God of the Above and a sort of new God of the Ahead was, through structural necessity, being produced by definitive co-existence and the irresistible meeting in my heart of the cosmic Sense and the Christic Sense. (Teilhard de Chardin 1979)

Now to bring the discussion to the challenge at hand—soldiers who suffer trauma. Teilhard speaks to that as well. Teilhard, however, having lived before the emergence of a medical diagnosis, and functioning under the weight of phenomenology, expressed trauma from war as revelation. He wrote,

> As things were, my attention and my interest (still guided by the same fundamental need for Solidity and Incorruptibility) were gradually and almost imperceptibly climbing up from the extremely simple central core of the Planet to its ridiculously thin, but dauntingly active and complex, peripheral layers. It was not merely that I found no difficulty in apprehending, more or less intuitively, the organic unity of the living membrane which is stretched like a film over the lustrous surface of the star which holds us….There was something more: around this sentient protoplasmic layer, an ultimate envelope was beginning to become apparent to me, a taking on its own individuality and gradually detaching itself like a luminous aura. This envelope was not only conscious but thinking, and from the time when I first became aware of it, it was always there that I found concentrated, in an ever more dazzling and consistent form, the essence or rather the very Soul of the Earth. (Teilhard de Chardin 1979)

Teilhard never claimed to be a systematic theologian, though it should be obvious that Teilhard was following a hypothesis, in all of his writing, that he first experienced as a stretcher bearer across the trenches of WWI. Consequently, it would seem quite natural for him to understand suffering as a steady march forward,

> The world, seen by experience at our level, is an immense groping, an immense search, an immense attack; its progress can take place only at the expense of many failures, of many wounds. Sufferers of whatever species are the expression of this stern but noble condition. They are not useless and dwarfed. They are simply paying for the forward march and triumph of all. They are casualties, fallen on the field of honour. (Teilhard de Chardin 1969)

The reader can clearly see the military imagery Teilhard employed, but the reader may have lost the community effort of the generation in which Teilhard lived, a community tragically fractured in our time. The insular focus on individual progress makes one open to a limited vision, where meaning is lost like a torn page from a novel. The role of the chaplain, in this case for spiritual healing, can be to restore meaning to the story, not by recovering the missing page, but by writing with the soldier the new paragraphs.

Neither Tillich nor Teilhard formulated a method to navigate the journey to new meaning. One is left to wonder whether the suffering that both endured, and carried until the end of their lives, was limited to sharing the experience and the new revelation of G-d—while falling short of mapping the road home.

For this, Paul Ricoeur offers a realistic hermeneutic that he applied to biblical interpretation, which he called, *the second naiveté.* When the experience of G-d cannot be contained in the familiar reading of Scripture, trauma opens the individual in ways that are at first unbearable. Ricoeur, in his hermeneutic, refers to a "desert experience" which results when the first naiveté is lost. The person is then faced with what Ricoeur, (as interpreted by his colleague, Mark Wallace), calls a "wager":

> The interpretation (first naiveté) of this language "which disposes of us" (the desert) has the status of a wager: it may be the case that a lie exists in the heart of the witnessing community that would result in false testimony. But the risk must be taken because the stakes are so high—the stakes

> being the possibility of biblical language being a faithful trace of God's presence in the Jewish and Christian communities. (Wallace 1990, p. 28)

This research considers the role of the Chaplain in helping the service member move from the "desert," after the first death of naiveté, and toward the potential healing power of the second naiveté. It is clear from a quick Google search that many chaplains have returned to the first naiveté through their glamorizing of death. Desmond Morton holds no punches when he relays the experiences of soldiers and their chaplains as *sheep who were not fed by their padres.* (Morton 1993, p. 30)

This research will not consider the character of the hireling so much as the need to educate the shepherd. The considered educational process for educating the shepherd in this study will be Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) and accreditation by ACPE.

Summary

This chapter introduced the work of two writers: A systematic theologian and a paleontologist—Paul Tillich and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, respectively—both of whom served in World War I. Their wartime experiences grounded their theological inquiry and understanding. In addition, other theologians remarked on or expanded certain areas of both Tillich's and Teilhard de Chardin's understandings.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology used to ensure that I could name the experience of the chaplains being interviewed. Further, it considers the data collection methodology: i.e., interviews predominately in the form of written narratives. It also examines issues related to qualitative methodologies including the following: choosing the sample, ensuring sample validity, ethical considerations, limitations, and triangulation. It also describes the coding process used and the data revealed. The chapter closes with a summary.

Phenomenological Methodology

Ronald S. Valle, Mark King, and Steen Halling, rightly critical of the research methods of the natural sciences, proposed in its place *existential phenomenology* as a method to get to a deep expression of human experience. They wrote,

> *Existential phenomenology* can be viewed as that philosophical discipline which seeks to understand the events of human existence in a way that is free of the presuppositions of our cultural heritage, especially philosophical dualism and technologism, as much as possible. (Valle 1989, p. 31)

Although existential phenomenology gets close to the mark, a more precise method for this research uses ontological phenomenology because the reality of Pastoral Identity appears as the critical component of spiritual care for the trauma chaplain. To capture this point, Max Van Manen recalled the premise of Martin Heidegger,

> Heidegger asked how the being of beings (things) show themselves to us as a revealing of Being itself…For Heidegger the method of ontology is phenomenology. So, for Heidegger phenomenology requires of its practitioners a heedful attunement to the modes of being of the ways that

> things are in the world…Much of Heidegger's work is concerned with the question of how philosophy is possible in view of the realization that human life is radically finite and always involved in dynamic change. (Van Manen 2014, p. 105)

This project followed a phenomenological approach following Creswell's six criteria considered essential to phenomenological research:

- First, "focus on a single phenomenon to explore." This research focused on the experience of chaplains offering spiritual care following and/or during a traumatic event.
- Second, Creswell maintains that the researcher "Collects data from *individuals who have experienced the phenomenon*." I drew the data from chaplains who have served in or during traumatic events.
- Third, the researcher "Explores the *context* in which the individuals experienced the phenomenon." The research only worked with chaplains in a defined ministry setting.
- Fourth, the research "Frames the study within a broad *philosophy*." The study considered the subjective and the objective as the means to get to the deeper experience of the question.
- Fifth, Creswell warns the researcher to "*Bracket out* personal experiences." The researcher recognized this criterion would be challenging because of years of experience and heavy involvement in trauma ministry. It was also important to monitor the suspicion that the chaplains' training, and therefore the chaplains themselves, had failed to provide adequate spiritual care.
- Sixth, and finally, the approach "reports on the *essence* of the experience." (Creswell 2016 pp. 262-263)

This project is designed to explore the common experience, or what Creswell termed the "essence" of the chaplain's experience. Through coding responses to open-ended questions, the researcher found themes that described the experience.

Phenomenological research differs from other forms in that it is grounded in human experience and consequentially it is messy by design. Max Van Manen suggested,

> Phenomenology does not assume that our experiential reality is necessarily rational, logical, noncontradictory, or even describable in propositional or scientific language. Rather, it tries to be sensitive to moments of thoughtfulness as well as moments of taken-for-grantedness,

> moments of insight, and even moments that we may experience our world in terms of mystery, confusion, disorientation, strangeness, or incongruity. After all, this is how life presents itself to us. (Van Manen 2014, p. 33)

The researcher sought to elicit a thick description of the chaplains' experience of their training prior to being assigned to the war theater, their experience during their assignment, and their reflection about training that helped and limited them throughout their experience.

Research Design

The researcher used a survey format to meet the project objectives. After identifying a core of chaplains, the researcher attached open-ended questions to the Qualtrics platform to secure confidential responses to the questions. The nine questions used in the survey are listed here:

1. What is your working definition of "death" for providing spiritual care for the dying?
2. What resources guided you (the chaplain) to develop this definition?
3. How did caring for the dead impact you (the chaplain) spiritually?
4. How did caring for the dead impact your (the chaplain) personal relationships?
5. Reflecting on your experience, what was missing in your training that would have supported your pastoral care?
6. What training was especially helpful in caring for the dead?
7. If you provided a ritual for the body please describe?
8. How has your understanding of these experiences changed your vocation?
9. If providing spiritual care in the midst of death has changed you, how has this new understanding of caring for dying soldiers challenged you in your work?

Survey Participant Demographic

Research was conducted across a broad geographical area using a survey generated by Qualtrics. The researcher expected it to take thirty minutes to complete the survey. The setting for most participants was their home or office computer with adequate space to be reflective in their responses. The technological capacities varied by respondent; some faced the challenges of firewalls that seemed to block some responses. The survey was directed to military, Army and Navy, chaplains who have served a minimum of three years on Active Duty. The participant was either a member of the Active Duty Army or Navy, or a Retiree from the military, Army Reserve or National Guard. The respondent must have served a minimum of 90 days in a combat zone. This length of time was chosen because the military requires a minimum of 90 days to issue a service member a combat patch. All but one respondent identified as a male. All respondents are over 30 and under 65 years of age.

In keeping with Creswell's six criteria for phenomenological research, the researcher adhered to the following guidelines: all questions were open ended so that the participants could explore his/her philosophy without constraint and provide a fuller picture of the issue. Participants were given a two-week timetable initially, though this had to be modified due to technical problems and remained open an additional two weeks. Additional participants were added in the final two weeks from an updated list. An additional two weeks were added to meet the minimum requirement of five respondents. Ultimately, 16 respondents took the survey, although only 6 completed every question. Only surveys that were entirely completed were included in the data analysis.

Validity

This research applied to a narrow band of people. Vagle suggested,

> As a phenomenological craftsperson, I have found entry into discussion of validity to be marked primarily by a consideration of the researcher's sustained engagement with the phenomenon and the participants who have experienced the phenomenon. (Vagle 2018, p. 72)

Because the researcher has worked with military chaplains and service members for over three decades, the sustained engagement with this ministry adds to the validity of my ability to interpret the participants' experience. Moreover, care was taken to reflect often so as to minimize my personal expected outcomes: i.e., that they were unprepared.

Taken to heart, was Tim Sensing's counsel; he placed the Doctor of Ministry squarely in the center of praxis. He wrote,

> While I recognize the interplay that occurs through the porous boundaries of any taxonomy, I identify most with Bevans's "The Praxis Model" or "action-reflection-action" activity that is in process and moving forward. In that model, the DMin student functions as a resident contextual theologian who is initiating a ministry intervention within a particular context in order to address critically a discreet problem….(Sensing 2011, p. xix.)

Some might say that this project began on 2 May 2004 following a catastrophic event that was suffered by dozens of soldiers deployed in the oil fields of Kirkuk, Iraq—and witnessed by few military chaplains. At the time, a question formed in my mind: "who would provide the spiritual care for the dead and solace for the living? How could that task be met with compassion and resilience?" Thus, the researcher landed squarely in Sensing's criteria working to address "critically a discreet problem."

As I pondered the questions, I identified that the first issue to be met was the brokenness and vulnerability of the researcher who lacked the framework to contain the experience fully enough to objectively reflect on the challenge. Dr. Michael Trice

reminded me of the smallness of the human condition. Indeed, this was already known simply by pointing to the vastness of the Universe in the night sky. I no longer had to fear, apart from war. Dr. Michael Raschko brought to the conversation those theologians and spiritual seekers who did not flinch from the effort and thus left behind a way to recovery. Dr. Callahan returned me to earth and the tedium of the daily tasks that collectively give meaning and perhaps the conclusion of a dissertation.

It was a struggle to sift through the clamor of concerns in my own mind and ministry, to rest on the mundane task of chaplains who care for the dying. The challenge related to the essence of the human's condition of finitude as it played itself out in countless starts and stops and in obstacles that were creatively constructed, if predictable. Tarrying in my own wounds, slowed my progress. I retired from the Service and had less access to military points of contact, yet fortunately, I was able to meet the Internal Review Board stipulations and pressed forward. Among the first tasks I faced was contacting potential participants for my study. Appendix A contains the letter to potential participants in this project. It contains information about the study and notes the requirements necessary to qualify for participation.

Data Analysis

Using the Qualtrics system, data were analyzed. The aim was to look for common themes and unique diversions that might be able to shed light on the challenges being faced. The researcher suspected that some challenges may not have been completely integrated. Further, the question arose whether the participants would be able to freely express their experience to someone not currently in the military.

Several of the participants followed up with more challenges. Those are not, however, included in the research. The data would have been more robust if I could have been more productive and efficient. In the end, the process took the time that was necessary. John Creswell provided a roadmap for analyzing the data. Where his map applied to this research, each step was followed laboriously (Creswell 2016, pp. 158-163).

The researcher read through the participant responses and used the Seattle University-sponsored research software *Qualtrics*. The data validity was informed by my 20 plus years as an active duty military chaplain as well as my time spent in the National Guard and Reserves. Reflexivity was an influence at the beginning and remained constant throughout the project. The anonymity provided by Qualtrics allowed enough distance not to be overwhelmed—or to overwhelm the data with personal military experiences.

The following coding types assisted the interpretation of data:

1. "In vivo codes," or what Creswell understood as direct quotes.
2. Expected and unexpected codes and unusual codes that Creswell understood as possibly "triggering."
3. Themes
4. "Lean method" because the questions were open ended, and respondents seemed to be using narrative as a way to hunt and peck their way to their core meaning (Creswell 2016, p. 156). Lean method is a process of cutting away extraneous research that would otherwise color the data.

Use of respondents' quotes as a form of coding allowed me to follow Donald Polkinghorne's challenge to the investigator: i.e., to be cautious not to influence the data. (Valle 1989, p. 55)

Ethical Considerations

All possible and appropriate measures were taken with consultation. The original concerns were those of confidentiality, particularly as applied to the small branch of military chaplains. Working closely with both the Internal Review Board (IRB) Committee and DMin. advisor, the researcher set protocols within the research project to allow a workable anonymity for participants.

Participants were reminded that their participation was entirely voluntary and that they could stop the survey at any point (See Appendix B). This appeared to be the case in some situations as the results from Qualtrics were scanned. In reading the results it became clear to the researcher that the ethical issue of "triggering" was not entirely considered. 'Moral Injury' was not considered in any great detail by this project, and yet I wondered about the possible influence of moral injury and the experience of participants engaged in the survey.

Another safeguard that is perhaps particular to the rank-based culture of the military was my intention to invite all levels of military service and pay grade to participate in the survey. It was my determination that a broad range of participants would provide greater data security.

The Seattle University IRB determined, after each letter and word had been carefully examined that this project met their criteria for exemption (see Appendix C). It was my hope that this sensitive platform offered a means for participants to process, perhaps for the first time for some of them, their experiences of death while serving as a military chaplain—within the grace that I hope is implied in this project that improvements can be made in spiritual care, and suffering can have meaning.

Summary

This chapter addressed the phenomenological methodology used to develop, distribute, and review the Qualtrics survey. The drive behind this study was to consider in depth the impact that military chaplains have when faced with death and dying service members in traumatic situations. The research began with the challenge to explore the experiences of chaplains and collect their reflections with the hope of improving spiritual care. As can be discovered in Chapter 4, some surprise and, in some cases, disappointment came from the patterns discovered in the chaplains' responses.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter synthesizes the respondents' efforts to form meaning by reflecting on their experience (working with dying service members) through the exercise of answering open-ended survey questions. Key responses for each of the nine open-ended questions to be considered appear in Table 2.

Coding

Coding proved challenging because it became apparent that the questions themselves had the potential to cause triggering. Creswell was helpful in this regard because of the decision to identify themes of triggering and document them through in vivo codes. For example, one respondent wrote a lengthy narrative in response to question nine: (If providing spiritual care in the midst of death has changed you, how has this new understanding of caring for dying soldiers challenged you in your work?)

> Soldiers are not only searching for a community to belong [to] but also [when] away from the community that provided senses of belonging as they serve. Especially, when they are deployed or in combat, they already suffer from being disconnected from their own communities. I wonder if the chaplain's ministry of presence, reminding or symbolizing them of God's presence in the midst of dying, is enough to be a community as they lack their own communities to connect.

Findings by Survey Question.

The data suggest a clumping around community or being in relationship. In an effort not to unduly influence the data, a respondent wrote clearly in pondering a new awareness.

Table 2: Lean coding-derived key words from participants' responses to Questions 1 through 9

CHAPLAIN 1	CHAPLAIN 2	CHAPLAIN 3	CHAPLAIN 4	CHAPLAIN 5	CHAPLAIN 6
Question 1:What is your working definition of 'death' for providing spiritual care for the dying?					
Cease	Expiration	Bridge	Cessation	Transition	Release
Question 2: What resources guided you (the chaplain) to develop this definition?					
CPE	CPE, Bible	Bible	Bioethics	Books	Bible
Question 3: How did caring for the dead impact you (the chaplain) spiritually?					
Unpredictable	Sad/joyful	Reward	Broadened	Community	Humanness
Question 4: How did caring for the dead impact your (the chaplain) personal relationships?					
Relationships	Relationships	Others	Compassionate	Relationships	Compassionate
Question 5: Reflecting on your experience, what was missing in your training that would have supported your pastoral care?					
Direct Experience	Discussion/reflection	Training	Experienced chaplains	Human theology	Planning
Question 6:What training was especially helpful in caring for the dead?					
NA	Death reading	CPE	CPE	CPE	Experts on death
Question 7: If you provided a ritual for the body please describe?					
Service member	NA	John 14	Prayer Book	Korean Prayers	Prayer
Question 8: How has your understanding of these experiences changed your vocation?					
Part of Life	Deepened	Presence	Meditation	Community	More in touch
Question 9: How has your understanding of these experiences changed your vocation?					
Better manage emotions	More truth	Show up	Practice spiritual care	Community	Power of symbols

> Being with people, walking with them as Jesus did to disciples on the road to Emmaus, and building a community that is safe to belong to with them become what matters the most in the ministry and my personal Christian life.

I was encouraged by the deeply reflective responses of all respondents to the final survey question. Some responded with a more disciplined spiritual practice, some moved entirely outside of their denomination. From caring for the dead and/or dying, one was inspired to write of his growing awareness away from a model that he learned in seminary to one that was more relational,

> I had been trained and driven by the church growth models and business consulting models for ministries. I was pressured to create events and "do" something "for" people who come to the ministry. Reflecting on these experiences, I do understand the meaning and power of the ministry of presence. Jesus came to us as "God with us." The Holy Spirit came to us to be with us as Jesus ascended after the resurrection. Being with people, walking with them as Jesus did to disciples on the road to Emmaus, and building a community that is safe to belong to with them become what matters the most in the ministry and my personal Christian life.

Common Themes from the Analysis

The lean-code analysis chart (Table 2) revealed the common themes of *relationship, community, compassionate, sad, and belonging.* These were expressed on several occasions.

A word study (to include variations of the word) revealed the following words and their number of appearances:

- Cessation: 3 times
- Bible: 3 times
- CPE: 5 times
- Community: 3 times
- Relationship: 3 times

- Emotions: (general or particular) 4 times
- Prayer: 3 times
- Experienced: 2 times.

Processing of Spiritual Encounter

After developing the survey questions, the researcher noticed that the answers to the questions posed seemed to move quite naturally from an academic to an experiential response. This accidental overlay seemed to draw the spiritual care provider out of their head and more into their heart/soul. In fact, one respondent offered the following reflection,

> Even though the military renders honor with ceremonies, but they are after death and they are for Soldiers in the unit. But for the moment of dying. I am challenged to search for and study the symbols and signs of the community from my tradition and traditions of [the] Soldiers.

I was left to wonder about the chaplains' resiliency. I watched their own journey, as represented in their responses to the survey: how far they had moved from their support structures and whether they felt isolated from community. The almost cookie-cutter responses on the earlier questions such as, "Death is the state of the completed transition from the search for where one belongs to the celebration of belonging." to the more searching response of,

> Even though I had theological training, I feel like I lack the depth in regard to dying and death as well as living and life. I focused on the theology of God and missed the depth of the theology of human. I also did not fully grasp the connection between theology and ministry…most of training in practical ministry was more like a set of techniques from business models and theories.

As the data revealed, all respondents initially answered with what sounded like "seminary" answers. The responses on question one were generic and followed the pattern of one participant who wrote,

> Physical death I define as the cessation of higher brain function. Spiritual death is the conscious or unconscious cutting of oneself from the Source of all life. Death is not the ultimate end state for the living.

By question three, as the survey became more specific to the individual, the responses grew less certain and, thereby, more personal. The candor by question three is clear. One participant reflected,

> Caring for the dead helped me to realize how unpredictable life can be. There are no guarantees that one will necessarily live a long life. I think it is helpful to live in such a way that there are no regrets should one's life end unexpectedly.

At question six, a respondent had dropped efforts at explanation and wrote simply,

> I do not remember any formal training that was especially helpful.

I was surprised by the witness given in the final response to question nine,

> The dying don't care about your denomination or your academic degree and they don't care about where you are from or socio-economic background. The[y] look at your cross or collar or your position as clergy and see if you genuinely care about their well-being then they open up like a flower ready to receive sunlight into their lives.

Closer examination of responses from participant six revealed an interesting pattern. For question number 1 he/she wrote a systematic definition for death,

> Three kinds of death, namely physical death, spiritual death, and eternal death. Spiritual care for the dying would be focused on physical and spiritual death. Death may be spiritual in a sense that it is a release from suffering and in a sense a sense of healing.

This same respondent, in response to question 5 (i.e., what was missing from her/his training) wrote,

Pre-death planning guide and resources.

Although the researcher made every effort to rely on the qualitative phenomenological approach, there can be no denying that the proximity of the researcher to the respondents should be noted as a critical contributor to the study. As Jane Goodall remarked of her own research that,

> I was told at Cambridge that you have to be absolutely objective, and you must not have empathy with your subject. And to me, that, right from the beginning, was so wrong, because when I was watching a chimpanzee family, for example, and one of the young ones did something a little strange, and so, because I was empathetic towards them, I thought, Well, if they were human, they'd do it because of … whatever; and that gives you a platform. And you can stand on that platform and then try to analyze what you've seen in a scientific way.
>
> But it's the empathy that gives—it's that intuition, that aha moment, which you wouldn't get if you didn't have empathy, I don't think. And also, the cold, scientific approach, I believe, has led to a lot of suffering on this planet. (Goodall 2020).

A brief inclusion of the heuristic research method is included here for clarity and transparency. Sensing, using the definition of Michael Patton, notes that,

> 'Heuristics' is a form of phenomenological inquiry that brings to the fore the personal experience and insights of the researcher….Heuristic research epitomizes the phenomenological emphasis on means and knowing through personal experience; it exemplifies and places at the fore the way in which the researcher is the primary instrument in qualitative inquiry. (Sensing 2011 p. 180)

Therefore, the researcher will ask three questions of herself:

1. What did you learn as a chaplain about your own experience? Was it more like Tillich? Or more like Chardin?

2. What did you learn as a supervisor who teaches others to be supervisors and chaplains?

3. How does your project impact you as you move from military through the VA and on to hospital chaplaincy?

I have come to understand Teilhard de Chardin and Tillich as holding opposite ends of the tightrope that I have walked since returning home. I have come to understand Tillich's long gaze into the abyss and Teilhard's rapture with all creation much like Paul's righteousness in Romans 10: 5-7:

> Who will ascend into heaven?" (that is, to bring Christ down) (Teilhard) or Who will descend into the abyss? (that is to bring Christ up from the dead) (Tillich).

Chaplains are now on the battlefield undergoing trauma because of the threat to their own life while providing spiritual care for the injured and dying. Education as adult learning provides the relationships that can help bring spiritual care providers home, wiser, wounded, and yet relevant.

Summary

This chapter considered the common themes and the surprises that were revealed when using the structure suggested by Creswell. It became clear early on that *in vivo* coding would be critical to allow the respondent's voice to speak apart from the researcher. Over and over there was a pull towards relationship and community whether through spiritual disciplines, mentoring, or Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). CPE was mentioned by 5 of the 6 respondents, and the one respondent without CPE lamented no prior training for caring for the dying.

The survey reported answers to each of the questions, and data related to the coding as depicted on the coding analysis, Table 2, and word study comparison exercise, taken together, provide a thick description. Further, the chapter considered overarching themes and impact on the researcher as she realized that the questions naturally guided the respondent to deeper considerations of the issue of chaplaincy in war theaters.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

A brief reminder of the question addressed at the core of this research. As we began this study it was stated that research suggests that PTSD, moral injury, and suicidal ideations are the purview of spiritual care. In response to current understandings, this project considered the impact of service on military chaplains serving in war theaters. It sought to identify the shared experience of chaplains as they prepared for deployment, entered the theater, and then returned. Through careful theological reflection, and using a phenomenological approach to the chaplains' experience, a survey was used to interview 11 chaplains (6 participated fully). Using Qualtrics to analyze responses, the researcher's data documented a growth in understanding owing to the revelations noted in chapter four. This chapter reviews issues of validity, and asks questions about preparation, both through the traditional CPE and through theological or denominational requirements for chaplaincy training.

Endorsement of CPE

As revealed in answers to question six (What training was especially helpful in caring for the dead?), the respondents suggested an approachable solution of improved and relevant training in the form of Clinical Pastoral Education. Indeed, they offered suggestions that may help the Certified Educators (CEs) attend to:

- engaged reading of resources that reflect on death
- Clinical Pastoral Education in Seminary Years
- Local church ministry experiences under the Senior pastors' supervision, and
- CPE experience .

These suggestions seem to corroborate needs noted earlier in this project from one respondent:

> Even though I had theological training, I feel like I lack the depth in regard to dying and death as well as living and life. I focused on the theology of God and missed the depth of the theology of human. I also did not fully grasp the connection between theology and ministry. The most of training in practical ministry was more like a set of techniques from business models and theories.

More Research Needed

Yet the pattern persists beyond CPE and calls to mind the current work of Ed Waggoner, Assistant Professor of Theology in the Rt. Reverend Sam B. Hulsey Chair in Episcopal Studies, Brite Divinity School who revealed,

> The military instructs chaplains to be "force multipliers" by promoting mission-friendly spirituality, moral values, and esprit de corps…The military trades on the religious authority of chaplains to help create the moral ethos it deems most conducive to victory. (Waggoner 2019, p. 121)

The question that naturally flows is one that is beyond the pale, whether one is trained by military professional development modules, or endorser retreats. This question emerges more from the shadows of unreported rates of suicides by military chaplaincy and, to return to the question of this particular research: i.e., the general abandonment of spiritual solace for the dying and those who witness to the dead.

There is a broader crisis here than imagined at the start of this research. The necessity of tending to the wounded from the Nation's wars precipitates a broader conversation that calls for, as Ed Waggoner suggested,

> If Americans do not address underlying questions about their pursuit of global, full-spectrum military dominance and religion's role in that pursuit, the project of US military religion will remain broken there. Without ongoing critical attention to such questions, the US chaplaincies will never escape a military logic that exploits religious credibility for military power. (Waggoner 2014, p. 164)

In this regard, the spiritually wounded thousands of men, and women—not forgetting civilians and military personnel on both sides of the battle—serve as prophets for our time. They call us not to a morose indifference or apathy, but rather to an awakened spirit, an enchantment of all of Creation, even a restoration of our various faith traditions. It does not seem too fine a point to remind citizens of their moral obligation when unleashing armed forces against our neighbors.

As James Hillman notes,

> The shadow side of tolerance is the loss of the sense of the intolerable. To normalize may mean to take the side, not of survival, but of death. (Hillman 2004, p. 28).

This research has surveyed the development and challenges of military chaplaincy. The two primary theologians, who served in opposing armies have guided my work and continue to challenge my recovery. As an infant, Paul Tillich who served as a chaplain in the German Army during WWI, began his journey with death. Wilhelm and Marion Pauck conveyed that Tillich barely passed his first day of life,

> We have already given him up three times this night…he lay in a death struggle for nearly seven hours…In this first experience of his existence, Paul Tillich's lifelong dread of death—this melancholy preoccupation—may have had its beginning…As a boy he repressed the knowledge of the untimely death of his mother. As a young man, in World War I, he experienced the death of a civilization and was transformed by it. (Pauck 1977, p. 1)

In the opposing Army stood the French priest, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, who served as a litter bearer. He would not find the fame that Paul Tillich achieved. Nonetheless, his war experience taught him that,

> In itself, death is an incurable weakness of corporeal beings….and in order to assimilate us in him, he must break the molecules of our being so as to re-cast and remodel us. The function of death is to provide the necessary entrance into our inmost selves. It will make us undergo the

> required dissociation. It 'will put us into the state organically needed if the divine fire is to descend upon us.' And in that way its fatal power to decompose and dissolve will be harnessed to the most sublime operations of life. What was by nature empty and void, a return to bits and pieces, can, in any human existence, become fullness and unity in God. (Teilhard de Chardin 1960, pp. 88-89)

Conclusions from the Study

There is no point in belaboring the hypocrisy of the establishment and sustainment of the Chaplain Corps. This has been addressed in the course of the research, though the far-flung consequences have not been fully considered. That is, the broader spectrum of the human condition and our mortality can be sucked through the narrow gate of nationalism, and individual meaning is lost.

David Kessler who co-authored a recent book with Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, found it necessary to add a sixth stage of grief to the standard five when his son died. The sixth stage Kessler exhorts for healing is: finding meaning.

> When we don't have a "why," we tend to jump in and play God. We tell ourselves, "I could have prevented his death," or "It should have been me." This means we are attributing to ourselves a power that we don't have. We don't get to decide who lives and who dies. (Kessler 2019, p. 108)

I want to propose that the best chaplains, and by "best" I mean those who enter with authority to help the survivor write the first lines of the new meaning gained from his/her encounter with death. This is the awareness the Teilhard captured and Tillich missed. Teilhard wrote his reminiscence on the frontlines during WWI:

> Not only does one see there things that you experience nowhere else, but one also sees emerge from within one an underlying stream of clarity, energy, and freedom that is to be found hardly anywhere else in ordinary life—and the new form that the soul then takes on is that of the individual living the quasi-collective life of all men [sic], fulfilling a function far higher than that of the individual, and becoming fully conscious of this new state. It goes without saying that at the front you no longer look on

> things in the same way as you do in the rear: if you did, the sights you see, and the life you lead would be more than you could bear. (Teilhard de Chardin, 1979, p. 208)

The survey revealed a pattern that further revealed the measure of success for the chaplain: to be rewarded by the Institution, and adherence to National objectives rather than compassionate care for the individual trauma of soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines.

Perhaps a question for another researcher: Can this be done?

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DEFINITION OF TERMS

ACPE: Association of Clinical Pastoral Education

CE: Certified Educator

CPE: Clinical Pastoral Education

FOB: Forward Operating Base

Heresy: Belief, doctrine or practice that subtracts from the meaning and breadth of life.

Love: The aspect of G-d that animates life, the energy force, the primal emotion from which all other emotions emanate and to which all emotions return.

Military Operations: When a service member is given live rounds for his/her weapon whether or not the operation is approved by Congress

Orthodox: Belief, doctrine, or practice that gives meaning and breadth to life

PTSD: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Religion: The rites, ordinances, sacraments, and doctrine that are held in common by a clearly defined community of practice, often referred to as a denomination.

Spirituality: The energy, or the spirit, that animates matter without which there would not be life.

Spiritual Care: As used in this research project, refers to the chaplain who cares for a community that he/she is commissioned to lead by virtue of their office.

Pastoral Care: In this research project refers to the ministry that the minister is ordained to tend and is limited by efficacies gifted by a particular denomination.

Trauma: Refers to an experience that cannot be contained by the individual's personal narrative or faith. Trauma is, in itself, a neutral event. The consequence of trauma and the applied meaning are a value judgement held entirely by the individual.

APPENDIX A

POTENTIAL PARTICIPANT LETTER OF INVITATION

Potential Participant Letter of Invitation

Dear Chaplain:

I am writing to invite your participation in a research study. I am completing my Doctorate of Ministry degree at Seattle University, and I am conducting a research project that considers the role of the chaplain to provide spiritual care that is effective, If you meet the following criteria I would like to send you a survey to learn about your experience. The survey will be confidential, and your name will not be included in the final report, unless you explicitly grant your approval.

You qualify for this study if you served in a combat or trauma ministry, in any form that provided spiritual care for service members and/or patients following a traumatic event.

If you are willing to participate in this research, please reply to this email as soon as possible so that I can add you to the potential participant list. You will be contacted shortly afterwards with the survey. Also, please read and sign the attached Consent to Participate in Research form. Please scan and attach the signed consent form as a PDF. note that the Consent form must be signed and returned before participating in the survey.

As a reminder that your survey will be kept confidential and that no identifying information will appear in the final report without your prior consent.

Thank you for your willingness to participate.

Sincerely,

Beth M. Echols
Doctor of Ministry student

APPENDIX B

INFORMATIONAL CONSENT FOR PARTICIPANTS

Informational Consent for Participants

Project Title: Improving Spiritual Care by Chaplains for Service Members Who Witness Death

Investigator**:** Beth M. Echols

4414 3rd Ave NW, Olympia, WA 98502

360-485-7281, echolsb@seattleu.edu

ADVISOR: Dr. Sharon Callahan, Ed.D**,** Director, Doctor of Ministry**,** School of Theology and Ministry**,** Seattle University**,** 901 12th Avenue**,** Seattle, WA 98122

206-296-5336, scal@seattleu.edu

PURPOSE: You are being asked to participate in a research project that seeks to investigate the relevance of the spiritual care provided by the chaplain for soldiers who witness death and how to improve. You will be asked to complete a survey around a set of guiding questions. The survey should take approximately 30 minutes.

SOURCE OF SUPPORT: This study is being conducted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctoral degree in Ministry at Seattle University.

RISKS: There are no known risks associated with this study. However, depending upon your level of ease and prior experience talking about your pastoral care, you may potentially experience some emotional discomfort in completing the survey. You may choose to discontinue the survey at any time.

BENEFITS: Participants may gain increased self-awareness as a result of discussing their experience caring for soldiers who witness death. More broadly, the study may provide important new insight into an improved spiritual care practice as a critical skill set for military chaplains. Additionally, the study hopes to discover potential

leadership lessons that may be learned and shared across the formation as a means of caring for our Nation's soldiers.

INCENTIVES: You will receive no gifts/incentives for this study. Participation in the project will require no monetary cost to you.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Your name and contact information will be collected for the purposes of communication and confirming the accuracy of recorded information post-interview. Your name, image, and survey comments will never be used in any public dissemination of these data (publications, presentations, etc.), unless your expressly grant permission to do so below. All research materials and consent forms will be stored in a locked cabinet to which only the researcher has access. Human subjects research regulations require that data be kept for a minimum of three (3) years. When the research study ends, all identifying information will be removed from the data, or it will be destroyed. All of the information you provide during the interview will be confidential unless you have granted the aforementioned permission to associate your comments with your name. However, if we learn you intend to harm yourself or others, we must notify the authorities.

RIGHT TO WITHDRAW: Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may withdraw your consent to participate at any time without penalty. Your withdrawal will not influence any other services to which you may be otherwise entitled.

FUTURE USE: The data and research findings from this study may be incorporated into future research, academic presentations, publications, or other public dissemination.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS: A summary of the results of this research will be supplied to you, at no cost, upon request. Contact Beth M. Echols at echolsb@seattleu.edu or 360-485-7281.

VOLUNTARY CONSENT: I have read the above statements and understand what is being asked of me. I also understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time, for any reason, without penalty. On these terms, I certify that I am willing to participate in this research project. I understand that should I have any concerns about my participation in this study, I may call Beth M. Echols, who is asking me to participate, at 360-485-7281. If I have any concerns that my rights are being violated, I may contact Dr. Michelle Dubois, Chair of the Seattle University Institutional Review Board at (206) 296-2585.

_____

Participant's Signature Date

_____

Investigator's Signature Date

The following consent is additional and entirely voluntary, for those who wish to maintain and freely disclose their identity throughout the study. If you prefer not to allow the researcher to use identifying information, such a choice will not disqualify you from participating in the study. In that case, you may simply skip this question.

CONSENT TO USE IDENTIFYING INFORMATION:

I give my permission for my name, image, recorded statements, and direct quotes to be used in any presentation, publications, or other public dissemination of the research findings of this study.

_____ _____

Participant's Signature **Date**

APPENDIX C

IRB CONSENT TO DO RESEARCH LETTER

IRB Consent to do Research Letter

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Administration 201
901 12th Avenue P.O. Box 222000 Seattle, WA 98122-1090

January 8, 2020

Beth Echols
School of Theology and Ministry
Seattle University

Dear Beth,

Thank you for all your hard work on your protocol application **Army Chaplain as Soul Doctor**, which now meets the criteria for exemption from IRB review in compliance with **45CFR46.104(d)**:

2) Research that includes only interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if (i) the investigator records information in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained (directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects); (ii) any disclosure of the data outside the research would not reasonably place subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or damage the subjects' financial standing, employability, educational advancement, or reputation; or (iii) the investigator records information in such a manner that the participant's identity can readily be ascertained, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review.

Note that a letter of exemption does **not** mean IRB "approval." *Do not include statements for publication or otherwise that the SU IRB has "reviewed and approved" this study*; rather, say the SU IRB has "determined the study to be exempt from IRB review in accordance with federal regulation criteria."

Please save this notification in your files. If your project alters in nature or scope, contact the IRB right away. If you have any questions, I'm happy to assist.

Best wishes,

Andrea McDowell, PhD
Email: irb@seattleu.edu IRB Administrator Email Phone: (206) 296-2585
cc: Dr. Sharon Callahan, Faculty Adviser

APPENDIX D

OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES FOR LEVEL I/LEVEL II CPE

Objectives and Outcomes for Level I/Level II CPE

CPE provides theological and professional education using the clinical method of learning in diverse contexts of spiritual care. ACPE accredits two types of clinical pastoral education programs: CPE Level I/Level II and Certified Educator CE/ACPE accredited program provide a progressive learning experience through a two-level curriculum. Level I curriculum outcomes must be satisfactorily addressed prior to admission to Level II. Completion of CPE Level I/Level II curriculum outcomes is a prerequisite for admission to Certified Educator CPE. IT is a goal to ensure that students are knowledgeable about the Common Qualifications and Competencies for Professional Chaplains.

CPE Level I/Level II enables pastoral formation, pastoral competence, and pastoral reflection. Some CPE centers offer pastor offer pastoral specialization(s) as part of their Level II curriculum.

CPE Level I/Level II objectives define the scope of the CPE Level I/Level II program curricula in each of the programs.

Pastoral Formation

Objectives

To develop students' awareness of themselves as ministers and of the ways their ministry affects persons.

01. To develop students' awareness of how their attitudes, values, assumptions, strengths, and weaknesses affect their pastoral care.

02. To develop students' ability to engage and apply the support, confrontation, and clarification of the peer group for the integration of personal attributes and pastoral functioning.

Level I Outcomes

L1.1 articulate the central themes and core values of one's a religious/spiritual heritage and the theological understanding that informs one's ministry.

L1.2 Identify and discuss major life events, relationships, social location, cultural contexts, and social realities that impact personal identity as expressed in pastoral functioning.

L1.3 Initiate peer group and supervisory consultation and receive critique about one's ministry practice.

Level II Outcomes

L2.1 articulate an understanding of the pastoral role that is congruent with one's personal and cultural values, basic assumptions, and personhood

Pastoral Competence

Objectives

0.4 to develop students' awareness and understanding of how persons, social conditions, systems, and structures affect their lives and the lives of others and how to address effectively these issues through their ministry.

0.5 to develop students' skills in providing intensive and extensive pastoral care and counseling to persons

0.6 to develop students' ability to make effective use of their religious/spiritual heritage, theological understanding, and knowledge of the behavioral sciences and applies clinical ethics in their pastoral care of persons and groups.

0.7 to teach students the pastoral role in professional relationships and how to work effectively as a pastoral member of a multidisciplinary team

0.8 to develop students' capacity to use one's pastoral and prophetic perspectives in preaching, teaching, leadership, management, pastoral care, and pastoral counseling.

Level I Outcomes

04 to develop students' awareness and understanding of how persons, social condition, systems, and structures affect their lives and the lives of others and how to address effectively these issues through their ministry.

05 to develop students' skills in providing intensive and extensive pastoral care and counseling to persons

06 to develop students' ability to make effective sue of their religious/spiritual heritage, theological understanding and knowledge of the behavioral sciences and applied clinical ethics to their pastoral care of persons and groups.

07 to teach students the pastoral role in professional relationships and how to work effectively as a pastoral member of a multidisciplinary team

08 to develop students' capacity to use one's pastoral and prophetic perspectives in preaching, teaching, leadership, management , pastoral care, and pastoral counseling.

Level I Outcomes

L1.4 risk offering appropriate and timely critique with peers and supervisors

L1.5 recognize relational dynamics within group contexts

L1.6 demonstrate the integration of conceptual understandings presented in the curriculum into pastoral practice

L1.7 initiate helping relationships within and across diverse populations

L1.8 use the clinical methods of learning to achieve one's educational goals

Level II Outcomes

L2.2 provide pastoral ministry with diverse people taking into consideration multiple elements of cultural and ethnic differences, social conditions, systems, justice and applied clerical ethics issues without imposing one's own perspectives

L2.3 demonstrate a range of pastoral skills, including listening/attending, empathic reflection, conflict resolution/transformation, confrontation, crisis management, and appropriate use of religious/spiritual resources

L2.4 assess the strengths and needs of those served, grounded in theology, and using an understanding of the behavioral sciences

L2.5 manage ministry and administration function in terms of accountability, productivity, self-direction, and clear, accurate professional communication

L2.6 demonstrate competent use of self in ministry and administrative function which includes emotional availability, cultural humility, appropriate self-disclosure, positive use of power and authority, a non-anxious and non-judgmental presence, and clear and responsible boundaries.

Pastoral Reflection

Objectives

09. to develop students' understanding and ability to apply the clinical method of learning

010. to develop students' abilities to use both individual and group supervision for personal and professional growth, including the capacity to evaluate one's ministry

Level I Outcome

L1.9 formulate clear and specific goals for continuing pastoral formation with reference to one's strengths and weaknesses as identified through self-reflection, supervision, and feedback

Level II Outcomes

L2.7 establish collaboration and dialogue with peers, authorities, and other professionals

L2.8 demonstrate self-supervision through realistic self-evaluation of pastoral functioning

L2.9 by the end of Level II, students will be able to demonstrate awareness of the Common Qualification and Competencies for Professional Chaplains. (ACPE 2020)

APPENDIX E

U.S. MILITARY ACTIONS AND WARS, 1775 - 1994

U.S. Military Actions and Wars, 1775 - 1994

1775-1783: The Thirteen Colonies
Colonists wage and win a guerilla war for American independence from England.

1798-1800: The Quasi-War
Along the U.S. Atlantic Coast and the West Indies, an undeclared war with France begins; the U.S. wins 9 of 10 naval encounters.

1801-1805: Tripolitan War
Tripoli (now Libya) declares war on the U.S.; the U.S. responds by blockading and then invading Tripoli.

1811: The "Indian Belt" Affair
Across Indiana and Michigan, U.S. forces, led by Tecumseh defeat Native Americans and burn a city, Prophetstown.

1812-1815: The War of 1812
The U.S. wars with Great Britain over freedom of the seas, capture of seamen, and a blockade of U.S. ports. Battles were fought in and around Lake Erie; New Orleans, Louisiana; and the nation's capital.

1817-1818: First Seminole War
Following Native American raids in Florida, U.S. forces destroy Seminole villages and break tribal resistance.

1832: Assault on Sumatra
In the first U.S. armed intervention in Asia, the U.S. retaliates against an attack on a U.S. merchant vessel, killing 100 Sumatrans and burning the town of Quallah Battoo, located in what is now Indonesia.

1832: Black Hawk War
In Illinois and Wisconsin, Sac and Fox tribes under Sac leader Black Hawk attack white settlers but are defeated at the Battle of Bad Axe.

1835-1836: Texas Revolution
Texas settlers' revolt against Mexico.

1835-1842: Second Seminole War
In Florida, American troops clash with Native Americans led by Osceola; the Seminole people are reduced to 350 in number by 1842.

1838-1839: Aroostook War
The U.S. fights an undeclared war with England over Maine's boundaries. Approximately 10,000 troops camp along the Aroostook River in a conflict without casualties.

1846-1848: The Mexican War
The U.S. declares war against Mexico; the war ends with Mexico ceding all rights to Texas, and the U.S. purchase of New Mexico and California.

1847-1850: Cayuse War
In Washington state, Cayuse destroy the intrusive mission of Marcus Whitman, blaming the missionaries for a smallpox outbreak. In addition to Whitman, his wife, and their helpers, 14 Native Americans are killed. The U.S. military forces the Cayuse to surrender and hangs five people.

1855-1858: Third Seminole War
Brigadier General William S. Harney subdues Billy Bowlegs and other Seminole warriors in Florida.

1856: Bleeding Kansas
Conflict erupts in Kansas between pro- and anti-slavery forces, including John Brown; federal troops quell the fighting.

1857-1858: Mormon Expedition
The U.S. Army subdues Mormons who refuse to obey federal law in Utah.

1861-1865: American Civil War
Americans go to war over slavery and the attempted secession of southern states from the United States.

1871: War with Korea
After merchants are killed in Korea, the U.S. kills 250 Koreans in battle; a treaty is secured in 1882.

1871-1876: Apache Wars
Apache leaders Geronimo and Victorio raid white settlers and soldiers in Arizona; Geronimo surrenders in 1886.

1872-1873: Modoc War
In California and Oregon, U.S. cavalry fight to return the Modoc people and their leader, Kintpuash (known to whites as Captain Jack), to an Oregon reservation; Kintpuash is hanged and the Modoc are exiled to Oklahoma.

1876-1877: Black Hills War
Gold in South Dakota brings in whites to Sioux land. Colonel George A. Custer and 264 soldiers are killed at Little Bighorn; subsequently, the U.S. Army destroys Indian resistance.

1877: Nez Percé War
Across Idaho, Oregon, and the Washington border, the U.S. moves against the previously peaceful Nez Percé people in the Northwest; Chief Joseph leads a skillful retreat towards Canada but is caught.

1878: Bannock War
Native Americans of the Bannock tribe attack white settlers in Idaho before they suffer heavy losses and are forced back to Fort Hall Reservation.

1890: Messiah War
The U.S. apprehends Sioux leader Sitting Bull, who is killed when followers try to free him. The Sioux surrender but are massacred at Wounded Knee in South Dakota, in this final fight between Native Americans and the U.S. Army.

1893: Coup in Hawaii
U.S. Marines land in the kingdom of Hawaii to aid the overthrow of Queen Lili'upkalani.

1898-1902: Spanish-American War
U.S. victories against Spain lead to the Treaty of Paris, which establishes the independence of Cuba, and cedes Puerto Rico and Guam to the U.S. The U.S. also purchases the Philippines for $20 million.

1912: Occupation of Nicaragua
Marines arrive in Nicaragua to bolster the government of Adolfo Diaz; the last marines depart in 1934.

1914: Tampico Affair
After U.S. Marines are arrested at Tampico, U.S. forces bombard Veracruz, Mexico, and occupy the city.

1915: Invasion of Haiti
U.S. Marines occupy Haiti after a civil war; a treaty between the U.S. and the Haitian Senate makes the island nation a virtual U.S. protectorate. Troops withdraw in 1934.

1916-1917: Expedition Against Villa
The U.S. military invades Northern Mexico to capture Mexican Pancho Villa, who had raided New Mexico, killing 18; U.S. forces numbering 11,000 withdraw, unable to capture Villa.

1917-1918: World War I
The U.S. ends three years of neutrality in the European conflict, declaring war on Germany. An armistice is declared November 11, 1918.

1918-1920: Siberian Expedition
The U.S. and other Allied troops invade Russia to protect war supplies during the Russian Revolution.

1927: Protection of Shanghai's International Settlement
One hundred Marines land in Shanghai to defend U.S. property during a civil war there.

1941-1945: World War II
The U.S. enters World War II after Japanese planes attack Pearl Harbor in Hawaii; in 1945, Germany and Japan surrender to Allied forces.

1950-1953: Korean War
The U.S. battles North Korean soldiers and then Chinese soldiers in Korea before an armistice is signed in 1953.

1955: Defense of Chinese Nationalists
The U.S. 7th Fleet helps Nationalist Chinese evacuate 25,000 troops and 17,000 civilians from China to Taiwan to escape victorious Communist forces.

1955-1973: Vietnam War
In 1955, U.S. advisers are sent to Vietnam; in 1964 Congress authorizes President Lyndon B. Johnson to "repel any armed attack" in the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. A cease-fire is declared in 1973.

1961: Bay of Pigs Invasion
A CIA-backed invasion of Cuba fails.

1962: Anti-Communist Intervention
President John F. Kennedy orders 5,000 troops to Thailand to support the right-wing Laotian government.

1965: Dominican Crisis
Marines invade the Dominican Republic at the start of a civil war; troops withdraw in 1966.

1975: Mayaguez Incident
A U.S. merchant ship is rescued from Cambodians by U.S. Navy and Marines off the coast of Cambodia.

1980: Operation Eagle Claw
A military mission to free American hostages in Iran fails.

1983: Operation Urgent Fury
U.S. Marines and Rangers remove U.S. medical students from Grenada.

1986: Operation El Dorado Canyon
U.S. war planes strike Libya in retaliation for the Libyan bombing of a West Berlin disco.

1990-1991: Persian Gulf War
The U.S. leads a multi-nation coalition against Iraq after that country invades Kuwait; Iraq surrenders.

1992-1993: Operation Restore Hope
U.S. troops go to Somalia to help restore order and deliver food during a period of unrest and famine.

1994-1995: Operation Uphold Democracy
The U.S. Army sends troops to Haiti in September 1994 to help restore a democratic government.

1994-1995: Bosnian War
The United States bombs Bosnia to prevent "ethnic cleansing" by Serbs in that region and then sends troops to Bosnia to join a NATO peacekeeping force there, as well as in other Balkan areas including Macedonia and Kosovo. *(https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/us-militry-actions-and-wars-1775-1994/)*