

# Educating for Restraint



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Clausewitz made the intuitively appealing claim that wars tend to ‘absoluteness’, and that the limitations law and morality impose are in theory alien to it. Clausewitz of course knew that there are in practice many limitations to how wars are fought, but saw these restrictions as alien to what war is. Since then, historians such as John Lynn (2003), John Keegan (1993) and Victor Davis Hanson (1989) have taught us to see things differently: culture is central to understanding how wars are fought. Rituals and taboos set limits to what soldiers can and cannot do, and these limitations in fact form an essential element of what war is. A familiar example is the taboo on shooting at a lone soldier who forms too easy a target. This is the ‘naked soldier’ from Robert Graves’ war memoirs, brought to fame by Michael Walzer’s *Just and Unjust Wars* (1992; see also Chiu, 2019). Although such boundaries are as old as war itself, today it looks as if the limits to the violence militaries can use are stricter and more widespread than ever before. At present, these limitations spring more from the political and societal level than from the cultural and individual level. The law, politics, an increased moral sensitivity, extensive media coverage and public opinion, both at home and abroad, impose considerable (but mostly justified) limits on what troops can do.

As has been noted in many introductory paragraphs, the primary tasks of many militaries have shifted from national defence to the handling of international crises, ranging from humanitarian missions to outright war. These new operations, often at least partly undertaken for moral reasons, require a great deal of self-control on the part of military personnel. Having to function under the watchful eye of politicians, the media and the general public, ethics education for military personnel today partly comes down to convincing military personnel of the importance of exercising restraint, even when their opponents do not. Incidents in Afghanistan and Iraq have shown that the required moderation does not always come naturally. The

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killing of 39 civilians by Australian special forces in Afghanistan between 2005 and 2016 is a fairly recent example of such an incident (Inspector-General of the ADF, 2020), whilst the Abu Ghraib prison scandal and the Haditha massacre date back a little further into the past. In all of these three cases, the victims were outsiders to the military organization. Such innocent local civilians are the most visible victims of military misconduct. Of course, militaries also have to deal with serious misbehaviour *amongst* military personnel, but this is not very different from what we find in other organizations (although it is perhaps more prevalent in the military due to a number of specific characteristics). It is first and foremost the fact that the military can legitimately use violence that separates the military profession from almost all other professions. It is also what makes the ethical challenges for military personnel all the more testing, and underlines the importance of finding ways to prevent military personnel from crossing the line between legitimate force and unlawful violence.

Traditionally, militaries stressed the importance of obedience to rules and codes of conduct to that end, and clearly, pointing out what is permitted and what is not should have a role in any ethics education. Rules make clear to military personnel what actions are off limits. An example is the prohibition of torture, a ban that must be maintained regardless of how convenient it might be not to do so, and any flexibility here could bring us onto a slippery slope rather quickly. Similarly, we do not leave decisions concerning the use of certain types of weapons, such as chemical and biological ones, to the discretion of the individual soldier. Rule-based ethics point to the importance of having universal, categorically binding moral norms. This is not only in the interest of outsiders to the military organization but also in the interest of soldiers themselves. Research shows that military personnel who lack such rules experience more moral dilemmas, increasing the likelihood of moral injury (Schut, 2015). The drawback of rules is that they are often mostly ineffectual when there are no observers around. Moreover, rule-following can impede the ability to see the moral aspect of what one is doing, whilst that ability is evidently essential to morally sound decision-making. Perhaps the most important downside of such rule-based approaches, however, is that rules lack flexibility, also when that flexibility is clearly called for. Rules should therefore leave soldiers with some leeway in decision-making, if only to keep them from committing what have been referred to as ‘crimes of obedience’ (Kelman & Hamilton, 1989). It is perhaps for that reason that one textbook on military ethics explicitly states that ‘in any situation where law and ethics set different standards, a member of the military profession will follow the higher standard, inevitably the one required by ethics’ (Coleman, 2013, p. 268).

Making good use of this leeway presupposes a good disposition, and many militaries for that reason see a virtue-based approach to teaching military ethics as a necessary complement to rules imposed from above in their effort to ensure that military personnel exercise restraint in their use of force. Virtue ethics is in keeping with the tendency of many militaries to move away in their ethics education from a largely functional approach that is mainly about military effectiveness towards a more aspirational approach that focuses on character and aims at making soldiers better persons. This shift is mainly based on the view that bad persons are not likely to form morally good soldiers, although they could of course still be effective ones: military

history is replete with examples of military leaders who were effective but absolutely not ethical (Robinson, 2007a; Wolfendale, 2008, p. 164). What makes virtue ethics especially interesting for the military is its premise that character can be developed, and that virtues are not to be understood as innate qualities but as dispositions that can be acquired through training and practice. Such an approach sits rather well with the way most militaries see themselves: as being in the business of character-building. Many militaries have adopted this aspirational virtue ethics approach in a rather carefree manner, however, more or less overlooking the complexities that come with this approach.

In reality, there are quite a few unanswered questions. To state a few: how do we teach virtues? It is an assumption of virtue ethics that they can be taught, but is this really the case? And if so, how should they be taught? And at what age? If character is formed before one enters the military, this presents a problem for a military ethics curriculum founded on virtue ethics. What is more, virtues are allegedly developed by practising them, but all too often military ethics education consists of formal education in a classroom setting that leaves little room for that. Does ethics education based on virtue ethics not often consist of teaching *about virtues* (and virtue ethics) rather than teaching virtues? The most important question, however, is *which* virtues should form the building blocks for a virtue-based education.

The answer to the question as to which virtues military personnel need today depends at least in part on the answer to the underlying question as to whether military virtue is independent of place and time. At first sight, a convincing argument can be made that this is indeed the case, at least to some extent. Some military virtues are valued in all eras and cultures, for instance because they perform an important function in or for the military. Physical courage is, of course, the obvious example here, being the archetypal military virtue. But if we take a closer look at courage, it also becomes clear that the type of courage that is needed, and even what we mean by the term courage itself, is subject to change over time. Physical courage has always been less of a virtue for military personnel in units that are in fact never deployed, the so-called 'cold organization' (Soeters et al., 2003). Furthermore, the rise of a number of new technologies make physical courage also obsolete for at least some 'hot' parts of the military. Cyber soldiers and UAV operators, for instance, do not seem to need this type of courage at all.<sup>1</sup> Some years ago, Jesse Kirkpatrick (2015a, 2015b) and Robert Sparrow (2015) had a thought-provoking although somewhat semantic discussion on the courage of drone operators. If a conclusion had to be drawn from that discussion, it would be that these operators do need courage, but less in the form of martial courage than of moral courage. We return to this point later. Regarding other traditional, central military virtues, such as loyalty, discipline and obedience, it is at a minimum less clear what positive role they could have for, say, cyber operations or operating armed drones. More worryingly, the virtues

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<sup>1</sup> An article published in *The New York Times* (Schmidt, 2016) a few years ago describes how, for a long time, drone operators were viewed 'more as video game players than as warriors. But in a reflection of their increasingly important role under President Obama, the drone operators will now be eligible for military honors akin to those given to pilots who flew over the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan'.

that prevail in most militaries are mainly beneficial to the interests and aims of the organization and colleagues (Olsthoorn, 2010). With the possible exception of respect, which at least some militaries list as a virtue, these virtues are not particularly helpful to the local population of the countries that military personnel are deployed to. Instrumental in attaining the objectives of the military, there is little in them that limits the behaviour of soldiers towards civilians.

Assuming that the traditional martial virtues such as physical courage do not always suffice today, there are at least three possible answers to the question as to what we do need instead. One could argue, first of all, that the virtue approach is still the best one but that we need virtues that are just better suited for today than the traditional, rather bellicose ones are. But one could also argue, secondly, that not only is the virtue approach the right one, the traditional virtues are by and large the virtues that we still need—with the caveat that the new operations require new interpretations of these virtues. A third option is that we start looking for something different altogether, most probably a more rule-based or utilitarian approach to ethics education, or a combination of both.

## Looking for ‘New’ Virtues

If we assume that the virtues militaries traditionally try to espouse are of limited use in regulating the conduct of military personnel in today’s conflicts, devising a new list of virtues would be a first possible way ahead. In this line of thought, today’s soldiers do indeed need virtues, but not necessarily of the ‘duty, honour, country’ variety that prevails at present. As said, the virtues we teach military personnel should fit their responsibilities, and the virtues needed today are most likely more about exercising restraint than about demonstrating physical courage, loyalty and discipline. Virtues of restraint, although very relevant for military personnel, would be less military-specific in the sense that they would be closer to the virtues valued by society at large. Incorporating such virtues of restraint could therefore bring the military into closer alignment with wider society. Opting for a set of virtues that is closer to what we could call ‘common morality’ would also fit the more aspirational and less functional approach that militaries are moving towards in their ethics education.<sup>2</sup> The ‘general’ cardinal virtues of course form a natural source to turn to first when looking for aspirational, comprehensive virtues. Interestingly, of the four cardinal virtues of courage, wisdom, temperance and justice, only courage has until now made it to the traditional lists of military virtues. The equally cardinal virtues of

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<sup>2</sup> There is sometimes a difference between mainly functional role morality and more aspirational common morality: we expect lawyers to defend the guilty, and spies may use deceit (Coleman, 2013). Although role morality clearly differs from ordinary morality also for military personnel, we have already noted that there is a tendency in many Western militaries towards a less functional approach. One could also argue, however, that by aiming to instill both ‘general’ virtues, such as integrity and honesty, and more military-specific virtues, such as courage and discipline, the military combines an aspirational and a functional approach.

wisdom, temperance and justice, today probably at least as needed as courage is, are absent on most lists of military virtues (although they do surface in a recent book on military virtues; see Skerker et al., 2019). That is to be regretted, as wisdom, justice and temperance are clearly more encompassing than the traditional military virtues are, and are a lot more relevant when it comes to exercising restraint. Opting for the cardinal virtues would also give us a set of virtues that does justice to the now nearly forgotten ancient meaning of the word integrity, according to which all of the virtues are interrelated and one therefore cannot possess one virtue without having the others too. Being just is of little value if one lacks the courage to defend what is just, for instance. Likewise, courage is of not much use without practical wisdom to guide it, whilst that same courage is not a virtue if it does not serve a just goal. Wisdom uninformed by justice may come close to cunning. The rather jumbled collections of virtues that militaries now advocate (see also Robinson, 2008) lack these important interconnections, and at times the listed virtues even appear to contradict each other. Loyalty and integrity, for instance, are two virtues that will conflict on occasion. Military whistle-blowers, for example, choose integrity over loyalty, but often pay a heavy price for that because their (former) colleagues and the organization deem them disloyal.

To complicate matters, what, on the face of it, pretty straightforward virtues such as justice and wisdom stand for is rather time and place dependent. For instance, if we take a closer look at justice, we see that the classical understandings of that virtue ('to each his own') were much more inegalitarian than our current interpretation of what is just allows for. The underlying hierarchical worldview and corresponding ideas about justice motivated Aristotle's infamous defence of slavery, for instance. Apparently, our arguments against slavery are mainly convincing to those who subscribe to the modern idea that all people are equal, a notion that was alien to Aristotle and his contemporaries. Whilst Aristotle believed that he had given an objective description of moral and intellectual virtues that were rooted in a shared human nature, he had in fact mainly described the qualities that an Athenian gentleman of the fourth century BC would ideally possess.

That the way we interpret virtues makes such a difference is not only a complication, it also presents us with a second way forward. One could reason that it perhaps suffices to identify the weaknesses of the existing military virtues and find ways to interpret these traditional virtues in a manner that does not suffer from these pitfalls, and that formulating a new list of more outward looking and less bellicose virtues is hence unnecessary (and perhaps a bridge too far for the relatively traditional organization that the military is). The question is then not which new virtues the military should promote, but in what form the existing ones should best be understood.

## **Interpreting Old Virtues in New Ways**

Although militaries today mostly cling to traditional interpretations, other readings of the military virtues are of course possible. A second way forward would therefore

be to interpret the existing virtues somewhat differently; that is, less narrowly than is commonly the case (see also Schulzke, 2016, pp. 195–196). The virtue of courage is especially interesting in this context. Most definitions of courage in the military still hark back to Aristotle, who defined courage as the mean between rashness and cowardice (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1115). This idea of courage fitted the hoplite warfare of his day very well, as both an excess or a deficiency of daring would destroy the organized whole that the phalanx was. But this martial notion of courage on the battlefield could clearly not be further away from what Gandhi imagined when he pleaded for courageous but peaceful resistance to the British colonial power. Clearly, the term courage can denote different things in different settings, and where Aristotle wrote about physical courage, Gandhi called for a type of courage that we commonly call moral courage.

Moral courage is an important subspecies of the virtue of courage, as it asks us to stick to our principles even if others disagree and perhaps hold us in contempt for upholding them. Physical courage is primarily something one's superiors and colleagues benefit from. Moral courage has a wider reach, and is, in line with the aforementioned distinction between an aspirational and a functional approach, more about being a better person than about being an effective soldier (compare Robinson, 2007a, p. 22; Robinson, 2008, p. 1). Today, its beneficiaries are not only military colleagues, as is predominantly the case with physical courage, but also the outsiders that the military is there to protect. It was suggested above that drone operators particularly need moral courage, and Peter de Lee (2019) gives an excellent example of just that when he describes how an acting sergeant on her first day in a supervisory role overseeing a Reaper team stuck to her judgement, against the opinion of all present, that an alleged parcel placed on the back seat of a motorcycle being used by a Taliban target was in fact a child, which in the end it did indeed turn out to be.<sup>3</sup> It is such wider interpretations of the military virtues that can provide guidance to military personnel in morally ambiguous situations, as providing general rules will not work in complex situations.

On a positive note, many contemporary interpretations of military courage already include moral courage. However, it can only perform its important role if militaries allow room for it. Yet although militaries today rarely fail to at least pay lip service to moral courage, in reality military organizations can on occasion offer a fairly unfriendly environment for the morally courageous, especially when adherence to principles conflicts with organizational interests or mission success. We already briefly noted above that loyalty, as most militaries define it, conflicts with integrity, which is also regularly listed as a military virtue. Many a whistle-blower can testify to that: they tend to end up as martyrs for the good cause, not as moral examples for their military organization. The explanation for this sobering fact lies in the interpretation that most militaries give to the virtue of loyalty.

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<sup>3</sup> She would have been equally courageous, of course, if the supposed parcel had turned out to be precisely that: a parcel. In that case, however, it would perhaps have been more difficult to muster that same amount of moral courage at another time.

Loyalty is included on lists of military virtues as frequently as courage is. The type of loyalty that most military organizations foster, however, is mainly confined to loyalty to the organization and colleagues. The military is not alone in this interpretation of loyalty as group loyalty. In general, loyalty tends to signify in some way giving priority to the interests of an individual, a group or a country, even when reason dictates a different direction (Ewin, 1992, p. 406). This is the form of group loyalty that militaries tend to promote in education and, especially, socialization. Disloyalty is, from that point of view, a very serious offence that adds insult to injury. However, someone taking a less partial standpoint might argue that the aforementioned whistle-blowers are not only disloyal but may even qualify as loyal, albeit to a principle instead of to a group or an organization. Different from group loyalty, loyalty to principle does not require the suspension of independent judgement. From this point of view, loyalty to principle might qualify as a virtue, whereas group loyalty, with its partiality to the near and dear, probably would not.

In the military, interpreting loyalty as group loyalty causes it to function as a root of both unethical conduct and attempts to cover that conduct up.<sup>4</sup> Military training reinforces this, being sometimes aimed more at furthering group loyalty than at cultivating autonomous individuals. As a result, military personnel usually identify mainly with the small group of colleagues with whom they spend most of their time. It would be a significant improvement if militaries would understand loyalty to include loyalty to a profession or principle, not just to a group and an organization (see also Olsthoorn, 2011). Loyalty to one's professional ethic, instead of to one's organization and colleagues, is what is commonly understood to be one of the key characteristics of a professional, something most military personnel claim to be.<sup>5</sup> Especially at a time when many armed forces consider the promotion of universal principles as their main ground for existence, and on occasion even claim to be 'a force for good', the development of a truer professionalism, with the main focus of

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<sup>4</sup> A report on the Netherlands Defence Academy observes that 'the great value that is attached to loyalty, group formation and comradeship and the intensive training that military personnel undergo together' can 'sow the seeds for a military practice in which there is an excessive inward focus' (2014, p. 10). The main reason cadets give for their unwillingness to report incidents is 'the idea that it is not in keeping with comradeship, that it is disloyal' (COID, 2014, p. 18). Interestingly, group loyalty here requires something different (i.e. not reporting) than loyalty to the organization. Somewhat ironically, most cadets said that later, when they were in leading positions, they would want their subordinates to report misbehaving colleagues—organizational loyalty should then trump loyalty to colleagues. A recent report on social safety within the Netherlands Defence organization as a whole similarly found that loyalty to the group reduces the willingness to report incidents (Giebels et al., 2018, p. 65). According to the report, the organizational culture with its emphasis on loyalty is an important cause of a lack of social safety (2018, p. 7).

<sup>5</sup> Loyalty to the organization is the main aspect of military professionalism that is somewhat at odds with what a 'regular' professional ethic entails. Armed forces thoroughly socialize their employees into the organization, which contributes to the strong loyalty military personnel feel towards each other and their employer. That military personnel are predominantly trained in house makes this socialization into the organization easier. As a consequence, different militaries have different organizational values (often still service specific), but there are no values of the military profession as such. By contrast, the values and standards of regular professionals stem from universities and professional associations, not from, for example, their hospital or law firm.

loyalty being the soldier's professional ethic instead of his or her organization, would be a step forward.

Finally, let us take a look at a virtue that is at first sight not a very martial one, namely that of respect. Respect appears on the value lists of several militaries, and was mentioned above as a virtue that both the military and society at large value. A closer look, however, reveals that respect in the military is at times limited to respect towards colleagues. The US Army, for instance, describes respect as, amongst other things, 'trusting that all people have done their jobs and fulfilled their duty', adding that '[t]he Army is one team and each of us has something to contribute'.<sup>6</sup> This definition seems to tacitly limit respect to colleagues. Military ethicist Timothy Challans describes how 'early drafts of the Army's 1999 leadership manual included the notion of respect; in fact, the key feature of respect was that of respecting the enemy on the battlefield. That idea did not survive the staffing process, and even a cursory check of the manual today will reveal that only Americans are mentioned as being recipients of this important value of respect' (2007, p. 163).<sup>7</sup>

Listing respect as a virtue is therefore not the concession to the current tasks of the military that it might seem: although 'respect' certainly sounds inclusive, at present, the way some militaries interpret the term bars it from being that. Such interpretations fail to take into account that military personnel will often be doing their jobs amidst the local population. As one author stated, somewhat boldly, 'non-soldiers lie outside the military honour group; as such they are felt to deserve no respect' (Robinson, 2007b). Why exactly militaries are reluctant to include outsiders remains somewhat of a mystery, given that respect is not a constant-sum game; respect for outsiders does not reduce the amount of respect left to show colleagues. Even if it is true that colleagues, not outsiders, are those who in fact suffer most often from misconduct in the military, this exclusive attention for their well-being seems a bit too one-sided.<sup>8</sup> Here, too, more inclusive interpretations seem justified.

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<sup>6</sup> The US Army values can be found at <https://www.army.mil/values/>.

<sup>7</sup> Somewhat similarly, the Dutch military published a new code of conduct in 2006 that contained the sentence 'I treat everyone with respect'. A look at the accompanying explanation showed that the pronoun 'everyone' referred exclusively to colleagues who should be safeguarded against harassment, sexual intimidation and discrimination. In 2018, that code of conduct was replaced by a new one. The new code also only regulates the behaviour of military personnel towards each other, not their behaviour towards outsiders.

<sup>8</sup> However, there is another side to this: Western military personnel sometimes face situations 'in which the conduct of the local population in a deployment area (a different culture) [was] experienced as conflicting with one's own personal moral and cultural values' (Schut, 2015, p. 106). Pre-deployment training teaches Western military personnel respect for other cultures, as Western forces can be involuntarily offensive in their dealings with the local population if they have 'a lack of cultural relativity in their occupation "technique"' (Fontan, 2006, p. 219). However, emphasizing the need to respect other people's mores provides Western soldiers with a reason for not intervening in cases of corruption or the abuse of women and children. A soldier deployed to Afghanistan explained: 'During Mission-specific Training, we didn't discuss this subject at all. But we did learn that we must respect local culture' (Schut, 2015, p. 116).



## Alternatives for a Virtue Approach

A final way ahead would be to reconsider whether virtues form the best underpinning for the ethics education of military personnel in the first place. We already saw that the traditional military virtues are in themselves more inward looking than the cardinal virtues. However, also on more a theoretical level, virtue ethics is fairly self-regarding: virtue ethics focuses on the agent and his or her character and flourishing, even in situations (and war is probably such a situation) where an outcome-centred approach would seem to be more appropriate. The aim of virtue ethics is one's own flourishing. It is therefore less attentive to the needs of others than is, for instance, the utilitarian notion of the greatest happiness for the greatest number, or the rule-based maxim that one should treat others as one would like others to treat oneself. Interestingly, the fact that militaries promote virtues with an eye to external goals such as military effectiveness or ensuring the ethical use of force raises the question whether it is virtue ethics that is being practised here in the first place. Promoting certain virtues because they are beneficial to others within or outside one's own organization amounts to what is sometimes described as character utilitarianism (Railton, 1988).<sup>9</sup>

That brings us to utilitarianism: next to rules and virtues it is in theory a possible third candidate to buttress military ethics education, as it is a universalistic ethic that holds that everyone's life and happiness should weigh equally. In practice, most authors on military ethics see it as particularly unfit for that purpose, mostly because it would make military expedience outweigh all other concerns: 'an outcome-centered approach may lead all too easily to military expedience as the sole guide to actions in war' (Bonadonna, 1994, p. 18). However, utilitarianism does not condone the maximizing of our own utility, as some critics seem to hold, but that of all. This means that the utilitarian dictum that the consequences to all persons should weigh equally would, if taken seriously, lead to a fairer distribution of the right to life (see also Shaw, 2016). From a utilitarian viewpoint, one could for instance argue that soldiers should take as much care to avoid casualties amongst enemy civilians as they do for their own civilians. Although such an impartial view may be expecting too much from regular soldiers in a regular war in defence of one's own country, in many of today's operations military personnel probably should be able to do so a bit more easily.

In general, the aspirational approach focuses on character, whilst the functional approach is based more on conduct and outcomes. This corresponds with three main schools in moral philosophy, namely virtue ethics, rule-based ethics and utilitarianism. An alternative to the usual virtue ethics, rule-based ethics and utilitarianism advance the idea of taking values as a basis for ethics education for military personnel. Virtues and values are two different things, even if militaries sometimes treat them as if they were the same. Virtues represent 'desirable characteristics of individuals, such as courage', whilst values, on the other hand, correspond to 'the ideals that the

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<sup>9</sup> Some argue that it is morally dubious to mould someone's character with the aim of making him or her a better soldier (Robinson, 2007a, p. 32).

community cherishes, such as freedom' (Robinson, 2007a, p. 32). A value-based ethics education could put the values and principles of that community in the foreground instead of promoting the military-specific virtues that are currently taught. An example of such a value-based approach is the concept of *Innere Führung* as used by the German armed forces. A leading idea behind *Innere Führung* is that soldiers should think for themselves. The values that should guide that independent thinking, however, are societal: members of the German military are to actively defend, out of personal conviction, values such as human dignity, freedom, justice, equality and democracy. The aim is to bring the military into alignment with civil society. It might also bring the values of the military somewhat more into alignment with the humanitarian ideals underlying many of today's operations.

But where does that leave us? Does a value-based approach just add a fourth alternative to choose from? Most moral philosophers tend to have a clear preference for one of the approaches outlined above. In real life, however, most of us tend to see a role for virtues, values and rules, whilst also taking the consequences of an act into consideration. We are probably right to do so, as none of these schools has the ultimate answer. It seems that those involved in professional ethics education are practically duty bound to adopt a similar mixed approach. In philosophy, one finds 'parts of the truth (along with much error) everywhere, and the whole truth nowhere' (Appiah, 2006).

## Discussion

Opting for such a mixed approach, however, does not alter the fact that it is uncertain whether ethics education for uniformed personnel has any tangible beneficial effects on their conduct. We know little about what works and what does not in military ethics education. It almost certainly augments the moral awareness of military personnel, but this does not necessarily mean that it also directly contributes to better behaviour. Perhaps the positive effects of military ethics education are indirect; that is, providing formal ethics education improves the ethical climate and in the long run therefore also the behaviour of military personnel. This is mere conjecture, however, and given the amount of time and effort spent on ethics education, the question of whether it works deserves more consideration. A good first step would be to think more systematically about the military virtues that we want to teach. As it stands, many publications on military virtues deal with one specific virtue only, such as courage or loyalty, whilst broader approaches that go into the relationships between the different virtues are relatively rare. These publications do not refer to much scholarly literature and are as a result sometimes rather uncritical, as they mainly stress the importance of a particular virtue and not so much its complexities. That is a pity, as it is clear that, as currently interpreted, some of the traditional martial virtues, such as courage and loyalty, are less relevant today. For that reason, we need to look for alternatives to the traditional military virtues. A few possible ways forward have been outlined above.

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