

**The Military “Pipeline” from our Public Schools to Returning Veterans: What
should be the Role of Public Schools?**

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The January, 2011 Issue of *American Psychologist*, the premier journal for the American Psychological Association (APA), was dedicated to “comprehensive soldier fitness” in the U.S. army. This issue was clearly an attempt to address the escalating numbers of returning soldiers with serious mental health problems, resulting in high rates of domestic abuse, substance abuse, depression and suicide. The Pentagon’s Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Program is, according to U.S. Army Chief of Staff, George W. Casey (2011), “an integrated, proactive approach to developing psychological resilience in our soldiers, in their family members, and in the Army’s civilian workforce” (p. 1).

With the collaboration of well-known psychologist Martin Seligman, who has done research on trauma and resiliency, the Army plans to work with soldiers to lower levels of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), increase resilience, and increase the number of people who experience post-traumatic growth (Seligman and Fowler, 2001). This program is presented as moving beyond “treatment-centric” approaches to one that focuses on prevention. That is, through teaching resiliency, “soldiers can “be” better *before* deploying to combat so they will not have to “get” better *after* they return” (Casey, 2011, p. 1). Casey (2011) acknowledges that the causes of these high rates of PTSD are the cumulative levels of stress that multiple deployments and “persistent conflict” create. According to Casey

Persistent conflict is defined as protracted confrontation among state, nonstate, and individual actors who are increasingly willing to use violence to accomplish their political and ideological objectives. While we in the army cannot determine when this era of persistent conflict is going to end, we know that—for the foreseeable future—American servicemen and women will continue to be in harm’s way defending our way of life (p.1).

I quote Casey at some length as an illustration of how our wars in Iraq and Afghanistan/Pakistan are normalized and euphemized in academic publications. One person's "persistent conflict" is another's "perpetual war." One person's "defending our way of life," is another person's "extending American influence abroad." And those willing to use violence to accomplish their political and ideological objectives is clearly not meant to refer to the U.S. Nowhere in this special military issue of *American Psychologist* is there any reference to the legitimacy or justness of the wars that are destroying the lives of so many American soldiers and their families.

In theory, at least, the military--including soldiers-- are supposed to remain neutral when it comes to wars, since their job is to implement decisions made by the President, who is the Commander in Chief. Such is not the case however for civilians who work in schools or edit academic journals. Their job is to provide both sides of controversial issues through the relative unfettered examination of ideas, which often means questioning taken-for-granted or officially-sanctioned views.

The use of this euphemized language tends to normalize these two American wars, making invisible the fact that public support for them has generally been weak. At its lowest point, a CNN poll in 2006 indicated that just 34% of Americans polled supported the war in Iraq (CNN U.S., 2006). While developing a program to engage in the use of positive psychology to develop resilience in soldiers before sending them off to fight these unpopular wars may be useful, it may be avoiding a significant part of the problem, a lack of support for the wars themselves, resulting in a climate of general indifference to their sacrifices when soldiers return.

Although, I am not a psychologist, it would seem that being resilient in the aftermath of the horrors of war would be somewhat easier returning from a war, such as World War II, that

had broad support and in which a vast majority of Americans knew that it was clearly a war to defend democracy against totalitarianism and of national defense. In such wars, civilians are expected to also make sacrifices, and do so enthusiastically. It would seem that returning to a community of solidarity and support might at least make the trauma of war somewhat more bearable. By only fighting such wars, we could exponentially reduce and in some cases eliminate altogether the devastating effects of war on returning veterans. While such a statement might seem hopelessly utopian and even naïve to many, the fact is that most countries in the world rarely, if ever, fight wars.

The Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program is promoted as “prevention,” but, as I will argue in this paper, prevention might better be thought of as addressing the ways American public schools collude in the creation of a military pipeline in which some youth are being prepared for this “persistent conflict” from an early age. While, I am using the metaphor of a pipeline somewhat loosely, the notion of persistent conflict makes the need for a permanent pipeline of soldiers more literal. This makes it even more urgent that we look closer to the beginning of the pipeline to understand how the Pentagon and public schools have developed a partnership that has helped to create and legitimate a significant and growing military presence in schools, including a fertile terrain for military recruiters.

The reason for documenting in some detail the increasing presence of the military both in society and in our schools is to make the case that we need to pay attention to the impact of this presence on our youth in schools, rather than address it later on when they return. How might we think about this public space of schools differently than merely a convenient place to meet recruitment quotas? How might we revive former debates about citizenship, democracy, the military and the role of public schools?

When it comes to the military, our schools have the responsibility to educate our youth about what for many will be the most important decision of their lives. The military via JROTC, is certainly a legitimate career option, and for some may provide structure, discipline, belonging, leadership, and help pay for post-secondary education. But this is the only side schools tend to present. In an age of "persistent conflict," for many students, their decision to enlist in the military will result in post-traumatic stress disorder, domestic violence, substance abuse, homelessness, traumatic brain injury, dismemberment, suicide or violent death (Church, 2009; Mundy, 2007). Our public schools play an important role in feeding a military establishment that has grown even beyond World War II levels. In the following sections I will document in what ways and to what extent this is done.

My argument in this paper is not that the military should not implement clinical programs that attempt to deal with the devastating results of war on soldiers and civilians. This program is a positive development in a military establishment whose response to soldiers suffering from combat-related illness has tended to be either to tell them to "man up" or to medicate them with drug cocktails that often have lethal consequences (Dao, Carey, and Frosch, 2011). On the other hand, programs that promote resilient individuals tend to be popular among many social scientists and clinicians, but leave the conditions—poverty, abuse, war--that require resilience unexamined.

Nor do I argue against the need for a standing army, although some pacifists might. What I will argue, however, is that our traditional and very American concept of the citizen soldier and the virtues of defense of democracy, service to one's community or the defense of country has become badly distorted over time. As the American citizen soldier tradition has given way to conscription, and later to a volunteer army, the connection between serving in the military and

being of service to one's community has been weakened (Snyder, 1999). Wars to defend democracy, family, community, or country have been replaced by "wars of choice" or "preemptive wars" that appear to be decided in back rooms and then "sold" to the public through disinformation and with often self-serving geopolitical, domestic, and personal motives.

My two specific concerns about the schools as the main entryway into the military pipeline are the following: 1) While the Pentagon has a massive budget to support its presence in schools, primarily, but not exclusively, through JROTC and recruitment, there is no equivalent funding or alternative space dedicated to providing students with a balanced or even counter perspective on the military; and 2) While public schools open their doors to the military and even subsidize programs like JROTC, there is little effort in schools to provide a serious discussion of the military and its relationship to the meaning of notions of citizenship, democracy, patriotism, and service or the ethics of war. This general lack of attention to these issues represents an abdication of the educative mission of schooling.

Some scholars, however, see the U.S. as becoming increasingly militarized, making what Casey (2011) called "persistent conflict" more likely to continue (Enloe, 2007; Lutz, 2002; Robbins, 2008). One concern, among others, of such scholars is the continued growth of the military budget. Even in the context of the current recession and a call for large cuts to social programs, proposed "cuts" to the Pentagon budget represent cuts to the projected growth, rather than to the actual military budget.

The Massive Growth of the U.S. Military

Sherry (1997) documents how historically national leaders assembled armies in wartime and dismantled them after the war. This was also true in the U.S. until 1940, but has changed dramatically since then. While the size of our military has varied somewhat during the second

half of the 20th century, it has remained at historically high levels even during peacetime.

Military spending dropped off some by 1948 from World War II highs, but as cold war ideology and a powerful military-industrial complex emerged, military expenditures increased. Yearly spending in inflation adjusted dollars rose to over \$500 billion at the peak of the Vietnam war in 1968, decreasing after the war, but rising steadily until 1989 when spending again reach over \$500 billion.

Although military expenditures leveled off slightly after the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989, the war in Iraq and Afghanistan/Pakistan have driven expenditures to new post World War II highs. Steiglitz and Bilmes (2008) document how the long-term costs of the two wars will cost American taxpayers over three trillion dollars. For the 2011 fiscal year, the national budget is estimated to be \$3 trillion, with over half, or \$1.6 trillion, going to the military¹ (Lindorff, 2010; The United States Department of Defense, 2010). Many educators and advocacy organizations have pointed out the opportunity costs of such spending, arguing that much of this spending should be redirected to education and social services for children.

The Entryway to the Pipeline: The Growing Military Presence in Schools

The Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program described by U.S. Army Chief of Staff, George W. Casey is preventative to the extent that it intervenes with soldiers a bit earlier in the pipeline, providing resiliency training to soldiers upon entry into the military. In this section, I will move further down the pipeline to the point at which prospective soldiers are being recruited and the role of schools in this process. With such a massive growth in military spending, perhaps it should not be surprising that in recent years the presence of the military in public schools has grown rapidly. American high schools present an important opportunity for the Pentagon: Schools are institutions where for at least 6 hours a day adolescents are gathered together in one

placeⁱⁱ. Throughout the 20th century the Pentagon has worked hard to gain and increase its access to public schools in order to legitimate itself to each new generation and recruit youth for America's wars (Zeiger, 2003; Zimmerman, 1999). I will provide an overview of the military presence in schools, with a particular focus on recruitment, I do this in some detail so as to give the reader a sense of the many ways that schools collude in moving young people along the pipeline to the military, whether in JROTC, classrooms, counselors offices, or the access they provide for military recruiters.

A de facto partnership has existed between the Department of Education and the Department of Defense that has increased the military's presence in schools. It is most visible in low-income high schools, with JROTC being perhaps the most visible aspect. In addition to JROTC, one can also see military recruiters in lunchrooms, hallways, and classrooms, military commercials on Channel One news programs, counselors administering the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB), various military vans that visit schools and provide military-themed entertainment for youth, among a growing list of other activities and after-school programs. In recent years the military's presence has extended into middle schools and, though still rare, into elementary schools (Houbert, 2008). Since 1994, with offices in 31 states, *Troops to Teachers* has helped certify military personnel as teachers, principals, and superintendents for low-income schools (Owings, Kaplan, Nunnery, Marzano, Myran, and Blackburn, 2006). Venture philanthropist, Eli Broad has for two decades bankrolled the preparation of business and military leaders to be superintendents (Broad Center, 2010).

Any one of these elements of what some have called the "militarization" of schooling (Robbins, 2008; Saltman and Gabbard, 2003) might seem inconsequential. However, a typical low-income school might have considerable synergism and social networking among: JROTC

instructors; military recruiters; guidance counselors who are military liaisons; and teachers, a principal and/or a superintendent retooled from the military. This synergism is reinforced outside schools through Pentagon-funded commercials and online video games and Pentagon-influenced movies and television programs (See Garofolo, 2000; Robb, 2004; and Valantin, 2005 for extensive accounts of this influence). This synergism creates a seamless pro-military message for many students, particularly those who are not viewed as "college material," and who are not bombarded by an equivalent seamless message about other post-secondary options. We actually know very little about each of these elements and how they interact in and around schools, and educational researchers, with only a handful of exceptions, tend to stay away from the military in schools as a topic of researchⁱⁱⁱ.

Another aspect of this Pentagon-public schools partnership is the fact that schools are not merely allowing the military to run programs in schools, but they are paying them to do so. While the Defense Budget pays some of the costs of JROTC, school districts end up paying a major portion of the cost of these programs out of their own budgets. In fact, it is probably more accurate to think of the public schools using taxpayer money to subsidize the Pentagon. In most cases the costs to schools are considerable and lead to the necessity of cutting other programs (American Friends Service Committee 1999; Jahnkow, 2004). Extra costs include additional insurance coverage, new facilities construction and maintenance, and a portion of JROTC instructors' salaries, benefits and taxes. This is a real bargain for the Pentagon since its presence in schools, the influence over youth that this presence provides, and the legitimacy it confers is priceless.

Military Recruiters in High Schools

High school recruiters are not at the farthest end of the military pipeline. The military is dipping into elementary and middle schools with after school programs and others like the Young Marines, which is patterned on the Boy Scouts (Houbert, 2008). However, recruiters tend to directly target high school juniors, seniors, and recent graduates. The Department of Defense (DoD) is the largest employer in the U.S. and needs over 200,000 new enlistees every year. Since the end of the draft in 1973, the DoD has struggled to meet enlistment targets and during the 20 years from 1990 to 2010 periodically failed to meet its recruitment goals. During much of this period the military has had to compete in a healthy economy in which unemployment was low, more students aspired to a college education, and interest in the military waned (Sacket and Maver, 2003). In response, the DoD increased incentives, diversified its recruitment strategies, and placed more pressure on school recruiters.

While there is plenty of anecdotal data, very little systematic research exists on the activities of military recruiters in schools, especially by academic researchers. A study by the New York Civil Liberties Union and co-sponsored by the office of the Manhattan Borough president and the *Students or Soldiers? Coalition* (NYCLU, 2007) surveyed nearly 1,000 students in 45 New York City high schools. They found that one in five respondents reported use of class time by military recruiters; two in five did not receive a military recruitment opt out form; one in five did not believe anyone in their school could properly advise them of the risks and benefits of enlisting in the military, and nearly half said they did not know to whom to report misconduct by a military recruiter.

On the other hand, there is considerable investment by the DoD into research on effective strategies for recruiting youth. For instance, in 1999, the Pentagon requested the National Academy of Sciences, via its National Research Council, to establish a Committee on Youth

Population and Military Recruitment. The result was a series of studies on attitudes, aptitudes, values, and aspirations of youth with implications for increasing recruitment targets.

Among the studies that were contracted were studies by Sacket and Mavor (2003; 2004) that provided recommendations, such as focusing advertising not only on potential recruits, but also on key influencers, such as peers and parents. As a result, incentives are provided to recruits to recruit their high school friends, and advertisements increasingly target parents. In addition they recommend surveys and focus groups with youth to determine "the concepts and language used by youth in determining alternative courses of action (e.g. education vs. military service)" and "that advertising message strategies be evaluated in terms of their effects on targeted beliefs and values (Sacket and Mavor, 2004, p. 164).

While most of the research that the Pentagon funds is functionalist and quantitative, more open-ended qualitative and critical research might provide more nuanced findings about what attracts youth to military service. For instance, Tannock (2005) calls for research that

thoroughly examines the ideological basis of what constitutes meaningful work in the imagination of recruits: the powerful draws of militarism, patriotism, technology fetishism, or hegemonic masculinity that frequently help to motivate military enlistment. Within this desire for meaningfulness in employment, young armed forces recruits are making a powerful critique of the jobs (and sometimes the schools and classrooms) that are otherwise available to them in a capitalist economy (p. 177).

Tannock (2010) and others, then, suggest that even without well-funded efforts by the military to recruit young people, our economy is not producing the kinds of jobs that would provide well-paid and meaningful alternatives. In a post-industrial society, well-paid, unionized jobs are scarce, and few other forms of national service are available. Moreover, many young

males enter military service with the notion of achieving “manhood.” Thus, the tendency of the military to perpetuate hegemonic forms of masculinity in schools needs to be further studied as well as what factors are attracting growing numbers of women to JROTC and the military (Diamond, Kimmel, & Schroeder, 2000; Higate, 2003; Lahelma, 2005).

Perhaps the most revealing places to seek information on recruiters in schools are the handbooks that all branches of the military use to gain and maintain access to schools. For instance, *The School Recruiting Program Handbook* is published by the United States Army Recruiting Command and represents the army’s business plan for penetrating the high school “market.” The following quote from the handbook illustrates both the intent and language of marketing the military to students.

The objective of the school recruiting program (SRP) is to assist recruiters with programs and services so they can effectively penetrate the school market. The goal is school ownership that can only lead to a greater number of army enlistments. Recruiters must first establish rapport in the schools. This is a basic step in the sales process and a prerequisite to an effective school program. Maintaining this rapport and establishing a good working relationship is next. Once educators are convinced recruiters have their students’ best interests in mind the SRP can be effectively implemented. (United States Army Recruiting Command, 2002, p. 2).

Most schools have a military liaison (usually the head guidance counselor) who is the contact person and gatekeeper for school access. Since the stated goal is school ownership, recruiters are encouraged to sidestep counselors as “centers of influence;”

Never rely on guidance counselors as the sole center of influence (COI) in the school. Cultivate coaches, librarians, administrative staff and teachers, especially those whose

subjects correlate with Army programs. (United States Army Recruiting Command, 2002, p. 2).

The Handbook does not encourage recruiters to market the military to students through dishonesty. Recruiters are encouraged to “present clear, accurate, and complete information to students, giving honest answers on both positive and negative aspects of military life, so that students may make informed choices” (p. 4).

But wartime enlistment quotas have at times placed added stress on recruiters. In 2006, in response to reports of a growing number of allegations of incidents of misconduct and abuse by recruiters, Congress called upon the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to investigate. In 2005, the GAO documented 6,600 allegations of recruiter wrongdoing, a 50% increase over the previous year (GAO, 2006). Complaints were so numerous that on May 20th, 2005 recruiting was suspended nationally for one day in order to retrain recruiters in the legalities and ethics of military recruiting.

Even a hard sell did not produce sufficient enlistees, leading the military to waive key enlistment requirements. In October of 2007, 12.3 percent of recruits needed waivers because of criminal records, including felony convictions. Other waivers were given for being overweight and drug or alcohol abuse. Besides using waivers to increase enlistments, the military has added more recruiters, and increased financial incentives. In 2002, an expedited naturalization process for members of the military took effect causing an increase in recruitment of non-citizens. According to Castro (2006), there are currently about 37,400 non-citizens in the active duty military^{iv}.

The impact of NCLB on Recruitment.

The No Child Left Behind Act, signed into law in 2002, reauthorized and amended the

Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. The 670-page act included many items slipped in at the last minute including two sections that pertain to the presence of the military in schools. One ensures the same recruiter access to schools as business and university recruiters, and the other ensures access to student information.

The issue of how much access recruiters should have to schools has been debated for years. The NCLB law does not allow a district or school to deny recruiters access. However, in those schools where recruiters have unlimited access to students and classrooms, some principals or superintendents have used the law to limit recruiter access similar to that which college recruiters have, which tends to be only when the schools host job fairs. However, the issue of access to student information ended up being the more controversial of the two measures.

The measure was introduced in part because some schools were refusing to provide student information to the military. The combination of counter-recruitment activism and complaints of recruiter harassment in 1993 caused the San Diego school district to stop releasing student information to recruiters (Jahnkow, 2006). This and other isolated cases of schools protecting student's privacy, led an angry Louisiana congressman to amend NCLB by adding Section 9528. This amendment directs schools to provide military recruiters access to high school students' directory information (name, address and telephone number) or lose federal funding. Parents and students have to fill out a form if they wish to opt out of this requirement, but schools have only recently begun systematically providing this information to students, largely as a result of activism and litigation (Anderson, 2009).

In reality, the military also gets access to student information in other ways. The U.S. military, as part of a larger tendency toward privatization of services, has contracted with the private firm, Equifax Database Services (formerly BeNow) to create a database with daily

updates of 30 million 16 to 25 year-olds. This database contains information on 90% of students nationally and is housed in the Pentagon's Joint Advertising Market Research and Studies department (JAMRS). Several advocacy organizations have come together to protest the existence of this database as a violation of the Privacy Act^v. Another source of student data is the ASVAB exam, which is promoted to schools as a career exploration test, but is used by military recruiters to target students with specific skills for enlistment. Fourteen thousand schools and Military Entrance Processing Stations give the ASVAB each year.

So while most American schools already provided data to the military and allowed recruiters on campuses prior to NCLB, the legal requirement to do so has resulted in greater acquiescence by school districts and a more generalized acceptance of the inherent right of the military to have a strong presence in American schools. What it also did, however, was to galvanize opposition in some communities who rallied to challenge this presence or to insist that schools also present another side to the recruiter's pitch (Anderson, 2009; Furumoto, 2005).

Guidance Counselors: The Liaisons to the military in schools.

What little scholarship exists on school counselors and the military tends to focus on the effects on children of deployed parents (e.g. Fenell, Fenell, & Williams, 2005), and this is an important issue, particularly in schools near military bases. School counselors could also have an important impact on helping young people to think seriously about the pros and cons of joining the military. Unfortunately, while some counselors likely take this role seriously, there is little evidence that most have the time or inclination to do very much in this regard. In the absence of a significant counselor role in this important decision, this counseling role is de facto delegated to military recruiters.

Guidance counselors in high schools have heavy case loads and have taken over many tasks formerly done by principals. To expect counselors to play a significant role in guiding students through the difficult choice of whether or not to join the military may be unrealistic. However, high school counselors are far more enmeshed in the military's presence in schools than most are aware. The head school counselor is the military liaison in most high schools and controls access to the school for military recruiters. Although the school counseling literature is silent on this important guidance role, there is some evidence that counselors (as well as principals, teachers, and many parents) see JROTC and the armed forces as providing needed structure and discipline for "difficult" students. (Corbett & Coumbe, 2001; Perusse, 1997). There is also evidence that the expansion of JROTC in schools was seen as in part a way to discipline social difference and as a response to social unrest among youth (Bartlett and Lutz, 1998; Collin, 2008).

Counselors are linked to the military in another way. As mentioned above, the ASVAB exam is routinely used by many school counselors, who seem either unaware or untroubled by the fact that their students' scores and personal information are provided to the military, which uses it as a recruitment tool. The ASVAB is often presented as a vocational aptitude inventory, and students and their parents are often unaware that it is developed and utilized by the military.

Many high school counselors and teachers see the military as an opportunity for job training and educational attainment. Therefore it is important to review some of the literature on this subject. Various researchers have studied the longterm educational and occupational attainment of those who opted for the military and those who did not, and the results are not good for current students. Sampson and Laub (1996) found that longterm occupational and educational benefits did accrue to veterans of WWII with a strong G.I. Bill and the growing

economy of the 1950s and 1960s. However, subsequent generations of veterans have not fared as well. During the years of the draft, as might be expected, draftees generally saw military service as interrupting their education or work careers and support for returning Vietnam War veterans was far less than WWII veterans (Cohen, Segal and Temme, 1986).

In a more recent study, Teachman (2007) compared veterans and nonveterans of the post-1973 all-volunteer force and found that “there is a deficit in schooling at the time that veterans are discharged from the military, and for many veterans, this deficit grows after they return to civilian life (pp. 359-360).” In a related study, Kleykamp, (2010) found that military downsizing after the end of the cold war in 1989 did not result in loss of employment and resulted in substantial increases in college going, particularly for African-American men. While more studies are needed, these results suggest that, with the exception of World War II veterans, students who do not opt for military service have higher longterm educational attainment than those who enter the military^{vi}. Although the G.I. bill was recently beefed up, in the current recession, veterans are returning to an economy that provides far fewer options than when these studies were done.

Movements that Challenge the Military Presence in Schools or Provide Other Information or Options

The previous sections have provided some idea of how extensive and diverse the military presence in schools is, and the lack of a sustained and balanced discussion of this important topic among school professionals or educational researchers^{vii}. Educational researchers have yet to study the thousands of activist organizations across the country that seek to challenge recruiters’ unfettered access to schools, promote a more balanced perspective on recruitment, and provide career and employment options to the military. These groups are generally not anti-military, but

are concerned that too many young men and women are being moved into the military pipeline by public schools without providing them with alternative perspectives. This is why Iraq Veterans for Peace and other groups throughout the country have organized to provide students with an alternative viewpoint. There is also a sizable national movement to challenge the presence of recruiters in schools. Some--mainly pacifists--believe the military has no place in K-12 public schools since they believe all war is immoral. Others object to recruiting young people in schools to fight in wars because they are still legally minors, and because they see it as a violation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (ACLU, 2008). Some argue that adolescents' brains are literally not prepared cognitively to make such an important decision (Giedd, 2008).

Some opposition is motivated by the equity-related concern that military recruiters and JROTC tend to target lower-income students to whom we have provided few other post-high school options, creating what some refer to as an economic or poverty draft (Mariscal, 2004). Until its recent repeal, there was also much concern about the military as a homophobic institution and its "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. Yet others object to recruiting youth for wars whose objectives they believe are less to defend the nation than to extend American influence abroad.

There is a long history in the U.S. of opposition to military training in schools^{viii}. Before military recruiters began using schools as sites of recruitment, there was opposition to military training in schools in the early twentieth century, mainly focused on JROTC, which didn't enter schools until 1916. Many women's organizations opposed military training in schools. The American School Peace League (ASPL), founded by Fannie Fern Andrews in 1908, campaigned against military training in schools in the years leading to World War I (Zeiger, 2003).

Zimmerman (1999) documents how during this pre World War I era, some activists not only opposed military training, but offered in its place a requirement for physical education for boys and girls in all grades. Peace activists and educators like John Dewey prevailed against veterans groups and the War Department's offer of resources through the newly created JROTC. Thirteen states passed compulsory physical education laws during the war; by 1923, a total of twenty-five states required the subject. Several of them also rejected competing military training bills, just as pacifists had hoped (Zimmerman, 1999, p. 609). The controversy continued into the 1930s with pro-JROTC groups gaining ground, until in the run-up to World War II calls to patriotism and war preparedness won the day, making JROTC a major presence in American schools for decades thereafter. Having legitimated a military presence in schools, recruiters were not far behind.

However even today there is still quite a bit of push-back on a military presence in schools. In 2006, the San Francisco school district voted to replace JROTC with an alternative non-military, leadership program (Tucker, 2007). The primary reason for the elimination of this 90-year program according to a majority of school board members was "its connection with a discriminatory and homophobic military means it has no place in public education" (Tucker, 2007, p. B5). However, with the election of a new school board, the San Francisco school district voted to reinstate JROTC program in May 2009 (San Francisco Business Times, 5/13/2009). In another example of resistance, members of the New York Collective of Radical Educators (2008) have developed a curriculum and resource guide titled *Camouflaged: Investigating how the U.S. military affects you and your community*. This curriculum was developed to provide teachers with a resource to use in their classrooms to provide an antidote to what they see as a one-sided view provided by JROTC and military recruiters.

The role of the military in schools has long been a topic of debate and continues to be today. However, the military has made important gains in increasing its influence in schools, and school principals, teachers, and counselors, with some notable exceptions, tend to see the issue as too controversial to take on publicly. One of the reasons groups like Veterans for Peace do assemblies in high schools is because they want students and school professionals to know what may await students at the other end of the pipeline.

Rethinking the Relationship of Schools and the Military

It is hard to rethink the role of schools with regard to the military without discussing citizenship education in a democracy. The role of the military in democratic societies is a topic that dates at least back to the civic republican tradition of ancient Greece. According to Snyder (1999), “Citizen soldiers serve in the military in order to protect their ability to govern themselves for the common good, and they participate in the process of deciding when to engage in war” (p. 1). This suggests that participation in the military goes hand in hand with participation in self-governance. In the absence of participatory democracy, neither compulsory nor volunteer military service adheres to these requirements^{ix}.

This dilemma of balancing the civic and military aspects of a democratic society has been central to debates about the military, and more specific to this article, its relationship to public schooling throughout U.S. history. While an in depth discussion of these debates is beyond the scope of this article (See Barber 1984; Moskos, 1988; Moskos, Williams, and Segal, 1999; Snyder, 1999), these civic-military tensions form a background to most of the debates around what role, if any, the military should have in public schools and how public schools should educate students about the military. Given our current volunteer and partly privatized (Springer, 2007) army fighting ill-defined and often unpopular foreign wars, U.S. policies regarding the

relationship of public schooling to the military has become increasingly important.

In the documentary *The War Tapes*, in which three soldiers in Iraq filmed the war for a year, a young Lebanese-American soldier asserts that he loves being a soldier, but laments that he cannot choose the wars he fights in. His love of soldiering is related to his desire to be of service to a democratic community in which personal sacrifice is related to the protection and preservation of the community. He strongly opposes the Iraq war, which he feels was not entered into democratically, and is left feeling cheated of being able to be of genuine service to his community^x.

Snyder (1999) addresses this dilemma by calling for reconstituting the citizen-soldier tradition through emphasizing civic participation for youth:

Situating military service within a broad array of civic practices, should remind us that a democratic society has a military not only in order to defend its borders, but also to defend its democratic principles, including equality and participatory citizenship (p. 159).

There have been many proposals for national civic service, but few have done so with the intent of democratizing military service. Such democratization does not involve a return to conscription, which fails to re-imagine the civic public. Reconstituting the citizen soldier tradition "requires instituting a program of civic education in all military training. Instead of military service being the primary form of civic education, civic education should become a primary part of military service" (Snyder, 1999, p. 159). This would mean that a program like JROTC would at very least have a combination of civilian and military instructors, and preferably all instructors would be prepared, not just in military training, but also in political philosophy. It would be either integrated into the social studies curriculum or provided as an elective, and ideally it would be part of a civic service program that would integrate those

providing military service with those providing other forms of community or national service^{xi}.

The citizen-soldier concept has its limitations. Much like the current U.S. militia movement, such a proposal could be captured by nationalism and the hyper-patriotism that Westheimer (2007) and others warn about. Also, given the cozy partnership the military enjoys with public schools, it is unlikely it would be motivated to go along with such a program. But given the relative success of the Works Progress Administration during the depression and the more recent AmeriCorps, bringing military service into this larger conversation about civic engagement might be a strategy worth exploring. Such a civic service program in schools, that would include the military as a form of service, but also many other options, might be effective in helping to resuscitate the notion of American citizenship to include more substantive engagement with government. Such democratic engagement also might lead to fewer wars that fail to enjoy broad support.

After all, what goes on in schools is in many ways a reflection of what goes on in society and vice versa. Many see the militarization of schools as a logical consequence of a larger process of militarization of American society, which has accelerated in the wake of president President Bush's response to 9/11. Enloe (2007) describes militarization in the following way:

To become militarized is to adopt militaristic values (e.g. a belief in hierarchy, obedience, and the use of force) and priorities as one's own, to see military solutions as particularly effective, to see the world as a dangerous place best approached with militaristic attitudes. These changes may take generations to occur, or they may happen suddenly as the response to a particular trauma. Most of the people in the world who are militarized are not themselves in uniform. Most militarized people are civilians. (p. 4)

So teaching soldiers resiliency will not address the larger militarization of the society, the plight of civilians who are family and friends of returning soldiers, or those who are being exposed to these dispositions through military programs in schools. Except for the 9/11 attack on the Twin Towers in New York, American civilians have not recently experienced war directly. However, civilians are also now more likely to be victims of war than soldiers. The age in which armies clashed on battlefields is long gone. The advent of urban, house-to-house warfare, aerial bombing, ecological destruction, nuclear and germ warfare, suicide bombings, and now unmanned drone attacks has changed the ethics of modern warfare.

If we are to address the growth of the military and militarization in our society, we must begin to address it amongst our youth in schools. Rather than only worry about them when they return as damaged goods from the foreign wars we send them to, we need to move further along the pipeline to look at the role of schools and forms of militarization that occur there and elsewhere. As I have tried to describe in this paper, such a project would mean addressing the multiple manifestations of the military in our schools and society and the dispositions and attitudes we are inculcating in our youth.

Although seen as a European war initially, after the attack on Pearl Harbor, World War II veterans and the broad American public saw that war as a necessary evil to protect democracy and the U.S. While national defense and "our way of life" have been evoked indirectly to justify subsequent wars, popular support has been weak in comparison, and the ability to fight them, has depended on creating a group of soldiers eager to sign up for the military and a public tolerant of "preemptive" wars fought by a volunteer army, in which sacrifice is largely delegated. In a New York Times report on graduates of West Point, a quote by a graduating cadet illustrates the

difference between the soldier trained to kill in wars of national defense, but reluctant to do so, and the soldier who is eager to use his or her new skills,

Cadet Ragsdale said he is itching to get to Iraq. “I’ve been training for four years to do something, and I want to go do it,” he said. “It would be weird if there wasn’t a war going on. You’d go out and pretend there was a war” (Wilson, 2007).

While this example is merely anecdotal, there are few places in our public schools (and apparently at West Point) where serious conversations about war take place. In the midst of the drills, the uniforms, the recruiters, the video games that simulate wars in the Middle East, and our age of “persistent conflict,” schools seem to have abdicated their responsibility to educate youth about the brutality of war and the proper role of the military in society. History texts are often organized around important wars, but these are treated more as historical facts, than the agony of real human beings and their families. Teaching about contemporary wars is often avoided for being too controversial. As I have documented elsewhere, those teachers who bring issues of contemporary wars into the classroom or invite counter-recruiters in to provide a more balanced perspective are seldom encouraged and often discouraged from doing so (Anderson, 2009).

But, of course, as I documented above, there are always tensions and pockets of resistance in schools. One exception to the tendency to avoid discussion of war. is the poem by Wilfred Owen, *Dulce et Decorum Est*, that has been part of the high school English literature curriculum for decades. Wilfred Owen was a soldier in World War I, who was killed just seven days before the Armistice on November 4, 1918. At the age of 25, he was killed by a German machine gun blast. In the poem he provides a brutally vivid image of a soldier dying as the result of exposure to mustard gas. Owen’s poem is for many young men, a memorable moment in their

high school education. This is because the poem represents a rare moment of brutal honesty about the horror of war, and the tendency for those of us with little or no experience with war to send generations of youth off to fight and die.

If we want to address the physical and health problems that result from war, we must do more than medicate returning soldiers or teach them the skills of resiliency. We must first address the economic, political and social policy issues that cause unpopular wars to occur in the U.S. with such frequency. However, regardless of how we understand these broader economic and policy issues, we also need to better understand why many seem in denial of the brutality of war (Cohen, 2001), and why so many young men (and increasingly women) are attracted to fighting and to the military, and the role of the schools (and popular culture) in promoting or questioning this attraction. Only in this way can we better understand the ways we are placing them in harm's way in the first place, and perhaps not send them off to war so cavalierly. This is ultimately the message the 25-year-old Wilfred Owen was trying to send us in the poem he wrote before he died in a blaze of bullets.

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ⁱ These numbers can vary somewhat. To make military spending look smaller, the government tends to include social security in the budget when in reality, it is a separate trust fund.

ⁱⁱ While the military still needs to recruit heavily in high schools to meet quotas, they have shifted to a higher percentage of high school graduate recruits. Knowles, Parlier, Hoscheit, Ayer, Lyman, and Fancher (2002) report that the Pentagon, using a “just in time” business model, has discovered that efforts to recruit and sign up high school seniors are less efficient than recruiting graduates. Since students cannot officially enlist until they are eighteen and finish high school, students recruited through the delayed entry program have been “warehoused” until they can enlist. The Pentagon was losing over 20% of its senior recruits during this time, while graduates tend to want to enlist as soon as possible. Moving the focus from seniors to graduates lowered the estimated cost per recruit to the military from \$16,400 to \$12,800.

ⁱⁱⁱ While there is considerable research on this topic in other disciplines, the relative lack of research in education journals on this topic may be due to the fact that the topic may be seen as too controversial and therefore not a good way to build a career in an applied field. It is also a topic that falls through the cracks of academic subdisciplines. It is hard to know where the study of the military and education would fit in a College of Education. Nor is there a Special Interest Group on the topic in the American Educational Research Association. Another reason may be that the presence of Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (JROTC) and military recruiters have become so normalized in our schools that they are largely rendered invisible.

^{iv} There has been considerable controversy surrounding the proposed “Dream Act” legislation which would provide American citizenship for attending college or the military. Some see it as a recruitment tool aimed at Latinos/as.

^v These organizations include LeaveMyChildAlone.org, Brooklyn Parents for Peace, Coalition Against Militarism in our Schools (CAMS), and Peace Action.

^{vi} Many states also have lottery-generated college scholarship programs, and low-income students have other forms of state and federal education aid and loans, making the military less essential in some cases

^{viii} Although beyond the scope of this paper, historians have also documented the increase of the military presence in schools during the post World War II cold war period, as well as a substantial literature on the relationship among citizenship, schooling, and the military throughout the 20th century.

^{ix} Militias made up of citizen soldiers proved too inefficient in the early years of the American republic and were early on largely replaced by a professional army. I am not suggesting here a return to the militia tradition, but rather using it as a way to think about what the citizen’s relationship to a professional army should be, and to bring back a broader sense of what service to community and country might look like.

^x How typical this soldier is is a matter of conjecture. There are many reasons young men and women chose to be soldiers. The most pragmatic is the monetary and educational benefits they perceive, or the opportunity to leave small towns and see the world. As the recent movie, *The Hurt Locker* illustrates, some soldiers like the adrenaline rush that combat provides. Others build strong bonds of camaraderie to each other that keeps them going back. Yet others, believe the wars are noble causes worth dying for.

^{xi} Snyder (1999) and others who write on the military and civic engagement are not proposing replacing a professional army with local militia. My own proposal is limited to blending military and civic engagement into a more educationally justifiable program at the high school level.