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Signature:

Jacob William Bucher

Date

The Camouflage Collar: An Exploratory Study of Crime among the Military

Jacob William Bucher
B.A., Baker University, 2002
M.A., University of Memphis, 2003
M.A., Emory University, 2007

Sociology

Robert Agnew, Ph.D.
Advisor

Elizabeth Griffiths, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Corey Keyes, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Kay Levine, J.D., Ph.D.
Committee Member

Accepted:

Lisa A. Tedesco, Ph.D.
Dean of Graduate School

Date

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By

Jacob William Bucher
B.A., Baker University, 2002
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An abstract of
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Abstract

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By Jacob William Bucher

The purpose of this research is to identify the nature and extent of crime committed by military personnel, as well as to critically explore possible causes for criminal behavior among this population. The military provides a unique social environment given the organization and culture of the institution. Criminal behavior of those inside this institution has recently received much media attention, yet has not received much academic attention. Prior research focuses on military-specific crimes and/or the military experiences of current offenders. This dissertation focuses on general crimes as well as the offending experiences of current military personnel. Through in-depth interviews, a sample of military personnel was examined. Participants in this research report substance use, steroid use, minor theft, and some violence. This research supports and suggests extensions in strain, control, and social learning theories.

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I would like to take an opportunity to show appreciation for all of the people who helped me throughout the completion of this research.

First, thank you to the participants that served as my sample. Their willingness to meet and to honestly and openly answer the questions provided valuable information that will help in our understanding of military life, military offending, and offending in general. Research (and researchers) is nothing without data, and therefore nothing without a sample of willing participants.

I would like to acknowledge the institutional support received from Emory University. The education and support I received throughout my time at Emory provided me the necessary tools and resources to complete this research and my degree. Special thanks to Dean Lisa Tedesco and Assistant Dean Virginia Shadron for supporting me through a difficult time.

Thank you to my parents for sticking with me from a time when they wanted to send me to *military school* to a time when I am earning a PhD *researching the military*. Thanks to dad for all the talks about the military and providing his insight for this research, and thanks to mom for all the talks about this research and her insight on researching and writing. And of course thanks for the continuous love and support.

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Introduction

Given the current military presence maintained by the United States throughout the world, the soldier receives much media attention and public interest. An explanation for why those in the military engage in crime, however, is one that has yet to be thoroughly examined in criminological discourse. What previous literature there is focuses on the relationship between military training and crime, including the desensitizing and traumatic effects of killing in combat as a cause for future violence as a civilian. This literature is further limited by its focus on the military experiences of offenders as opposed to offending experiences of those in the military.

As a major social institution in American society, the military is an important population to examine. Indeed, there are approximately 2,860,000 men and women currently serving in the United States military either under “active” or “reserve” status. Well over a million of those individuals are in the Army (Department of Defense Personnel Statistics, 2008). Furthermore, according to a 2008 Department of Defense report, the budget for the United States military is 548.9 billion dollars, ranking the military first in national expenditures.

Goffman (1961) describes a “total institution” as an institution where all parts of life for individuals in the institution are subordinated to and dependent upon the authorities of the institution. Both by definition and by direct reference from Goffman (1961), the military can be considered a total institution.

Should a person reside in such a system, it encompasses his or her whole being. It undercuts the resident's individuality. It disregards his or her dignity. It subjects the individual to a regimented pattern of life that has little or nothing to do with the person's own desires or inclinations. And it is inescapable (1961).

If we accept the military as a total institution, then we must consider the substantial effect it potentially has on the people who serve.

The topic of military personnel and involvement in crime is especially important given the current public concern regarding crime among military personnel, during overseas deployment and in the United States. The media has given a great deal of attention to incidents such as the rape charges against Marines and Army soldiers while deployed to Iraq (Cloud, 2006) and murder charges against soldiers wrongfully killing civilians in combat (Von Zielbauer, 2008; Von Zielbauer, 2007; Frosch, 2008). The images and reports of crimes committed by military guards in the Abu Ghraib prison are still fresh in the minds of many civilians (Rubin, 2008). There are also news reports of soldiers committing crimes stateside (Frosch, 2008). Whether it is domestic violence and spousal murder in Fort Bragg, North Carolina (Staba, 2007) or a botched armed-robbery by former soldiers in Colorado (Frosch, 2008), there is a great deal of concern about military crime in the media.

A logical conclusion from this concern is that some have argued that serving in the military has a *special* impact on crime. There is some reason to support this response; the data regarding the military experiences of current offenders, the research on combat experience and crime, and the research on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and crime (Kulka et al., 1992; Smith & Despard, 1978; Foy & Card, 1987, Bryant, 1979). It makes intuitive sense to think that an institution that inherently deals with violence through training and exposure might lead to unsanctioned violence among its members.

Indeed, data suggest that soldiers returning from combat experiences have historically engaged in higher rates of offending compared to pre-deployment levels

(Kulka et al., 1992; Smith & Despard, 1978; Foy & Card, 1987, Bryant, 1979).

Researchers consistently find higher levels of post-military¹ involvement with the criminal justice system for men with heavy combat experience compared to men with lower levels of combat experience (Frey-Wouters & Laufer, 1984; Kulka et al., 1992). Furthermore, Castle and Hensley (2002) state that many serial killers learned to reinforce violence, aggression, and murder in military boot camps. Although there seems to be some empirical exploration into crime among military personnel, it is very limited. The literature either focuses on military-specific crime (as in Bryant, 1979) or focuses on the military experience of current offenders, *not* the offending experience of current military personnel.

Bryant's (1979) work was very important in that it successfully identifies types of military-specific crime such as *crimes against property*, *crimes against person*, *crimes against performance*, and *crimes against civilians*. Bryant (1979) also considers, albeit in a limited way, the role of social learning, stress, and substance abuse on military personnel who engage in these military-specific crimes. Bryant (1979) suggests a relationship between those trained in weapon-use and violent behavior. Bryant (1979) also concludes that there is concern for the modern military about substance use (alcohol and narcotics), and this concern is supported by substance use by various militaries throughout history. Much of what Bryant (1979) is examining is crime that is defined as such by the military. This dissertation builds on past literature by examining common criminal behavior among a military population.

¹ It should be noted that virtually all of the literature focuses on post-military offending, a gap in the literature I believe this study fills.

This is an important area for research given the lack of academic attention combined with the media's reported rise in military offenders since the beginning of the war on terror. This research fills two specific voids in the current literature. First, I identify types of crime military personnel are involved in. Second, I identify theoretical themes that will help explain why those currently in the military offend. To accomplish these goals I chose an exploratory qualitative study of a sample of current active-duty military personnel. An exploratory study is appropriate given the lack of literature in this area and the difficulty of gaining access to this population. Doing so will allow me to establish a baseline of understanding from which I and others can develop a larger and more accurate quantitative approach for measuring crime among this population.

This dissertation is organized into three general sections. In the first section I examine some of the current data on military offending in order to establish an understanding of the types and patterns of crime present in arrest data collected from the United States Army Crime Records Center. In the second section I consider the possible causes of crime for military personnel through a review of traditional criminological theories including social learning, subculture, strain, and social and self control theories. Lastly, I discuss the methods and results of the present research. I interviewed fifty military members, asking questions about military experiences, questions related to the aforementioned theories, and questions about offending. These in-depth interviews allowed participants to provide their perspective on the issues addressed in the interview. I then examined the transcripts of these interviews and identified certain themes regarding military experience, theory, and offending. Among other findings, I found

important data regarding substance use and steroid use, and theoretical data relevant to strain and social learning theories.

My aim is not to compare the criminality of people in the military to the civilian population, nor is it to prove that one theory over another is better than the others at explaining offending in the military. Rather, the goal of this study is to examine the types of offending military members engage in and possible factors that predict military offending.

Chapter One: Current Data on Crime Committed by Army Personnel

In this chapter I outline the nature and extent of crime committed by those in the military. To do this I examine arrest data of the United States Army and review some existing literature on military offending.

Data Source and Type

Data regarding the amount of crime committed in the military is recorded and maintained by the U.S. Army Crime Records Center (USACRC). This organization is a subdivision of the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command and collects information from the Military Police as well as the Judge Advocate General (JAG). Arrest data is collected by the USACRC and is the source of the data considered in this section.

Military Police only handle crimes committed on the military installation (post, base, “fort”, et cetera). Military Police have no “statutory” arrest authority off a Federal Reservation. In other words, they are not “commissioned” law enforcement officers as defined by the State and Federal Statutes. On the installations they have arrest and detention authority over everyone, including civilians, contractors, and visitors. However, normally if the situation involves a civilian as a “subject”, Military Police officers will contact the local police and make arrangements to transfer custody to them. The civilian police will typically charge the “subject” with a criminal offense similar to the one s/he was arrested on base for, and the civilian criminal justice system will handle the case. The installation will normally place a “Bar” on the individual, which means s/he will be denied access to the installation, and potentially be “Barred” from all Department of Defense installations. I would note that Special Agents assigned to the

Army Criminal Investigation Command do have arrest authority (of military personnel only) off the Federal Reservation.

There is no data I could find on the clearance rate for the Military Police; however I would speculate that the case clearance rate for the Military Police and Criminal Investigation Division is probably much higher than their civilian counterparts. As the Army is a “closed society” of sorts, it is much easier to compel witnesses to make statements and ultimately testify. In addition, for those cases adjudicated under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (non-court martial), the Commander only requires a “reasonable suspicion” that the soldier did what is being alleged, in order to punish him/her. This is less stringent than the “beyond a reasonable doubt” requirement for civilian criminal cases. I would note that if the case goes to Court Martial, then the “beyond a reasonable doubt” standard is applied.

Data Results

The USACRC records the number of arrests² and crimes known to the police, providing an index of a variety of crimes including child abuse, domestic violence, murder, robbery, aggravated assault, computer theft, larceny, absence without leave (AWOL), drug use and possession, and drug sale and distribution, among other crimes. These subcategories are grouped into what is known as the Army’s “Top 5” offense codes; Crimes against Persons, Sex Crimes, Crimes against Property, Fraud Crimes, and Special Investigative Activities. Table 1-1 shows the total offense count for these offenses in 2006.

² Arrests of soldiers stationed both stateside and overseas

Table 1-1: US Army “Top 5” Offenses in 2006³

Offense	Count
Crimes Against Persons	108772
Sex Crimes	3012
Crimes Against Property	37320
Fraud Crimes	1263
Special Investigative Activities	2836

Table 1-2 shows the arrest rates for select crimes committed by army personnel from 2003-2006. The rates are calculated per 1000 people.

Table 1-2: Army Crime Rates (per 1000)

Year	Child Abuse	Domestic Violence	Personal Crime⁴	Property Crime⁵	AWOL	Drug Use	Drug Sales
2003	.28	1.57	8.93	9.82	12.73	3.87	.28
2004	.28	2.01	8.58	10.61	9.64	3.63	.29
2005	.41	2.58	9.61	10.75	13.01	5.14	.43
2006	.45	2.87	9.21	9.42	14.12	4.46	.46

Table 1-3 compares the data obtained from the USACRC to that distributed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation in its annual Uniform Crime Report (UCR). Crime rates in the UCR are calculated per 100,000 people, so for the purposes of this comparison the rates have been manipulated to reflect rates per 1000 people. The UCR includes a few different offenses including *rape* for personal crime and *arson* and *motor vehicle theft* for property crime.

³ There were 1,047,000 members of the Army in 2006.

⁴ Army personal crimes include: murder, robbery, and assault

⁵ Army property crimes include: burglary, theft, and larceny

Table 1-3: Army vs. National Crime Rates (per 1000)

Year	Army Personal Crime	UCR Personal Crime⁶	Army Property Crime⁷	UCR Property Crime
2003	8.93	4.75	9.42	35.9
2004	8.58	4.63	8.82	35.1
2005	9.61	4.69	8.61	34.2
2006	9.21	4.86	9.75	33.3

There are two observations in the above data. The first is that the personal crime rates for army personnel are almost double the national rates reported by the UCR. For clarification purposes, the UCR considers aggravated assault, forcible rape, murder, and robbery as a violent “Type I” offense; this is what is shown as “UCR Personal Crime” in Table 1-3. The USACRC also indexes murder, robbery, and aggravated assault, this is shown as “Army Personal Crime” in Table 1-3.

The next notable observation from the data is the substantial difference between property crimes reported by the USACRC and those reported by the UCR. Property crimes in the army are about a third of what is recorded nationally.

There are many possible explanations for this disparity. Bryant (1979) suggests that there is a lack of opportunity for army personnel to steal as well as a lack of valuable material for army personnel to steal. Furthermore, access to Army “property” is highly restricted and controlled. Only a limited number of personnel ever have access, so when theft occurs it is much easier to narrow down the potential suspects. Second, the demographics of an Army installation make it difficult to get away with theft and redistribution. The population, acreage, road network, et cetera on military installations allow for a higher density/frequency of observation, either by cameras or mobile patrols (Bryant, 1979). Third, Bryant (1979) argues that communal living on a military post

⁶ UCR personal crimes include: assault, rape, murder, and robbery

⁷ UCR property crimes include: arson, burglary, theft, larceny, motor vehicle theft

allows for little privacy and so any new “items” will surely be noticed. Communal living may provide more opportunity to steal, however the lack of privacy and the lack of individual rights increases the likelihood of being caught and apprehended. That is to say residents in military housing have no individual right to privacy, meaning that military police officers can search a residence at any time and for any reason; no warrant required.

These first two explanations would seem to create less violent crime as well, however as mentioned the data for personal crime is much higher in the Army. The absence of this finding provides cause for research as to why the same density, observation, et cetera that leads to less property crime does not lead to less personal crime.

What Bryant (1979) does not consider is how the difference in age of offender may help to explain these disparities in property crime rates. Specifically, much of national juvenile crime consists of property crimes, contributing to the overall rate reported in the UCR. Army personnel are 18 years or older (average age is 24 according to Department of Defense Personnel Statistics, 2008) and the absence of juvenile offenders in the USACRC data may in part explain the lower rates of property crimes. If we adjust the UCR data for age and include only those males⁸ arrested who were 18 years or older, it increases the gap for personal crime and erases the gap for property crime as seen in Table 1-4. By controlling for age, we see that the initial crime rate comparisons are somewhat misleading. The difference in property crime can be at least partly explained by age of offenders.

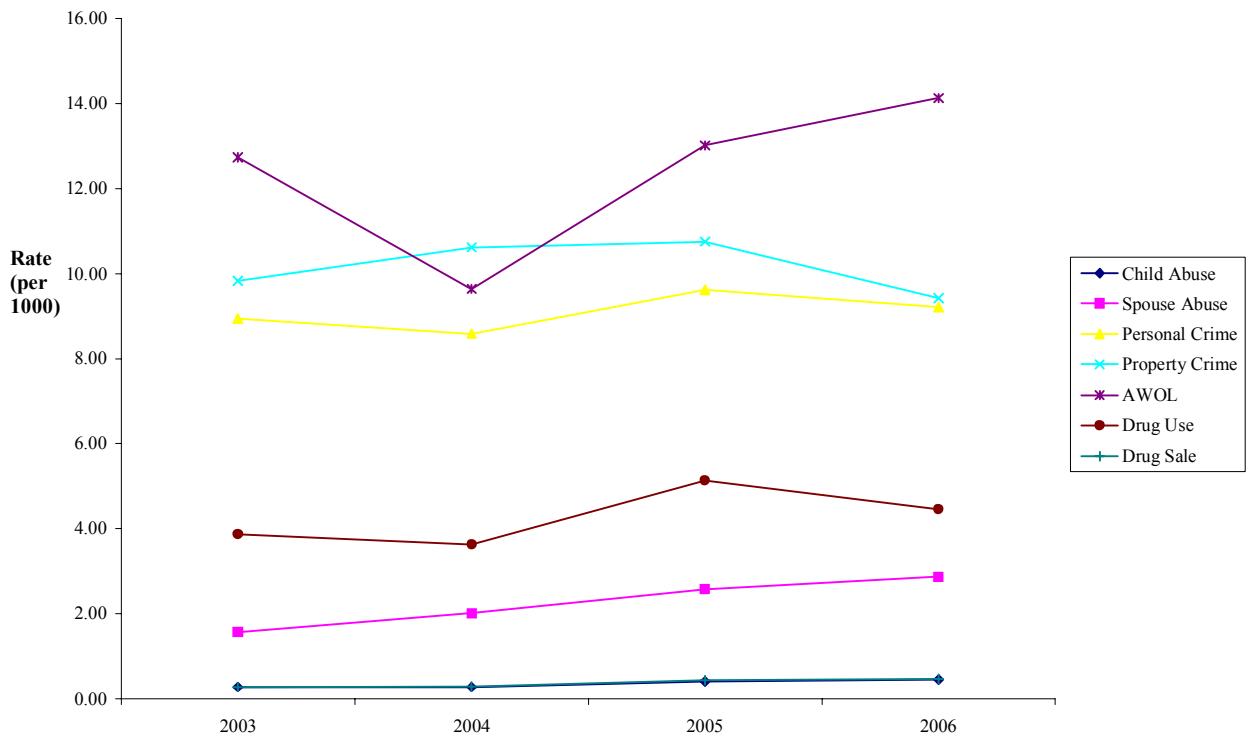
⁸ Males make up 85% of the United States Army

Table 1-4: Army Data vs. National Data for Male Offenders 18 Years and Older

Year	Army Personal Crime	UCR Personal Crime	Army Property Crime	UCR Property Crime
2004	8.93	4.37	8.82	9.13
2005	8.58	4.45	8.61	8.96

In terms of crime trends, figure 1-1 shows a moderate degree of change in crime rates among army personnel from 2003 to 2006. Generally speaking, crime rates have remained fairly stable from year to year with some minor increasing trends (and a more substantial increase for AWOL violations). The exception is found in a decrease in overall personal and property crime from 2005 to 2006.

Figure 1-1: Army Crime Rates 2003-2006



The data obtained from the USACRC are helpful for determining a base understanding for how much crime is committed by army personnel. The data are limited, however, in that they cannot be broken down by demographic characteristics (age, gender, et cetera). Furthermore arrest data is inherently limited⁹. Despite these limitations, the data are effective in providing a general understanding of crime in the Army and identifying the difference in personal crimes compared to the data from the UCR. It is therefore important to determine what it is that causes soldiers to engage in crime. These data also call for further research to explain the high rates of personal crime and lower rates of property crime that characterize military offending.

Drug Offense Data

In a study sponsored by the US Department of Defense, Bray et al. (2002) report on the illicit drug use¹⁰ of military personnel from all branches (Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines). They find that illicit drug use among military personnel has drastically declined across the different branches since 1980, down to 6.9 percent in 2002 from 37 percent in 1980.

The Army reports a rate of approximately 100 individuals per 1000 who have used illicit drugs in 2002 (Bray et al, 2002). This rate is significantly higher than the rate reported in the USACRC data of approximately 4 per 1000. This difference can be explained by discrepancies between the two surveys. The USACRC data is an index for crimes handled by the military police whereas the Bray et al. (2002) study relies on self-

⁹ This is an acceptable limitation given that the USACRC data is extremely hard to obtain and many channels had to be pursued. Data were obtained through direct contact with an employee of the USACRC

¹⁰ Includes marijuana/hashish, phencyclidine (PCP), LSD or other hallucinogens, cocaine, amphetamines or other stimulants, tranquilizers or other depressants, barbiturates or other sedatives, heroine or other opiates, analgesics or other narcotics, inhalants, designer drugs, and gamma hydroxybutyrate (GHB) (Bray et al., 2002).

reported behaviors. Literature shows that data from law enforcement agencies such as the UCR, and in this case the USACRC, will miss many more crimes and delinquent behaviors. Much of this unreported crime can be uncovered through victimization and self-report surveys.

Data Conclusions

The available data concerning military offending provides a baseline understanding for the types of crime that happen in the military as well as the rates at which crime happens. In his work on military crime, Bryant (1979) classified military crime as “Crimes Against Property”, “Crimes Against Person”, and “Crimes Against Performance”. While Bryant's (1979) examination is limited to military specific crimes, he provides a valuable classification for looking at the data included in this chapter. The data included here and the data provided as a result of this dissertation expands on Bryant's (1979) work and include a variety of military-specific and general offenses committed by military personnel.

It is my belief that the present data as well as the work of Bryant (1979) are in need of further exploratory research. Bryant (1979) limited his analysis to behaviors criminalized by the military and limited his theoretical discussion to overviews of previous work as opposed to collecting data on a current military sample. An important finding from Bryant's (1979) work that will be pursued by this research is his conclusion about alcohol and narcotic dependency. It is the goal of this dissertation research to pick up where Bryant (1979) left off, to expand on the rates found in the USACRC data, and to develop a baseline of understanding so that future research can construct a framework for understanding why soldiers in the military engage in offending behavior.

The preliminary evidence reported here shows that personal (violent) crimes may be particularly important to study given the apparent high rates of these crimes among military personnel. The possible explanations for this occurrence will be posited in the following chapter on criminological theories (under sections titled *Military*). These include combat exposure, training in violence, and stress among others. In the chapters that follow I will discuss my data in terms of both property and personal crime.

Chapter Two: Discussion of Criminological Theories

In this chapter I outline four traditional criminological theories (social learning, subculture, strain, and social control) that may be important in explaining military offending. Each section is divided into three parts; a review of the theory itself, a discussion of the possible relationship between the theory and military offending (including what, if any, previous literature there is on said relationship), and finally a discussion of the measures I use in this study.

Social Learning and Subculture: Theory

There are two main concepts in social learning theory, differential association and reinforcement. Differential association discusses how individuals learn criminal behavior through interaction with others in the same way people learn most anything. Sutherland (1942) elaborated on this concept by arguing that the interaction occurs in intimate groups, where the level of communication is more personal. Individuals learn how to commit crime; but they also learn attitudes favorable to law violation (Sutherland, 1942).

The beliefs and attitudes favorable to offending is important because it suggests that learning how to commit the behavior is not solely responsible for committing the behavior. For example, Anderson (1999) discusses how juveniles learn favorable beliefs and attitudes about being “tough” and as a result are more apt to use violence and delinquency to achieve that “toughness”.

Continuing this discussion of beliefs favorable to crime, there are beliefs that express a rationalization for crime, these beliefs are referred to as “techniques of neutralization”. Sykes and Matza (1964) suggest that those who commit illegal acts will

neutralize the values that act as controls that would normally prevent the individual from committing the act. These techniques include the following:

Denial of responsibility (it was not my fault)

Denial of injury (it was no big deal, they can afford the loss)

Denial of the victim (they had it coming)

Condemnation of the condemners (you are just as bad)

Appeal to higher loyalties (it was for a good reason).

Akers and Burgess (1966) furthered social learning theory by adding reinforcement and modeling to the work of Sutherland. These authors argue that differential association explains criminal behavior through its reinforcement of crime, exposure to criminal models, and the internalization of beliefs favorable to crime.

Sometimes categorized under social learning theory and sometimes considered a stand alone theory, subculture theories of crime are useful for understanding the military population, specifically the subculture of violence theory. This theory considers the role of “honor” in violence and I posit that honor is an important factor in explaining offending, especially violent offending, by military personnel. I consider this theory because honor is a learned value for many subcultures (i.e. southern men as per Ellison, 1991), including the military. These subcultures highly value honor and allow and perhaps even encourage violence as a means to uphold the value of honor.

A subculture is “a normative system of some group or groups smaller than the whole society” (Wolfgang & Ferracuti, 1967). The subculture follows a set of rules about how members of the group are to act in certain situations. Violation of these rules will result in sanctions from the group.

Social Learning and Subculture: Military

Most of the research regarding the association between military service and offending relies on social learning theory as an explanatory framework (Grossman, 1995; Hakeem, 1946; Frey-Wouters & Laufer, 1984; Kulka et al., 1992). Researchers have found that men who have had extensive combat experience have more involvement with criminal activity post-military than men with little or no combat experience (Frey-Wouters & Laufer, 1984; Kulka et al., 1992)¹¹. Kulka et al. (1992) found such data by looking at arrests/nights in jail, felony convictions, and current incarceration. Frey-Wouters and Laufer (1984) found similar effects when examining arrests and felony convictions separately. Both studies also found more self-reported violence among heavy combat veterans than among men with lower levels of combat exposure. This does not necessarily mean that social learning is at play, perhaps there is something else about the military experience that explains these disparities. However, social learning is one plausible explanation.

It is important to revisit the discussion of Akers and Burgess and their consideration of reinforcement and modeling. In the military there is an importance placed on achieving certain standards, and reinforcement and modeling are used to reach those standards. There is positive reinforcement through the use of medals, awards, and promotion. There is negative reinforcement in the form of punishment, extra work, isolation, demotion, et cetera. The reinforcement of values and beliefs is intense in the military. Similarly, these standards, “codes”, and norms are modeled by superior officers and other soldiers.

¹¹ These findings can also be explained by strain theory which will be discussed later in the chapter

Continuing with the idea of reinforcement and modeling, the increase in antisocial acts after combat may occur because the military experience socializes soldiers to seek combative solutions to problems (i.e. Sutherland) or because certain men find violent or combative solutions to problems rewarding (i.e. Akers). Military training is designed to convert the civilian into a warrior; soldiers are obedient killers who can perform acts defined by civilians as inappropriate and even abhorrent (Grossman, 1995). This is done through the use of hand-to-hand combat training, and training in the use of deadly force. This training provides more than just the physical and practical methods of violence, but socializes a will to kill if necessary. The training, the definitions favorable to violence used in training, and especially actual participation in the violence of combat may further distort the soldier's definition of appropriate and effective ways of dealing with others. Acts that are prohibited by civilian rules and values may become acceptable and even worthy of reward to combat veterans.

Exposure to combat may directly increase antisocial acts in post-combat life because of desensitization. Much of the aforementioned literature (Hakeem, 1946; Grossman, 1995; others) speaks to the desensitizing effect combat has on soldiers. Soldiers are presented with definitions and training, and they also learn that violence happens and is sometimes acceptable; thus they are desensitized to the negative effects of violence.

Furthermore, soldier desensitization may result in the perception of combat as a rewarding experience. For some soldiers, perhaps those who have predispositions toward violence including a lack of control, esteem, et cetera, the combat experience leaves them with a sense of control, a psychological "high", or a sense of self-actualization for a job

well done (Appy, 2004). It is possible that these individuals engage in antisocial behavior after military service to regain the positive feelings they received in combat. Indeed, Castle and Hensley (2002) state that many serial killers learned to reinforce violence, aggression, and murder in military boot camps.

Social learning theorists argue that training leads soldiers to eventual crime through its emphasis on approved violence and the subsequent reinforcement and modeling that enforce that emphasis. By “approved violence” I am referring to the acceptance of violence as an appropriate resolution to conflict. The military uses physical punishment and motivation in training its soldiers and the use of violence in combat is inherently condoned, although there are rules about legitimate and illegitimate uses of violence even during combat. Furthermore, the culture of the military itself may help explain general offending among military members due to learned beliefs and definitions regarding violence, toughness, aggression, and substance use (Grossman, 1995; Hakeem, 1946).

In sum, there is sufficient cause to study the possible link between social learning and military offending. When a population is subject to training that involves the learning of beliefs, definitions, skills, and values that allow and often encourage violence, aggression, et cetera, it is not a stretch to hypothesize that the crimes committed by that population may be related to their specific training. In addition to training, the effects of combat experience also seem to support social learning theory. Combat might create an over-exposure to definitions favorable to violence and aggression. I posit that social learning may help understand military offending in that some members have been

differentially influenced by their training, combat experience, learned definitions, values, et cetera.

There has yet to be any research applying the subculture theory of violence to the military. The military certainly sets itself apart from larger society; it has its own laws (Uniform Code of Military Justice), values, and operations that are distinct from larger society. Therefore, the military is just as distinct of a subculture as those formed around race, region, et cetera as studied by Anderson (199) and Ellison (1991). Within this subculture there is an established value system that each member of the military subculture is expected to adhere to and failure to do so may result in being ostracized, losing of rank and status, mission failure, and (according to some military people) the loss of soldier and civilian lives. This value system is put into place the first day of basic training and continues to be embedded in the soldier throughout his or her career. Immersion in different units might influence subcultural attachment, as well as length of time enlisted.

It is my hypothesis that the subculture theory of violence, including the variables of honor and retaliation found in the southern subculture of violence, help to explain violence committed by military personnel. The value placed on violence, especially in terms of conflict resolution, is part of a larger value system unique to the military subculture. Violence is inherent in combat, and combat is what soldiers are trained to do. Military training encourages violence, and the training itself involves violence (basic training, advanced training for combat occupations, combat itself, et cetera). These values are factors that may contribute to military offending.

In addition to the subculture of the military itself, there is also an element of subcultural social learning that may be considered a subculture within a subculture. According to Valdez (1997), there are instances in which ex-gang members, gang members, and gang associates join the armed forces to improve their lives. Further, there have been numerous documented instances in which active military personnel have been involved in gang-related crimes off-base (Valdez, 1997).

Finally military units are very tight-knit, often distinguishing themselves from the larger military society as Special Forces, snipers, comms (communications), gun-bunnies (artillery), et cetera. These smaller subcultures might hold different values about crime both on-duty and off. Loyalty and commitment to these smaller units and to the larger military subculture obviously influence the effect of the value system on the individual.

Social Learning and Subculture: Measures¹²

The first measure that I use for social learning theory is the participant's combat experience due to its ability to serve as a proxy for exposure to differential association and definitions of violence. I inquire a) whether or not the participant has been in combat, b) how recent was their last tour, c) how many total months they have spent in combat, and d) about their combat experience overall. I ask participants about whether they thought the military and or unit of approved violence, and whether they thought training taught them to value violence.

Next I use the measure of military occupational specialty (MOS, this is the soldier's job; i.e. cook, infantry, artillery, et cetera). I believe that the more combat-type occupations (infantry, military police, et cetera) are more likely to use violence to resolve conflicts compared to more service-oriented occupations (cooks, supply, et cetera). I hypothesize that beliefs about violence are more strongly enforced in the more physical occupations because violence is seen as more necessary for these jobs. Certain occupations such as infantry and military police are heavily trained in hand-to-hand combat and use of deadly force in addition to training on the value of violence as conflict resolution.

It is also important to measure whether or not the participant has been arrested for criminal/delinquent behavior. Asking the participants about interactions with the criminal justice system prior to their enlistment, as well as any sanctioning they have experienced while serving provides some insight as to whether or not the soldier has been told that violence and/or crime is wrong and thus learned definitions unfavorable to crime. Should a participant report many offenses and yet never have been punished,

¹² Actual measures can be found in the interview script located in Appendix One

perhaps that soldier only knows beliefs *favorable* to violence and crime. There is potential for variation between soldiers who have never been arrested, those who have been arrested, and those who have recently been arrested.

Building off of the punishment experience that introduces definitions unfavorable to crime, measuring the participant's perceived likelihood of being punished is also important. While traditionally a measure for deterrence, rational choice, or routine activities theories, I think it fits here because it indicates how important the individual feels that violence/crime is to his or her social environment. For example, if a soldier believes that s/he will not be punished for an act of violence; that may be an indication of the larger cultural beliefs and values about violence and crime. This measure will help assess how much the participant believes that violence or crime is condoned.

Finally I measure the participant's association with criminal peers. The association with delinquent peers is a known contributor to delinquent behavior (Agnew, 2005). It is important to inquire about delinquent peers both pre-enlistment and during active service. Both measures potentially hold information that could explain variation in military offending. In the section on self-reported crime, I ask about crimes committed with a friend or a group of friends. I also ask more direct questions concerning whether or not they have friends who engage in criminal activities, whether or not these friends have been punished, and whether they view these friends as admirable or engaging in rewarding behavior. Included in the measure of criminal peers will be a question about gang ties pre-enlistment and during active service.

To measure subcultural theory, many of the same measures used in considering social learning theory are applicable. Shared measures include the individual's belief in

violence as an acceptable method for resolving conflict, MOS, and association with criminal peers. Measures for subculture theory also include attachment to current unit and the military in general. Attachment variables are relevant due to the ability to understand how entrenched the participant is to his or her subculture. Accordingly I ask how important the unit and military values are to the participant, and how important s/he perceives the unit and the military.

I measure some concepts that are unique to subculture theory. Most importantly I measure the participant's belief in the value of honor and respect. I ask how important the subject believes this value to be and what behavior (including violence and crime) is acceptable in order to adhere to this value and maintain honor and respect. I also ask if the respondent feels that is worth being punished or sanctioned due to efforts to achieve or maintain honor and respect.

Strain: Theory

Another relevant theory for explaining crime among soldiers is strain theory; more specifically General Strain Theory (GST). According to GST, goal blockage, the introduction of negative stimuli, and/or the removal of positive stimuli leads to anger, resentment, rage, dissatisfaction, disappointment, and unhappiness; all the emotions customarily associated with strain in criminology (Agnew, 1992).

The first major type of strain for GST is goal blockage. The military is an immense bureaucracy and many within the military believe that this bureaucracy creates obstacles to achieving goals such as promotion, placement/transfer, getting into certain job-related schools, awards, et cetera. Depending on the individual soldier's goals, there is a reasonable expectation that s/he may experience goal blockage based solely on the organizational structure of the military. Soldiers may feel stuck in rank, stuck in a location, and generally stuck in their career. Given the recent deployment of soldiers I would include the goal of returning and staying home as an example. From my experience and knowledge, many soldiers want to return home and not have to re-deploy, however the current operation extends tours overseas and increases the likelihood of being re-deployed.

A second strain is the presentation of negative stimuli. A clear example of negative stimuli in the military is combat itself. To have your life threatened, to see death and injury, and to cause death and injury are all extreme forms of negative stimuli. Other negative stimuli include the constant transition from one post to another and the resulting family problems that may occur. Indeed, time spent away from family is a negative stimulus. Negative stimuli also include demotions, sanctions/punishments, physical pain

from training, and verbal interactions with superiors (i.e. yelling). These aspects of military life are negative stimuli that contribute to stress, frustration, anger and strain.

The final type of strain considered by GST is the loss of positive stimuli. Many of the negative stimuli discussed above also entail a loss of positive stimuli. For example, being removed from one's family may be viewed as a negative stimulus (isolation, loneliness) or as a loss of positive stimuli (loss of time with family). Losing rank is another example. The demotion could be viewed as a negative stimulus while the loss of rank could be viewed as the loss of positive stimuli. Similarly there are positions within units such as lead gunman, squad leader, driver, et cetera that are informally assigned positions.

These positions can be taken away due to performance, preference of superiors, et cetera. Removal or transition from these positions is a definite loss of positive stimuli in the military. Similarly, soldiers may experience losses related to their unit. Certain awards, positioning in a battery, et cetera are distributed among units in a battery or battalion. Great emphasis is placed on these awards and positions, and to lose the awards or transition out of the positions is experienced as a loss of positive stimuli. This group loss may be experienced on the individual level. Finally, the loss of autonomy that occurs when one joins the military could be a major strain.

Strain may also be the result of alienation, which is associated with anomie; a major aspect of classical strain theory (Merton, 1938). Anomie is a sense of normlessness, and while the military is full of norms and structure, there is the possibility for deindividuation. The military is an immense bureaucracy and the potential for anomie is evident when a soldier loses agency and serves only as a cog in the military

machine. A lack of agency or a lack of efficacy may lead to a feeling of anomie and the resulting strain.

Strain is also closely associated with the idea of relative deprivation. Relative deprivation is the concept that one will define how successful they are only in relation to their surrounding environment (Cohen, 1955). Relative deprivation suggests that if a person perceives themselves to be in a state of economic failure, and lives in a neighborhood that contains many financially successful people, s/he will experience strain regardless of any objective measure of depravity. The theory predicts that the greater the relative deprivation, the greater the anomie and the subsequent reactions to the strain. I posit that this relative deprivation may be present for enlisted military personnel who compare their circumstances to those of commissioned officers. The assumption is that officers receive more money, authority, and rewards for what is perceived as less work. This could lead to strain among the enlisted/non-commissioned members of the military.

Strain: Military

Structurally, it is possible that military as an occupation places greater emphases on certain things such as order, obedience, rewards, mobility, isolation, violence, and honor among other things, and as result, these pose additional strains that are intensified for those in the military. For example soldiers must deal with spending much of their time away from their families (high mobility and geographic isolation). This is shared by other occupations such as certain business and sales, however with non-military occupations there is little worry about the potential of not returning home.

There is also the danger involved in the military that is similar to the experiences of police officers (Gibson, 2001), that adds stress. There are dangers to one's life when dealing with explosives, ammunitions, weapons, offenders (military police), enemies, et cetera. The military also places a greater emphasis on certain codes and violations such as insubordination, mission failure, and other work-place strains that are intensified in the military given the potential for loss, including the lives of both soldiers and civilians (Elder & Clipp, 1989). Finally, as in other occupations, promotion through the military is dependent on awards. I argue that the emphasis on awards in the military is more intense than other occupations. This increases the stakes for some military personnel such that criticisms of performance and/or failures could ruin an entire career.

In addition, military soldiers have to follow orders in a much different way than a civilian employee must listen to a supervisor. Failure to follow an order could result in a loss in rank, court martial (criminal charges), and severe damage such as the loss of life depending on the context and content of the order (a similar stress to those placed on police officers and emergency room doctors). There is also the strain of having to take a life, something shared only by police officers (Gibson, 2001; Grossman, 1995). Soldiers must deal with the emotions of potentially losing his or her life while having the responsibility of taking the life of another. Military service members may also endure radical physical deprivation based on their specific occupational specialty, possibly contributing to strain (Rose, 1980).

The American soldier, especially junior enlisted soldiers, does not earn very high pay and thus it is important to consider the possibility of economic strain. For example, deployment has a dramatic effect on individual soldiers as well as their families.

Deployments for married soldiers create “single” parent households. This then impacts child care, marital satisfaction, as well as economic strain due to the difficulty in maintaining employment, paying bills, et cetera.

To further the discussion of economic strain, there are advantages and disadvantages to being in the military. Regarding living expenses, soldiers may live on-post where they have no rent or mortgage, and do not have to pay any utilities. However a disadvantage of living on post is that the soldiers' spouses then need a car if they want to work, since most public transportation does not come on post. A lot of junior enlisted soldiers elect to live off post so their spouses can work and use public transportation, especially in more urban areas. The tradeoff obviously is to incur bills such as rent/mortgage and utilities. Soldiers can also receive what is called a Basic Allowance for Quarters (BAQ) or a housing allowance. Ultimately the comforts of having the military “cover” expenses and provide benefits are weighed against the strains that result from very low earnings.

One example of military strain is found in the family arena. For instance, a possible resulting condition of combat is post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Researchers have found that combat related PTSD is related to negative marital quality (Foy & Card, 1987; Kulka et al., 1992). The effects may be direct (disturbing the marriage) or indirect (affecting educational achievement, job stability, or income, strains that affect marriage).

Studies of the Gulf War veterans provided an opportunity to estimate the effect of work-related separations on military families. Angrist et al. (2000) found that deployment affected divorce rates, spousal employment, and children's disability rates.

Further research suggests that life disruption may account for the increase in negative marital quality among veterans (Foy & Card, 1987; Pavalko & Elder, 1990) and that combat exposure is another factor (Kulka et al., 1992; Laufer & Gallops, 1985; Pavalko & Elder, 1990). There is variation in both life disruption and in combat experience. Some in the military are given long term assignments and some never have to go overseas. There is also variation in the educational opportunities for soldiers as well as variation in whether or not assignments are “accompanied” or “unaccompanied”¹³. These factors might explain the variation in offending among military personnel.

Continuing in the family arena, Roth (1980) and Shwed (1979) found that child abuse in military families results in a higher proportion of serious injury and mortality than those in civilian families. Factors that may contribute to this include transient lifestyle and the resulting isolation of children, long and frequent separations, geographical isolation (unaccompanied tours), low rank, housing allowances (extra money for living expenses), assignment to an occupational situation (in this case, type of command) with a violent mission, and a specific military duty or job involving violence, and economic strain (especially among the lower ranks) (Roth, 1980; Shwed, 1979). All of these variables can be used to explain variation in offending among military personnel.

Both Merton and Agnew also suggest that in addition to personality traits and social factors, coping mechanisms are a major variable contributing to the link between strain and crime. People who find legitimate coping mechanisms will not engage in criminal behavior whereas those with limited access to legitimate coping mechanisms choose crime as a means to resolve strain.

¹³ An accompanied tour means the soldier can bring his or her spouse and/or family whereas an unaccompanied tour is where the soldier serves by him or herself.

Blount et al. (1992) consider coping mechanisms in examining military family separations. According to the authors, family separations are an intrinsic part of military life. The result of not having adequate coping skills upon separation leads to medical problems, especially depression. Blount et al. (1992) suggest that the families most at risk are those “with a history of poor adapting skills, poor pre-deployment attitudes, family conflicts, dysfunctional family relationships, and poor communication. In addition, young spouses, lower pay grade personnel, and foreign spouses are at an increased risk of coping problems upon separation”.

With regards to individual coping mechanisms, early behavior such as drinking and drug use, having multiple sexual partners, gambling, and fighting, may have a negative impact on coping skills (Sylvester, 1946; Elder and Clipp, 1989). It follows then that some of the conditions that increase the likelihood of military-related strain are the same factors that limit the coping mechanisms available to soldiers¹⁴.

Due to the organizational and structural issues prevalent in military life, it is possible that military personnel have a lack of alternatives for dealing with strain. One coping mechanism useful for individuals is self-engagement, or involvement and interest in one's duties. Self-engagement might also be relevant in the discussion of control theory given the attachment, commitment, and involvement elements proposed by Hirschi (1969). Self-engagement is discussed here to show how soldiers may cope with occupational stress and strain in the military.

One reason why those in the military have limited access to legitimate coping mechanisms is that soldiers are not often encouraged to seek out help for their problems. The culture of the military, instead, calls for the individual to “suck it up”, to not “whine”

¹⁴ The discussion in this paragraph is also relevant to self control theory, discussed later this chapter.

about a situation (Grossman, 1995). When soldiers are injured, and especially when they are having mental problems, they are physically isolated from their unit and may become social outcasts. These soldiers are referred to “sick call”, a group separated from the rest by virtue of the fact that they cannot carry out their duties. This separation carries an enormous stigma and is something that most soldiers try to avoid. Military culture, then, effectively takes away a legitimate coping mechanism for soldiers in that it removes an outlet for coping with strain. The toughness mentality is embedded into soldiers creating an environment where individuals feel unable to express their vulnerability to strains and stressors. The bureaucracy of the military, thus, thwarts this coping mechanism, in that soldier feel that any expression of a problem will go unheard and/or without resolution.

As a result, military members are left with limited options for coping with their strains. Schuckit et al. (2001) examined the influence of the military workplace on drinking beliefs, behaviors, and problems of enlisted personnel and officers. They found that members of the military (in this case the Navy) were significantly likely to use alcohol as a stress-reliever both in work and non-work situations. This suggests that military members may turn to a deviant method for coping with strain due, at least in part, to the lack of opportunity to cope with the stressors in other, more socially acceptable, ways.

Police officers and soldiers are presented with similar strains, to somewhat similar degrees, and the relationship between police strain and crime provides insight into the relationship between crime among the military and strain. Gibson (2001) uses General Strain Theory to examine how negative coping mechanisms for work-related stress (violence, exposure to misery, et cetera) experienced by law enforcement officers leads to

and includes domestic violence. This study found that the strain experienced by officers is indirectly related to domestic violence through the negative effects of anger and depression. Another study by Storch & Panzarella (1996) examined stressors resulting from organizational structure, interacting with the public, violence, and exposure to human misery. Storch & Panzarella (1996) found that the stress of potential injury and death was highest, followed by dealing with changes in work and family. These findings can be applied to those in the military.

Strain: Measures

As evidenced by the literature above, there are many possible strains to examine for the military. The first of which is mobility and time away from family. I measure this by asking about the number of times transferred, the number of times deployed, and total months deployed. This helps get an understanding of the instability, isolation, and potential for family troubles.

I further ask a variety of questions regarding family stress, including items pulled from Straus' (1979, 1996) Conflict Tactics Scale. I ask about the respondent's satisfaction with their spouse and with their relationship with their children. I also ask about the number of unaccompanied tours, and whether or not deployment has caused marital trouble. In addition to family strain, I consider the role of economic strain. I ask for information about spousal employment, I ask questions about education and financial support.

I address issues of specific goals through questions about the number of demotions, the recency of the latest demotion, and the participant's perception of the likelihood of a promotion. Similarly I ask about awards and merits. I also measure

whether individual subjects worry about awards. Another measure is pay grade, thereby classifying the individual on a monetary scale. I hypothesize that those at the lower end of the pay scale are higher in strain and higher in self-reported crime. Finally I ask whether the subject feels as though there are obstacles preventing him or her from receiving a promotion and/or award.

The military has two distinct career paths, one for non-commissioned officers (sergeants, corporals, et cetera) and one for commissioned officers (captains, majors, et cetera). Officers are paid much more than non-commissioned soldiers; they have more authority and control, more prestige, more access to awards, and I hypothesize they are less likely to be presented with some of the stresses discussed. For example they are not on the front lines of combat, they can choose assignments, and they are the ones yelling as opposed to being yelled at, et cetera.

To consider various stresses, I include a variety of measures such as combat experience (pulled from the measures used for social learning), and questions dealing with general stress. I ask about the participant's experience stress at home, and stress at work (promotions, awards, physical and mental stress, et cetera). With the amount of stress measured, I also inquire about coping mechanisms.

Social and Self Control: Theory

Social control theory seeks to explain why people *do not* engage in crime. Reiss and Nye (1951) suggest that there are external as well as internal controls that determine whether or not someone will offend. Hirschi (1969) expanded on this theory of control by contributing the concept of social bonds. Social bonds include attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief to social control theory. The more attachment an individual has to conforming or legitimate others, the more commitment to conformity, the more involvement in non-criminal activities, and the internalization of conforming and legitimate beliefs all contribute to making someone less likely to engage in criminal behavior.

Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) added a dimension to control theory by suggesting that self-control is vital in understanding any and all crime. Self-control (both high and low) develops from the internalization of external social controls. This internalization can come through one's upbringing and from experiencing sanctions after offending. This is very similar to the earlier discussion of social learning and reinforcement.

Low self-control can help predict someone's likelihood of committing or refraining from crime (Akers, 1991). Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) also note that people involved with crime engage in similar behaviors that provide short-term gratification much the same as offending. Examples include smoking, drinking, gambling, unprotected sex, and speeding in cars are examples of behaviors that may be found in offenders.

One could argue that one of the effects of military service, if not one of the purposes, is the instilling of self-discipline and self-control. Although Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) suggest that this must happen early in life, one cannot ignore the potential internalization of discipline and control in the military given the intensity of the experience. From day one of basic training the military is trying to eliminate risky behaviors, selfish behaviors done for immediate gratification, and trying to instill notions of teamwork, accountability, and self-control. It is because of these efforts that many delinquent juveniles, and even criminal adults, are encouraged to join the military or are sentenced to paramilitary correctional programs. This is done because they are believed to be lacking in self-control and that the military can provide them with such control. With all that said, perhaps variation in military offending can be explained at least in part by how much self-control service members have actually developed.

Social and Self Control: Military

The military subjects its personnel to a high level of external control in the form of standards and codes (McDonagh, 1945). The military also pushes its personnel through training aimed at socializing those individuals to internalize the controls. These standards and codes, socialized through training, show an effort to make soldiers more committed, more involved, and more attached, as well as cultivate stronger organizational beliefs. I posit that variation in criminal activity among military members is related to variation in attachment, commitment, involvement and belief. Some military personnel are higher in control than others and this will explain the variation in criminal activity in an occupation assumed to be high in social control.

One way to understand the social controls facing military service members is to understand the situations or the contexts in which the military professional finds him or herself that generate social controls. To follow orders of superiors, not to kill or injure noncombatants, to attend conscientiously to one's military duties and the like, would all be part of what binds the military professional more or less uniquely (with exception to police officers and perhaps doctors) due to the stakes (missions, lives, et cetera). As a result, this suggests a more intense social control. Whether or not soldiers abide by these orders and this intense social control might explain variation in offending among military personnel.

Finally, there is an emphasis on discipline and conformity that is certainly present in other occupations, but given the nature of military work, discipline and conformity are vital to avoiding failure (where failure means mission failure, loss of life, et cetera) across the military and may be more or less intense given the unit and MOS. Obedience to

authority, internalized discipline, and conformity all act as controls to provide soldiers with reasons not to commit crime. Discipline and conformity are central elements to the military, from uniform to procedure to vernacular; soldiers are expected to be disciplined and to conform.

Hackett and Wakin (1986) have claimed that a bad person “cannot be a good soldier” and others (Grossman, 1995; Sylvester, 1947; Appy, 2004) would seem to agree with this claim. These authors base their conclusion on an argument of functionality. They acknowledge the unique moral situations and demands placed on the military professional and argue that there are certain general demands on the character and behavior of military professionals. For example, military units cannot function well, especially in combat environments, if the members of the unit are not completely honest with each other. Also, soldiers simply will not be able to do their jobs if they are not, to a certain degree, selfless. Otherwise, they would not be willing to tolerate even the ordinary hardships of military life, much less be willing to risk their lives (Grossman, 1995). Similar arguments can be made for the virtues of courage, obedience, loyalty, and conscientiousness. This would help explain the variation in offending by soldiers. Those who score higher on certain controls such as selflessness, obedience and conscientiousness will have lower self-reported crime than those who score lower on those controls. Furthermore, failure in the military context will likely bring about tremendously negative consequences. When a soldier violates social controls, there is potential for disaster that is unique to this occupation (Elder & Clipp, 1989). When property and life are at stake in military endeavors, violations of social controls can have disastrous consequences.

The public image of the military might also provide an external social control through expectations. Since the military constitutes a readily identifiable group, many kinds of misconduct by the few can lead to negative consequences for the many (Hackett & Wakin, 1986). Some people might form general opinions about how they should view all military professionals. This is hard to show empirically as what data there is has an overlap of variables.

As stated, offending by military personnel rises somewhat after combat. Recruitment rates decline after combat efforts, leaving the door open for hypotheses about the declining rate being the result of fear of combat or of dissatisfaction with the military (among other possible hypotheses). My suggestion of public perception as a social control is more anecdotal than anything based on empirical findings. The military is very conscious about maintaining a good image, for recruitment purposes, for funding from tax payers, and to simply establish trust with the very public the military serves.

It is necessary to provide some empirical validation for the theoretical and anecdotal discussion of social control that has been attempted thus far. According to McDonagh (1945), control is the most characteristic element of military life. Social control in the military is used for “the express purpose of controlling the conduct of those individuals who are subject to military discipline”. Moreover, the opportunity to gain advancement is dependent on the record of a soldier. Rewards in the form of medals and citations, and the possibility of losing these rewards, serve as social controls.

There is an element of risk and adventure that is inherent in military service, especially in certain job specialties. Airborne troops get to jump out of planes, bomb squad troops deal with explosives, and military police officers deal with a range of risks

and excitements. When not on duty, soldiers, especially soldiers from these higher risk units, may seek out risky or adventurous behaviors (including alcohol and drug use, crime, et cetera) in order to satisfy their need and desire for excitement.

Self-control theory argues that a lack of self-control is neither a sufficient nor a necessary condition for crime to occur, because other properties of the individual or of the situation may counteract one's likelihood of committing deviant acts (Hirschi and Gottfredson, 1993). Everything else being equal, low self-control should positively and significantly predict a variety of deviant and criminal conduct (Podlowski, 1994). As an anecdote I would argue that the riskiest units are also the closest knit. Therefore if Hirschi and Gottfredson (1993) are correct, low self-control in high risk units may be neutralized by the high commitment and bond to the unit and to the military. However those low in self-control who also have a weak bond to their particular unit or the military might be more likely to engage in crime.

Social and Self Control: Measures

I include social control theory for this study because I am trying to achieve a thorough understanding of why military personnel offend. One might assume that social control is inherent in military service and therefore all military personnel will score high in social control. While a fair assumption, there may be variation in social control because soldiers may differ on their attachment to their unit, their commitment to the military, their loyalty to their commanding officer, et cetera. I gauge varying levels of social control through measuring rank, awards, desire to re-enlist, et cetera.

I also measure the degree of commitment to the military by soldiers. I consider the amount of time the participant has been in service. I ask the reason for originally enlisting, if s/he has re-enlisted, and whether s/he plans on re-enlisting. I also look at rank as it may be an indicator of both time served and occupational commitment (the higher the rank, the more commitment is assumed). I further include measurements of medals/commendations, and MOS as they may be indicators for commitment and involvement

It is not enough to just simply measure the individual's account of commitment; I wish to know whether that commitment is to his or her squad, unit, military, et cetera, and whether the degree of commitment is stronger for any one level than the other. This is important because while the army may push controls such as obedience and selflessness, an individual unit may not implement such controls, and may even encourage independence and selfish behavior. The level at which the soldier is committed may help to explain variation in offending.

I examine attachment in regard to both the military and to external controls. I include whether or not the participant likes his or her commanding officers, his or her peers, his or her unit, and the military in general. I measure the importance of the respondent's family, education, and obtaining future goals.

Another variable of interest is voluntary deployment or assignment. If a participant has signed up for extra duty, for re-deployment, et cetera; that would indicate a certain amount of commitment, involvement, and attachment. Finally I consider issues of self-discipline, authority, conformity, and morality.

To measure self-control, the MOS and current unit variables are useful since I can designate a specialty or unit as having a certain degree of risk. I will also ask the soldiers why they signed up for their MOS. This will help address their desire to pursue risk. Finally I will use items from Grasmick's (1993) 24 Item Scale of Self-Control.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I discuss some of the prominent theories in criminology; social learning and subculture theories, strain theory, and social and self control theories. I provide a brief overview of the theories, discuss the literature on the theories as they apply to the military, and discuss how I measure the theories for this dissertation. Given the literature that exists, I believe that combat experience, training in violence, and beliefs about violence influence criminal behavior among military personnel. I argue that combat-type occupations (infantry, military police, et cetera) are more likely to use violence to resolve conflicts compared to more service-oriented occupations (cooks, supply, et cetera

I also suggest that delinquent peer history and association will have an impact on offending among military personnel. Asking the participants about interactions with the criminal justice system prior to their enlistment, as well as any sanctioning they have experienced while serving provides some insight as to whether or not the soldier has been told that violence and/or crime is wrong and thus learned definitions unfavorable to crime. Similarly, association with delinquent peers should predict offending behavior.

Given the literature and my personal experiences, I believe that beliefs regarding honor and respect will be so engrained that a soldier will believe that using violence for honor and respect is acceptable. I also ask if the respondent feels that is worth being punished or sanctioned due to efforts to achieve or maintain honor and respect.

Regarding strain theory, I suggest that the strain from mobility and time away from family creates family strain. Economic strain is important to consider, and the survey will include some items to measure economic strain. Finally I attempt to measure

frustration in terms of career goals through questions about rewards, promotions, et cetera.

For control theory I expect there to be a relationship between degrees of attachment and commitment and levels of attachment and commitment. By degrees I mean to what extent an individual is attached or committed. By “what levels”, I am referring to whether the individual is attached/committed to the military, his or her unit, or his or her squad. I think these different “levels” are important distinctions to consider.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The main objective of this study is to explore offending among the military through obtaining a thick understanding of crime among the military. In order to explore this issue and to obtain the aforementioned thick description, I chose a qualitative approach for this dissertation research. Qualitative methods are appropriate when the research requires an inductive or naturalistic inquiry, a need to have the researcher as the instrument of data collection, and seeks results that emphasize narrative over numbers (Royse et al., 2006). This dissertation research has each of these features. It has been discussed how there is inadequate research into the area of military offending, this dissertation is exploratory in nature, and the causes of crime for the sample are at least in part a product of how the individual interprets his or her behavior.

Qualitative methods include various ways to collect data, including in-depth interviews. In my dissertation, I conduct interviews of currently enlisted soldiers in the United States military¹⁵. The interviews cover demographic information, self-reported offending, and the measures of various theories; social learning, subcultural, strain, and social control discussed in the previous chapter. Siedman (1998) says that the interviews allow the research to examine complicated issues by understanding experiences of participants based on the meaning the experiences have for the participants.

Instead of addressing methodological issues of validity and reliability necessary for quantitative research methods, qualitative researchers are concerned with issues such as credibility and transferability (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Methods to address these issues include member checks, triangulation, and stating researcher biases Merriam (1988).

¹⁵ The interview script can be found in Appendix One

Credibility

Establishing credibility in qualitative analysis involves providing evidence that the results of the research are credible or believable from the perspective of the participants (Berg, 2007; Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1988). The purpose of qualitative research is to describe or understand the experience/behavior in question from the participant's eyes; "therefore the participants are the only ones who can legitimately judge the credibility of the results" (Berg, 2007).

Mertens (1998) argues that the use of member checks is vital in establishing credibility. I first use member checks by asking for clarification during conversations with the participants. Second, once the interviews had been transcribed each participant was e-mailed their own transcript and asked to provide their feedback within two weeks. Each of the participants was given an opportunity to review their own transcript, suggesting corrections, additions, and commenting on inaccuracies. Although all participants were given this option, one was unable to be located after the interview, and twelve did not send any kind of response.

There were very few participants who requested any changes, and the majority of requested changes had to do with grammar and language. Many of the participants asked that their responses be "cleaned up", which to them means that the grammar be fixed and profanity removed. Out of respect for the participants and out of appreciation for their participation in this research, I agreed to "clean up" the grammar but asked to leave in the profanity as it can be an indicator of emotion. No changes were made to content or context of what participants said. The remaining participants returned the transcript without any requested changes.

Transferability

Transferability refers to the ability to generalize the results of the research to other contexts and settings (Berg, 2007; Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1988). In doing qualitative research, transferability is primarily the responsibility of the one doing the generalizing. Meaning that the researcher can contribute to transferability by describing the research context and the assumptions that are vital to the research, but the person who wishes to “transfer” the results to a different context is then responsible for making a judgment on generalizing/transferring for a particular context (Merriam, 1988).

In the chapters following this one, I provide a “rich, thick description” (Merriam, 1988) so that those who consume the data will be able to evaluate the degree of transferability to their own settings. I do not expect all military offenders to share identical features, rather that these are features one might look for in military offenders (Eisner, 1998).

Role of the Researcher

I have already mentioned that I, as the researcher, was the instrument of data collection throughout the study and would like to make some of my biases explicit. I have spent time as a military soldier myself. From my personal exposure, I believe incidents of domestic violence and alcohol abuse to be high among military personnel. In terms of explaining this behavior, given my interaction with offenders, I anticipated social learning and social control theories to effectively explain the causes of crime among the military. Despite these preconceptions, I went into the data collection and analysis phases allowing the data to guide me.

Understanding the issues surrounding military offending has occurred through my personal experiences, review of the literature, and conversations with others. My past experiences both as a soldier and a criminologist allowed me to recognize the causes of crime among the military, which I deem to be an asset.

I would like to address Yin's (1994) comments about researchers' preconceived ideas. I did submit a partially completed theoretical framework with my initial dissertation proposal that was quantitative in nature. One of my concerns is that this early deductive approach would blind my eyes to seeing and hearing things which are outside or contrary to this early framework. Consequently, I made a concentrated effort to follow the data regardless of whether it fit my earlier theoretical expectations, and I focused on the participants' words rather than limit them to any one framework. At various points during the data collection phase of my study, others would question me about the theoretical framework and I was able to articulate only its broad concepts.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations in my study include confidentiality of data, anonymity of participants, and informed consent. Data was secured at all times on my person, in my residence or office, or on my computer thus ensuring confidentiality. In regards to anonymity, at no point was the participant's name ever spoken on the recording device, nor was it transcribed or otherwise documented. Furthermore questions are asked in such a manner that responses would not identify the participant. Finally informed consent was achieved in that the individuals who participated in the interviews were given an explanation of the research and verbal consent was obtained.

Sample

Given how little is known about military offending, a qualitative study that explores the issue is necessary. According to the literature (Berg, 2007; Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1988), methodologies such as the use of purposive snowball techniques, can be used to target and enlist those who are needed to fill in the gaps in our knowledge of certain understudied social contexts (i.e. crime among the military). This sample was built using purposive snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is a technique for building a sample where willing study subjects recruit future subjects from among their acquaintances (Hendricks et al, 1992). This means that this sampling method relies on referrals from initial subjects to generate additional subjects. Thus the sample group appears to grow like a rolling snowball.

A key advantage of a snowball sample is that it allows researchers to get access to “hidden” populations, including populations that are vulnerable and hard to reach (Atkinson and Flint, 2001). I consider the “military soldier” as difficult to reach given the lack of data and literature on military offending and the lack of access traditionally granted to academic research by the military. This study also deals with criminal activity; snowball samples are a common way of dealing with sensitive subjects such as this due to its ability to reach people who might otherwise be hesitant when directly approached by researchers.

In early March 2008, I established four contacts with people who are currently in the military, who agreed to be interviewed, and who served as the initial seeds for the snowball sample. I made these contacts based on my seven years experience in the military. These individuals not only served as initial seeds for the sample, but also

provided me with an opportunity to enhance the interview script through their feedback about question inclusion, question wording, et cetera.

As stated, I use these initial “seeds” to create a snowball sample of offenders. After the interview, I requested that these participants recommend one to two current military members who they believe may be willing to participate in the study¹⁶. I requested contact information and also provided my e-mail address and phone number for the participant to give to the person s/he recommended.

To strive for variance, I limit each of the respondents to a maximum of two recommendations. This is consistent with the respondent-driven sampling literature that suggests limiting references decreases bias and increases variance through more and varied “waves” (Semaan et al, 2002). Having more than one recommendation increased my chances of obtaining respondents; and having no more than two recommendations limited the potential for having an entire sample that is connected to one initial participant (more branches/waves). Ultimately this sample was built through six “waves”. Since I was not confined to one military installation, the snowball took me to respondents that ranged across geographic region, military experience, demographic variables, offending history, et cetera.

I will provide results throughout the following chapters of this dissertation, however I feel it is important to provide numerical data at this stage in order to give the reader a more full and accurate understanding of this sample. I have included some important data regarding demographics, military experience, and criminal behavior.

¹⁶ A map of the snowball sample can be found in Appendix Two

Sample: Demographic Data

In total, the sample includes fifty current active-duty military personnel. The population is capped at fifty by decision, not because the snowball had run out of recommendations. Given the length of the interviews and other time constraints, an N of fifty is deemed sufficient for this exploratory research. In retrospect, fifty might have been more than necessary for the goals of this research. The data collection and entry was incredibly taxing and perhaps equally valuable data could have been achieved with a smaller sample.

The sample is limited to Army personnel. Perhaps with different seeds and/or further pursuit of recommendations I could have achieved variance in military branch. According to the Department of Defense Personnel Statistics (2008), the United States Army comprises 54% of the entire United States military and thus makes this sample worthy of investigation.

The majority of the participants are males (94%). This lack of variance with gender is anticipated and determined to be acceptable. According to the Department of Defense Personnel Statistics (2008), women make up roughly 15% of the United States Army. As stated above, the Army accounts for most of the United States military, and similarly males account for most of the United States Army. This sample is therefore somewhat representative of the larger military population.

Interviewees are asked about their race and/or ethnicity. Almost half of the sample (24 individuals) claim to be white while 12 (24%) claim to be black or African-American, 10 (20%) claim to be Hispanic or Latino/a. There is one Asian participant, one American Indian, and two subjects who claim “other” as their race or ethnicity.

Current Army data shows 61% white, 22% African-American, 11% Hispanic, and 7% other (Department of Defense Personnel Statistics, 2008).

The majority of the sample is under the age of 35. In order to avoid possible identifying information, I ask subjects their age in ranges; 18-25, 26-35, 36-45, 46-55, and over 55 years of age. There are twenty-one individuals in the 18-25 range and eighteen in the range of 26-35 years of age. This means that 78% of the sample is under the age of 35. There are eight individuals aged 36-45, three aged 46-55, and no participants over the age of 55.

I ask respondents about where they thought they were “from” in terms of geographical region. As a probe, I gave examples such as “east coast”, “south”, and “midwest”. Around half (52%) of the sample is either from the midwest (30%) or the south (22%). A full report of home region can be found in Table 3-1. As stated, these response categories are the interviewees’ own choosing.

Table 3-1: Participant Regional Home

Region	Frequency	Percent
East Coast	4	8%
South	11	22%
Midwest	15	30%
Southwest	4	8%
Northwest	3	6%
Texas	8	16%
West Coast	5	10%

In terms of education, participants are asked about their own highest level of education as well as their parents’ highest level of education. There are striking similarities in terms of the frequencies; however the numbers are not consistent among individual participants. By this I mean that someone who has a bachelor’s degree does

not necessarily have a parent who also has a bachelor's degree, it is just the total numbers that are similar. Data concerning education of the sample is found in Tables 3-2 and 3-3.

Table 3-2: Highest Completed Level of Subject Education

Education Level	Frequency	Percent
GED	3	6%
High School Diploma	19	38%
Some College	6	12%
Associates Degree	9	18%
Bachelors Degree	11	22%
Masters Degree or Higher	2	4%

Table 3-3: Highest Completed Level of Parental Education

Education Level	Frequency	Percent
GED	6	12%
High School Diploma	19	38%
Some College	6	12%
Associates Degree	3	6%
Bachelors Degree	13	26%
Masters Degree or Higher	3	6%

The sample is fairly evenly split in terms of marital status. There are 18 (36%) individuals who are married and 24 (48%) that are single. The number of single participants is technically higher since 8 (16%) responded to the question about marriage by saying they are divorced. There are 20 (40%) participants who reported having children. According to the Department of Defense Personnel Statistics (2008), 54% of Army personnel are married¹⁷.

¹⁷ 9% are married to another service member.

Sample: Military Data

There is quite a range of time-in-service among the sample. It is difficult to determine a cutoff point given the variety in enlistment obligations that a particular individual can agree to serve. However 20 years of service is important to military personnel because that is when one can receive retirement benefits. If we take half of that and consider 10 years as a cutoff point, then the majority of participants had 10 years or less time-in-service. A complete report of time-in-service is found in Table 3-4.

Table 3-4: Time in Service

Years	Frequency	Percent
2	3	6%
3	5	10%
4	6	12%
5	4	8%
6	3	6%
7	2	4%
8	7	14%
9	5	10%
10	3	6%
11	4	8%
12	1	2%
14	3	6%
15	2	4%
16	1	2%
18	1	2%

There are three categories of ranking that someone in the United States Army can have; enlisted, non-commissioned officer (NCO), and officer. Everyone in the Army is at one point an enlisted soldier. Then depending on promotion, training, et cetera, the individual can remain as an enlisted soldier, become an NCO, or receive his or her commission and become an officer. In this sample there are 18 enlisted soldiers (36%), 24 NCO's (48%), and 8 officers (16%). Army data shows 44% enlisted, 38% NCO, and 16% officer (Department of Defense Personnel Statistics, 2008). A portion of the sample

had been demoted; twelve individuals report having been demoted in rank (24%) at some point during their military career. However the majority of the sample (76%) reports having never been demoted.

Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) is the job branch that military personnel are assigned to, and it determines their location, unit assignment, et cetera. There are nine MOS's represented in this sample including infantry, field artillery, mechanics, military police, engineers, transportation, medical, aviation, and armored infantry/cavalry. The infantry is the largest occupational branch in the military and is represented as such in this sample. Job specialty of the sample is expressed in Table 3-5.

Table 3-5: Military Occupational Specialty

MOS	Frequency	Percent
Infantry	12	24%
Field Artillery	6	12%
Mechanic	4	8%
Police	3	6%
Engineer	1	2%
Transportation	8	16%
Medic	6	12%
Aviation	3	6%
Armored Infantry/Cavalry	7	14%

As expected, most of the sample has been transferred to a different duty station or reassigned to a unit at least once. Only six individuals have yet to experience a transfer, all six of these have very little time-in-service. Nine participants have been moved once (18%), eight have been transferred twice (16%), twelve moved three times (24%), eight four times (16%), and three individuals each have been transferred five and six times (6%). One person has been transferred seven times.

An interesting aspect of this sample is the amount of combat experience held by participants. An overwhelming majority (84%) report having had some combat experience. This is not intended or even anticipated in my proposal; however this may speak to the current troop presence in Iraq and Afghanistan. Five years ago one might expect to find the majority of a military sample to have no combat experience, perhaps given the rise in deployments most military personnel now do have combat experience. It should also be noted that a surprisingly high number of participants (40%) report that they have *volunteered* for combat.

As stated, the United States Army comprises 54% of the entire United States military (Department of Defense Personnel Statistics, 2008) and thus makes this sample worthy of investigation. Table 3-6 is a comparison table summarizing how the sample for this research compares to that of the United States Army.

Table 3-6: Comparing Sample Demographics to Army Demographics

	Sample	Army
Male	94%	85%
Female	6%	15%
White	48%	61%
Black	24%	22%
Hispanic	20%	11%
Asian	2%	Not Available
American Indian	2%	Not Available
Other	4%	7%
Married	36%	54%
Enlisted	36%	44%
NCO	48%	38%
Officer	16%	16%

Sample: Offending Data

Subjects are asked a variety of questions about past and current criminal behavior. Much of this data will be discussed in forthcoming chapters, yet to understand the sample I believe there is relevant data appropriate for this stage. It should first be noted that every participant responded positively to at least one question regarding offending behavior.

There are 13 individuals (26%) who report that they had been arrested prior to joining the military. There are certain crimes that will prevent enlistment in the military, however most can be handled through a waiver process (signed by the court and a commanding officer). The Army is more concerned with convictions, especially felony convictions, than it is with arrests/being detained. However recently the Army has relaxed its denial of applicants with a felony conviction (Army.com, 2008). In sum, arrests do not necessarily prevent enlistment and in some cases even lead to enlistment if the court recommends military service (Army.com, 2008). Soldiers in basic training can still be heard singing the cadence; “I went to court and the judge said go to war or go to jail”.

There is a decrease in arrest numbers when participants were asked whether they have been arrested since joining the military. Only 4 subjects (8%) report that they had been arrested since enlisting. It is interesting that despite every participant in the sample reporting to have engaged in some manner of criminal activity, such a low number have been arrested. This suggests that arrest data is not an accurate source for investigating crime among the military.

Participants are asked about their peers' criminal behavior as well as their own. Almost all of the participants (94%) report that prior to enlisting in the military they had friends who engaged in criminal activity. This is not all the surprising given the literature on youth crime, specifically what is known as adolescent-limited offending. This term describes how most adolescents engage in some sort of criminal activity, usually minor, during adolescence (Agnew, 2005). This number changes when participants are asked whether they currently have any friends who engage in criminal activity. Only 19 individuals (38%) respond positively to this question while 31 (62%) reply that they do not currently have any military friends who engage in criminal activity.

*Data and Measures*¹⁸

The data itself is respondent driven. The goal is to ask open-ended questions that would allow the participants to provide their own response categories, their own voice, and ultimately provide content rich data. The literature led me to ask certain questions, yet this did not limit responses since I ask the questions in a way that allow participants to create the data. For certain items, especially those concerning demographic information, I did provide the interviewees with ranges and/or possible responses. With every question I asked for and allowed the interviewee to elaborate on their answers and discuss the given item. Overall the data is representative of, and true to, the sample.

Measures of crime that I examine include general acts such as property damage, domestic violence¹⁹, drug use, fights (individual and as a group), thefts under \$50, thefts over \$50, adultery, and public disturbance (including drunk and disorderly). I also measure some military specific crimes (specific to the Uniform Code of Military Justice) including absence without leave (AWOL), insubordination, theft of work materials, and failure to follow orders. Finally I ask the respondent why s/he engaged in this behavior, and whether or not these self-reported crimes were committed while on duty or off duty, while deployed for combat, and whether they were committed on post or off.

These self-report questions provide the most useful information as interviewees gave their voice to the data through discussing and explaining that behavior. The ability for participants to elaborate on their behavior and to offer reasons and explanations as opposed to answering yes or no on a survey is a key advantage and benefit of this research.

¹⁸ The full interview script can be found in Appendix One

¹⁹ I informed participants that I must report any admissions of child abuse

Data Collection

Recruitment

As stated, the data collection began with four initial seeds. I contacted each of these seeds and explained the research and informed them as to why I was requesting their participation, what their participation would involve, and how I would keep the data confidential and anonymous. One seed is a contact from high school that I did not serve with. This individual is a white male, under 35 years of age, is an enlisted soldier attached to an armored cavalry unit. Another seed is a friend from college whom I did not serve with. This individual is a white male, under 35 years of age, and is a NCO attached to a medic unit. A third seed is someone I briefly served with during my time in service. This individual is an African-American male, under the age of 35, and is an officer attached to a military police unit. I was initially put in contact with the fourth seed by a colleague from the Memphis Police Department. This seed is a white male, under 45 years of age, and is a NCO attached to an infantry unit. These four seeds vary in location; they are currently in Pennsylvania, Texas, Georgia, and California (in no particular order²⁰). Once the participant had agreed to participate and had given verbal consent, I proceeded with the interview.

Upon completion of these four interviews, I asked each interviewee for feedback on the interview. For example I requested feedback about interview length, about certain questions included, questions not included, et cetera. The initial seeds commented that the interview was too lengthy and that I sometimes rushed them in their responses. I was told that the probes and any clarification are very helpful to the participants. There was not much feedback regarding the content of the questions other than a consensus

²⁰ To avoid identification

agreement that the questions regarding domestic violence and adultery would more than likely not be answered and may even upset future participants. Given this feedback I decided to shorten the interview, to make sure that I allow ample time for participants to respond, to be as thorough as I can be in explaining questions and offering probes, and ultimately I kept the questions regarding domestic violence and adultery. I then ask each participant to recommend one or two individuals who had military experience and who may be willing to participate in an interview. All the seeds provided me with two names and corresponding contact information.

The next phase of recruitment involves pursuing the recommendations and building the “snowball”. The initial four seeds provided me with the contact information for the “second wave” of the sample. I followed an introductory script²¹ when I contacted potential participants. This script includes why I am contacting them, what the research is about, and addresses issues of voluntariness and confidentiality. I obtained verbal consent and requested to meet for an interview or to conduct the interview over the phone. If the participant preferred a phone interview, I either requested an appointment or in many cases began the interview at that time. For in-person interviews, of which there were only 11, I made an appointment to meet with the participant at a time and place convenient for him/her. I pursued these leads until I achieved a total sample size of fifty²².

There are 22 instances where the recommended person did not wish to participate as well as 4 cases where the interviewee did not want to, or could not, recommend any potential subjects. In either of these instances, I thanked the individual for his/her time

²¹ Script can be found in Appendix Three

²² Final interview was conducted May 4, 2008

(and participation if relevant) and did not further pursue that “branch”. The total N was achieved in six waves, meaning that there are participants in the sample that are six people (waves) removed from the initial seed²³.

There was no incentive offered for participation. I wanted to avoid any possibility for coercion. While incentives have been shown to increase response rates, I am more concerned with gathering content-rich data as opposed to increasing my sample size. I did not want to risk having socially desirable responses or having any possibility to be accused of coercion (Singer & Bossarte, 2006). Furthermore, what may otherwise be acceptable may be “undue influence” if the subject is “especially vulnerable” (Singer & Bossarte, 2006). Again, participants in my study are vulnerable due to their offending experiences.

Interviews

The initial four interviews were all conducted in person. Three were conducted at the participants’ residence (one was technically outside the residence) and the fourth was conducted at the residence of a mutual acquaintance. These and later interviews were recorded and I made notes throughout the interviews as well as after the interviewing was over. From start to finish these interviews lasted from 1-2 hours. Participants were informed that they could pause or stop the interview at any time, yet none of those interviewed chose to do so.

For all interviews (both in-person and phone interviews), there was no reference to the participant’s actual name, therefore allowing no identification on paper or recorded tapes. Furthermore, as stated in my discussion of data and measures, all questions with answers that have potential identifying information were asked in a way that will prevent

²³ A map of the sample can be found in Appendix Two

anyone from “putting pieces together” and identifying respondents. For example, all questions with potential identifiers ask for a range of responses. Instead of asking what specific rank the participant is, I ask what category of ranks the participant falls in. Instead of a specific age, military specialty, and date of deployment; I ask for an age range, general job type, and range of deployment times.

Data was collected through semistandardized or semistructured survey interviews (compared to structured or unstructured interviews). The interviews are structured in that there are a standard set of questions that I asked every participant. There is no deviation in these main questions (language and wording, question order, et cetera) and every interviewee is asked this set of questions. However, these are not completely standardized or structured interviews because I asked questions with defined response categories (the ranges and prompts alluded to earlier in this chapter) as well as more general questions with open-ended responses; and I asked follow-up questions and/or probed further when I felt necessary. Participants were thanked for their time and participation and I gave them my contact information should they have any questions about the research.

The interviews were recorded on a digital recording device²⁴ and I also made written notes throughout the interview. I recorded notes about tone of voice, non-verbal behavior, as well as anything that “stood out” to me as the subject spoke. After completing the interview, I reflected on the experience and recorded further notes concerning again tone and non-verbal behavior, interview environment, “mood” of the conversation, and any other reflective observations.

²⁴ The recording device was attached to a compatible phone for phone interviews

Data Entry and Data Check

Once the interviews were completed, they were transcribed and entered into MaxQDA, a qualitative data analysis software program. I tried to transcribe the interviews soon after completion of each interview, however many of the interviews were not transcribed until after all had been completed. The transcription or data entry was actually the first step in data analysis as it allowed me to “experience” the interview again.

Transcription was a two-part process. The first part involved getting the interviews from the recording device into a document. Ultimately I decided to transcribe the interviews in the traditional manner, which involved listening to the recorded interview while manually typing the interview into a document. On average transcription took between approximately five hours.

The second part of the data entry process involved taking the documented transcript and entering it into MaxQDA. This is a simple process. I simply had to save the transcriptions as a “rich text file” as that is what MaxQDA primarily uses.

With the data entered I could now begin my analyses. However before exploring patterns and emergent themes, I wanted to do a final check of the data to make sure it is sufficient for the goals of my research. Earlier in this chapter I discussed the importance of credibility and transferability in qualitative research. To reiterate, to achieve these I conducted member checks, triangulation, an examination for a thick description, and a check for variation.

I began by checking the methods and interviews. I examined each transcript to make sure I did in fact have a “thick” description. This examination is different from the

analysis for emergent themes; this is to verify that the data is suitable for analysis. This includes checking interview questions, thoroughly checking responses, et cetera (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). I repeatedly checked throughout the research process to make sure that the interview items sufficiently covered the goals of this research. I checked to that interviewees answered the questions and the probes, and I checked to make sure that the participants were able to fully express themselves to their satisfaction. The content of the interview items and the quality of the responses do in fact create a thick description.

To further check the methods, I used triangulation. I collected data from two sources, interviews and personal notes recorded during and after each interview. Triangulation allows the researcher to be more confident of the results given the varied sources of information (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). By comparing my notes with the interview transcripts, I am able to verify the data as well as getting more intimate with the data. For example, there is an interview where the participant was using heavy military jargon. During the interview I was keeping notes of what I thought the jargon to mean. When analyzing the transcript I was then able to elaborate and corroborate the transcript with my notes. The transcript was further verified through a member check.

Finally as discussed earlier, the last method I used in regard to member checks was to discuss the transcripts and my notes with the interviewees once the interviews were transcribed. I e-mailed participants the transcripts and my notes. Each subject was given the opportunity to address any inaccuracies they felt existed. This is a time consuming process, yet the credibility gained through this kind of additional check is vital in making this type of research scientific and effective.

The final step taken to check my methods was to examine the relationship(s) between participants. One of the potential dangers of a snowball sample is the possibility that the entire sample is connected and/or comprised from one group of people. I discussed earlier how I sought to avoid this through limiting interviewees to two recommendations. Semaan et al (2002) suggest that to ensure the recruitment of members who differ from the initial recruiting peers, and to ensure an adequate sample of the population, at least four to six chains (waves) of recruitment are needed. As stated throughout this chapter, my sample was built of six waves. Through this and through a thorough check of demographic data and military experience, I was able to ensure variance among the sample.

Data Analysis: General Approach

The analysis of this data is based on an inductive approach. Inductive analysis means that the “patterns, themes, and categories of analysis come from the data; they emerge out of the data rather than being imposed on them prior to data collection and analysis” (Patton, 1980).

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), data analysis should be completed by reading and re-reading the data and by looking for patterns that emerge. These observations should then be grouped and organized into distinct categories. After transcription, I read through the data to try to make sense of the information (Creswell, 2003). Data analysis involved reducing the data into themes and concepts. This reduction was conducted through sentence separation, coding, categorization, and summarizing (Giorgi, 1985). More specifically, the primary approach for this data is reduction by means of identifying primary themes or categories (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). Themes gradually emerged as a result of becoming intimate with the data and considering what was learned during the review of the literature.

The first stage of analysis is an immersion into the data. The transcription process itself was the first step in immersing myself with the data. Furthermore, while waiting for participants to return the transcripts I sent them for review, I read and reread the transcripts ten times in their entirety (randomly selected goal). I used what Maxwell (1996) calls a “contextualizing strategy”, which involved my reviewing the transcripts and “marking”²⁵ the text as patterns and themes began to emerge. This immersion into the data was consuming, but necessary to achieve the aforementioned intimacy with the data.

²⁵ In MaxQDA the researcher has the ability to mark text and attach to it certain values

The next stage of analysis involved exploring the data through the specific questions asked in the interview. There are four general types of questions in the interview; demographic items, items concerning military experience, questions relevant to the criminological theories discussed, and self-reported crime.

Analyzing the demographic data is fairly straight forward. Responses were coded into categories and otherwise marked depending on content. Much of the military experience data is straight forward, i.e. rank, time in service, military occupational specialty, et cetera. There are some items that dealt with military experience that did require deeper analysis. For example, much of the discussion surrounding combat experience could not be quickly categorized. Whether or not the participant had combat experience, duration, location, et cetera could all be categorized; however there is a lot of rich content around this issue that needed to be explored further for patterns and themes.

Questions regarding the criminological theories discussed in Chapter Two were analyzed based on the assumptions and implications of each theory. This means that I took key elements of each theory (strain, social control, social learning, subculture) and made the logical associations between these elements and the data provided by the participants' own words. I marked the text according to the questions themselves as well as what the literature would suggest. I identified different types of strain, different controls, and different examples of all of the theories.

The analytic approach to the self-report items is similar to the analysis of the theory questions in that I made use of the literature. In addition I approached the content inductively, meaning I assessed the data as patterns and themes emerged outside of any theoretical limitations. I first coded the behavior appropriately for occurrence, frequency,

et cetera. Beyond that I marked text according to what the literature suggests and based on the interviewees' own words.

I was able to identify different types of criminal behavior, different frequencies (low and high), and most importantly I was able to obtain a thick understanding of the behavior from the respondents' own words. This content rich data coupled with the responses to the theory questions provides adequate data for understanding criminal behavior among this sample. A great advantage to this type of research is that I was able to uncover types of behavior (such as steroid use) that is not anticipated. This shows the potential benefits when not limited to a rigid deductive approach and/or theoretical framework.

Data Analysis: Specific Approach

A common approach in analyzing qualitative data, especially semi-structured interviews, is content analysis (Siedman, 1998). Rubin and Babbie (2005) describe content analysis as a “broad research method able to study nearly every form of communication by examining the occurrences of certain forms of content”. My approach to data analysis can best be described as content analysis. Interviewing provided me with an understanding of the participants’ perceptions and how the meaning they identified in their behavior (Berg, 1995). Content analysis gave me the ability to apply a coding scheme to the interviews and notes, and is an important and necessary choice for my qualitative data analysis (Berg, 1995).

To conduct my analyses, I used Max for Qualitative Data Analysis software (MaxQDA) software to code responses and uncover patterns. MaxQDA is a software package that is used for qualitative research and is appropriate for this type of data. It has many benefits, including the ability for researchers to code responses as well as to identify patterns, concepts and themes.

The transcripts in addition to my notes were imported as rich text files and included in the coding and analysis. The next step in this process was coding the data which required identifying patterns across the information by marking (codes) within interview responses and observations (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1990). Codes were established using options in the MaxQDA software which allowed me to enter a code and assign it to text throughout the analysis.

Once codes were applied, I examined the data using axial coding, or “intensive coding around one category (Strauss, 1987). I took the codes that were created and applied them to other statements or text that were relevant. I then sorted through the codes and grouped the codes by category (strain, assault, combat, et cetera).

My first goal of data analysis is to establish an understanding of the sample in terms of the independent variables discussed in Chapter Two. Therefore I examined each participant in regards to their responses for items dealing with strain, social control, social learning, and subculture theories. Regarding the items that I analyzed to assess the theories, please revisit Chapter Two. Further analysis and the results of the theoretical analysis can be found in Chapter 4.

The next set of analyses that I conducted is focused on substance use. In my review of the data, a pattern of high substance use was uncovered. I then investigated the types of individuals who engaged in substance use, the relevant theoretical explanations, as well as additional patterns within substance abuse. For example, one behavior that emerged in the analysis of substance is steroid use. Analysis and results for substance use and steroid use are discussed in Chapters 5 and 6 respectively.

A logical analytic focus is to examine the data in terms of physical/personal criminal behavior and criminal behavior involving property, as these are the two general groupings of criminal behavior. I examined the data in terms of types of personal and property crime, the demographic and military data that corresponds with that behavior, as well as the relevant theoretical items. For example, themes emerged surrounding assaults, domestic violence, and “theft” of items from combat. Within these patterns I searched for themes dealing with possible causes expressed both in responses to theory

related questions as well as discussion around the self-reported behavior. Further discussion of personal and property crime can be found in Chapters 7 and 8 respectively. I discuss the results of the remaining offending behaviors in Chapter 9.

Another logical approach to the data is to simply examine the frequency of criminal behavior. I separated the sample into low frequency and high frequency offenders based on the self-report data. From there I considered the relevant demographic and military experience items. Results concerning frequency of criminal behavior are discussed in Chapter 10.

In addition to the analytic approaches discussed above, combat experience emerged as a prominent theme. There are some important patterns surrounding combat experience and criminal behavior. Results of the analysis of combat experience and criminal behavior are discussed in Chapters 11.

The final type of analysis is a truly thick description of crime among the military. The goal of this analysis is to create a narrative of the “military offender”. This is a compilation of the analyses of each of the areas of the interview. I analyzed the demographic data, the military experience data, as well as the responses to the theory and self-report items and examined them for patterns and themes. From the words of the participants in this sample, I developed a narrative of the military offender in this sample. This analysis is discussed in Chapter 12.

Limitations

The obvious limitation to this type of research is the inability to generalize the data from this sample to the larger military population. Given the small sample size and the nature of the data collected, I cannot say that all military offenders commit the types of crimes uncovered in my research or that all military offenders offend for the same reasons. Quantitative studies of larger samples have more potential for generalizability. Despite the lack of generalizability, the thoroughness of the research allows for the potential for transferability should someone want to attempt to replicate the study in other populations.

Another limitation and one that faces all interview-based research is the potential for biased responses. There is a possibility that interviewees will give desirable answers, especially given the sensitive nature of this research. It is possible that those interviewed may have been dishonest. However, all I can do as a researcher is trust my sample and the resulting data.

In reviewing the interview process, a possible limitation is the interview itself. My initial proposal for this research called for a survey. When the methods switched to a qualitative interview, I modified the survey to fit an open-ended interview structure. I think it is possible that the wording of the questions and the manner in which I asked them was still more in the style of a survey as opposed to an open interview. I still feel that I received rich and useful data, I must acknowledge, however, the possibility that the data may be limited as a result of interview style.

An operational limitation that can be corrected in future research deals with the initial basic self-report question. I asked participants if they had ever committed the

behavior “while in the military”. This question is useful in obtaining a thick description from the participant, however “while in the military” is entirely too vague to conduct analyses for generalization, prediction, or even correlation with theoretical themes. Some participants have been in the Army for many years, so asking “while in the military” may be too vague a response category and may be limiting what I can do with the data²⁶.

Future research should focus on the timing of both reported offending and factors/predictors. Although a limitation, as stated earlier, the goal of this research is not to make generalizations, but rather to obtain a thick description.

Additional limitations include that the sample is too small to conduct statistical analyses or comparisons between most subgroups. I am also unable to test causal arguments given that the data is not longitudinal and is too small for meaningful controls.

²⁶ I do ask participants whether they have engaged in the behavior within the last year

Strengths

The primary strength of this research is that it examines a population that is often under studied, and, furthermore, it examines this population in an area that is overlooked in literature (criminal behavior). This exploratory research provides a base understanding of both the population and criminal behavior, thus allowing for future research in the area. This research examines crime among the military; this scope is a strength in itself.

In addition to the scope of the research, the specific methodological approach has its benefits. With interview research, the data allow the researcher to examine the complexities of the situation on its own terms. Meaning, there is no attempt to control the external environment or to control and/or limit responses, and thus the researcher can then describe the behavior using the words of the subjects themselves (Merriam, 1998). Given my knowledge of the literature, I can provide perspective to those words through application of theory and academic consideration. The exploratory or inductive approach to the research allows the data to be a pure and accurate representation of the sample.

Most of the previous literature is limited in that it focused on how social learning contributes to crime among the military post-service. This research helps us learn about the types of strain, control, social learning, et cetera that may contribute to military offending. The data and knowledge achieved by this research can then be used to construct a survey and conduct a larger and more systematic quantitative test of hypotheses developed from this research.

Through this research I obtain a better sense of the possible types of crime committed in military through the self-report section of the interview. As stated, this data may not be generalizable but provides useful data nonetheless. I am also able to identify

certain key offenses, strains, forms of control, and social learning variables identified by the literature that apply to, or exist in, this sample of the military. Furthermore, through open-ended questions I uncover other unanticipated strain, control, and social learning variables that apply to this sample of individuals working in the military.

Chapter 4: Theoretical Themes

The purpose of this research is to explore offending among military personnel by analyzing the perceptions of those in the military who have offended. This chapter analyzes the closed-ended and open-ended questions dealing with the causes of offending. Most of these questions are related to the three theories which guided this project; strain, social learning, and control.

This chapter is divided into a discussion of the three main criminological theories represented in the data; strain, control, and social learning. Each section will contain a review of the relevant measures, a description of the coding scheme, and finally a discussion of the results. These results will be discussed in terms of themes; for example the types of strain that emerged from the data. Results and theory will not be discussed in terms of offending behavior in this chapter but rather will be addressed in later chapters.

Strain: Measures

There are questions asked during the interview that are directly related to strain theory and were developed after a review of the literature on strain theory. Questions about strain include among others:

Have you ever been demoted in rank? How did that make you feel?

How many times have you been demoted? Have you been demoted in the last year?

Do you worry about promotions and awards?

Are superiors unfair when it comes to giving awards?

Have you been given orders that you do not agree with?

Do you have a lot of debt that you need to repay?

Is there too much yelling or verbal abuse in the military?

Do you suffer a lot of physical pain due to your work?

What types of things cause stress for you, upset you, or make you feel bad?

Are there people you can talk to about your stress?

In addition to these questions, all responses to questions dealing with combat experience were closely examined for elements of strain. Combat experience lends itself to many criminological theories, so I cannot claim that questions about it are *directly* dealing with strain. However questions about combat were examined for elements of strain.

Strain: Coding

In order to code the transcripts for theory, the content and relational dimensions that relate to a given theory were identified and described under categories. In content analysis, a category refers to a group of words which have a similar meaning. For the purposes of analyzing theories, the theories themselves are the “categories” and the content that relate to those theories is coded as “concepts”. In order to fill the categories, I carefully and repeatedly read the transcripts and coded concepts through axial coding and content analysis.

All responses to the questions directly dealing with strain are coded into a larger “strain category”. All other responses are examined and coded based on concepts that deal with strain. For example, whenever a respondent speaks of *stress*, that response is then placed under the strain category. Other codes include among others; *pain, trouble, frustration, fear, afraid, scared, angry, alone, sad, upset, mad, furious, lost, and confused*. MaxQDA allows the researcher to isolate a given word or a string of text. In

coding, there are three layers of analysis. I first isolate the specific sentence that contains a concept. Next I code the text surround the given sentence to provide context. Finally I code the entire response for that question.

Strain: Closed-Ended Results

There are certain closed-ended questions dealing with strain and I divide those results into four sections; work strain, family strain, economic strain, and coping with strain. The questions and the frequencies²⁷ of responses are shown in Tables 4-1 through 4-4.

Table 4-1: Work Strain

	Frequency	Percentage of Sample
Transferred	44	88%
Demotion	17	34%
Given orders that disagreed with	50	100%
Too much yelling in military	4	8%
Physical pain from work	10	20%
Worry about own injury/death	22	44%
Worry about causing injury/death	7	14%
“Lost”	22	44%
Exposure to violence	3	6%
Promotions and Awards	1	2%
Fairness of Awards	4	8%

One interesting finding in this data deals with worrying about oneself getting injured or dying as a result of the work. I think that many would assume this to be a common fear among military personnel as it is a very real risk for many who serve. I anticipated finding a general awareness of this risk, if not the use of the word “fear” itself. What I found is not so much a general fear, but a very specific one, and one that I would not have guessed; fear of faulty equipment and incompetent superiors.

²⁷ The valid N for all items in all tables is 50 unless otherwise noted

Participants talk about the fear they have of going into combat with faulty equipment such as flak jackets, Kevlar (helmets), weapons, vehicles, et cetera. Fear of injury or death seems to not center around the enemy, but the soldier's own tools and resources.

Most guys don't even use what they issue us...you buy some shit before you head out or get your family to send you some stuff...you can get a flak jacket on e-bay that will save your life or test your luck with some piece of shit they issue you.

Are you surprised? They've had shit on the news about how the Humvees aren't equipped to deal with IED's (*improvised explosive devices*), lack of body armor, shit like that...I would normally say don't believe the news reports on Iraq, but they're on to something there. We're the richest fucking country with the best army, but we don't give them the basics they need.

You can always count on something failing, in fact you plan on it. Plan on your vehicle breaking down, of your rifle jamming, of your jacket missing a plate.

Yeah I'm a little worried about something messing me up, but it won't be because of them or because of me...I'll probably die because my MRE (*meal ready to eat*) will blow up in my face...that seems about right in line with all the other broke-down shit they give us.

Some of the work strains did not emerge in the descriptions provided by the participants. For example, as discussed in Chapter Two, part of Agnew's General Strain Theory is goal blockage. It did not appear either from direct questions or responses to other questions that participants were impacted by goal blockage. They are asked specific questions about promotions and awards, including the perceived likelihood of obtaining promotions and awards. The majority of participants feel that the promotion and award process is just and that superiors are fair in giving out promotions and awards. This is not an anticipated finding as I would have predicted there to be much strain surrounding one's ability to successfully navigate through their goals in the military.

Another issue in many studies using strain, including studies of members of the military as discussed in Chapter Two, is strain surrounding one’s family. I ask participants questions about their family including among others:

Do you fight a lot with your spouse/partner?

Do you feel you get enough time with your spouse/partner?

Has being deployed caused problems in your relationship?

How well do you get along with your spouse/partner/children?

Table 4-2 shows the frequency distribution for close-ended questions dealing with family strain.

Table 4-2: Family Strain

	Frequency	Percentage of Sample²⁸
Unaccompanied Tours	23	55%
Spousal/Partner Employment	31	74%
Time with Spouse/Partner	4	10%
Spousal/Partner Worry	42	100%
Marital/Relationship Problems	20	48%
Fight with Spouse/Partner	6	14%
Get along with Spouse/Partner	36	86%
Get along with Children	18	90% ²⁹

There are only six individuals who answer in the affirmative that they fought a lot with their spouse/partner. Many of the rest respond that they did not know what “a lot” meant and asked me for clarification. I told them that I was not looking for anything specific and asked them to just explain whatever they felt was an appropriate answer. In response participants describe that they felt they fought “some” with their spouse/partner or that they fought “probably the same as any other couple”. After examining the

²⁸ Valid N = 42

²⁹ Valid N = 20

responses to this question, I am questioning its inclusion in the interview. It seems that this is a difficult question, and consequently provides little analytical value.

There is one family question that is directly related to the participants' affiliation with the military; *has being deployed caused problems in your relationship?* This question resulted in some interesting descriptions from the participants. Participants seem to deny any stress but acknowledge the stress for their spouses/partners. Participants respond to this question by saying how hard it is on their spouse/partner, but said nothing about any effect deployment has on their side of the relationship. This provides interesting data, but I got very few participants to actually articulate that their deployment caused problems for their marriage.

I know she struggles with it. Its hard not having me there to help around the house, help with the kids...be there for her.

My wife lost it when I get called up again. She gets pissed at me, pissed at the Army, pissed at everyone.

I ask this participant if he thought that his wife "getting pissed" at him was stressful for him, or if he considers it a problem in his relationship. He responds in a way that continues to divert the "strain" back on his wife.

Well it causes her stress because I tell her I can't do anything about it...Its not a problem in our relationship, it's a reality...that's what married couples deal with in the Army.

This participant is a great example of the feedback I received regarding this question.

Either participants truly feel no stress about being away from their spouses/partners, or it is not acceptable to talk about it. Participants spoke of this perception that the deployment causes stress for their spouses/partners, but that they (the individual participants) and their relationships were ultimately unaffected.

There may be a different way of looking at the effects of deployment on relationships. Participants spoke of how they thought it was their relationships that prevented stress brought on by deployment.

Getting called up was the best thing that happened to our relationship...I could never pull the trigger on proposing (*marriage*), but we got married once I found out I was going over...being away made us really appreciate each other as well, when I got back I think I was better to her.

Being over there was hard on us both, but we got each other through it...between her writing letters and e-mails and me calling when I could, we survived it.

These two accounts show that the anticipated relationship between deployment and relationships is mixed for participants. It is not just that deployment causes family strain, but perhaps that family/relationships prevent or decrease deployment strain. This finding coupled with a lack of any positive responses regarding family strain items suggests that family strain is not an issue for this sample.

Similarly there is evidence of economic strain; however participants again seem to cope with it through rationalization. I ask participants among other financial questions:

Do you think your housing allowance is sufficient?

Do you have a lot of debt that you need to repay?

Do you have trouble paying bills?

Do you receive financial support from anyone?

Table 4-3 shows the frequency distribution for economic strain.

Table 4-3: Economic Strain

	Frequency	Percentage of Sample
Financial/housing problems	4	8%
Financial Support/own family	2	4%
Financial Support/spouse family	1	2% ³⁰
Debt	18	36%
Trouble paying bills	11	22%

All participants are in agreement that they do not get paid enough. I did not include this perception due to the fact that I think many people, regardless of occupation, feel that they are underpaid. Furthermore, due to my experiences in the military I can attest that this sentiment is held by all military personnel. Responses to questions about financial strain are similar to the questions about family strain. Respondents avoid the questions and do not acknowledge that there is much, if any, financial strain. I should note that there are more participants answering affirmatively about financial strain compared to family strain; however there is still a lot of denial and/or rationalization of financial issues.

We got bills, but who doesn't? Sure they don't give us enough and don't give us shit for housing, but we got a place to live and food to eat...can't be mad at that.

I wish I made more money...I wish I made enough so she didn't have to work...but what the Army doesn't give us in our paychecks they make up for in benefits.

There again seems to be a lot of rationalization going on that may or may not be impacting the perceived strain. Similar to the issue of family strain, either participants genuinely do not feel financial strain or they talk themselves out of it and convince themselves that it is acceptable. The last quote mentioned a concept that is echoed by other participants – the security of the Army. Participants articulate that they do have

³⁰ Valid N = 42

stress about money, but that they feel comfortable and secure due to the perceived stability of their occupation and their employer.

Yeah I need more money, but what other job is there 100% job security? No matter what happens in the world, with our economy, with anything – I’ll have a job.

I’m not making tons of money, but I know I got a place to live, a school for my kids, a steady pay check, and my health care is covered.

Its great – its not a lot of money, and not enough based on what we do - but I don’t have shit else to pay for! Room? Paid for. Meals? Paid for. That means my pay check goes to whatever I want it to go to.

Given these insights I think that the issue of economic strain can be better addressed in future research. There may be strain that results from financial issues, however asking about “money” alone is not sufficient for this population. Therefore given the questions that are asked and the responses that are given, economic/financial strain is not a prominent pattern in this sample.

The final category from the closed-ended questions is *coping with strain*. I ask participants among other coping questions:

Are there people you can talk to about your stress?

Do you drink or use other substances to deal with stress?

Do you seek fights with other people to deal with stress?

Table 4-4: Coping with Strain

	Frequency	Percentage of Sample
People to talk to	31	62%
Substance to deal with stress	45	90%
Fighting to deal with stress	9	18%

There are two important findings in these close-ended questions. The first is that the majority of the participants do not feel that there are people that they can talk to about

their stress, or that they do not feel comfortable talking to about their stress. Second, a significant percentage of the sample report using alcohol or other drugs to help them deal with stress. Both of these findings are also present in the open-ended findings discussed in the next section of this chapter.

Strain: Open-Ended Results and Key Themes

There are four main themes related to strain theory that emerge from the data; effects of combat, anomie, masculinity, and coping. Two of the themes, effects of combat and masculinity, are not unique to strain. The effects of combat will also be talked about in reference to control and learning theories and the issue of masculinity will be addressed again in discussing learning theory. Table 4-1 shows a breakdown of these four important themes.

The table contains the four important larger themes of combat strain, anomie, masculinity, and coping. Included in each larger theme are the certain concepts used to build the theme. For example participants who talk in closed or open-ended questions about having a negative experience, lack of purpose, or fear in terms of combat are listed under “combat strain”. In “anomie” the two concepts are not understanding or not agreeing with orders. For “masculinity” the responses where participants discuss the use of violence in terms of masculinity, not showing emotion, and being “an Army man” are included. Finally, the “coping” theme is built using issues of masculinity, lack of coping outlets, and examples of negative coping. The frequency column shows how many participants express these concepts, and the percentage column is the percentage of participants from the overall sample or a distinct group that fell under the theme/concept.

Table 4-5: Themes within Strain

Theme	Frequency	Percentage of Overall Sample
Combat Strain	35	70%*
Negative Experience	27	77%**
Purpose	30	86%**
Fear	16	46%**
Anomie	50	100%
Orders	50	100%
Lost	22	44%
Masculinity	38	76%
Violence	9	24%***
No Emotion	36	95%***
Army Man	29	76%***
Coping	50	100%
Masculinity	11	22%
Outlets	31	62%
Negative Coping	45	90%

* = percentage of those with combat experience

** = percentage of those with combat strain

*** = percentage of those with masculinity-related strain

There is an intuitive relationship between combat and strain. It is not a stretch to think about the stress and hardships endured in combat and the effects that has on a soldier both during and post-combat. This commonsensical relationship is supported in this research. Participants talk about stress from combat, fear, nightmares, physical pain, et cetera.

I still have fucking nightmares...I still am afraid to drive. Here driving is natural, second nature, but over there driving is so intense. You don't know if there are bombs in the ground, you don't know if people are going to shoot at you, you don't know what the fuck is going to happen. I get in a car now and I still have that feeling...on edge.

I got a bunch of shrapnel in my ass and down my leg...hurts all the time. Some days I deal better with the pain than others – but its always a chore.

I've hunted a lot, and I've fired my weapon a bunch for the Army...but the first time I pulled that trigger with someone on the other end, that fucked with my head...I didn't think about it when I did it, but I sure did after, still do.

It is clear that the assumed effects of combat do in fact take place. Participants spoke of stress surrounding exposure of violence. Participants talk about the stress resulting from the physical toll including muscle and bone issues, sleep deprivation, and battle wounds. Participants also articulate in different ways a sense of fear. Fear of being attacked, fear of “messing up and someone dying because of it”, and fear of “not making it home”. These are fairly obvious examples of negative stimuli³¹ that military individuals are presented with in combat. Next I would like to address some less obvious examples that emerge during data analysis.

First, when a soldier is sent to combat, this deployment could itself be negative stimuli. Some participants spoke of how they “never wanted to go to combat” and “didn’t sign up for that”. This suggests that just “being” in combat is a negative experience, or perhaps that being removed from the United States is the removal of positive stimuli.

An interesting counter to this is the individual who wanted to go to combat. Forty percent of the sample claims that they have volunteered for combat. The negative experience for these individuals comes not from being there, but from the experience not matching expectations. This is one of the more interesting findings for me, that there is a disappointment and frustration related to combat experience. Much of this frustration is centered around the use of violence.

I want to kill...that’s why I signed up, to kill...I get there and they don’t let you kill. You have people trying to kill you, but you can’t always shoot back.

They asked me when I joined if I could kill, and I said yes...I get over there and we go out...I can’t pull the trigger. I know I’m supposed to kill, I know if I don’t that I might die or worse yet my buddies might die, but I don’t want to kill nobody.

³¹ Refer to Chapter Two for a discussion of General Strain Theory

Its frustrating as hell...we're over there to fight, but we're not doing all that much fighting. We go on patrol and get our asses shot at, have to avoid bombs and shit, but oh no – we can't fight back. Every time one of them goes down there's a fucking investigation...its war – what's to investigate?

I joined to do some killing...two tours and I haven't killed nobody. I've been shot at a bunch, and I've shot back, but I can't say I've killed anybody...what the hell are we doing over there? It's a war and only one side is fighting.

This data exhibits the frustration that comes from combat experience, and according to Agnew (1992), frustration is a key element of strain. Mixed in with this data and this element of frustration is a sense of fear that results from the frustration itself.

I don't know what the crap is going on. I'm over to kill and all I spend my time doing is trying not to die...Just let me shoot at the motherfuckers so I don't have to be scared about getting shot at.

Every time we go out, I'm afraid what might happen. I'm afraid because I don't know what they're going to do and I'm afraid because I don't feel like I can do anything about it.

I have no idea if we're winning, and that's a pretty scary thought. I could die at any second – and for what? Are we winning? Are we making a difference? I have no fucking idea what I'm doing or what we're doing, and its pretty fucking scary to think that I might die for that.

I think this frustration and fear makes combat a negative experience for these individuals and is a great example of strain. In addition to negative stimuli, the last set of quotes also suggests another element of strain, anomie.

One of the more prominent themes that emerges from the data is a sense of anomie. Robert Merton first associated Durkheim's notion of anomie with strain. For Merton (1938), anomie resulted from the conflict between socially accepted goals and the legitimate means for achieving them. I do not think that we can use Merton's understanding of anomie for this sample; however I do think that participants are expressing this larger concept of anomie, specifically the feeling of normlessness,

direction, and the absence of clear expectations, the lack of value, worth, and/or purpose, and finally the lack of understanding “self” and its relation to the larger group. Whether in combat or just over the course of their military career, participants describe a confused and unclear understanding of their purpose, their goals, and especially confusion over what means there are to meet the Army’s goals.

I ask participants two questions directly related to anomie; *Have you ever been given orders that you did not agree with*, and *Some people feel lost or just like a “number” in the military – is this true for you?* This question may not seem to directly deal with anomie, but the responses did. The initial response to the former question is not surprising, 100% of participants respond that yes they have been given orders they did not agree with. What is surprising are the responses to the probe question *How did that make you feel?* I anticipated participants to say that they did not care, or are unaffected, and in fact I did receive a few of those responses.

I didn’t feel anything about it. They don’t pay me to feel or think, they pay me to follow orders...so who gives a shit if I agree with them or not?

How did it make me feel? Made me feel like anybody does when their boss tells them something they don’t want to do. My job is to follow orders, not to decide if they’re right or wrong.

Shoot...that’s why they call them orders...doesn’t matter if I agree with them or not or how I feel about them.

Despite a few other similar accounts, the majority of the sample express some manner of stress involved with carrying out orders that they did not agree with.

They (*superiors*) don’t ever fucking listen...they tell us what to do without asking us what we think...and then it ends up being the most inefficient way...pisses me off, pisses all of us off.

I hate always having to do it someone else’s way...but I can’t ever say nothing, I just have to say “yes sir” and drive on...but it gets old.

We also see strain surrounding orders in combat situations.

Its all messed up. I got somebody approaching our perimeter and can't do shit about it because some XO (*executive officer*) has given a "no-fire" order. Then we'll have innocents in a building but some jackass orders us to put down anyone who isn't supposed to be there...so I'm told to shoot when I don't want to, told not to shoot when I want to...I'm just a fucking monkey with a gun.

Every time someone orders me to take lead on patrol I disagree.

I really hate the "no-fire" order...what are we here for if not to shoot? They're shooting at us and you're ordering me to hold fire...does one of us have to get our head blown off before you'll let us fire back?

There is also strain surrounding orders between officers and NCO's/enlisted personnel.

One particular NCO describes a situation in which he disagreed with an order from an officer.

This one green LT (*lieutenant*) was giving us marching orders and chose a bad route and made a dumb choice for who would be in the lead vehicle...I tried to suggest a better way to go about it and he ripped my ass in front of everyone...luckily nothing happened, but that shit could have cost lives.

These officers put out these orders with no fucking idea whats going on with the men. No idea about who is coming off rest, who has just been out, who should be lead, who should be on the 50 cal. (*50 caliber machine gun*)...they're making all these decisions and giving out all these orders without any consideration of what the shit is really like.

I've yet to agree with an order from an officer. Until they get their hands dirty and do some work, I got no faith in what they're telling me to do.

There is a reason you gotta say "yes sir/no sir" or "yes ma'am/no ma'am"...they're (*officers*) the bosses, but that doesn't mean I gotta agree with them. Most of them don't know what the hell they're doing, but that's why they get paid the big bucks.

In addition to the question about following orders, I ask participants about feeling "lost" or "just a number" in the military. The military is an immense bureaucracy with a very steep hierarchy, and it is therefore reasonable to anticipate individuals not feeling a part of it or feeling lost within it. I examine responses to this question along with others

dealing with the subject's place in the Army, his/her feelings towards the Army, et cetera.

The results are very interesting in that most individuals feel very much a part of the

Army; however they do not feel like they themselves are especially valued.

I love the Army and am proud to be in it...*(but)* I don't think anybody in the brass (*officers*) gives a shit if I die or quit or whatever. They'll just be down a warm body.

I am just a number, a social security number...they don't give two-shits about me, just so long as I show up and do what I'm supposed to.

One participant who was on leave from duty made a similar point:

If I decided to stay up here and not go back, nobody would care why. They'd try to get me back, maybe have me arrested...but they don't care why I'm not back...they don't care what I'm doing...they just know that there is an empty spot in the ranks and they want it filled.

As discussed earlier, frustration is a key element of strain theory. There are participants who articulate this frustration in reference to feeling "lost" in the Army.

Its frustrating not knowing whats going on...why we're doing this, why we're going here...I don't get to know shit, its all "NTKB" (*need to know basis*) and apparently I'm not important enough to know shit.

Officers are all that matter, then maybe NCO's...nobody cares what I think...its frustrating never getting to make a decision, never mattering...makes you wonder why the hell you signed up if its just to fill some boots.

Its really frustrating...I don't know why we're over there (*Iraq*) and nobody tells us why. We hear on TV that we're not supposed to be there and that we're losing...but then they (*officers*) tell us that we're doing good and winning. I don't know what or why I'm doing anything, I just do what I'm told...and that's irritating and frustrating.

This feeling of being "lost" seems to be very similar to what participants describe in terms of boredom. I am not just speaking of boredom as one might assume, but boredom as in an absence of expectations and direction. In both general service and especially in combat, participants describe the immense boredom that comes from down

time and the frustration that results. Participants express frustration in “sitting” and “waiting” while in combat, and about not doing anything productive during the day while stateside. This is a common complaint and may seem to be nothing more than a work complaint. However looking closer at the perspectives of the respondents shows that this “down time” can lead to fear, frustration, and ultimately stress and strain.

We got set for our first patrol...we got the orders the night before, that we were heading out at 0200...a night maneuver is always intense and we kind of look forward to it. We sat in that fucking Humvee until 0400 of the following day. That's 26 hours of literally sitting in the damn jeep, just taking time to piss. 26 hours of nothing, we could have been moving. Nobody told us what was going on either...everyone was so pissed off by the time we finally got moving.

Every day we RTR (*re-train*) on shit we're already squared away on...do you know how mind-numbing that is? Most of us joined up so we can do something, and we do the opposite, we do nothing.

All this talk about being a killer, of getting ready to kill, of going and fighting for your country...I sit all day. There is absolutely nothing for us to do, scratch that – nothing we're allowed to do. There is shit we could be doing but we have to get the green light and that just doesn't happen.

That's the Army motto, “hurry up and wait”...they put all this pressure on you to be ready, but ready for what? Ready to move but we're not moving, ready to shoot but we're not allowed to shoot...not even sure why we're here or what we're accomplishing. Bums a lot of guys out but I just do what I'm told.

It's the same shit over there as it is here, we don't do anything. Its frustrating, but especially over there. Its like being an athlete and practicing your ass off, getting a great speech from your coach, and then not getting to play. Every day we practice and every day we're told we might get some playing time...but every day we're sitting on the bench. Shit most days we don't even get off the bus.

The last form of anomie found in the data is a disconnect between the military and the general public. A previous quote mentions what is being discussed in the media compared to what he is being told by his superior officers. Other data from this sample show similar perceptions about how individuals feel disconnected from their society (country).

Everyone says we shouldn't be there...but they don't see the good we're doing...they don't hear all the thank-yous the Iraqis are giving us when we go out into the villages and cities. They don't understand what we're doing over there and so I can't really talk about it.

...they all want to know how many people I've killed, they don't understand what its like. I get back and its like I'm in a new country.

I come home and everyone is weird to me and I guess I'm weird to everyone...things are different and I don't know what to do about it...I don't feel like I fit in anywhere but the Army, so I don't know what the fuck to do with myself.

I joined and my platoon sergeant said to "forget the people of the country and to fight for the principles of the country. The people don't matter, but America matters". At first I was like "what the fuck?", but then after awhile you start to see its true. Sure people like our friends and family care about us, but nobody else does...so if you're fighting for them (*the people of the country*), you're going to make yourself pretty sad and upset...that's why you say "fuck 'em" and fight for the guy next to you and for the idea of America.

This is a very interesting theme, especially in thinking historically about the military. The military that once fought for the freedom of its country's citizens, to protect its citizens, is now disconnected from those citizens. It seems now that perhaps military soldiers do not feel connected to the citizens of its country, and instead soldiers have to fight for each other and/or some larger ideology. This is not so much a sense of anomie or being lost *within* the military, but a sense of anomie or being lost in a much larger sense *between* the military and society. Theoretically the military is there to represent and operate as a defense for its country's citizens, yet if those citizens do not like the military or if soldiers do not feel supported, a sense of anomie or being lost results. Soldiers in this sample express feelings of loneliness, loss, and frustration about the relationship between the military and the rest of the country.

A third strain-related theme that emerges deals with masculinity and the stress that comes from trying to achieve standards of masculinity. Previous research, including

among others Messner (1990, 2002) and Messerschmidt (1993), talk about how boys are socialized into standards of masculinity that often include displays of violence and toughness and include lack of emotional expression or productive coping. Messner (1990, 2002) and others (Messerschmidt, 1993; Pleck, 1995; Eisler & Skidmore, 1987; Connell, 1995; Kaufman, 2001) describe the stress that results for men failing to meet, and/or even just trying to meet these standards of masculinity.

The first concept within masculinity that I would like to discuss is the use of violence. Miedzian (1991) examines the socialization, peer pressure, media, and even military influences that lead to violence being an acceptable behavior in men. Miedzian (1991) found that the approved use of violence by peers, media, and the military provide a standard of masculinity involving the use of violence. As stated earlier, much of the relationship between masculinity and crime will be discussed in the social learning section, however strain results when individuals cannot meet that standard of masculinity or do not wish to meet that standard.

A bunch of guys like to go out to civi-bars (*civilian bars*) and get drunk and get in fights...not really my thing...I'm not a big drinker or a fighter and I catch a lot of shit for it.

Some of the infantry guys talk about how many kills they got or how many bodies they've racked up...I didn't join for that, so I don't get into it...but they call me a "pussy" or a "fag" because I'm not trying to kill every goddamn thing.

It's all a big pissing contest...who can bench more...who has killed more...who can beat up who. I get made fun of or passed over for shit just because they think I'm not tough enough.

I got stuck driving around a Colonel because I refused to fire when ordered...they said I can't kill and that I was a risk to others because of it...I said I just didn't want to...either way I wasn't a soldier after that – just a fucking driver. Now I'm not part of the squad and nobody will hang out with me.

Similar to the use of violence, men are socialized to hide emotion or to not even feel emotion at all. Men are socialized to not show pain, not show fear, to not show any emotion that may convey weakness (Messner 1990, 2002). Stress or strain results when men feel emotion but feel like they should not. It also occurs when men feel they cannot express emotion, and/or express emotion and are socially sanctioned for doing so.

There is only one time when it is ok to cry over there (*in combat*) – when somebody close to you dies, and even then some guys don't think its ok to cry. You get hurt or shot – suck it up. You miss your family – suck it up. You scared – you better not be scared, so suck it up.

I remember I got word from one of my buddies back home that my girlfriend was hooking up with some other guy...it really broke me up and I started crying...one of the guys told me to stop being a pussy...I think it was his way of helping me through it, but now I gotta deal with that whore and with guys thinking I'm a pussy.

One of my sergeants took a round from a SA (*small arms*) right in the neck...he just looked at the blood and then got real pissed...he found the guy after we cleared the building...he was already dying and he put like 4 rounds in his head from close range...he was the biggest badass...to take a round in the neck and not be phased? Nobody bitched about cuts or bruises after that.

You know what they do with criers? They put them on suicide watch and section 8³² their ass...you can't show emotion because you can't be weak...nobody is going to be afraid of you and nobody is going to trust you in battle if you can't put a lid on shit.

There is a substantial amount of literature on the negative emotions including stress that result from filling gender roles, including masculinity (Messner, 1990, 2002; Messerschmidt, 1993; Pleck, 1995; Eisler & Skidmore, 1987; Connell, 1995; Kaufman, 2001) and this is also found in this dissertation data. What is also evident in both literature (Miedzian, 1991; Grossman, 1995) and this data is that the military creates an environment that is hyper-masculinized which includes an emphasis on the use of

³² Discharge based on military assessment of psychological unfitness (U.S. Department of the Army, Regulation 635-700).

violence and the lack of emotion. Trying to fit into this environment can be stressful for individuals who cannot meet or do not want to meet these standards. From this data analysis it seems that it is not just about general masculinity or an idea of what it means to be a “man”, but rather what it means to be an “Army man”.

Its part of what you gotta do...you want to be a head-knocker, a badass, you join the Army...you get to shoot things, blow things up.

Name me a better man than an Army man...a police officer? A firefighter? Shit – we do everything they do and more...nothing an Army man can't do and we do it all without a tear or a smile.

These accounts suggest that there is something about the military that creates the ideal male. The very same use of violence and lack of emotion that was discussed earlier are assumed to be inherent in the military man, even more so than any other man.

Therefore we can conclude that if men in general feel stress and strain about fulfilling masculine standards, that stress and strain and pressure must be higher for men in the military. Men join the Army to be an “Army Man”, and once in he sees himself and identifies himself as such. Any failure to fulfill that identity and/or the process of trying to fulfill that identity has the potential for stress and strain.

All I ever wanted to be was in the Army...all I ever wanted to do was fight for my country in war...I did a 9 month tour and now we're going back and I don't want to go...I'm trying to get a waiver and then I'll get out when I ETS (*expiration of term of service*) in October...but that messes with me, all my life its what I wanted and now I'm not who I wanted to be.

I wanted to be in the Army and I'm a fucking mechanic...I tell people I'm in the Army and they start asking questions about this and that, but I'm a fucking mechanic – I'm not what they think of when think Army. I've volunteered for combat, I've tried switching MOS's, to do more – but I might as well be working at fucking Jiffy Lube.

I've never been real "manly", so I joined the Army to help me be more manly...I had never shot a gun, never been in a fight – and all the guys know it and give me shit for it...the Army makes me a man to my civilian buddies, but within the Army – they all think I'm soft.

I went through Airborne when they still "pinned"³³ your wings on you...it was a rite of passage, you take it like a man – you're one of them...people cringe when I tell the story – but it was an honor, its like an Indian passage into manhood...I was now an Airborne man.

...takes a special kind of man to be good in the Army...what you gotta go through, what you see, what you put up with...you just drive on and get through it...being in the Army makes you stronger and makes you a better man.

One thing that an Army man is not, is homosexual. Participants describe the high amount of "gay jokes" and homophobic rhetoric that is touted by those in the military.

Constant jokes about being a fag, about liking dudes, shit like that...its relentless, its all anybody talks about or jokes about.

If you don't want to do something, go somewhere...if you can't do something, aren't good at something...if you don't want to play along...you're a fag, you're gay. That's the most common name guys call each other, the most common shit to talk about.

That don't ask, don't tell policy isn't for straight guys, its to protect the gay guys...there are a bunch of guys in here who would beat the shit out of someone if they found out he was gay.

Everything is about sex. How much sex have you had? How much can you get on leave? How many girls can you get? Would you fuck her? How would you? Where would you? This is the conversation, 24/7. Go ahead and one time say you don't want to talk about all that, then you're a fag. If you're not out there fucking everything that moves or at least talking about it, you're not a real man.

I think what it is, especially over there is that guys aren't getting any. So if you can't get any to prove that you're a man, well then you gotta talk about it to prove it.

Biggest slam there is...you don't like someone the first thing you're going to call him is a fag. You can be a lot of things, but you can't be gay...that's the biggest diss to someone's manhood.

³³ Pinning, also called "blood wings", is where a soldier's Airborne medal is placed on his bare chest with the two sharp pins exposed, then other soldiers pound the pins through the flesh. Other Airborne members will then come and pound the medal after it is in, the soldier has then had his wings "pinned".

This discussion of masculinity provides a nice transition into the last theme associated with strain, coping. Coping is a major element of General Strain Theory as Agnew (1992) identified it as a key factor in explaining variance. Many people endure strain, but how people cope with strain is one of the important issues in determining what behavior results from the strain. Coping emerges as an important theme in this data, and I will begin discussing it by building off the previous discussion of masculinity, especially the issue of not showing emotion.

I ask participants one direct question dealing with coping; *Are there people you can talk to about your stress or other problems you are having with the military.* Most participants acknowledge that they knew of people they could talk to about stress, but all state in some manner that they did not talk to people about stress. This issue goes back to the masculinity issue of not showing emotion, soldiers do not feel that should talk about what is bothering them, or that anything is bothering them at all.

The Army toughens you up so you don't get affected by shit...and if you do, you certainly don't talk about it

Nah, you don't talk to anybody about it, just bottle it up and drive on.

We're all going through the same shit and nobody is bitching...you don't want to be the one asshole that's complaining.

It is evident that military personnel do not feel like they can talk about stress or problems they are experiencing. Talking about problems is admitting problems exist, and neither is the manly nor the Army thing to do.

I would like to further discuss this issue and return to the finding that the majority of participants acknowledge that there are people they knew of that they could talk to about their problems. The above discussion suggests that the pressure to not show

emotion keeps soldiers from using these sources of support. I also found that participants feel that there are not enough people (outlets) to go to in order to cope with strain, and/or not enough genuine outlets. Most participants cite the company chaplain as the primary outlet for talking about stress and problems. Others talk about certain NCO's or officers as possible outlets. Despite acknowledging these as possible outlets, most participants feel that there are not legitimate or feasible outlets for a variety of reasons.

Sure, you got the chaplain to talk to – but you don't because if that shit gets out they'll think you're crazy or weak or something.

You go and talk to someone, then they're going to think you can't cut it... "talking about your problems" is a quick way to get a section 8.

First day the Captain told us that his door was open if we ever needed to talk...one guy went in to talk about some shit and the Captain ripped him a new asshole...guess that door isn't all that open.

Top (*First Sergeant*) says to come to him with any beef (*problems*), but we all know that he's going to use anything you say against you or go tell the Captain and they'll use that shit to judge or evaluate you.

These accounts suggest that military personnel are presented with outlets for coping, yet there is an understanding among personnel that those outlets are not to be used. If a soldier is not supposed to have stress, is not supposed to talk about stress, has no one to talk about it with, what does s/he do with that stress? This adds to the previously discussed culture surrounding an absence of emotion.

Agnew (1992) posits that when legitimate coping mechanisms are not available people will cope with strain in illegitimate means. This is supported in the data; almost the entire sample discusses using some coping mechanism that would be considered deviant or negative. I code anything related to "bottling up" stress, "keeping it inside", "deal with", among others as negative coping and this is where a sizeable portion (92%)

of the sample fell into this category. There are also several questions directly related to negative coping; *Do you drink or use other substances to deal with stress*, and *Do you seek fights with other people to deal with stress?* A number of participants respond yes to the former question about alcohol and substances.

Hell yes...you have a bad day, you go home and open a beer.

Who doesn't? Go to a NCO club at 6 p.m. and you'll see how people deal with stress.

Yeah, I drink quite a bit and I'll smoke (*pot*) from time to time when shit gets too heavy.

Yeah I probably drink too much, but what the hell else am I going to do? Work all damn day, can't go anywhere, so we drink – makes the shit easier to deal with.

We smoke whenever we can get it, makes all this bearable...hard to when we're stateside because we get tested...but when you go over (*to Iraq*) they don't test for shit.

They have some good pot and dope (*heroin*) over in Afghanistan and Iraq...every now and then the brass will bring in some beer and let us have some, but guys can get pot and dope from the locals whenever and most people over there hit that shit hard...helps deal with being in such a fucked up situation.

There are very few participants who talk about seeking out fights to deal with stress, but the findings are interesting nonetheless.

A buddy and I will go to a civi-bar and just start fucking with some jerk-off...hoping he'll try to do something and we can kick his ass...all that shit bottled up, go to the gym or go pick a fight...either way you feel better after.

Yeah I might get an argument with someone just because it feels good to yell...can't yell at any of the brass, so you yell at someone else to work it out of your system.

In addition to keeping the stress "inside" and using substances to cope with strain, some participants use more criminal behavior to deal with the stress and strain. These behaviors along with further discussion of substance use will be discussed in later chapters. The importance for this chapter is that participants describe how they cannot or

do not use legitimate coping mechanisms to deal with strain and consequently resort to negative coping strategies.

Strain: Summary

In summary, there are four important themes that emerge in the data regarding the larger strain category: negative experiences of combat, anomie, masculinity, and coping mechanisms. These themes will be revisited and discussed in later chapters concerning criminal behavior. This data is effective in identifying the presence or absence of a strain. It does not, however, measure the degree of strain(s). Future research should focus on the degree or magnitude of strains, especially since certain strains are common and therefore measuring variation is important.

Social Learning: Measures

There are questions in the interview that are directly related to social learning theory and were developed after a review of the literature on social learning theory.

Questions about social learning include among others:

How do you think the military views violence?

How important is honor and respect?

Do any of your military friends now engage in criminal activity?

Are you in a gang now or do you have gang ties?

In addition to these questions, all responses to questions dealing with combat experience are closely examined for elements of social learning. Previous literature concerning the military and offending focuses on the idea of combat as “teaching” soldiers to use violence in civilian life.

Social Learning: Coding

In order to code the transcripts for theory, the content and relational dimensions that relate to a given theory are identified and described under categories. In content analysis, a category refers to a group of words which has a similar meaning, and it is essential in coding the data. For the purposes of analyzing theories, the theories themselves are the “categories” and the content that relates to those theories is coded as “concepts”. In order to fill the categories, I carefully and repeatedly read the transcripts and coded concepts through axial coding and content analysis.

All responses to the questions directly dealing with social learning are coded into a larger “social learning category”. All other responses are examined and coded based on concepts that deal with social learning. This proved more difficult than coding for strain because there are less obvious words and terms that could be associated with social learning. However, whenever a respondent speaks of being *taught* something, that response is then placed under the social learning category. Other codes include; *reward, rewarded, praised, approved, reinforced, copied, imitated, punished, learned, learning, valued, trained, train, training, culture, supposed to do, and instructed*. MaxQDA allows the researcher to isolate a given word or a string of text. In coding, I had three layers of analysis. I first isolate the specific sentence that contains a concept. Next I code the text surround the given sentence to provide context. Finally I code the entire response for that question.

Social Learning: Closed-Ended Results

There are a few closed-ended questions dealing social learning theory. I divide those results into three sections; beliefs favorable to violence, honor and respect, and

delinquent peers. Tables 4-6 through 4-8 show the frequencies for these closed-ended questions.

Table 4-6: Beliefs Favorable Towards Violence

	Frequency	Percentage of Sample
Military: justify non-combat violence	26	52%
Unit: justify non-combat violence	40	80%

Table 4-7: Honor and Respect

	Frequency	Percentage of Sample
Military: violence for honor and respect	9	18%
Unit: violence for honor and respect	19	38%

Table 4-8: Delinquent Peer Association

	Frequency	Percentage of Sample
Delinquent peers pre-military	47	94%
Delinquent peers now	19	38%
Gang affiliation	2	4%

The important finding in these close-ended results is the apparent difference between how participants feel their unit addresses violence, and honor and respect compared to what they feel the military believes regarding these concepts. For non-combat violence there is about 30% more of the sample who believe their unit approves of non-combat violence compared to those who believe the military as a whole does. Similarly, almost 40% of participants respond that they feel their unit held beliefs that would encourage the use of violence to achieve or maintain honor and respect compared to around 20% who thought the military would approve of the use of violence for honor and respect.

Social Learning: Open-Ended Results and Key Themes

The three key theoretical themes that emerge from the qualitative data mirror the three divisions discussed in the close-ended results section. Specifically beliefs favorable to violence, intense value of honor and respect, and delinquent peers. Many may argue that delinquent peers can be used in a variety of criminological theories; I place it under social learning given how participants talk about delinquent peer association. Table 4-9 shows a breakdown of these three themes.

In Table 4-9 there are three major social learning themes; beliefs favorable to violence, honor and respect, and delinquent peers. Included in each larger theme are the concepts that built the theme. In *beliefs favorable to violence* there is the concept of whether those beliefs are learned/encouraged by the military or by the individual's unit. In *honor and respect* there are the concepts of honor and respect being valued and whether the use of violence is acceptable to gain, maintain honor and respect. Finally within *delinquent peers* are the concepts of learning the logistics of criminal behavior, beliefs favorable to criminal behavior, and gang affiliation. In the frequency column is the number of participants who express these concepts either in closed or open-ended questions. In the percentage column is the percentage of participants from the overall sample or a distinct group that fell under the theme/concept.

Table 4-9: Themes within Social Learning

Theme	Frequency	Percentage of Overall Sample
Beliefs Favorable to Violence	45	90%
Military	26	52%
Unit	40	80%
Honor and Respect	50	100%
Values	50	100%
Use of Violence	28	56%
Delinquent Peers	19	38%
Logistics	8	42%*
Beliefs	18	95%*
Gang	2	10%*

* = percentage of those with delinquent peers

When one considers social learning theory in terms of criminal behavior, one of the basic ideas is that people can learn the logistical aspect of a given behavior (the how-to) as well as learning beliefs favorable to the behavior. For example, a juvenile may learn *how* to steal a car, but it is also necessary that s/he learn that it is acceptable to steal a car. This is an important distinction for understanding social learning among the military. Obviously military personnel are taught how to use violence. The major part of basic training is combat training where recruits are trained in the use of hand-to-hand combat, marksmanship, grenades, et cetera. This is the nature of the occupation, much the same as violence is inherently a part of police work or boxing. What is interesting is how military personnel learn beliefs favorable to the use of violence.

I ask participants questions about the use of violence including; *How do you think the military views violence, Does the military think violence is justified outside of combat, Does your unit think violence is justified outside of combat, and Has your military training taught you to justify violence.* It is interesting that even though participants said that the military thinks violence is justified outside of combat; there is a significant

increase from that number to the number of those who respond that their unit thought violence is justified outside of combat.

The Army trains us to be killers, but then wants us to shut it off when we're not in uniform.

The Army just wants to cover its ass...they tell you all this stuff about fighting and killing and defending and protecting...but if you bust up some idiot in a bar, they turn their back on you.

The Army has its "memo's" and "guidelines", but our unit tells us to ignore all that shit...you tell people that you only use necessary force and that you follow the rules of engagement because that's what the Army wants you to say...we have our own rules in our unit.

My squad leader tells us to do whatever is necessary regardless of the situation...you gotta defend yourself, your buddies, your squad, your platoon and so on.

This data shows that there are entities or models supporting beliefs that are favorable to the use of violence outside of combat. This finding is further supported by responses to the question about whether participants feel their training taught them that violence is justified outside of combat, including two participants who seem to be directly articulating social learning theory.

They can teach you to shoot in basic (*basic training*) but you don't learn that its ok to shoot until combat...once you learn that...changes your whole view on shit.

Everyone knows how to fight and how to shoot...but it seems that some guys think its ok to do it whenever.

The assumption made by many in the public and the conclusions made by many previous studies is that it is the learning how (logistics) to be violent in the military that has a lasting effect. I posit that it is learning beliefs favorable to violence in the military that has a larger impact.

You're taught your whole life not to hit, that guns are bad, use your words...then you get to the Army and you're taught *to* hit, that guns are good, and to skip words and use force.

I think I'm ok using force in other situations because I was trained that its ok...some people only respond to force and so you can't be afraid to go to it.

In addition to social learning regarding the use of force and violence, there is also social learning concerning honor and respect within the military. Honor and respect are included in the research because of the hypothesized value these concepts hold for those in the military. Participants are asked; *How important is honor and respect, What does the military/your unit/you think about the use of violence to achieve honor and respect, and Is it worth being punished for.* Every participant responds that the military, their unit, and they themselves value honor and respect. Although one might intuitively suspect this, any time all participants agree on an answer is somewhat surprising. I did find variation with the question about the use of violence to achieve/maintain honor and respect.

A portion of the sample said that they feel the military would support the use of violence to achieve/maintain honor and respect.

That's what the Army is all about – honor and respect...why do you think we're in this war? We lost a lot of honor and respect on 9/11 and now we're getting it back.

That's what we do, we're the strong arm of the country...we have honor and respect but when someone goes against it – that's what we're (*the Army*) there for.

Several respondents describe how their unit would support the use of violence in order to achieve/maintain honor and respect.

We're ass-kickers, everyone knows not to fuck with us...some jackass burned our guideon³⁴ (*a flag representing the unit*)...lets just say our Captain told us to handle it...he's (*person who stole guideon*) still walking funny.

³⁴ Pronounced *guide-on*

An E-4 got his ass whipped by some civilian at a bar...word got back to his squad leader and he (*squad leader*) got in his ass and told him that he needed to go back and represent the unit.

Yeah, its unit pride – you do what you have to...somebody is disrespecting you or someone in the squad...you better do handle it.

Finally participants articulate that they themselves thought that it is appropriate to use violence to achieve/maintain honor and respect and that they thought it is worth being punished for using violence to achieve/maintain honor and respect.

You have to have stand up for yourself because its you, its your buddies, its your unit, it's the Army, if someone is shitting on you they're shitting on everything you're about...you can't let it slide.

Its like if someone was messing with your girl, you gotta save face.

Honor and respect is all you got, you can't let anyone take it from you.

If some jackass is mouthing off and I beat his ass, yeah I might get kicked out or arrested...but I saved face, so I can sleep at night...I defended my buddies and the Army, so they all know they can trust me...yeah, its worth it.

Punishment? Like what, getting arrested? Who cares? I'd rather get arrested than let my boys down or get punked by somebody.

When I ask this particular participant whether getting “punked” was having his honor challenged or being disrespected, he replies “*exactly*”.

Finally I discuss delinquent peers among the sample. Delinquent peer association is most often used to understand juvenile delinquency. It is relevant to this research, however, because any individual that associates with delinquent peers is exposed to both the logistical aspect of social learning as well as the beliefs/values aspect of social learning.

For those who respond in the affirmative to having delinquent peers, a small portion describe learning the logistics (or how-to) of delinquent behavior. I anticipated

any delinquent behavior to be related to violence. These data show, however, that most delinquent peer association to be centered around substance use.

I know this guy who can get me whatever I want whenever I want it...I just get some weed and sometimes some X³⁵, but he knows how to get it and where to get it.

I have a buddy who knows when we're going to be tested, so he just lets me know when and how to beat it.

I didn't start using (*steroids*) until I met him...he got me the stuff, showed me how to use it, how to hide it, everything.

As anticipated, much of the discussion around delinquent peers focuses on learning beliefs favorable to the given behavior.

I saw this guy in our squad walk up to some college kid and just knock him flat out for no reason...we all laughed and somebody bought him a beer...I figured that shit's ok in this group.

A few guys in our squad were talking about juicing (*using steroids*) and how it gave them more energy, made them do better on PT³⁶ tests, got them hype for shit, that we don't get tested for it...so I figured I'd give it a shot.

Its like a fucking drug store over there (*Iraq*)...everybody is cool with it...you want some weed, dope, juice, doesn't matter – most people are doing it and those that aren't are cool with it.

We were on patrol and this guy and I go into this house and clear it...we're going through and there are some artifacts or some shit on a table and he starts putting shit in his ruck (*rucksack*) and telling me to do it too...he kept saying we deserved it, that we're saving these people and we're not getting paid shit and so its ok

The final discussion of delinquent peer association surrounds gang affiliation.

Although very few participants (two) acknowledge any gang ties, gangs in the military is an increasingly important issue (Valdez, 1997) and bears relevance to any discussion of social learning. Participants with gang ties describe similarities between a gang and the Army, in regard to logistical and beliefs/values aspects of social learning.

³⁵ Ecstasy (MDMA)

³⁶ Physical Training Tests

Shit, the Army is a gang...you got leaders, you got soldiers, you got an initiation, you do work (*violence*), stick together, it's a gang.

I met up with some guys when I got here that used to bang with some guys I know back home...so we just stick together and are just waiting to get out.

This guy I know deals for most of the people on post...he runs the shit the same way they do outside in the real world

Nothing has changed for my friend who was in a gang...he likes to say that the only that has changed is now its ok for him to shoot at somebody.

I again acknowledge that only two participants claim to have any gang ties. The data, however, is intriguing and this issue of gangs in the military is worthy of future research. Indeed, I argue that there is a need to explore the formation of new gangs or subcultures in the military.

Social Learning: Summary

Social learning has been explored in previous research concerning both the military in general and military offending. In this research there are three main themes that emerge from the data. In terms of social learning, learning beliefs favorable to violence and force, learning to value honor and respect, and being associated with delinquent peers are all potential factors for this sample. Whether and how these themes impact offending will be discussed in the following chapters.

Control: Measures

There are questions in the interview that are directly related to social and self control theory and were developed after a review of the literature on social and self control theory. Questions about social and self control include, among others;

How long have you been in the military?

Have you re-enlisted? Will you?

How important do you think your work is?

How much do you like the military?

Do you think soldiers should uphold a high moral standard?

Do you like to take risks?

How important are the core Army values to you?

Did you get into many fights growing up?

Did you have a quick temper growing up? Do you have one now?

In addition to these questions, I ask participants about their perceived likelihood of getting arrested for certain behaviors.

Control: Coding

In order to code the transcripts for theory, the content and relational dimensions that relate to a given theory are identified and described under categories. In content analysis, a category refers to a group of words which has a similar meaning, and it is essential in coding the data. For the purposes of analyzing theories, the theories themselves are the “categories” and the content that relates to those theories is coded as “concepts”. In order to fill the categories, I carefully and repeatedly read the transcripts and code concepts through axial coding and content analysis.

All responses to the questions directly dealing with control are coded into a larger “control category”. All other responses are examined and coded based on concepts that deal with control. For example, whenever a respondent speaks of *commitment*, that response is then placed under the control category. Other codes include; *attachment*, *involved*, *being a part of*, *purpose*, *discipline*, *allowed*, *team*, and *control*. MaxQDA allows the researcher to isolate a given word or a string of text. In coding, I had three

layers of analysis. I first isolate the specific sentence that contained a concept. Next I code the text surround the given sentence to provide context. Finally I code the entire response for that question.

Control: Closed-Ended Results

Many questions dealing with control are more open-ended by nature, however there are some questions with specific response possibilities. Please see Chapter 3 for the results on time in service, and please refer to earlier in this discussion for results on re-enlistment; both of which are indicators of control³⁷. I divide the results into four sections; attachment, moral beliefs, external controls, and self-control. Tables 4-9 through 4-12 show the frequencies for these questions.

Table 4-10: Attachment

	Frequency	Percentage of Sample
Importance of military	50	100%
Importance of unit	38	74%
Importance of loyalty	50	100%

Table 4-11: Moral Beliefs

	Frequency	Percentage of Sample
Soldiers have higher moral standard	45	90%
Public holds military to higher standard	36	72%
Military values important	29	58%

³⁷ Specifically indicators of commitment, that is why there is not a table for commitment

Table 4-12: External Controls

	Frequency	Percentage of Sample
Do you think it is likely you would be arrest for...		
Domestic Violence	45	90%
Drug Use	22	44%
Theft	42	84%
Insubordination	0	0%
AWOL	50	100%

Table 4-13: Self-Control

	Frequency	Percentage of Sample
More self-discipline in military	50	100%
Do you like to take risks?	27	54%

The closed-ended results for social and self-control are misleading data.

According to these results there are high levels of attachment and commitment among military personnel. Specifically, many participants believe that their unit and the military are important, believe in a higher moral standard, are aware of external controls, and have a strong sense of self-discipline. The qualitative analysis, however, reveals a great deal of variation in these concepts of social and self-control.

Open-Ended Results and Key Themes

There are two main themes that emerge from the data regarding control; attachment and commitment, and purpose³⁸. Indeed, attachment and commitment, key elements of social control theory, are addressed in some manner by all fifty participants. A clear indicator of commitment is the question about whether the participant planned to re-enlist. Although less than half of the sample said they planned on re-enlisting, 29 individuals have already re-enlisted at least once. When I probe with the question “if we

³⁸ The data did not provide significant themes regarding self-control

were to pull out of Iraq, would you re-enlist”, the number of affirmative responses jumps from 22 to 36 individuals who would re-enlist.

Attachment and commitment is also assessed by the following question; *How loyal are you to the military? To your unit? To your squad?* An overwhelming majority of individuals (46) said they are loyal to their squad, similarly 35 said they are loyal to their unit, and 32 said they are loyal to the military.

In basic we were taught the order is “God, country, Army, unit, squad, girlfriend”...but that’s pretty backwards for me...for me I would go God, squad, girlfriend, unit, Army, then the fucking country.

You gotta be loyal; these guys might be responsible for whether you live or die...you better be loyal and committed to them.

Squad comes first man, those are the guys that are with you 24/7...fuck the Army, I mean I’m loyal to the name and will back any man from the Army...but the Army as in the brass or people in D.C., they don’t get my loyalty

Guys who aren’t loyal or committed don’t cut it...you can’t...you gotta be all in, if you half-ass anything, somebody might die.

I ask participants about the core Army values of leadership, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage.

Yeah, they pound that shit into you from day one...but you know what? I think those are really important and I do think I’m committed to them.

They’re important because its like an outline for who you’re supposed to be and what you’re supposed to do.

The second and final theme regarding control theory is a sense of purpose.

Generally individuals, who are high in attachment and belief, have a sense of purpose either in terms of the group or as an individual. With this sample, 30 participants spoke in some manner about not having a purpose or not knowing their purpose. This is very similar to the previous discussion of anomie. The difference is found in the different

theories. While strain theory considers a lack of purpose as a negative or stressful situation, control theory views having a purpose as a control and therefore not having a purpose or not knowing a purpose an absence of a control.

I mean I know I'm in the Army, but I don't even know what that means anymore.

I don't know why I do anything that I do...I just do what I'm told...I know I belong because I look like everybody else, but I don't know that I know what I belong to.

I honestly don't know who I am out of this uniform.

When I've been over there (*Iraq*), I don't know what the fuck we're doing...so we goof off, we smoke, we gotta find shit to do because none of us knows what the fuck is going on.

I love the Army, but I get up every day and go to PT, go to work, come home...the Army is all about going through the motions and most of the time that's how I feel...like I'm just going through the motions...never really thought about what I'm doing or why...not sure I know the answer to that.

We're supposed to be killing bad guys...they're sure as hell trying to kill us...yet we don't get to kill them...so what are we doing? Are we trying to lose?

I think that these accounts combined with those used in the discussion of anomie point to a very important issue of "purpose" among those in the military. According to strain theory, this lack of purpose leads to stress and frustration. According to control theory, this lack of purpose creates a void in control and consequently the individual may try to fill that void with deviance or will be more susceptible to deviant temptations.

Regardless of the theoretical lens, soldiers are lacking in their understanding of their purpose and this influences deviant behavior.

Control: Summary

In sum, there are two main themes regarding social control. The first is attachment and commitment. One might anticipate that there would be high levels of

attachment and commitment among military personnel given the nature of the military. While this data supports that assumption, the levels of social control are as high as anticipated. Furthermore, there is variation between levels of attachment, particularly between attachment to the military and attachment to one's squad. The relationship between control and offending will be explored in future chapters.

Probably the most interesting and important theme dealing with control is the lack of a purpose whether in combat or in general. Control theorists are concerned with what "keeps people in line" and a purpose is one thing that has been shown to do that very thing. Many participants describe that they do not have a purpose, are unclear about their purpose, feel lost, and/or feel a void, this is a very important theme and will be discussed throughout this dissertation.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter three theories are discussed; strain, social learning, and control. The data supports the inclusion of these theories via various themes. For strain there are themes of negative combat experience, anomie, masculinity, and coping mechanisms. For social learning the themes that emerge from the data are beliefs favorable to force and violence, learned values of honor and respect, and delinquent peer association. Within the larger control category, themes about commitment and attachment, as well as a lack of purpose emerge.

Future research can build off of my work by gathering a much larger sample using quantitative measures that will allow for analysis of a causal relationship. Given this current data, future research should start with strain and social learning theories, specifically focusing on the themes identified in this chapter. Future research should

develop response categories that will allow for grouping of participants. Doing so, especially in a quantitative study, will allow researchers to group participants into levels of strain, control, et cetera and produce generalizations.

Future research should explore other criminological theories not considered by this research. If nothing else, such research could eliminate possible causes. Included in those other theories are subculture and cognitive/biological theories. I initially sought to examine subculture theory, however I do not think my questions and/or the responses are sufficient for this theory. I am also very interested in exploring cognitive/biological theories, specifically whether or not there are certain qualities or characteristics that lead someone to joining the military. If this is the case, I would then want to explore whether any of these traits are also the very same traits that predict offending behavior. I do not have any traits in mind and at this point in time such a relationship is merely speculation, but worthy of future examination.

The purpose of this chapter is to identify the themes within the theories. With these themes established, we can now consider the data regarding offending behavior. In the following chapters I discuss the data on offending behavior including types, extent, et cetera. In each chapter I also take the themes and theories discussed in this chapter and apply them to the various discussions.

Chapter 5: Substance Use

One of the themes that emerges from the data is the use of substances such as alcohol, marijuana, and heroin reported by participants in the sample. The current literature suggests that there is little substance use among those in the military. Given that evidence as well as my anecdotal understanding of little substance use among the military, this theme is not anticipated and warrants further discussion. I will discuss substance use in two sections; the first will be a discussion of the nature and extent of substance use among the sample. The second is a discussion of substance use in relation to the theories presented in Chapter 4.

Substance Use: Nature and Extent

Participants are asked three questions that directly deal with substance use:

Do you drink or use other substances to deal with stress?

While in the military, have you ever used marijuana?

While in the military, have you ever used other drugs?

Table 5-1 shows the breakdown of responses to these questions and Table 5-2 shows the frequency of substance use..

Table 5-1: Substance Use

Theme	Frequency	Percentage of Overall Sample
Substances and stress	35	70%
Marijuana	18	36%
Other Substances	21	42%
		Percentage of Other Substances
Cocaine	4	18%
Ecstasy	2	9%
Methamphetamine	1	4%
Heroin	3	14%
Steroids	16	76%

Table 5-2: Frequency of Substance Use

	Ever	Within Last Year	2-3 Times/Year	Once a month	2-3 Times/Month	Once a Week	2-3 Times/Week	Once a Day
Marijuana	18	11	5	4	1	1	0	0
Cocaine	4	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
Ecstasy	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Meth	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Heroin	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Steroids	16	13	2	7	2	2	0	0

For every self-report question I ask a series of probing questions in an effort to obtain more rich data from the participant. For substance use I ask the following probes:

If yes, why did you do it? Please explain the incident.

How many times in the last year?

Has this occurred while on duty, off duty, or both?

Has this happened pre-deployment, upon your return, or both³⁹?

Has this happened on post, off post, or both?

Have you done this while deployed to combat?

These questions provide additional specific information about the use and allow the participant to elaborate and explain his or her experiences in his or her own words, through his or her own perception. Responses to these probes are shown in Tables 5-3 and 5-4, and a sample of quotations from the responses follow.

³⁹ Pre-deployment means before the participant was sent overseas for combat. Post-deployment means when the participant returned from combat. While-in-combat addresses behavior during deployment.

Table 5-3: Marijuana Use

Probe	Frequency	Percentage of Overall Sample
Ever Used	18	36%
		Percentage of Marijuana Use
Duty		
On	1	5%
Off	16	89%
Both	1	5%
Timing		
Pre-deployment	2	10%
Post-deployment	5	28%
Both	11	62%
Location		
On post	2	11%
Off post	13	72%
Both	3	17%
While Deployed to Combat	8	44%

I smoked before I joined...so yeah I smoked before getting deployed, when I got back, on post, off post, while over there

There are a few of us in the squad who will smoke when we get some time off.

I didn't smoke that much before going over there...when I got back I hooked up with some friends from back home and they were smoking and at that point I didn't give a shit about anything else.

I get tested 4 times a year, I smoke 4 times a year...once you get tested you know you won't get it again for at least a month.

I've smoked a couple of times since joining...mostly with buddies from home, but there are a few guys here who I know smoke.

Table 5-4: Other Substance Use

Probe	Frequency	Percentage of Overall Sample
Ever Used	21	54%
Duty		Percentage of Other Substances
On	1	7%
Off	9	44%
Both	11	48%
Timing		
Pre-deployment	6	30%
Post-deployment	11	44%
Both	4	26%
Location		
On post	0	0%
Off post	18	81%
Both	3	18%
While Deployed to Combat	9	43%

I didn't even know what heroin was until we got over there...but some guys said it was good shit and will do the trick.

I actually started with the juice in basic...it helped me get through that shit and perform well on all the PT tests, so I stuck with it.

I never did heroin until I got over there.

I started juicing when they made us start doing patrols over there...gave me energy, got me hype...now I'm still on some stuff because it helps me stay fit and shit.

As stated earlier, the primary theme that emerges from the data regarding substance use is the use of steroids. I have intentionally left the discussion about steroids short in this chapter as I will fully address steroid use in Chapter 6.

For substance use related to stress, the majority of participants report using alcohol, marijuana, or heroin. Given the high number of those who describe using substances to deal with stress (70%), especially alcohol use, it is difficult to separate the data out along demographic lines. There is no difference in usage between genders, races, or age groups. Ultimately the data show that most participants who use substances

to deal with stress use alcohol, while some use marijuana and even fewer use heroin. It should be noted that most of the participants who report using marijuana to deal with stress and all of the participants who report using heroin to deal with stress are referring to combat.

Hell yes...you have a bad day, you go home and open a beer.

Who doesn't? Go to a NCO club at 6 p.m. and you'll see how people deal with stress.

Yeah, I drink quite a bit and I'll smoke (*pot*) from time to time when shit gets too heavy.

Yeah I probably drink too much, but what the hell else am I going to do? Work all damn day, can't go anywhere, so we drink – makes the shit easier to deal with.

We smoke whenever we can get it, makes all this bearable...hard to when we're stateside because we get tested...but when you go over (*to Iraq*) they don't test for shit.

They have some good pot and dope (*heroin*) over in Afghanistan and Iraq...every now and then the brass will bring in some beer and let us have some, but guys can get pot and dope, and even coke from the locals whenever and most people over there hit that shit hard...helps deal with being in such a fucked up situation.

In talking about alcohol use, participants describe a dependency on alcohol that extends beyond casual use or even use to deal with stress.

That's what we do...we work and we drink...you get released for the day and you go to the bar or go grab a case and drink the rest of the night...you get released for the weekend and you head off post and hit up some civi-bar...if we're not working, we're drinking.

I probably drink every day...not hard or anything, but I have a couple of beers a day easy...on the weekends that's probably a bit more than a couple (laughs)

Its part of the culture, you gotta be able to drink.

These data suggest that in addition to being a personal choice, or a coping mechanism, alcohol use by participants is also indicative of a larger Army culture. Participants talk about drinking as something "everyone does", "its what we do", "its all there is to do".

This is a very interesting and important finding both in understanding deviant behaviors by those in the military as well as understanding the larger norms of the Army culture.

Marijuana is the substance that was most used after alcohol. As stated earlier, some participants describe using marijuana as a way to deal with stress. Others talk about using marijuana not for any particular reason.

Every now and then when we go off post we'll run into somebody who has got some weed...if you just got tested or if you know when your test is coming...then you go ahead and smoke up.

Actually my wife likes to smoke...half the time it pisses me off, but the other half I'm sitting there doing it with her...explain that.

I have some buddies from high school who still smoke...whenever I go home and we hang out I'll end up smoking.

It (*marijuana*) ain't hard to get...you just gotta know when the tests are coming.

In addition to alcohol and marijuana use, participants report using are cocaine and heroin.

I never did heroin until I got over there.

I haven't seen anybody use it (*cocaine*) over there, but I know some guys feed their habit stateside.

I don't know...I guess its easy to get...it doesn't fuck you up too much...really it just helped me sleep when I was over there.

They don't let you sleep...coffee, Red Bull, coke...whatever keeps you going.

I wouldn't ever do that shit here...I wouldn't even know how to get it...but I'm telling you, you'll take what you can get over there to pass time, sleep, calm down, whatever.

A bunch of guys in this one squad were known for doing coke before going out on patrol...I always thought that was retarded...but they talked about how it made them more alert and gave them more energy and shit, so I gave it a shot one morning before we went out...not for me, shit just amplified whatever fear I already had.

Other substances that are reported are ecstasy and methamphetamine.

I was on TDY (*temporary duty*) in Germany and we hit some clubs there and somebody had some X...I knew I wasn't going to get tested...I had never tried it and I was pretty messed up already.

My ex-girlfriend was a meth-head...I was back home on leave and really wasn't giving a fuck about the Army or anything else, so I smoked some with her...can't leave track marks

A bunch of us went up to Las Vegas and were fucked up the entire weekend, I don't remember much, but I do remember taking X with some girls we hooked up with.

In terms of substance, there seems to be a significant amount of use represented in this sample. Even if we remove those who report using only alcohol, there is still a portion of participants who report using marijuana and/or other substances. I will next discuss substance use in relation to the theoretical themes discussed in Chapter 4.

Substance Use: Theoretical Themes

The data show there is a relationship between the themes found in the data that relate to strain theory and social learning theory and substance use. Although the relationship between control theory and substance use is weak, the "purpose" theme is relevant. For the purposes of this chapter, I include a discussion of purpose in alongside strain theory because most participants who talk about substance use and "purpose" talk about substance use as a coping strategy rather than as an absence of a control.

The first theme within strain is the *negative combat experience* theme.

Participants describe using substances as a way to deal with the stress of combat.

I don't know...I guess its easy to get...it doesn't fuck you up too much...really it just helped me sleep when I was over there.

I wouldn't ever do that shit here...I wouldn't even know how to get it...but I'm telling you, you'll take what you can get over there to pass time, sleep, calm down, whatever.

We smoke whenever we can get it, makes all this bearable...hard to when we're stateside because we get tested...but when you go over (*to Iraq*) they don't test for shit.

They have some good pot and dope (*heroin*) over in Afghanistan and Iraq...every now and then the brass will bring in some beer and let us have some, but guys can get pot and dope from the locals whenever and most people over there hit that shit hard...helps deal with being in such a fucked up situation.

I couldn't sleep...my body was all messed up because we weren't sleeping...then its never quiet...plus I can't shut my mind off...so I need shit to help me sleep.

Man guys were doing whatever to take their minds off shit...between the stress and the boredom...you gotta keep your mind off shit.

It is clear that the negative stimuli from combat experience create strain that may lead to substance use as reported by this sample. This may be an intuitive finding, however given the low prevalence of documented substance use, it is an important finding.

Building off of the above finding, substance use can be a negative coping mechanism used by military personnel. As discussed in Chapter 4, there is a lack of legitimate coping mechanisms for those in the military due to a lack of resources and a culture that does not support some of the legitimate or "healthy" coping mechanisms.

I got a buddy who says "you know what they mean by 'suck it up'...you suck it up right out of a bottle"

...my wife doesn't understand so I'm not going to talk to her...I'm not going to go talk to the Chaplain or anyone...everyone else just drinks or smokes or does whatever...some people like to talk about their problems, we like to drink right through them.

How do I deal with stress? Gotta have fun and drive right through it ...that (*having fun*) means getting hammered, getting lit, whatever...let your hair down and forget about shit for a few hours.

As exhibited, military personnel may turn to substances such as alcohol, marijuana, and heroin to cope with stress and strain. These statements suggest that negative combat experiences and a lack of positive coping mechanisms may lead to substance use.

The theme of masculinity also is relevant to understanding substance use, especially alcohol. Much of this can be explained through the above discussion of coping mechanisms, however there are distinct references to the pressures of masculinity and substance use.

That's what all the guys do on the weekend...go out and get tore up...you want to be one of the guys, so you go out too.

Its definitely a big deal how much you can drink...you don't want to be the light-weight or else you'll get made fun, called a pussy...they'll fuck with you when you go out...the more you can drink – the bigger the badass you are.

There is a lot of pressure to drink...they'll call you a pansy, a fag, a pussy, a girl, all sorts of shit if you don't drink...same shit as high school.

We all knew that all of the guys maxing out on PT tests were juicing up...so I started to take a little so I could be up there with them.

Guys talk about the rush the juice gives them when they go out on patrol...I never liked firing my weapon before...but once I started juicing I loved it...like I wanted nothing more than to split someone open...shit's crazy because I got a lot more respect once I started talking hard and shit...when I was the nice guy who weighed 160 and didn't want to kill nobody – I'm a pussy...then I'm some asshole who is cut and wants to blow people up and I'm a badass...I got back to the states and I got off that shit...I don't care who liked me when I was that guy – I didn't like me...call me a pussy, call me a fag, I don't care anymore...besides, it makes you stronger but kills your endurance.

Much of the relationship between substance use and masculinity can be attributed either to the negative coping of the strain that results from the pressures of masculinity, or to the social learning aspects dealing with masculinity. However there is some evidence that the pressures of masculinity lead directly to substance use, not just indirectly through stress and negative coping.

The last strain related theme, and also the only theme remotely associated with control, is that of anomie or “purpose”. Participants describe using substances because they feel “lost”, like “they didn't have anything else to do”, that “it didn't matter”, et

cetera. This is evidence of the sense of anomie and loss discussed in Chapter 4. It is also evidence to the strain that results from a lack of purpose as negative behavior that can occur when there is no purpose there to act as a control to prevent said behavior.

I didn't even fucking drink at all until I joined the Army...never had a taste for it...but I get in and I don't have shit to do...I don't know what I'm doing...it doesn't matter, so whats the point? Why not?

You need shit over there (*Iraq*)...you can sit here and talk all you want about how you would never do drugs...but you get there and you need it...you don't know what you're doing any given day, you don't know where you are, you don't know if you're winning or losing, you don't know shit...all that not-knowing sucks and you need something to fill that shit in.

A few of us will get together and get smashed or smoke a little if somebody has any...we always joke that it doesn't fucking matter...nobody knows who we are, nobody would miss it, nobody would probably even care that we're smoking...Its funny thinking about it now that you've asked that...if your job requires you risking your life but nobody in your job really gives a shit about you...that's fucked up.

We go to the NCO club and we're just like everyone else...a bunch of NCO's getting drunk and bitching about the officers...can't bitch about the officers to the officers...and we can't do anything about it anyway because we're not as important as those fairy fuckers...so we drink and bitch and go home, then wake up fresh.

One participant who reports high levels of substance use had this perception about his place and purpose in the Army:

Nobody cares what I think, I don't get paid to think...so I have no say in shit, no purpose other than to fill boots.

It is evident from this data that a feeling of anomie, of loss, and of powerlessness creates strain that is often dealt with through substance use. One could also make the argument that having a sense of power or purpose would act as a control against substance use.

Even still, this feeling of not having a purpose, a place, a voice does create strain and this strain may be coped with through substance use.

In addition to themes from strain, there is evidence supporting a relationship between the themes from social learning with substance use. As discussed in Chapter 4, two of the main elements of social learning theory are learning the logistical (how-to) aspect of behavior as well as learning beliefs favorable to that particular behavior. Both of these aspects are evident in the data concerning substance use.

I know this guy who can get me whatever I want whenever I want it...I just get some weed and sometimes some X, but he knows how to get it and where to get it.

I have a buddy who knows when we're going to be tested, so he just lets me know when and how to beat it.

I didn't start using (*steroids*) until I met him...he got me the stuff, showed me how to use it, how to hide it, everything.

You learn when the tests are coming and you learn how to beat them...NCO's will give you a heads up a week before you're up for testing...so you can stay clean or get clean.

I was on my first patrol and this guy who was on his second tour took me down this alley-type area...walked up to a guy...and next thing I know he has pot and dope...He told me about these signals and words that locals give soldiers saying they have shit for sale.

A few guys in our squad were talking about juicing (*using steroids*) and how it gave them more energy, made them do better on PT tests, got them hype for shit, that we don't get tested for it...so I figured I'd give it a shot.

Its like a fucking drug store over there (*Iraq*)...everybody is cool with it...you want some weed, dope, juice, doesn't matter – most people are doing it and those that aren't are cool with it.

I thought the guys were crazy for juicing until they said our Captain was doing it too...he was a badass...at first I was kind of disappointed that his shit wasn't real you know?...but I kind of looked up to him and if he used juice to get to be such a badass, so be it.

Much of the previous literature on military and social learning focuses on the social learning of violent behavior. This data suggests that within the military soldiers

are learning both the logistical (how-to) aspects of substance use and beliefs favorable to substance use from others in the military. This is especially true for use of heroin as well as steroid use.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I discussed the nature and extent of substance use in this sample. Themes that emerge regarding nature and extent include high use of alcohol, the use of substance to deal with stress, and the use of steroids. There are a high number of participants who report using marijuana, however given the unique nature of the substance and the extent of its use in this sample; I think steroid use is a more important theme compared to marijuana use.

I also discuss substance use in relation to the theoretical themes from Chapter 4. It is evident that participants use substances to help them deal with stress and cope with strain. Participants describe using substances to deal with the negative combat experiences, to deal with pressures related to masculinity, and to cope with their sense of anomie and lack of purpose. It is also evident that social learning plays an important part of substance use for participants. Participants describe learning how to get substances and how to avoid detection, and they also describe learning that it is acceptable to use substances such as alcohol, steroids, et cetera.

Future research should first explore the extent of substance use among the military. Data provided in Chapter 1 suggest that there is very little substance use among military personnel. This data indicate that there may be more than what is showing up in arrest data. A large-scale self-report study that can get data on substance use from a large military sample would be very beneficial. Secondly, future research should explore more

fully the relationship between strain and social learning with substance use. If soldiers are in fact using substances to deal with stress and negative emotions, then the military should want to take measures to deal with this whether it means addressing the stress itself, providing more legitimate coping outlets as well as a culture that supports using such outlets, or tightening both the logistical aspects and values leading to social learning of substance use.

Chapter 6: Steroid Use

In the previous chapter I discussed the use of substances by participants in this study. In addition to discussing the rates and types of use, I discussed the relationship between theoretical themes and substance use. In this chapter I would like to continue this type of discussion for a specific substance use, steroids. As mentioned in Chapter 5, one of the most alarming findings of this study is the prevalence of steroid use by participants. This finding is not anticipated either through the existing literature or through my anecdotal experiences.

According to Brower (2002), anabolic-androgenic steroids (AAS) are manufactured substances related to muscle mass and male sex hormones (i.e., testosterone). “Anabolic” refers to muscle-building and “androgenic” refers to increased male hormonal characteristics. “Steroids” refers to the class of drugs. These drugs can be legally prescribed to treat conditions resulting from steroid hormone deficiency, but are often used by those trying to increase muscle-mass (Taylor, 1991).

The preclinical, clinical, and anecdotal reports suggest that steroids may contribute to psychiatric dysfunction (Brower, 2002; Taylor, 1991). Research shows that abuse of anabolic steroids may lead to aggression and other adverse effects. For example, users report feeling good about themselves while on anabolic steroids, but extreme mood swings can also occur, including manic-like symptoms that could lead to violence. Researchers have also observed that users may suffer from paranoid jealousy, extreme irritability, delusions, and impaired judgment stemming from feelings of invincibility (Brower, 2002; Taylor, 1991; Pope, 1988; Pope, 2000).

I will discuss steroid use in two sections; the first will be a discussion of the nature and extent of steroid use among the sample. Next I will discuss steroid use in relation to the theories discussed in Chapter 4. Implications for future research will be discussed in the chapter summary.

Steroid Use: Nature and Extent

In the process of asking participants about substance use, there is a question in the interview that asks: *While in the military, have you ever used other drugs such as meth, cocaine, et cetera?* One of the initial seeds of the sample asked whether or not this question included steroid use. I stated that it could indeed include steroids and consequently I later included “steroids” as a possible “other substance” in future interviews. I was initially surprised by this finding for the first participant, and even more surprised as other participants also spoke of steroid use.

In total there are 16 participants who claim to have used steroids while in the military. This makes up 32% of the entire sample and 76% of the participants who have used “other substances”. For every self-report question I ask a series of probing questions in an effort to obtain more rich data from the participant. For steroid use I ask the following probes:

If yes, why did you do it? Please explain the incident.

How many times in the last year?

Has this occurred while on duty, off duty, or both?

Has this happened pre-deployment, upon your return, or both?

Has this happened on post, off post, or both?

Have you done this while deployed to combat?

These are important questions both because they get at very specific information and also because they allow the participant to elaborate and explain his or her experiences with steroid use in his or her own words and through his or her own perception. A breakdown of steroid use is shown in Table 6-1 and a sample of quotations from the correlating responses follow.

Table 6-1: Steroid Use

Probe	Frequency	Percentage of Overall Sample
Ever Used	16	32%
Duty		
On	0	0%
Off	10	62%
Both	6	38%
Timing		
Pre-deployment	3	19%
Post-deployment	2	12%
Both	11	69%
Location		
On post	1	6%
Off post	14	88%
Both	1	6%
While Deployed to Combat	7	14%

I actually started with the juice in basic...it helped me get through that shit and perform well on all the PT tests, so I stuck with it.

I started juicing when they made us start doing patrols over there...gave me energy, got me hype...now I'm still on some stuff because it helps me stay fit and shit.

You know how the prison system is paramilitary? Well that's no joke, a lot of times I feel like a prisoner...I just work and go back to the bunk...the only other thing to do is work out...so all this working out...I tried getting a boost.

Tried it over in Iraq...guys were doing it to get an edge.

(*Medic*)...I started just giving guys some steroids...they would go down to Mexico stateside or buy from locals in Iraq and that shit isn't necessarily safe...so I would get some and give it or sell it to guys.

We would just go down to Mexico on a weekend pass and some guys would get shots, others pills, some both...then you come back up and you're good to go for a couple of weeks or months...depending on what you got.

I think it's a big issue because I know a lot of guys besides myself who juice up either here or over there...the Army has to know about it because you just can't get that big off working out alone.

The medics are like dealers...they have access to all that stuff and if they don't have direct access then they know where to get it...I swear it's a fucking racket, guys wanting to get big before going over, guys wanting to get crazy while over there, and I mean the medics supply it, the Army doesn't test for it, so I'm not that surprised that people do it.

I know a guy who jokes about taking his 'roid rage out on the Iraqis...that's what you need to research...you need to look at all the non-com (*non-combat*) deaths in Afghanistan and Iraq and see how many of those involved were juicing...guys are already restricted in fighting back, then you throw in the aggression that comes with juicing...I know for a fact guys have released that aggression on patrols and shit...mostly its in a legit fight, and it gets written off as acceptable or justified, but I'm telling you...a lot of that shit is the 'roid rage and guys have no way to release it...they juice to get aggressive, and that has to come out some way or another...look it up, I bet you find something.

To get a better understanding of the data, I will now discuss some of the demographic variables in regards to steroid use. First, all participants who claim to have used steroids are under the age of 35 years. This is somewhat interesting given that one of the common reasons for steroid use is to heal aches and pains associated with aging (Taylor, 1991). Participants who used steroids are predominately white. In terms of rank, participants are mostly either enlisted or a non-commissioned officer. There is little distinction possible for MOS, as users spanned 7 of the 9 listed MOS's. Table 6-2 shows a breakdown of the demographic data concerning steroid use.

Table 6-2: Demographic Data of Steroid Use

	Frequency	Percentage of Overall Sample	Percentage of Demographic Group	Percentage of Steroid Users
Race				
White	13	28%	58%	78%
Black	3	8%	33%	22%
Age				
18-25	9	20%	48%	56%
26-35	7	16%	44%	44%
Rank				
Enlisted	10	22%	61%	61%
NCO	4	10%	21%	28%
Officer	2	4%	25%	11%
MOS				
Infantry	5	10%	42%	28%
Field Artillery	3	6%	50%	17%
Mechanic	1	4%	50%	11%
Police	1	2%	33%	6%
Transportation	3	6%	38%	17%
Medic	1	2%	17%	6%
Armored Infantry/Cavalry	2	6%	43%	17%

Given the high percentage of this sample that discuss using steroids, and given the complete absence of the relationship between the military and steroids in any data and literature, the use of steroids by the military is an important finding by this research.

Steroid Use: Theoretical Themes

Asking “why” soldiers use steroids would seem to hold a fairly intuitive answer. Steroids are primarily used to promote muscle growth and development, healing, and aggression. In actuality some of the early tests and uses of steroids were on German soldiers in Nazi Germany (Taylor, 1991). Then the goal was to create stronger and more aggressive soldiers. Strength and aggression are certainly evident in the data, however I think the focus should be beyond just strength and aggression and rather be on the issues

that support the need for strength and aggression. With that said, some participants did describe a simple desire to be stronger or more aggressive.

What I do is all about strength...PT tests, humping rounds, you gotta be strong.

Guys talk about the rush the juice gives them when they go out on patrol...I never liked firing my weapon before...but once I started juicing I loved it...like I wanted nothing more than to split someone open...

Getting amped up to go work out, amped up for a PT test, amped up for patrol...that shit is like Red Bull plus crack plus whatever else.

I'm not saying we're all professional athletes, but we do get paid in large part based on what we can do physically...if I can be stronger or whatever – that only helps me be a better soldier and helps my career right?

There does seem to be at least some support for the intuitive claim that those who do steroids are doing so to become stronger and/or more aggressive. However if we delve further into the data, the theoretical themes discussed earlier in this dissertation add valuable understanding and explanation.

The data show there to be a relationship between the various themes found with strain theory as well as those of social learning theory. For both strain and social learning, the major theme is masculinity or an “Army ideal”. Also uncovered in the data is the nature or basic premise behind social learning theory, the learning of the “how” as well as beliefs favorable to steroid use.

The clear and predominant theme related to both strain and social learning is this desire to be more masculine and/or to achieve some standard of an “Army man” or the Army ideal.

...we all have to do PT and then get scored on PT tests...the stronger guy always gets the better assignments...so I think that's why I first used (*steroids*)...to be better

Guys are just competitive...its in our nature. So everyone wants to be the strongest and baddest mother-fucker in the unit...that's why you see guys juicing.

My old sergeant used to say they don't let women in combat because there is no room for pussies in war...you can't be weak and you can't be timid...I don't think any guy wants to be weak or timid and if someone tells you that some pills or a shot will fix that – well there you go.

Proof is in the pudding...you know a guy juices and all of the sudden he's kicking everyone's ass in PT or whatever...well then I'd say the shit works...you see all the attention and credit he's getting, so you want that for yourself.

To me it makes sense...guys join the Army because the Army is all about being strong, being a badass...and they like that. So if there is something that can make them stronger or a bigger badass, it fits right in...I'm not saying the Army condones it, but I also don't see them trying to stop it⁴⁰...and why would they? They want the strongest and baddest Army, pretty sure they're going to look the other way.

I don't think it's a military thing, it's a man thing...evolution or survival of the fittest or whatever...we're all subconsciously trying to compete with one another...to be stronger and faster, to be the best man.

I thought the guys were crazy for juicing until they said our Captain was doing it too...he was a badass...at first I was kind of disappointed that his shit wasn't real you know?...but I kind of looked up to him and if he used juice to get to be such a badass.

I'm surprised the Army doesn't fucking issue the juice along with your boots and rifle...they tell you how important physical performance is, how important to be strong is, to be a killer...isn't that what steroids do?

Tried it over in Iraq...guys were doing it to get an edge.

You just do it to get stronger...which is funny because it kills your endurance...I got plenty big, but then I couldn't run for shit...but it didn't matter – I was stronger and meaner, that was more important than getting winded when I ran.

The energy you get is insane...I would always get nervous before going on patrol...and I felt like everyone could see I was nervous and thought I was a pussy or I couldn't hack it...then after using, that energy and aggression was there, and I felt like everyone trusted me.

⁴⁰ The Army does not currently test for anabolic steroids

I started juicing when they made us start doing patrols over there...gave me energy, got me hype...now I'm still on some stuff because it helps me stay fit and shit.

In addition to responding to the strain resulting from the pressures of masculinity, and the learning of the importance of masculinity and/or the "Army ideal", there is further support for social learning.

I didn't start using (*steroids*) until I met him...he got me the stuff, showed me how to use it, how to hide it, everything.

Mexico. We were down at Bliss (*Ft. Bliss in San Antonio, TX*) and would just cross the border on the weekend, get some shit, and come back up. We all talked about where to go, how to get it for cheap, how to get back across the border, it was easy.

(*Medic*)...I started just giving guys some steroids...they would go down to Mexico stateside or buy from locals in Iraq and that shit isn't necessarily safe...so I would get some and give it or sell it to guys.

A few guys in our squad were talking about juicing (*using steroids*) and how it gave them more energy, made them do better on PT tests, got them hype for shit, that we don't get tested for it...so I figured I'd give it a shot.

We would just go down to Mexico on a weekend pass and some guys would get shots, others pills, some both...then you come back up and you're good to go for a couple of weeks or months...depending on what you got.

As stated, the primary theoretical explanation for steroid use comes from the strain of masculinity as well as the social learning of the logistics of steroid use and the learning of beliefs favorable to steroid use. While not necessarily a theme, it should be noted that there are a few participants who spoke to control theory in regards to steroid use. This does not include the themes of control discussed in Chapter 4, but rather control in terms of external controls, or lack thereof.

They don't test for it...they test for the marijuana and then your harder drugs...but not for juice...I don't know if they can't or if they just don't want to.

I know NCO's that have done it, officer that have done it, they don't test for it...so why not try it?

This would suggest that part of the issue of steroid use is related to a lack of external controls. It may also speak to elements of Routine Activities theory. This theory argues that among other things; absence of capable guardians, ease of disbursement, opportunity, et cetera all explain criminal behavior. It may be that Routine Activities theory should be explored for a military sample in future research.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I discuss the nature and extent of steroid use in my sample. Themes that emerge regarding nature and extent include first and foremost the sheer number of those who have used steroids while in the military. As stated earlier in this chapter, steroid use by those in the military is something that is not covered in the literature nor is it something that corresponds with my personal experience. In terms of demographic data, participants who used steroids are younger than 35, mostly white, and range in MOS.

I also discuss steroid use in relation to the theoretical themes from Chapter 4. While participants did describe using steroids to simply get stronger, that idea of needing to be stronger can be couched in a larger theoretical framework, namely masculinity and the ideal Army man. Participants talk about the pressures to be masculine, to be the "big, tough Army man". According to strain theory, these pressures could lead to strain and ultimately to steroid use to achieve the physical standard as a goal. According to social learning theory, individuals learn the importance of being masculine as well as learning the "how to" of steroid use along with learning beliefs favorable to steroid use.

It is also evident in some of the data that participants use steroids to deal with combat. This is not necessarily a coping mechanism, but more of a tool to be more effective in combat. Combat presents unique challenges both in terms of mental and physical requirements. Participants spoke of using steroids to deal with the physical requirements of combat and especially the mental requirements, specifically energy and aggression.

Future research should further explore the extent of steroid use among the military. As stated, previous literature and data make no mention of steroid use among the military. While this sample can not be used for generalizations, it still would seem that steroid use is a potential issue facing the military and more research is required. A large-scale self-report study that can get data on steroid use from a large military sample would be very beneficial. It may also be worthwhile for the military to conduct random urinalysis testing of soldiers to determine the extent of steroid use in the military.

Secondly, future research should explore more fully the relationship between strain and social learning with steroid use. Much of what participants describe focuses on the lack of attention the Army gives to steroids. If the Army is indeed turning a blind eye to the use of steroids, or even condoning its use, this issue needs further explanation and understanding. There is no relationship between steroid use and violent crime in this sample; however previous literature does suggest a relationship (Pope, 1988; Dalby, 1992; Perry, 2003). It is therefore necessary for future research to explore whether or not steroid use in the military is related to violence, either combat or non-combat violence.

Chapter 7: Personal Crime

A natural categorization of criminal behavior is to group behaviors into either violent/personal crime or non-violent/property crime. In the next two chapters I will discuss the data in terms of personal crime (Chapter 7) and property crime (Chapter 8).

I will discuss personal crime in two sections; the first will be a discussion of the nature and extent of personal crime among the sample. Next I will discuss personal crime in relation to the theories discussed in Chapter 4. Implications for future research will be discussed in the chapter summary.

Personal Crime: Nature and Extent

Participants are asked three direct questions dealing with violent behavior; *While in the military, have you ever physically hurt your spouse or romantic partner*, *While in the military, have you ever been in a physical fight outside of combat*, and *While in the military, have you ever physically hurt someone with your friends?*

In total there are 13 participants who respond in the affirmative to at least one of the aforementioned questions. This makes up 26% of the entire sample. A breakdown of personal crime is shown in Table 7-1 and a sample of quotations from the correlating responses follow.

Table 7-1: Personal Crime

	Frequency	Percentage of Overall Sample	Percentage of Personal Crime
Domestic Violence	6	12%	46%
Individual Fights	11	22%	85%
Group Fights	2	4%	15%

When I first joined I got in a bunch of fights...guys in (*the military*), guys out, didn't matter – I guess you could say I was looking for it.

I've been in a scrap or two...

I'm pretty sure a big part of why I joined was because I was always getting in fights...someone suggested that I join the Army or box so that that I could get paid for it.

I don't like to admit it, but I've gotten physical with my wife.

I've always had a big chip on my shoulder...add to that a chip that comes with being a woman...add to that the things we deal with in the military...so I'm not afraid to get into it with someone if I think they're pushing me.

For every self-report question I ask a series of probing questions in an effort to obtain more rich data from the participant. These probes include:

If yes, why did you do it? Please explain the incident.

How many times in the last year?

Has this occurred while on duty, off duty, or both?

Has this happened pre-deployment, upon your return, or both?

Has this happened on post, off post, or both?

Have you done this while deployed to combat?

Tables 7-2 through 7-4 show a breakdown of the responses to these probes.

Table 7-2: Domestic Violence

Probe	Frequency	Percentage of Group
Duty		
On	0	0%
Off	6	100%
Both	0	0%
Timing		
Pre-deployment	1	17%
Post-deployment	3	50%
Both	2	33%
Location		
On post	4	67%
Off post	1	17%
Both	1	17%
While Deployed to Combat	N/A	N/A

Table 7-3: Individual Fights

Probe	Frequency	Percentage of Group
Duty		
On	2	18%
Off	8	73%
Both	1	9%
Timing		
Pre-deployment	2	18%
Post-deployment	4	36%
Both	5	45%
Location		
On post	1	9%
Off post	8	73%
Both	2	18%
While Deployed to Combat	2	18%

Table 7-4: Group Fights

Probe	Frequency	Percentage of Group
Duty		
On	0	0%
Off	2	100%
Both	0	0%
Timing		
Pre-deployment	1	50%
Post-deployment	1	50%
Both	0	0%
Location		
On post	0	0%
Off post	2	100%
Both	0	0%
While Deployed to Combat	0	0%

The above tables are helpful in further understanding personal crime. Most of the participants involved in domestic violence report that it happened in their homes which in most cases are on-post residences. For individual fights, the majority of participants who claim to have been in a physical fight outside of combat are enlisted soldiers. There is a lack of demographic distinction among the participants who report to have physically hurt their spouse or romantic partner.

Participants who report fighting or physically hurting their partner span both race and age. There is some distinction possible for MOS, as those reporting personal crime are limited to 4 of the 9 listed MOS's. Tables 7-5 and 7-6 show a breakdown of the demographic data concerning personal crime so that the reader can have a better understanding of the data.

Table 7-5: Demographic Data of Domestic Violence

	Frequency	Percentage of Overall Sample	Percentage of Demographic Group	Percentage of Domestic Violence
Race				
White	2	4%	8%	33%
Black	1	2%	8%	17%
Hispanic	2	4%	20%	33%
Other	1	2%	50%	17%
Age				
18-25	0	0%	0%	0%
26-35	2	4%	17%	33%
36-45	3	6%	25%	50%
46-55	1	2%	33%	17%
Rank				
Enlisted	1	2%	6%	17%
NCO	3	6%	13%	50%
Officer	2	4%	25%	33%
MOS				
Infantry	3	6%	25%	50%
Mechanic	1	2%	17%	17%
Transportation	2	4%	25%	33%

Table 7-6: Demographic Data of Fighting

	Frequency	Percentage of Overall Sample	Percentage of Demographic Group	Percentage of Domestic Violence
Race				
White	5	10%	21%	45%
Black	2	4%	17%	18%
Hispanic	3	6%	30%	27%
Other	1	2%	50%	10%
Age				
18-25	4	8%	19%	36%
26-35	4	8%	22%	36%
36-45	2	4%	25%	18%
46-55	1	2%	33%	10%
Rank				
Enlisted	7	14%	39%	63%
NCO	3	6%	13%	27%
Officer	1	2%	13%	10%
MOS				
Infantry	4	8%	33%	36%
Mechanic	3	6%	50%	27%
Transportation	2	4%	25%	18%
Armored Infantry/Cavalry	2	4%	29%	18%

Personal Crime: Theoretical Themes

Within the various theoretical themes discussed in Chapter 4, there are two key theoretical themes that emerge as relevant to personal crime. In the larger strain theme, coping emerge in relation to personal crime. It should be noted that other strain themes (combat experience, anomie, and masculinity) are all relevant, however the data suggests that the frustration and anger caused by those themes, coupled with inadequate coping mechanisms, led to the personal crime. Within the social learning theme, honor and respect emerge as useful in explaining personal crime among this sample.

For participants who report physically hurting their romantic partner or others, the data suggest that these individuals are dealing with frustration and anger surrounding

combat experiences, anomie, and masculinity; and are otherwise unable to legitimately cope with these strains.

Somebody calls you out, you have to stand up for yourself.

You can't look like a bitch in front of other guys, so if somebody challenges you...you have to fight.

A buddy and I will go to a civi-bar and just start fucking with some jerk-off...hoping he'll try to do something and we can kick his ass...all that shit bottled up, go to the gym or go pick a fight...either way you feel better after.

Call me what you want, but I have certain expectations of my wife...I put up with shit all day, I don't need her shit...I'm not saying I'm right in getting physical with her...but half the time I'm just protecting myself when she starts throwing shit.

Whats the word – cathartic? Its very cathartic to let out everything...most of the time I can go for a run or hit the gym...but sometimes somebody will catch me wrong and all my shit just comes out...man, it sounds pretty bad as I say all this...sounds like I'm some violent psycho...I don't think of myself that way...but at the same time I usually feel spent and relieved after a fight, whether an argument or physical.

A lot of assholes in the world who go around pushing people around, being a bully...I got no problem being the one who puts those assholes in check...you think you're a big man...you want to fight somebody – I'll fight you.

I find I'll snap at people for little or no reason...ever since I got back I've had trouble dealing...so if it's a bad day, I'm liable to go off on my girl, the guy driving in front of me, the lady at the store, jackass at the bar...just takes one person to push me over the edge and I can't deal anymore...then next thing I know I'm fighting.

That's how men talk, its how we work shit out...you piss me off, I'm going to let you know about it...then if we fight – we fight...then I'm back to what I was doing...some people cry, some drink, some fight.

I can't speak for everyone, but I think it has a lot to do with having power as a man...I am nothing in the Army...seriously, nothing. I take orders all day...really I take shit all day...so when I go out or when I go home, I'm done taking orders and taking shit...I can't hit my superiors, but I can hit some asshole...I have to take orders at work, I don't have to take orders at home...I give them.

Fighting is just another way to prove yourself...to gain status, power, whatever you want to call it. A lot of guys don't have status or power at work...if you're an E-2, you ain't shit...but when you go to a civi-bar, you're the big bad Army man and you can pull rank on the frat boys.

These accounts describe how issues of strain lead to frustration and anger, and how the frustration and anger is then coped with through violent behavior. In Chapter 4 it was discussed how participants in this research feel very limited in their available legitimate coping mechanisms, and coupled with the above data, we can conclude that participants do use violence as a way to deal with the strains of combat experience, masculinity, and anomie.

The next theoretical theme that is relevant in discussing self-reported personal crime is the concept of *honor and respect* as was discussed under social learning in Chapter 4. In addition to the data that emerge from participant discussion of their involvement with domestic violence and personal fighting, participants are also asked *Does the military think violence is justified outside of combat, Does your unit think violence is justified outside of combat, and Has your military training taught you to justify violence, How important is honor and respect, What does the military/your unit/you think about the use of violence to achieve honor and respect, and Is it worth being punished for*. These questions pull from some of the literature on subcultures of violence (Wolfgang and Ferracuti, 1967; Doerner, 1980; Luckenbill & Doyle, 1989; Cohen et al, 1996; Ellison, 1991). Again, the answers to these questions along with the description provided by participants regarding the crime itself shed light on the relationship of social learning to personal crime.

We're ass-kickers, everyone knows not to fuck with us...some jackass burned our guideon⁴¹ (*a flag representing the unit*)...lets just say our Captain told us to handle it...he's (*person who stole guideon*) still walking funny.

An E-4 got his ass whipped by some civilian at a bar...word got back to his squad leader and he (*squad leader*) got in his ass and told him that he needed to go back and represent the unit.

Its my house, my rules...I demand a certain amount of respect in my house.

Yeah, its unit pride – you do what you have to...somebody is disrespecting you or someone in the squad...you better do handle it.

You have to have stand up for yourself because its you, its your buddies, its your unit, it's the Army, if someone is shitting on you they're shitting on everything you're about...you can't let it slide.

I can't stand being disrespected...that is one thing that will get me to fight.

Maybe when I was younger I would fight if someone challenged my manhood or whatever...now, I don't care much what you say to me...but my wife, my friends...then I'll fight...yeah, I'll fight for their honor and respect...which I guess in a way is mine too.

Its like if someone was messing with your girl, you gotta save face.

Honor and respect is all you got, you can't let anyone take it from you.

I don't like taking shit from people...I don't mess with civilians as much as some other guys...I personally can't take shit from guys in other branches. So I'll take on any Navy or Air Force asshole that wants to run his mouth. The Marines are a little tougher fight, but they talk more than the other two...and I said tougher, not smarter...I can still take them on, just gotta give them a math problem before I start swinging...but yeah, with guys from other branches, then its not just your honor – it's the Army's honor you gotta defend.

If some jackass is mouthing off and I beat his ass, yeah I might get kicked out or arrested...but I saved face, so I can sleep at night...I defended my buddies and the Army, so they all know they can trust me...yeah, its worth it.

Punishment? Like what, getting arrested? Who cares? I'd rather get arrested than let my boys down or get punked by somebody.

⁴¹ Pronounced *guide-on*

My squad leader tells us to do whatever is necessary regardless of the situation...you gotta defend yourself, your buddies, your squad, your platoon and so on.

The above data suggests that honor and respect are important to the participants in this research and that those involved deem violence as an acceptable method for achieving and/or maintaining honor and respect. Honor and respect, as well as beliefs favorable to using violence in regards to honor and respect, are according to this sample learned in the military.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I discuss the nature and extent of personal crime in this sample. The two primary themes that emerge are domestic violence and personal (individual) fighting. I also discuss the relationship between the theoretical themes of Chapter 4 and domestic violence and personal fighting. According to the data, both domestic violence and personal fighting result from various strains and the inability to legitimately cope with the frustration and anger those strains cause. It is also apparent that military personnel learn to value the use of violence, especially in regards to using violence to achieve or maintain honor and respect.

Similar to the discussion on substance use as a coping mechanism, future research should focus on the possibility that military personnel are using violence as a coping mechanism for work-related stress. If strains unique to the military, coupled with the lack of coping available in the military, are leading to violence, this should be explored either through a self-report survey or an examination of military personnel convicted of violent offenses.

Future research should also explore the possible social learning angle discussed in this chapter. If there is indeed a “subculture of violence” in the military, it is imperative that this be examined further. Participants in this sample describe an environment where violence is both condoned and encouraged, especially if it is used to defend oneself, one’s unit, and/or the Army in general. If a subculture of violence, or social learning of violence, can be established and made generalizable, this will go a long way in explaining and predicting violent crime among those in the military.

Chapter 8: Property Crime

In Chapter 1 it was discussed that current arrest data for the Army shows very little property crime. I explore the issue of property crime in this research and according to participants' perspectives; it would seem that property crime is not a problem in the military. I make special note of "participants' perspectives" because the data suggest that there is a high level of property crime, yet to hear participants explain their behavior, it is clear that they do not believe it to be a problem.

There is a high response rate to the self-report items dealing with property crime. While respondents spoke of "stealing" something, the vast majority fall under the category of "less than \$50" value. The explanations provided for the behavior suggest that participants believe that there is little property crime and they would certainly question the "criminal nature" of what property crime was uncovered.

I will discuss personal crime in two sections; the first will be a discussion of the nature and extent of personal crime among the sample. Next I will discuss personal crime in relation to the theories discussed in Chapter 4. Implications for future research will be discussed in the chapter summary.

Property Crime: Nature and Extent

Participants are asked three direct questions dealing with violent behavior; *While in the military, have you ever stolen something less than \$50, While in the military have you stolen something more than \$50, While in the military, have you ever intentionally damaged someone else's property.*

In total there are 33 participants who respond in the affirmative to at least one of the aforementioned questions about property crime. This makes up 66% of the entire

sample. A breakdown of property crime is shown in Table 8-1 and a sample of quotations from the correlating responses follow.

Table 8-1: Property Crime

	Frequency	Percentage of Overall Sample	Percentage of Property Crime
Under \$50 Value	32	64%	97%
Over \$50 Value	6	12%	18%
Damaged Property	1	2%	3%

Yeah, everybody has souvenirs...either from the Army, from Iraq, Germany, Bosnia...you take something you like or take something just for the memory.

Come check out my basement...I have enough MRE's (*Meal-Ready-To Eat*⁴²) to last the rest of my life.

I have live rounds, I have grenades, I have all sorts of shit I *forgot* to turn in.

(*Medic*) I have a ton of left over supplies...I don't necessarily think of it as stealing though...it was issued to me and I just didn't give it back...they don't miss it.

Show me a guy in the Army who doesn't have some shit that he shouldn't hanging up in his office and I'll show you a guy who just keeps his shit at home.

I got a bunch of quote-unquote *souvenirs* from my time in Iraq.

Like I like to say, going on patrol can be just as good as going shopping...you clear a house or a store or whatever, its free game if you can carry it back to the rack⁴³ and if you think you can get it back to the states.

Oh yeah, I've got some souvenirs...I also have "lost" a lot of things. I have a flak-jacket that was "lost", I have some live rounds that were "lost", a grenade...actually a bunch of shit that has been issued to me came up missing and I had to request replacements.

Technically? Yes, technically I've stolen things – less than \$50...I say technically because its not really stealing to me...its more *acquiring*.

I've got a lot of little shit taken from the shop...car parts, tools, whatever...they don't miss it.

⁴² MRE's are self-contained, individual field rations (food for soldiers in the field)

⁴³ Sleeping quarters

Souvenirs are great...guys keep them by their bunks...they're hard to ship home because they could get caught...so most guys just hold on to them and carry them back with all their gear when they get rotated out.

I'll hoard MRE's like gold...you'd be surprised how much bargaining potential they have when guys are really hungry...they're also fun to give to friends back home.

I pretty much have everything I've ever been issued back at my house...it all was lost at one time or another and had to be replaced.

We found a weapons dump and we each took something back...I got a handgun but sold it after those guys in Pennsylvania got busted robbing a bank with rifles they took from a weapons dump they had found.

My favorite words from my supply sergeant are "don't worry about it, we'll just order a new one".

I keep a bunch of meds (*medication and medical supplies*).

There are three main property offense themes I would like to focus on for the rest of this chapter. The first two deal with stealing something worth less than \$50, and the third is stealing something worth more than \$50. I am breaking the category of less than \$50 into two themes that emerge; items from the Army, and items from combat. Table 8-2 shows the frequencies for these themes. Given the high frequency of those who have engaged in property crime, it is fruitless to try and discuss demographic differences.

Table 8-2: Property Crime Themes

	Frequency	Percentage of Overall Sample	Percentage of Property Crime
Under \$50 Value	32	64%	97%
Items from Army	26	52%	87%
Items from Combat	20	40%	67%
Over \$50 Value	6	8%	13%

Property Crime: Theoretical Themes

There are three key theoretical themes that emerge as relevant to property crime. In the larger strain theme, coping emerge in relation to property crime. It should be noted that this is a combination of two themes under strain, as it also pulls from the anomie theme. Social learning is also very relevant to understanding property crime. Finally, the *techniques of neutralization* is helpful in understanding this behavior. This theory put forth by Sykes and Matza (1964) is not measured by this research, nor did it appear anywhere else in the data. However it can be considered with both learning and control theory, and in examining responses concerning property crime, elements of Sykes and Matza's (1964) work emerge.

The first theme that may help understand property crime among the sample is coping. I combine anomie and coping themes based on the responses given by participants that suggest that property crime is in a sense being used to retaliate against the hardships brought on by the Army. By this I mean that participants rationalize their behavior by saying that they were entitled certain concessions. In reading their responses it seems that participants are coping with their strain through self-imposed compensation. This is not a legitimate coping mechanism and therefore fits under strain theory.

Its back pay...I figure since I'm so underpaid, I'll compensate myself with some souvenirs to make up for the fact that I'm risking my life for chump change.

Fuck them...we're fighting so they can have better lives and they're all still trying to kill us...so if you're shooting at me and then I go clear out your house to protect myself, I'm going to take a souvenir since you clearly don't appreciate what I'm trying to do for you.

That's been around as long as people have been fighting...spoils of war right? I'm over there and I'm winning, so I get to take whatever I want. Shit, people use to rape and pillage, now we just want to take a knick-knack back home to our wives.

The Army takes from me, so I take from them...evens shit out.

Honestly it helps me think about my combat service...it gives me a reminder of what I've been through and it gives me something...not a reward, but just like something for my trouble you know?

The next theoretical theme is social learning. Participants describe both how they learned how to get (steal) things as well as learning that such behavior is acceptable (beliefs favorable).

We were on patrol and this guy and I go into this house and clear it...we're going through and there are some artifacts or some shit on a table and he starts putting shit in his ruck (*rucksack*) and telling me to do it too...he kept saying we deserved it, that we're saving these people and we're not getting paid shit and so its ok.

Once I got to my unit some guys told me about losing stuff...they said to take some shit home and then fill out paperwork for replacements.

A buddy of mine got back from his tour and talked about all the stuff he had ganked here and there...told me that when I go to take home whatever I can fit.

Everyone does it...there really isn't anything all that wrong with it...you keep some shit you were issued...you keep some shit you found in Iraq...that's just what you do.

Honest to God people would call dibs AS we were clearing a house...so remember that there may be some bad motherfuckers in there waiting to shoot us or blow us up, but if a guy sees a clock he wants he'll call dibs.

Shit, everyone does it, even officers...most of the time they have the better shit. I may get some dish or something, meanwhile the captain has a fucking golden sword or some shit.

I had my first MRE from my dad, cause he took it when he was in...so I don't think its stealing if everybody was doing it then and everybody is doing it now.

The Army orders everything in mass, they plan to have replacements...that's why its easy and ok for guys to take shit.

The final theme is the *techniques of neutralization*. Sykes and Matza (1964)

suggest that those who commit illegal acts will neutralize the values that act as controls

that would normally prevent the individual from committing the act. This neutralization, or rationalization or justification, helps explain why normally law abiding people can engage in illegal behavior. These techniques include the following:

Denial of responsibility (it was not my fault)

Denial of injury (it was no big deal, they can afford the loss)

Denial of the victim (they had it coming)

Condemnation of the condemners (you are just as bad)

Appeal to higher loyalties (it was for a good reason)

There are responses that already exhibit techniques of neutralization, these and others are shown below.

Everyone does it...there really isn't anything all that wrong with it...you keep some shit you were issued...you keep some shit you found in Iraq...that's just what you do.

Shit, everyone does it, even officers...most of the time they have the better shit. I may get some dish or something, meanwhile the captain has a fucking golden sword or some shit.

I had my first MRE from my dad, cause he took it when he was in...so I don't think its stealing if everybody was doing it then and everybody is doing it now.

The Army orders everything in mass, they plan to have replacements...that's why its easy and ok for guys to take shit.

(*Medic*) I have a ton of left over supplies...I don't necessarily think of it as stealing though...it was issued to me and I just didn't give it back...they don't miss it.

Technically? Yes, technically I've stolen things – less than \$50...I say technically because its not really stealing to me...its more acquiring.

I've got a lot of little shit taken from the shop...car parts, tools, whatever...they don't miss it.

Its back pay...I figure since I'm so underpaid, I'll compensate myself with some souvenirs to make up for the fact that I'm risking my life for chump change.

Fuck them...we're fighting so they can have better lives and they're all still trying to kill us...so if you're shooting at me and then I go clear out your house to protect myself, I'm going to take a souvenir since you clearly don't appreciate what I'm trying to do for you.

That's been around as long as people have been fighting...spoils of war right? I'm over there and I'm winning, so I get to take whatever I want. Shit, people use to rape and pillage, now we just want to take a knick-knack back home to our wives.

The Army takes from me, so I take from them...evens shit out.

Its not stealing if the Army doesn't know its gone or doesn't care.

They're the ones we're fighting for, they owe us some shit.

Given this data, it appears that participants who have stolen while in the Army engage in some techniques of neutralization, perhaps to counter the controls that are there. Participants describe a denial of responsibility, that it is not their fault or that everyone does it. Participants deny injury and deny the victim, describing how the Army or the Iraqis have it coming and/or are not harmed by it. Some even appeal to higher loyalties by describing how their behavior is part of a larger concept of war or service.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I discuss the nature and extent of property crime among the sample. What emerges is a high frequency of minor theft, minor in terms of value and in offenders' perceived loss. Within that finding two themes emerge; the idea of taking from the Army and taking from combat zones. Participants talk of "losing" items that are issued to them by the Army, in actuality keeping the items and getting replacements issued. Participants also describe simply taking items, "souvenirs", from the Army and from houses, stores, et cetera in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Also discussed in this chapter is the relationship between theory and property crime. What emerge in the data are possible explanations from strain, social learning, and the techniques of neutralization. Participants describe that to cope with the strain of anomie, combat, or insufficient pay, they take from the Army or Iraqis. For these participants their strain is eased by their illegitimate behavior. The “souvenirs” from the Army or a given combat zone are considered as compensation for the strain the participants endure. Participants also discuss the social learning involved in property crime and how everyone holds beliefs favorable to this type of behavior. Finally participants articulate techniques of neutralization whereby they justified their behavior which may be in response to controls that are in place.

The primary recommendation for future reference is to develop better measures for property crime. These examples of property crime are somewhat military-specific and should be researched further. It should also be explored further what all is contributing to the feelings towards this type of behavior. Does the military encourage such behavior and beliefs towards the behavior (social learning)? Is this kind of behavior a coping mechanism for strain? I believe I have found some possible answers to these questions in my sample; however more specific measurements and measurements of determined important issues should be used in future research.

Chapter 9: Remaining Offense Data

This chapter is devoted to disclosing and discussing the results of the self-report items not yet discussed in this dissertation. In the preceding chapters, different behaviors measured in the self-report section of the interview have been discussed. In this chapter I would like to provide the results for all of the remaining items measured in the self-report data. These behaviors did not emerge as important data due to the lack of clarity of the questions used to measure the behavior, how participants describe them, or the inability of the theoretical themes to explain their occurrence. As a result they are not addressed in individual chapters; however in an effort to share all of the data, results for those behaviors are included in the Table 9-1 below with corresponding quotes to follow.

Table 9-1: Self-Reported Criminal Behavior

Theme	Frequency	Percentage of Overall Sample
Domestic Violence	6	12%
Theft Under \$50	32	64%
Theft Over \$50	6	12%
Damaged Property	1	2%
Marijuana	18	36%
Other Substance Use	21	42%
Personal Fight	11	22%
AWOL	3	6%
Adultery	16	36%
Drunk/Disorderly	1	2%
Group Fight	2	4%
Insubordination	34	68%

I ask participants whether or not they have gone AWOL (Absent without Leave). I ask participants not to include times when they were late for duty or off-post when they were not granted leave, both of which would technically result in AWOL status. Rather the question concerns leaving the post with no intent to return (also called desertion). Three participants report having gone AWOL. Two of these participants went AWOL

prior to deployment with the third going AWOL after returning from a tour in Iraq.

Selected quotes concerning this item are listed below.

I didn't want to go...we got the orders and I freaked out a little...they ask us when we sign up if we're ok going to war...but I never thought I'd have to go...so I bailed for a couple of weeks and finally my squad leader got a hold of me and talked me into coming back.

When I got back, I was done...done with the Army...I just needed to get away.

I have people down in Alabama, so when I was told we were going to Iraq, I got a ride from a buddy from Riley (*Ft. Riley, KS*) down to Alabama and was there for over a year.

I ask participants whether they have had sex with someone other than their spouse while in the military. According to the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), adultery is a punishable violation. I believe this question is perhaps too sensitive. Participants seem comfortable enough to answer yes or no to the question, but it was very difficult for them to elaborate even with the probes. I should note that this difficulty could be the direct result of my hesitancy and discomfort as a researcher asking this question. The data that is provided on adultery seems to mostly be relevant to self-control as participants are describing low self-control in regards to remaining faithful to their spouses as well as in regards to internal controls after having drunk alcohol.

Selected quotes concerning this item are listed below.

You go on an unaccompanied tour and...well...that's a long time to go without sex. So if you're in Germany or Korea or wherever, you quote-unquote fill the void.

I had this relationship with a woman on-and-off for a couple of years...nothing serious...just we'd get drunk together and shit would happen.

My wife was in Oklahoma the whole time I was down at Benning (*Ft. Benning, GA*)...that's 18 months and she came down maybe twice...so I messed around...we're moving to Ft. Lewis together though, so I'll knock that shit off then.

You heard of beer goggles? Well I got beer morals...its not that I see shit differently, but I think differently...I'll just leave it at that.

The final remaining question that I would like to share in this chapter deals with insubordination. Insubordination is an umbrella term used to describe conflict between superiors and subordinates. Examples of insubordination include failure to follow orders, disrespect, and others. Like the previous two items, insubordination is considered a military-specific crime for this sample and is punishable by the UCMJ.

I think this question encompasses too much and is difficult for participants to answer. According to the UCMJ, insubordination includes both failure to obey orders (section 891, UCMJ) and insubordinate conduct towards superior officers (section 890, UCMJ). In my operationalization of the concept of insubordination, I ask questions regarding following orders because this is the most common form of insubordination. However I did not ask questions about the less common, but perhaps more serious, behavior or conduct towards superior officers.

As discussed in Chapter 4, all 50 participants claim that they have been given orders they did not want to follow. When asked whether they have ever intentionally failed to follow orders, a good portion of participants answered in the affirmative. While such high responses to these questions about insubordination should be encouraging, the large number actually seems to negate any real value. If participants have issues with orders, I am not sure that the data is very valuable because it is stating the obvious; that people do not always agree with their orders and sometimes do not follow them. I plan to, and future research should, consider insubordinate conduct when constructing variables in future research on military populations. Selected quotes concerning this item are listed below.

I didn't feel anything about it. They don't pay me to feel or think, they pay me to follow orders...so who gives a shit if I agree with them or not?

How did it make me feel? Made me feel like anybody does when their boss tells them something they don't want to do. My job is to follow orders, not to decide if they're right or wrong.

Shoot...that's why they call them orders...doesn't matter if I agree with them or not or how I feel about them.

This one green LT (*lieutenant*) was giving us marching orders and chose a bad route and made a dumb choice for who would be in the lead vehicle...I tried to suggest a better way to go about it and he ripped my ass in front of everyone...luckily nothing happened, but that shit could have cost lives.

I mean technically, yeah, I've intentionally failed to follow orders...but you gotta understand your own question...we get orders all the time, you don't necessarily have to listen to all the little shit, but the bigger stuff you do.

There is not one single person in the Army who has never disobeyed an order.

Sure, you'll get an order from the brass and then nobody does it unless Top or the platoon sergeant or your squad leader tells you to...if they don't back it or tell you not to worry about it, then that order doesn't get followed.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I discuss the frequency rates of three self-reported offenses that are not covered in previous chapters; AWOL, adultery, and insubordination. These behaviors did not emerge as important data due to the lack of clarity of the questions used to measure the behavior, how participants describe them, or the inability of the theoretical themes to explain their occurrence.

The data are useful in providing direction for future research. As the current war in the middle east continues, AWOL will undoubtedly remain a concern. Future research could use arrest data coupled with some form of self-report survey to better assess this behavior. An important consideration for future research is the sensitivity of this issue.

This particular offense carries with it a significant stigma and social sanctioning, as well as serious legal sanctioning.

Similarly, future research should be mindful of the sensitive nature of researching adultery. I found it difficult asking, and the participants found it difficult when asked, about adultery. The data provided here coupled with my personal knowledge of military personnel suggests to me that this might be an unchecked offense among the military.

Finally, as stated earlier, my measures of insubordination should have included insubordinate behavior and conduct towards superior officers. I thought asking about following orders would address an offense that potentially contains elements of strain, control, and learning theories. I did not anticipate that the question would actually yield little valuable data. Future research should consider the other form(s) of insubordination and better flesh out the various issues within this offense.

Chapter 10: Comparing High and Low-Rate Offenders on Selected Socio-Demographic and Theoretical Variables

In this chapter I divide the sample into two offending groups; high-rate offenders and low-rate offenders based on frequency data provided by respondents when asked *While in the military have you done X, and If yes, how many times in the last year?* The first section of this chapter is devoted to a discussion about the formation of these groups as well as the data about the groups. The second section of the chapter takes the closed-ended questions from Chapter 4 and applies them to the two offender groups. This section is further divided into the three main theories and contains data regarding the aforementioned closed-ended questions in comparison to the offender groups.

High-Rate vs. Low-Rate Offenders

One of the intuitive ways to examine criminal activity of a sample is to divide the sample into two groups; high rate offenders and low rate offenders. In order to keep a proper audit so that this research can be replicated, I will explain the coding involved in determining these two groups.

Participants are scored based on their responses to the self-report items regarding behavior within the last year. Participants who had not engaged in the particular behavior within the last year are coded as “0”. One point is assigned if the participant answers in the affirmative to the question (*During the last year, have you committed X*). Next, points are assigned depending on how many times the participant reports committing the act in the last year (2.5 points for 2-3 times, 6 points for once a month or less, 20 points for every 2-3 weeks, 52 points for once a week, 130 points for 2-3 times a week, and 365 points for once a day or more). There are 12 self-report items, thereby giving participants a maximum possible score of 4380.

The range in scores is 9.5 to 437. When I initially grouped members by selecting the mean (65.8), the groups are unequal with 38 in the low-rate group and only 12 in the high-rate group. To get an even distribution within the groups, I then selected the median (33) and thus created two equal groups (25 in each group). Those with a score of less than 33 are grouped as “low-rate offenders” and those with a score of 33 or higher are grouped as “high-rate” offenders.

Table 10-1 shows the demographic breakdown of the offender groups. The first column contains the frequency of individuals in the entire sample, the second column shows the frequency of those that are high-rate offenders, and the third column shows the percentage of high-rate offenders within that particular demographic group.

Table 10-1: High-Rate Offenders

	Frequency in Sample	Frequency of High- Rate Offenders	Percentage of High-Rate Offenders
Race			
White	24	14	58%
Black	12	6	50%
Hispanic	10	4	40%
Asian	1	0	0%
American Indian	1	0	0%
Other	2	1	50%
Age			
18-25	21	14	67%
26-35	18	8	44%
36-45	8	3	38%
46-55	3	0	0%
Rank			
Enlisted	18	12	67%
NCO	24	9	38%
Officer	8	4	50%
MOS			
Infantry	12	7	58%
Field Artillery	6	3	50%
Mechanic	4	3	75%
Police	3	0	0%
Engineer	1	0	0%
Transportation	8	5	63%
Medic	6	2	67%
Aviation	3	0	0%
Armored Infantry	7	5	71%

It has already been stated that this research uses a small, nonrepresentative sample, and therefore it is difficult to make generalizations from the data. None of the differences in the table are statistically significant at the .05 level. Nevertheless there are two interesting findings in Table 10-1. First, there appears to be an age effect with younger military members being more likely to be high-rate offenders compared to older military members. This might be explained by life-course criminology that suggests that individuals “age-out” of criminal behavior (Piquero & Mazarolle, 2001).

Second, there are more enlisted soldiers making up the high-rate offender group compared to NCO's and officers. This finding can be explained by social control theory. First, one could posit that the longer one is in the military, the more likely it is that various external and internal controls will have an effect. Second, as individuals become more involved in the Army, as individuals gain more rank and more responsibility, those individuals gain more social control and stake in conformity, both of which keep the individuals from offending.

The next section takes the data from the closed-ended questions as well as the theoretical themes obtained from the open-ended questions and applies it to the offender groups described above.

Strain

This section discusses the relationship between the closed-ended categories for strain and the offender groups. I created several strain scales, with the response for each scale item being coded "1" if it indicates strain and "0" if it does not. Items that are more open-ended in nature are assigned a point if the participant indicates strain in his or her response. I then divide participants into high strain and low strain groups based on whether their scale scores are above or below the median score. Table 10-2 shows the results from this process.

For overall strain, scores range from 4 to 20 out of a possible 22 points and the median is 14. There are 24 individuals placed into the "high strain" group and 26 into the "low strain" group. Items used for this variable include:

Have you ever been demoted in rank?

Have you been transferred out of a position/assignment that you really enjoyed?

Have you been demoted in the last year?

Do you worry about promotions and awards?

Are superiors unfair when it comes to giving awards?

Have you been given orders that you do not agree with?

Do you have a lot of debt that you need to repay?

Is there too much yelling or verbal abuse in the military?

Do you suffer a lot of physical pain due to your work?

Do you worry about getting injured/losing your life due to work?

What types of things cause stress for you, upset you, or make you feel bad?

Do you feel stressed as a result of the type or work that you do?

Do you fight a lot with your spouse/partner?

Do you feel you get enough time with your spouse/partner? (reverse coded)

Has being deployed caused problems in your relationship?

How well do you get along with your spouse/partner/children? (reverse coded)

Do you think your housing allowance is sufficient? (reverse coded)

Do you have trouble paying bills?

Do you receive financial support from anyone?

Were any of your friends killed or wounded in combat?

Were you wounded?

Do you have nightmares about combat?

For work strain, scores range from 1 to 10 out of a possible 11 points and the median is 3. There are 25 individuals assigned to “high work strain” and 25 assigned to “low work strain”. This variable was created using the following items:

Have you ever been demoted in rank?

How many times have you been demoted?

Have you been demoted in the last year?

Do you worry about promotions and awards?

Are superiors unfair when it comes to giving awards?

Have you been given orders that you do not agree with?

Is there too much yelling or verbal abuse in the military?

Do you suffer a lot of physical pain due to your work?

Were any of your friends killed or wounded in combat?

Were you wounded?

Do you have nightmares about combat?

Family strain scores range from 0 to 4 out of a possible 4 points and the median is

2. There are 24 participants who are married and/or have children, and an additional 17 who are in a relationship. The remaining 9 individuals who are not married, do not have children, and are not in a relationship are excluded from analysis. For family strain there are 20 individuals placed in “high family strain” and 21 individuals placed in “low family strain”. Family strain was created using the following variables:

Do you fight a lot with your spouse/partner?

Do you feel you get enough time with your spouse/partner? (reverse coded)

Has being deployed caused problems in your relationship?

How well do you get along with your spouse/partner/children? (reverse coded)

For economic strain the scores range from 0 to 4 out of a possible 4 points and the median is 1. There are 11 individuals who scored more than one point to qualify for “high economic strain”. Economic strain items include the following:

Do you think your housing allowance is sufficient? (reverse coded)

Do you have a lot of debt that you need to repay?

Do you have trouble paying bills?

Do you receive financial support from anyone?

Finally, coping strain scores range from 0 to 2 out of a possible 2 points and the median is 1. There are only 14 individuals who scored more than one point to qualify for “high coping strain”. Individuals in “high coping strain” are those who answer that they did not have people they could talk to about stress and/or answer that getting help for stress is a sign of weakness. The coping strain variables were created using the following items:

Are there people you can talk to about your stress? (reverse coded)

Do you feel that talking about or getting help for stress or problems is a sign of maturity or weakness? (point assigned for “weakness” or similar answer)

Table 10-2: Percentage of High-Rate Offenders in Strain Groups

	Frequency	Percentage of High-Rate Offenders
High Strain	24	56%
Low Strain	26	24%
High Work Strain	25	44%
Low Work Strain	25	32%
High Family Strain	20	44%
Low Family Strain	21	36%
High Economic Strain	11	36%
Low Economic Strain	39	24%
High Coping	14	44%
Low Coping	36	24%

I calculated the chi-square probability for the relationships listed in the table⁴⁴.

The only relationships that are significant at the .05 level are that between overall *strain* and offending ($r = .95$) and *work strain* and offending ($r = .98$).

This data is encouraging in that most of the percentage differences are in the expected direction. For example, high-rate offenders are more common among those high in total strain, high in work strain, and economic strain. The data also show an expected direction in terms of poor coping and offending. A high percentage of high-rate offenders are high in coping strain, meaning that those individuals have poor coping skills or a lack of legitimate coping outlets.

These findings are also seen in the percentage of high-rate offenders who are high in family strain, however the difference is smaller. This could be because of the items that are used to measure family strain and/or the scale are not an efficient indicators of

⁴⁴ This is simply a rough attempt to determine if there is any significance in these relationships. I acknowledge that significance tests are best used with random samples and regression analyses, yet exploring significance is helpful in understanding the data.

“degrees” of family strain. It could also very well be an unanticipated finding. Meaning that contrary to what we would expect given the literature on strain theory, participants in this sample who are high in family strain are not necessarily more likely to be high-rate offenders.

The data is especially encouraging for overall strain and work strain given the statistical significance of the relationships. The data suggests that there are more individuals in this sample who are high in overall strain/work strain and also are high-rate offenders compared to those who are low in overall strain/work strain and are mostly low rate offenders.

Social Learning

The next table shows the relationship between the closed-ended categories for social learning and the offender groups. I created several social learning scales, with the response for each scale item being coded “1” if it indicates social learning and “0” if it does not. I then divide participants into high strain and low strain groups based on whether their scale scores are above or below the median score.

For overall social learning, scores range from 1 to 7 out of a possible 7 points and the median is 4. There are 26 individuals placed into the “high social learning” group and 24 into the “low social learning” group. The social learning variable was created using the following items:

Does the military value violence outside of combat?

Does your unit value violence outside of combat?

How important is honor and respect? (point assigned if respondent answered in the affirmative)

Prior to enlisting, did any of your friends engage in criminal activity?

Do you see violence in your current work?

Do any of your military friends now engage in criminal activity?

Are you in a gang now or do you have gang ties?

For beliefs favorable to violence, scores range from 0 to 2 out of a possible 2 points and individuals are grouped by scores of 0 or 1 (low) and those who scored 2 (high). There are 22 individuals assigned to “high beliefs favorable to violence” and 28 assigned to “low beliefs favorable to violence”. This variable was created using the following items:

Does the military think violence is justified outside of combat?

Does your unit or people in your unit think violence is justified outside of combat?

Learning honor and respect scores also range from 0 to 2 out of a possible 2 points and participants are divided based on scores of 0 and 1, or scores of 2. For honor and respect there are 9 individuals placed in “high honor and respect” and 41 individuals placed in “low honor and respect”. Honor and Respect was created using the following items:

What does the military think about the use of violence to achieve/maintain honor and respect?

What does your unit think about the use of violence to achieve/maintain honor and respect?

Finally, delinquent peer association had scores ranging from 0 to 4 and the median is 1. There are 26 individuals placed in the “low delinquent peer association”

category and 24 placed in the “high delinquent peer” category. The scale for delinquent peers was calculated using the following items:

Prior to enlisting, did you have friends who engaged in any criminal activity?

Do any of your military friends now engage in criminal activity?

Were you ever in a gang or did you have gang ties prior to enlistment?

Are you in a gang now or do you now have gang ties?

Table 10-3: Percentage of High-Rate Offenders in Social Learning Groups

	Frequency	Percentage of High-Rate Offenders
High Social Learning	26	28%
Low Social Learning	24	20%
High Beliefs Favorable to Violence	22	36%
Low Beliefs Favorable to Violence	28	8%
High Honor and Respect	9	44%
Low Honor and Respect	41	44%
High Delinquent Peers	24	24%
Low Delinquent Peers	26	16%

In calculating chi-square probabilities for the relationships in this table, none appear to be statistically significant. The relationship closest to significance is *beliefs favorable to violence* with a chi-square of .82. Despite the lack in significance, the finding that stands out the most for this table is that the percentage of those low in beliefs favorable to violence that are in the low-rate offender group is incredibly high. This might indicate that beliefs favorable to violence are important in understanding/predicting offending. It is also important to note that delinquent peer association does not show that high of a percentage for high-rate offenders, this is inconsistent with much of the literature that argues a strong relationship between delinquent peer association and criminal behavior.

Control

The closed-ended questions for social control theory are difficult to group into “low” and “high” categories. There is some minor variation for moral beliefs and external controls and I have included them in this discussion. For moral beliefs there is a range of 0-3. There are only 8 individuals placed in the “low” moral beliefs group. There is a similar lack of variation for external controls, with scores ranging from 0-5. There are 35 individuals placed in the “high” external control group and 15 in the “low” external control group. I have created scales for moral beliefs, external controls, using the following variables:

Have you re-enlisted?

Will you re-enlist?

How important do you think your work is?

How much do you like the military?

Do you think soldiers should uphold a high moral standard?

Do you like to take risks?

How important are the core Army values to you?

Did you have a quick temper growing up?

I have also included specific items in the table regarding self-control; *do you like to take risks* and *did you have a quick temper growing up*. There are 23 respondents who answer yes to both of these questions and when this is put against the high-rate and low-rate offender group data; there is an interesting breakdown that is shown in table 10-4.

Table 10-4: Percentage of High-Rate Offenders in Control Groups

	Frequency	Percentage of High-Rate Offenders
High Moral Beliefs	42	24%
Low Moral Beliefs	8	52%
High External Controls	35	32%
Low External Controls	15	40%
High Self-Control	27	12%
Low Self-Control	23	36%

The chi-square probability for the control relationship is not significant. Despite the lack of significance, most of the percentage differences are in the expected direction. For example, high-rate offenders are more common among those low in moral beliefs, low in external controls, and low in self-control (high in risk taking). Perhaps most intriguing is that even though there are a small number of individuals in the *low moral beliefs* group, there is a large difference in the percentage of high-rate offenders who are low in moral beliefs compared to those high in moral beliefs.

One of the limitations of qualitative research is that by nature, it is difficult to quantify certain aspects of the data. As discussed, much of the theoretical data could not be divided into groups due to a lack of data, insufficient variance, et cetera. What is provided in this chapter is not meant to form generalizable statements. This research recognizes the small sample size and the consequent non-representativeness of the sample. By doing these simple analyses, we can get a better sense of possible concepts and possible relationships, strengthening the literature so that future research can accurately and appropriately investigate this complex issue of military offending.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I provide frequency and demographic data for high-rate offenders. Also in this chapter I conduct analyses involving dividing the sample into various groups. In addition to grouping the sample into a “high-rate” offending group, I also create theory groups similarly divided on “high” and “low” measures. As stated, the data that resulted and the discussion that followed are limited due to the size and nature of this sample and research. However the data do provide valuable insight into this area and provides both some empirical support for why such research is needed as well as how to do such research.

All of the tests of significance are unable to prove statistical significance for the relationships in the tables, except for the relationship between *overall strain* and *work strain* and offending. The work strain relationship is a really important finding given that the uniqueness of this sample is determined by the type of work the population is assigned. If there is a significant relationship between military work and strain, and ultimately offending, this is an important finding because “military work” is what separates this population from the general population. Furthermore, the data on strain suggests that there are more individuals in this sample who are high in strain and also are high-rate offenders compared to those who are low in strain and are mostly low rate offenders. This data is promising not just for understanding the military population, but also in terms of adding to the literature on a possible relationship between strain and offending.

As stated, there are no other relationships that are shown to be statistically significant. Given that these tests of significance are a rough attempt to gauge

significance, I believe there is still value in the results shown throughout this chapter. For example, the percentage of those low in beliefs favorable to violence that are in the low-rate offender group is high. This might indicate that beliefs favorable to violence are important in understanding/predicting offending for those in the military.

It is also important to note that delinquent peer association does not show that high of a percentage of high-rate offenders, this is an unanticipated finding given that it is inconsistent with much of the literature that argues a strong relationship between delinquent peer association and criminal behavior. These findings suggest that more than beliefs in honor and respect, and more than delinquent peer association, beliefs favorable to violence might be a predictor of criminal behavior. If the military condones violence, trains violence, and instills beliefs favorable to violence, this is an important finding that these beliefs may explain criminal behavior for military offenders, and may further add to the literature on social learning and offending.

The results discussed in this chapter suggest a possible relationship between being low in moral beliefs and external controls; however there is a lack of variation as well as a lack of statistical significance. Despite this limitation, I think this is an important finding about moral beliefs, risk taking, self-control, and offending behavior for this sample. The more important question is determining variation in control for military personnel. It was discussed earlier in this dissertation that the military is assumed to be high in control given the amount of external controls that exist as well as the efforts to instill self-control (discipline). Therefore if we conclude that low self-control and low moral beliefs might predict criminal behavior in the military, then we need to better

understand why there is variation in self-control and moral beliefs among those in the military.

Future research should build on this idea of low and high-rate military offenders. With quantitative measures and a larger sample, future research could better examine whether there are differences between the two groups. Such an examination could provide results that could aid in generalizing and predicting crime among military personnel through regression analyses. Given the crime type themes and theoretical themes uncovered by this research, researchers can take these themes and construct a large scale quantitative study that would allow an examination of low and high-rate offenders and could lead to the desired generalizability and predictive ability.

Chapter 11: Combat and Crime

One of the important themes that emerges in this data is the role combat plays in a variety of areas. As stated in Chapter 3, a strong majority (84%) of this sample has had combat experience. Furthermore, one of the key themes discussed under strain theory is the strain that results from negative combat experience. In this chapter I will discuss the relationship between combat and the self-reported offending that is measured. The chapter is divided into sections; the first section will discuss crimes committed *while in* combat, and crimes committed *as a result of* combat.

These different sections are not to imply that these are distinctly different phenomena, certainly there will be overlap between crimes committed while in combat and those committed as a result of certain effects of combat. The purpose of this chapter is to explore the role combat may play in offending and the two main roles it plays are as a setting and as a cause. I acknowledge the possible overlap, yet I think in understanding the broader relationship between combat and crime, it is important to consider these two different specific relationships.

Crimes in Combat

One of the important probes that is asked during the self-report section of the interview was *Have you done this during deployment*. Table 11-1 shows a breakdown of the offenses that were committed while the participant was deployed.

Table 11-1: Crimes while in Combat

	Frequency	Percentage of Sample	Percentage of Offense
Theft Under \$50	20	40%	67%
Theft Over \$50	3	6%	75%
Marijuana	8	16%	75%
Other Substance	9	18%	82%
Personal Fight	2	4%	18%

For theft under \$50 and for both marijuana and other substance use, a significant percentage of the entire sample has engaged in those behaviors while in combat. The majority of participants who have stolen something and who have used marijuana or other substances have done so while deployed for combat.

The demographic breakdown for the 27 participants involved in the above offenses is shown in Table 11-2.

Table 11-2: Demographic Data of Crimes while in Combat

	Frequency	Percentage of Overall Sample	Percentage of Combat-Crime	Percentage of Demographic Group
Race				
White	15	30%	56%	63%
Black	10	20%	37%	83%
Hispanic	2	4%	7%	20%
Age				
18-25	9	18%	33%	43%
26-35	11	22%	41%	61%
36-45	6	12%	22%	75%
46-55	1	2%	4%	33%
Rank				
Enlisted	10	20%	37%	56%
NCO	14	28%	52%	58%
Officer	3	6%	11%	38%
MOS				
Infantry	10	20%	37%	83%
Field Artillery	2	4%	7%	33%
Mechanic	4	8%	15%	100%
Transportation	4	8%	15%	50%
Medic	3	6%	11%	50%
Aviation	1	2%	4%	33%
Armored Infantry	3	6%	11%	43%

These offenses committed while in combat have been discussed in terms of theory in the previous chapters. I have included quotes from those chapters along with others to illustrate this theme of crimes committed while in combat.

Yeah, everybody has souvenirs...either from the Army, from Iraq, Germany, Bosnia...you take something you like or take something just for the memory.

I got a bunch of souvenirs from my time in Iraq.

Like I like to say, going on patrol can be just as good as going shopping...you clear a house or a store or whatever, its free game if you can carry it back to the rack and if you think you can get it back to the states.

Souvenirs are great...guys keep them by their bunks...their hard to ship home because they could get caught...so most guys just hold on to them and carry them back with all their gear when they get rotated out.

I'll hoard MRE's like gold...you'd be surprised how much bargaining potential they have when guys are really hungry...they're also fun to give to friends back home.

We found a weapons dump and we each took something back...I got a handgun but sold it after those guys in Pennsylvania got busted robbing a bank with rifles they took from a weapons dump they had found.

We were on patrol and this guy and I go into this house and clear it...we're going through and there are some artifacts or some shit on a table and he starts putting shit in his ruck (*rucksack*) and telling me to do it too...he kept saying we deserved it, that we're saving these people and we're not getting paid shit and so its ok.

A buddy of mine got back from his tour and talked about all the stuff he had ganked here and there...told me that when I go to take home whatever I can fit.

Honest to God people would call dibs AS we were clearing a house...so remember that there may be some bad motherfuckers in there waiting to shoot us or blow us up, but if a guy sees a clock he wants he'll call dibs.

Shit, everyone does it, even officers...most of the time they have the better shit. I may get some dish or something, meanwhile the captain has a fucking golden sword or some shit.

Fuck them...we're fighting so they can have better lives and they're all still trying to kill us...so if you're shooting at me and then I go clear out your house to protect myself, I'm going to take a souvenir since you clearly don't appreciate what I'm trying to do for you.

That's been around as long as people have been fighting...spoils of war right? I'm over there and I'm winning, so I get to take whatever I want. Shit, people use to rape and pillage, now we just want to take a knick-knack back home to our wives.

They're the ones we're fighting for, they owe us some shit.

I didn't even know what heroin was until we got over there...but some guys said it was good shit and will do the trick.

I never did heroin until I got over there.

I started juicing when they made us start doing patrols over there...gave me energy, got me hype...now I'm still on some stuff because it helps me stay fit and shit.

We smoke whenever we can get it, makes all this bearable...hard to when we're stateside because we get tested...but when you go over (*to Iraq*) they don't test for shit.

I don't know...I guess its easy to get...it doesn't fuck you up too much...really it just helped me sleep when I was over there.

They have some good pot and dope (*heroin*) over in Afghanistan and Iraq...every now and then the brass will bring in some beer and let us have some, but guys can get pot and dope, and even coke from the locals whenever and most people over there hit that shit hard...helps deal with being in such a fucked up situation.

I wouldn't ever do that shit here...I wouldn't even know how to get it...but I'm telling you, you'll take what you can get over there to pass time, sleep, calm down, whatever.

A bunch of guys in this one squad were known for doing coke before going out on patrol...I always thought that was retarded...but they talked about how it made them more alert and gave them more energy and shit, so I gave it a shot one morning before we went out...not for me, shit just amplified whatever fear I already had.

I couldn't sleep...my body was all messed up because we weren't sleeping...then its never quiet...plus I can't shut my mind off...so I need shit to help me sleep.

Guys talk about the rush the juice gives them when they go out on patrol...I never liked firing my weapon before...but once I started juicing I loved it...like I wanted nothing more than to split someone open...shit's crazy because I got a lot more respect once I started talking hard and shit...when I was the nice guy who weighed 160 and didn't want to kill nobody – I'm a pussy...then I'm some asshole who is cut and wants to blow people up and I'm a badass...I got back to the states and I got off that shit...I don't care who liked me when I was that guy – I didn't like me...call me a pussy, call me a fag, I don't care anymore...besides, it makes you stronger but kills your endurance.

You need shit over there (*Iraq*)...you can sit here and talk all you want about how you would never do drugs...but you get there and you need it...you don't know what you're doing any given day, you don't know where you are, you don't know if you're winning or losing, you don't know shit...all that not-knowing sucks and you need something to fill that shit in.

I was on my first patrol and this guy who was on his second tour took me down this alley-type area...walked up to a guy...and next thing I know he has pot and dope...He told me about these signals and words that locals give soldiers saying they have shit for sale.

I know a guy who jokes about taking his 'roid rage out on the Iraqis...that's what you need to research...you need to look at all the non-com (*non-combat*) deaths in Afghanistan and Iraq and see how many of those involved were juicing...guys are already restricted in fighting back, then you throw in the aggression that comes with juicing...I know for a fact guys have released that aggression on patrols and shit...mostly its in a legit fight, and it gets written off as acceptable or justified, but I'm telling you...a lot of that shit is the 'roid rage and guys have no way to release it...they juice to get aggressive, and that has to come out some way or another...look it up, I bet you find something.

Man guys were doing whatever to take their minds off shit...between the stress and the boredom...you gotta keep your mind off shit.

Its like a fucking drug store over there (*Iraq*)...everybody is cool with it...you want some weed, dope, juice, doesn't matter – most people are doing it and those that aren't are cool with it.

Tried it over in Iraq...guys were doing it to get an edge.

Getting amped up to go work out, amped up for a PT test, amped up for patrol...that shit is like Red Bull plus crack plus whatever else.

The purpose of this section of the dissertation is to not focus as much on theory, but rather to focus on the nature and extent of offending among the sample – in this chapter we discuss the nature and extent of offending while in combat.

It is clear both from the frequencies and the quotes that participants commit many crimes while actually deployed for combat. Granted, these are not all serious crimes or “war crimes” that would garner the attention from the media, but they are offenses

nonetheless. This section is devoted to offenses committed while in combat; the next section describes crimes committed as a result of combat.

Crimes because of Combat

It has been argued throughout this dissertation that previous literature concerning military offending is very limited. One of the areas where there is substantial research is the connection between combat and future offending. Some have approached the relationship in terms of social learning and learning to be violent (Grossman, 1995; Hakeem, 1946; Frey-Wouters & Laufer, 1984; Kulka et al., 1992). Others have approached the relationship in terms of how combat leads to stress, specifically Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (Angrist et al, 2000; Pavalko & Elder, 1990; South, 1985; Kulka et al., 1992; Laufer & Gallops, 1985).

There are very few instances of violent or personal crime that participants describe as resulting from combat. The crimes most associated with combat and combat strain are of the property or substance use type.

Fuck them...we're fighting so they can have better lives and they're all still trying to kill us...so if you're shooting at me and then I go clear out your house to protect myself, I'm going to take a souvenir since you clearly don't appreciate what I'm trying to do for you.

Honestly it helps me think about my combat service...it gives me a reminder of what I've been through and it gives me something...not a reward, but just like something for my trouble you know?

They're the ones we're fighting for, they owe us some shit.

I don't know...I guess its easy to get...it doesn't fuck you up too much...really it just helped me sleep when I was over there.

They don't let you sleep...coffee, Red Bull, coke...whatever keeps you going.

We smoke whenever we can get it, makes all this bearable...hard to when we're stateside because we get tested...but when you go over (*to Iraq*) they don't test for shit.

They have some good pot and dope (*heroin*) over in Afghanistan and Iraq...every now and then the brass will bring in some beer and let us have some, but guys can get pot and dope from the locals whenever and most people over there hit that shit hard...helps deal with being in such a fucked up situation.

I couldn't sleep...my body was all messed up because we weren't sleeping...then its never quiet...plus I can't shut my mind off...so I need shit to help me sleep.

Man guys were doing whatever to take their minds off shit...between the stress and the boredom...you gotta keep your mind off shit.

You need shit over there (*Iraq*)...you can sit here and talk all you want about how you would never do drugs...but you get there and you need it...you don't know what you're doing any given day, you don't know where you are, you don't know if you're winning or losing, you don't know shit...all that not-knowing sucks and you need something to fill that shit in.

I actually didn't smoke weed until I got back...didn't do it before and didn't do it over there...but when I got back, it was like fuck it you know?

I'm just more irritable now, got a real short fuse...I don't think I had that before going over, but definitely since I've been back.

I didn't drink or smoke until Iraq...started drinking over there, started smoking when I got back...just figured I was growing up and getting into different shit...but yeah, I guess you could say that I wouldn't have started doing either if I hadn't done time in Iraq.

Never had trouble sleeping until I got back...now I'm in and out of sleep all night, sometimes I gotta take something to help.

In this section I provide some qualitative data addressing some of ways participants perceive combat influencing their offending behavior. Primarily what is evident is the concept of combat strain, and it is this strain that may lead to offending behavior when one is in, and when one returns from combat.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I discuss the self-report data through consideration of the context of combat experience. The two themes that emerge are that participants committed

offenses while they were deployed for combat, and second that participants committed offenses as a result of the strain from their combat experience.

This current research further supports the need for more investigation into the area. What crimes are soldiers committing while deployed for combat? What is the extent and seriousness of this offending? Is there an identifiable link between combat experience and future offending? These are all questions that are answered in this research *for this particular sample*. These answers add to the argument that the relationship between combat and offending needs further examination of larger military populations.

Chapter 12: Narrative of Military Offender

One of the distinct advantages of qualitative research is that it allows participants in the research to have their voice heard. In quantitative research participants are reduced to numbers and statistics, and limited response categories that their experiences are forced into, whereas qualitative research provides data that is rich with participants' own words.

I use these words to help describe theoretical themes as well as themes related to offending throughout this dissertation. In this final chapter I would like to bring those words together in a culmination of data in order to provide a narrative of the military offender in this sample⁴⁵. Narratives are an important part of qualitative research in that they provide the data that is used. The researcher then has the possibility of constructing a general narrative that brings together the various themes. For the purposes of this research, these themes will be brought together to provide a narrative for the "military offender" according to this sample.

The Military Offender

The military offender is a white male under the age of 35. He is not an officer and is assigned to a combat arms unit such as an infantry unit. The military offender has served less than 8 years, has been in combat, and has volunteered both for combat and for re-enlistment.

The military offender deals with stress that is specific to the military. One of these strains is the negative experience of combat. Certain occupations such as policing, firefighting, and being a doctor all deal with death, risk of injury and life, et cetera.

⁴⁵ I have made special note throughout this dissertation that I am aware that given the size and nature of this research, there is little to no opportunity for generalizability. The data discussed throughout this dissertation, including this chapter, is referencing this particular sample.

However no other occupation deals with the unique situation of combat, as it is the charge of those in the military to work in combat. Since combat is unique to those in the military, the strains attached to combat experience are also unique to those in the military.

I got a bunch of shrapnel in my ass and down my leg...hurts all the time. Some days I deal better with the pain than others – but its always a chore.

I still have fucking nightmares...I still am afraid to drive. Here driving is natural, second nature, but over there driving is so intense. You don't know if there are bombs in the ground, you don't know if people are going to shoot at you, you don't know what the fuck is going to happen. I get in a car now and I still have that feeling...on edge.

I've hunted a lot, and I've fired my weapon a bunch for the Army...but the first time I pulled that trigger with someone on the other end, that fucked with my head...I didn't think about it when I did it, but I sure did after, still do.

I couldn't sleep...my body was all messed up because we weren't sleeping...then its never quiet...plus I can't shut my mind off...so I need shit to help me sleep.

In addition to the impact of negative combat experience, the military offender has no sense of purpose and little sense of identity. Whether within the Army or in relation to his combat experience, the military offender does not have a strong sense of purpose or worth.

Its frustrating as hell...we're over there to fight, but we're not doing all that much fighting. We go on patrol and get our asses shot at, have to avoid bombs and shit, but oh no – we can't fight back. Every time one of them goes down there's a fucking investigation...its war – what's to investigate?

I joined to do some killing...two tours and I haven't killed nobody. I've been shot at a bunch, and I've shot back, but I can't say I've killed anybody...what the hell are we doing over there? It's a war and only one side is fighting.

I have no idea if we're winning, and that's a pretty scary thought. I could die at any second – and for what? Are we winning? Are we making a difference? I have no fucking idea what I'm doing or what we're doing, and its pretty fucking scary to think that I might die for that.

I love the Army and am proud to be in it...*(but)* I don't think anybody in the brass (*officers*) gives a shit if I die or quit or whatever. They'll just be down a warm body.

I am just a number, a social security number...they don't give two-shits about me, just so long as I show up and do what I'm supposed to.

If I decided to stay up here and not go back, nobody would care why. They'd try to get me back, maybe have me arrested...but they don't care why I'm not back...they don't care what I'm doing...they just know that there is an empty spot in the ranks and they want it filled.

Its frustrating not knowing whats going on...why were doing this, why we're going here...I don't get to know shit, its all "NTKB" (*need to know basis*) and apparently I'm not important enough to know shit.

Officers are all that matter, then maybe NCO's...nobody cares what I think...its frustrating never getting to make a decision, never mattering...makes you wonder why the hell you signed up if its just fill some boots.

Its really frustrating...I don't know why we're over there (*Iraq*) and nobody tells us why. We hear on TV that we're not supposed to be there and that we're losing...but then they (*officers*) tell us that we're doing good and winning. I don't know what or why I'm doing anything, I just do what I'm told...and that's irritating and frustrating.

The military offender, as a male, is constantly facing pressures of masculinity. He learns the importance of being masculine, and this learning also leads to pressure and ultimately strain. The military offender feels he must constantly prove his masculinity.

Some of the infantry guys talk about how many kills they got or how many bodies they've racked up...I didn't join for that, so I don't get into it...but they call me a "pussy" or a "fag" because I'm not trying to kill every goddamn thing.

It's all a big pissing contest...who can bench more...who has killed more...who can beat up who. I get made fun of or passed over for shit just because they think I'm not tough enough.

I got stuck driving around a Colonel because I refused to fire when ordered...they said I can't kill and that I was a risk to others because of it...I said I just didn't want to...either way I wasn't a soldier after that – just a fucking driver. Now I'm not part of the squad and nobody will hang out with me.

I remember I got word from one of my buddies back home that my girlfriend was hooking up with some other guy...it really broke me up and I started crying...one of the guys told me to stop being a pussy...I think it was his way of helping me through it, but now I gotta deal with that whore and with guys thinking I'm a pussy.

One of my sergeants took a round from a SA (*small arms*) right in the neck...he just looked at the blood and then got real pissed...he found the guy and knocked him down and put like 4 rounds in his head from close range...he was the biggest badass...to take a round in the neck and not be phased? Nobody bitched about cuts or bruises after that.

You know what they do with criers? They put them on suicide watch and section 8 their ass...you can't show emotion because you can't be weak...nobody is going to be afraid of you and nobody is going to trust you in battle if you can't put a lid on shit.

Its part of what you gotta do...you want to be a head-knocker, a badass, you join the Army...you get to shoot things, blow things up.

Name me a better man than an Army man...a police officer? A firefighter? Shit – we do everything they do and more...nothing an Army man can't do and we do it all without a tear or a smile.

The strains discussed above face most of the people serving in the Army and lead to frustration and anger. Also facing those in the Army, especially the military offender, is a lack of options for legitimate coping. The military has a culture of not expressing emotions, of “sucking it up”, ultimately leading the military offender to illegitimately cope with the aforementioned frustration and anger.

Hell yes...you have a bad day, you go home and open a beer.

Who doesn't? Go to a NCO club at 6 p.m. and you'll see how people deal with stress.

Yeah, I drink quite a bit and I'll smoke (*pot*) from time to time when shit gets too heavy.

Yeah I probably drink too much, but what the hell else am I going to do? Work all damn day, can't go anywhere, so we drink – makes the shit easier to deal with.

We smoke whenever we can get it, makes all this bearable...hard to when we're stateside because we get tested...but when you go over (*to Iraq*) they don't test for shit.

They have some good pot and dope (*opium*) over in Afghanistan and Iraq...every now and then the brass will bring in some beer and let us have some, but guys can get pot and dope from the locals whenever and most people over there hit that shit hard...helps deal with being in such a fucked up situation.

Man guys were doing whatever to take their minds off shit...between the stress and the boredom...you gotta keep your mind off shit.

You need shit over there (*Iraq*)...you can sit here and talk all you want about how you would never do drugs...but you get there and you need it...you don't know what you're doing any given day, you don't know where you are, you don't know if you're winning or losing, you don't know shit...all that not-knowing sucks and you need something to fill that shit in.

I actually didn't smoke weed until I got back...didn't do it before and didn't do it over there...but when I got back, it was like fuck it you know?

I'm just more irritable now, got a real short fuse...I don't think I had that before going over, but definitely since I've been back.

I didn't drink or smoke until Iraq...started drinking over there, started smoking when I got back...just figured I was growing up and getting into different shit...but yeah, I guess you could say that I wouldn't have started doing either if I hadn't done time in Iraq.

Never had trouble sleeping until I got back...now I'm in and out of sleep all night, sometimes I gotta take something to help.

The reason that the military offender can turn to these illegitimate coping mechanisms is because the military creates an environment and a culture that condones, if not encourages, such behavior. The military supports repression of emotion, supports beliefs favorable to violence, and touts the values of honor and respect as vital.

The Army trains us to be killers, but then wants us to shut it off when we're not in uniform.

The Army just wants to cover its ass...they tell you all this stuff about fighting and killing and defending and protecting...but if you bust up some idiot in a bar, they turn their back on you.

The Army has its “memo’s” and “guidelines”, but our unit tells us to ignore all that shit...you tell people that you only use necessary force and that you follow the rules of engagement because that’s what the Army wants you to say...we have our own rules in our unit.

My squad leader tells us to do whatever is necessary regardless of the situation...you gotta defend yourself, your buddies, your squad, your platoon and so on.

We’re ass-kickers, everyone knows not to fuck with us...some jackass burned our guideon (*a flag representing the unit*)...lets just say our Captain told us to handle it...he’s (*person who stole guideon*) still walking funny.

An E-4 got his ass whipped by some civilian at a bar...word got back to his squad leader and he (*squad leader*) got in his ass and told him that he needed to go back and represent the unit.

Yeah, its unit pride – you do what you have to...somebody is disrespecting you or someone in the squad...you better do handle it.

Its like if someone was messing with your girl, you gotta save face.

Honor and respect is all you got, you can’t let anyone take it from you.

If some jackass is mouthing off and I beat his ass, yeah I might get kicked out or arrested...but I saved face, so I can sleep at night...I defended my buddies and the Army, so they all know they can trust me...yeah, its worth it.

All of these themes impact the military offender’s offending, in offense type and rate. One of the more prevalent offenses the military offender engages in is substance use. Substances including alcohol (which is not considered an offense), marijuana, cocaine, heroin, and steroids are used by the military offender to cope with strain of combat or lack of purpose, or to fit into the masculine ideal of the Army.

I didn’t smoke that much before going over there...when I got back I hooked up with some friends from back home and they were smoking and at that point I didn’t give a shit about anything else.

I didn’t even know what heroin was until we got over there...but some guys said it was good shit and will do the trick.

I actually started with the juice in basic...it helped me get through that shit and perform well on all the PT tests, so I stuck with it.

I never did heroin until I got over there.

I started juicing when they made us start doing patrols over there...gave me energy, got me hype...now I'm still on some stuff because it helps me stay fit and shit.

Hell yes...you have a bad day, you go home and open a beer.

Who doesn't? Go to a NCO club at 6 p.m. and you'll see how people deal with stress.

Yeah, I drink quite a bit and I'll smoke (*pot*) from time to time when shit gets too heavy.

Yeah I probably drink too much, but what the hell else am I going to do? Work all damn day, can't go anywhere, so we drink – makes the shit easier to deal with.

We smoke whenever we can get it, makes all this bearable...hard to when we're stateside because we get tested...but when you go over (*to Iraq*) they don't test for shit.

They have some good pot and dope (*heroin*) over in Afghanistan and Iraq...every now and then the brass will bring in some beer and let us have some, but guys can get pot and dope, and even coke from the locals whenever and most people over there hit that shit hard...helps deal with being in such a fucked up situation.

That's what we do...we work and we drink...you get released for the day and you got the bar or go grab a case and drink the rest of the night...you get released for the weekend and you head off post and hit up some civi-bar...if we're not working, we're drinking.

I probably drink every day...not hard or anything, but I have a couple of beers a day easy...on the weekends that's probably a bit more than a couple (laughs)

Its part of the culture, you gotta be able to drink.

I got a buddy who says "you know what they mean by 'suck it up'...you suck it up right out of a bottle"

...my wife doesn't understand so I'm not going to talk to her...I'm not going to go talk to the Chaplain or anyone...everyone else just drinks or smokes or does whatever...some people like to talk about their problems, we like to drink right them.

A few of us will get together and get smashed or smoke a little if somebody has any...we always joke that it doesn't fucking matter...nobody knows who we are, nobody would miss it, nobody would probably even care that we're smoking...Its funny thinking about it now that you've asked that...if your job requires you risking your life but nobody in your job really gives a shit about you...that's fucked up.

We go to the NCO club and we're just like everyone else...a bunch of NCO's getting drunk and bitching about the officers...can't bitch about the officers to the officers...and we can't do anything about it anyway because we're not as important as those fairy fuckers...so we drink and bitch and go home, then wake up fresh.

We would just go down to Mexico on a weekend pass and some guys would get shots, others pills, some both...then you come back up and you're good to go for a couple of weeks or months...depending on what you got.

I think it's a big issue because I know a lot of guys besides myself who juice up either here or over there...the Army has to know about it because you just can't get that big off working out alone.

The medics are like dealers...they have access to all that stuff and if they don't have direct access then they know where to get it...I swear it's a fucking racket, guys wanting to get big before going over, guys wanting to get crazy while over there, and I mean the medics supply it, the Army doesn't test for it, so I'm not that surprised that people do it.

My old sergeant used to say they don't let women in combat because there is no room for pussies in war...you can't be weak and you can't be timid...I don't think any guy wants to be weak or timid and if someone tells you that some pills or a shot will fix that – well there you go.

Proof is in the pudding...you know a guy juices and all of the sudden he's kicking everyone's ass in PT or whatever...well then I'd say the shit works...you see all the attention and credit he's getting, so you want that for yourself.

I know a guy who jokes about taking his 'roid rage out on the Iraqis...that's what you need to research...you need to look at all the non-com (*non-combat*) deaths in Afghanistan and Iraq and see how many of those involved were juicing...guys are already restricted in fighting back, then you throw in the aggression that comes with juicing...I know for a fact guys have released that aggression on patrols and shit...mostly its in a legit fight, and it gets written off as acceptable or justified, but I'm telling you...a lot of that shit is the 'roid rage and guys have no way to release it...they juice to get aggressive, and that has to come out some way or another...look it up, I bet you find something.

To me it makes sense...guys join the Army because the Army is all about being strong, being a badass...and they like that. So if there is something that can make them stronger or a bigger badass, it fits right in...I'm not saying the Army condones it, but I also don't see them trying to stop it...and why would they? They want the strongest and baddest Army, pretty sure they're going to look the other way.

The military offender is also a collector of sorts. While technically it is considered a theft, the military offender acquires what he calls "souvenirs" from combat and stockpiles Army equipment that he "lost" and had to have replaced. The military offender actually does not see this behavior as an offense, but rather he justifies the behavior as legitimate given his insufficient pay, life threatening work, and general strain. The military offender further justifies this offense by claiming that everyone in the Army does it and it is not hurting anyone.

Yeah, everybody has souvenirs...either from the Army, from Iraq, Germany, Bosnia...you take something you like or take something just for the memory.

Come check out my basement...I have enough MRE's (*Meal-Ready-To Eat*) to last the rest of my life.

I have live rounds, I have grenades, I have all sorts of shit the Army forgot to issue me.

(*Medic*) I have a ton of left over supplies...I don't necessarily think of it as stealing though...it was issued to me and I just didn't give it back...they don't miss it.

Show me a guy in the Army who doesn't have some shit that he shouldn't hanging up in his office and I'll show you a guy who just keeps his shit at home.

Its back pay...I figure since I'm so underpaid, I'll compensate myself with some souvenirs to make up for the fact that I'm risking my life for chump change.

Fuck them...we're fighting so they can have better lives and they're all still trying to kill us...so if you're shooting at me and then I go clear out your house to protect myself, I'm going to take a souvenir since you clearly don't appreciate what I'm trying to do for you.

That's been around as long as people have been fighting...spoils of war right? I'm over there and I'm winning, so I get to take whatever I want. Shit, people use to rape and pillage, now we just want to take a knick-knack back home to our wives.

We were on patrol and this guy and I go into this house and clear it...we're going through and there are some artifacts or some shit on a table and he starts putting shit in his ruck (*rucksack*) and telling me to do it too...he kept saying we deserved it, that we're saving these people and we're not getting paid shit and so its ok.

The Army takes from me, so I take from them...evens shit out.

Honest to God people would call dibs AS we were clearing a house...so remember that there may be some bad motherfuckers in there waiting to shoot us or blow us up, but if a guy sees a clock he wants he'll call dibs.

Shit, everyone does it, even officers...most of the time they have the better shit. I may get some dish or something, meanwhile the captain has a fucking golden sword or some shit.

I had my first MRE from my dad, cause he took it when he was in...so I don't think its stealing if everybody was doing it then and everybody is doing it now.

The Army orders everything in mass, they plan to have replacements...that's why its easy and ok for guys to take shit.

Finally, the military offender is someone who will use violence in a personal fight. This is especially true if the military offender feels that his honor and/or respect has been challenged, or that his unit's or the Army's honor and/or respect has been challenged.

Somebody calls you out, you have to stand up for yourself.

You can't look like a bitch in front of other guys, so if somebody challenges you...you have to fight.

A buddy and I will go to a civi-bar and just start fucking with some jerk-off...hoping he'll try to do something and we can kick his ass...all that shit bottled up, go to the gym or go pick a fight...either way you feel better after.

Call me what you want, but I have certain expectations of my wife...I put up with shit all day, I don't need her shit...I'm not saying I'm right in getting physical with her...but half the time I'm just protecting myself when she starts throwing shit.

Whats the word – cathartic? Its very cathartic to let out everything...most of the time I can go for a run or hit the gym...but sometimes somebody will catch me wrong and all my shit just comes out...man, it sounds pretty bad as I say all this...sounds like I'm some violent psycho...I don't think of myself that way...but at the same time I usually feel spent and relieved after a fight, whether an argument or physical.

A lot of assholes in the world who go around pushing people around, being a bully...I got no problem being the one who puts those assholes in check...you think you're a big man...you want to fight somebody – I'll fight you.

I find I'll snap at people for little or no reason...ever since I got back I've had trouble dealing...so if it's a bad day, I'm liable to go off on my girl, the guy driving in front of me, the lady at the store, jackass at the bar...just takes one person to push me over the edge and I can't deal anymore...then next thing I know I'm fighting.

That's how men talk, its how we work shit out...you piss me off, I'm going to let you know about it...then if we fight – we fight...then I'm back to what I was doing...some people cry, some drink, some fight.

I can't speak for everyone, but I think it has a lot to do with having power as a man...I am nothing in the Army...seriously, nothing. I take orders all day...really I take shit all day...so when I go out or when I go home, I'm done taking orders and taking shit...I can't hit my superiors, but I can hit some asshole...I have to take orders at work, I don't have to take orders at home...I give them.

Fighting is just another way to prove yourself...to gain status, power, whatever you want to call it. A lot of guys don't have status or power at work...if you're an E-2, you ain't shit...but when you go to a civi-bar, you're the big bad Army man and you can pull rank on the frat boys.

We're ass-kickers, everyone knows not to fuck with us...some jackass burned our guideon (*a flag representing the unit*)...lets just say our Captain told us to handle it...he's (*person who stole guideon*) still walking funny.

An E-4 got his ass whipped by some civilian at a bar...word got back to his squad leader and he (*squad leader*) got in his ass and told him that he needed to go back and represent the unit.

Its my house, my rules...I demand a certain amount of respect in my house.

Yeah, its unit pride – you do what you have to...somebody is disrespecting you or someone in the squad...you better do handle it.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I describe the typical military offender in this sample and provide a narrative for that offender through a compilation of data gathered in this research. The data discussed in Chapter 1 depicts a military offender that is more violent, one whose offenses are primarily personal in nature. Previous research depicts a military offender that has been trained to be violent and/or is someone who cannot deal with the stress of war.

The data for this dissertation depicts a somewhat similar, yet distinctly different, military offender. The military offender in this sample is a white male under the age of 35. He is not an officer and is assigned to a combat arms unit such as an infantry unit. The military offender has served less than 8 years, has been in combat, and has volunteered both for combat and for re-enlistment.

The military offender in this sample endures strain related to combat, lack of purpose and masculinity. These strains lead to frustration and anger, and these feelings are coupled with the inability for those in the military to legitimately cope and express emotion.

The military offender in this sample operates in an environment and culture that disapproves of expressing emotion, condones hyper-masculinity, supports the use of violence, and turns a blind eye to certain behaviors.

The military offender in this sample turns to substances to cope with the various strains he experiences. The military offender learns how to obtain substances, how to use

them, and how to avoid detection. The military offender is convinced that the Army knows about steroid use and is not opposed to its use for the sake of stronger and more aggressive soldiers

The military offender in this sample will take things from the Army and from countries where he is deployed. The military offender does not see this as a crime, but rather something that is owed to him.

In sum, the military offender in this sample is a different person than what is shown in arrest data or previous research. The issue of substance use, especially steroid use, is alarming and needs to be addressed both in research, and practically by military administration. The minor theft may hold less importance for military officials; however the prevalence in this sample suggests a need for future research into this behavior. The fighting, or violent/personal offending, is not new to this version of the military offender, however if there is a possible link to military service and violent behavior, future research should explore it more in-depth.

This research contributes to the literature in that it establishes a baseline for understanding the military offender. I have not claimed throughout this dissertation that this data is generalizable, and I will not make such a claim now. However the themes uncovered in this research greatly contribute to understanding military offending and provide a strong baseline of information and great direction for future research. With the findings in this research, a large comprehensive quantitative study of military personnel can be carried out more effectively. This dissertation provides the necessary information to develop relevant and appropriate measures that can be taken to examine a large sample and we can continue to increase our knowledge about offending among this population.

A question, if not *the* question, regarding military offending is whether the military creates or allows causes for offending, or whether military personnel who offend are predisposed to offending behavior and would have offended regardless of their military experiences. The first answer to this question is an easy one; it depends on how you look at it.

Criminological theories vary in their key assumption about the causes of crime. Biological theories assume crime is caused by biological things, psychological theories assume crime is caused by psychological things internal to the individual, and sociological theories assume crime is caused by sociological things (things external to the individual), and other theories assume a combination of things. This dissertation tested sociological theories found in the criminological literature. The theories used assume a relationship with the individual and his/her environment, meaning criminal behavior cannot be attributed solely to individual factors.

All the theories used do allow for the role of individual traits in making someone more or less likely to be effected by their environment; however this does not constitute a predisposition in the same way that psychological theories consider predisposition. Individual traits such as irritability, low self-control, et cetera do not predict crime without the external factors laid out by strain, social learning, and social control theories. Therefore these theories, and this dissertation, suggest that it is not the case that the individuals in this sample who offended would have offended had they not joined the military, but rather that the military had an effect on their offending.

A second answer to this question can be attempted through a summary of the findings. If we first consider the relationship between strain and offending in this sample,

one could certainly argue that these individuals were predisposed to feeling strain and/or offending, and they therefore would have offended had they not joined the military and had they experienced strain in their civilian lives. While there is no data to refute this argument, the data in this research suggests that there are unique strains experienced by those in the military, meaning that regardless of predisposition to strain, these individuals experienced these strains because of their military experience. Secondly, in the qualitative data on the relationship between strain and offending, participants discussed military-specific strains being related to their offending behavior. Again, regardless of a predisposition to offending, it seems that in this sample the military-specific strains were related to offending behavior.

Much of the above discussion is relevant for social learning. One can make the claim that the individuals who offended were predisposed to learning beliefs favorable to violence and would have offended had they not joined the military. The data however identifies elements of social learning and subculture theories that are unique to the military. For example, the learning of masculinity, honor and respect, and the use of violence to meet the requirements of masculinity and honor and respect, comes from the military. Even if the individuals who offended were predisposed to offending, by being in the military these individuals learned beliefs favorable to offending.

Finally social and self-control also allow for the argument to be made that these individuals would have offended without military experiences. If someone is low in self-control, then it can certainly be questioned whether they would offend regardless of outside influences. If someone lacks the elements of high social control in the military and consequently offend, perhaps if they lacked elements of high social control in civilian

life they would also offend. While hard to refute, if we consider the possible role the military has on lowering self and social control (despite the assumption that the military would increase self and social control), then we may find a possible answer to whether it is the person or the military predicting the offending behavior.

The final answer to this question is as simple as the first, we just cannot say for sure. As stated earlier in this discussion, this dissertation used sociological theories, assuming criminal behavior is not limited to individual traits and causes. As a result, the data suggest that there is something about the military that creates, or allows, or at the very least helps, predict offending. The theoretical results (including self-control data), the results on offending (especially the qualitative data) suggest that the military has an effect on criminal behavior.

We can explore this issue by examining participant response to the question; *Why did you join the military?* Unfortunately the data results for this sample does not help address the issue. The majority of the sample (36 participants) suggested that they joined the military for a “job/employment” and/or to “serve their country”. The next most common response was “adventure”. There were also no significant relationships between these responses and the offending groups discussed in Chapter 10. The lack of variation and clarity in the measure for why participants joined the military makes it impossible to draw any conclusions about predispositions to crime and violence. It is also beyond the limitations of the data to suggest any relationship between possible factors before enlistment with offending after enlistment.

This is certainly a limitation of this research and to fully answer this question, future research needs to explore the relationship between biological and psychological

theories on military offending. One possible way to achieve this would be to do a similar study using measures supported by biological and psychological literature. This data could then be used to determine whether the individuals who offend have the propensity to offend outside of their military experiences. A second approach could be to have a civilian control group. If we were able to identify civilians who score similarly to a military population on biological and psychological measures (predisposition to offending), we could then compare their offending behavior to see whether it was the individual factors or military experiences. Ultimately this dissertation supports the argument that the military has an effect on offending, the results and discussions in the previous chapters provide empirical support for this argument.

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Appendix One: Interview Script⁴⁶

To get the ball rolling, I'm first going to ask you some general questions about your military career and experiences.

1. Why did you join the military?
2. How many years have you been in military?
- 2a. If you're not longer enlisted, what are you doing now?
3. How many times have you been transferred to another duty station?
 - Probe:** Have you been transferred in the last year?
 - Have you been transferred out of a position/assignment that you really enjoyed?
4. Are you an officer, NCO, or enlisted soldier? How do you feel about each?
5. What is/are your Military Occupational Specialty (MOS)
 - Probe:** Why did you choose your MOS?
6. Have you ever volunteered for combat? Why or why not?
- 6a. Do you have combat experience? If so, can you talk about your experience(s)?
 - Probes:** How many months of combat? Within the last year?
 - What countries have you been deployed to?
 - Have you been re-deployed for combat?
 - How many times have you been deployed?
 - How did your combat experience affect your views on violence?
 - Were any of your friends killed or wounded in combat?
 - Were you wounded?
 - Do you have nightmares about combat?

⁴⁶ I continuously encouraged interviewees to “explain” their response and/or “elaborate”. This along with “how does that make you feel” and “what do you think about that” will be three main common probes.

7. Have you ever been demoted in rank? How did that make you feel?

Probes: How many times have you been demoted?

Where you demoted within the last year?

8. What do you think about re-enlistment?

Probes: Have you re-enlisted?

What made you decide to re-enlist?

If you haven't had an opportunity to re-enlist – do you plan on re-enlisting? Why or why not?

9. How do you feel about the promotion and awards process?

Probes: How likely do you think it is that you'll be promoted?

Have you received a promotion or award in the last year?

Have you received an individual award in the last year?

Do you worry about promotions and awards?

Are superiors unfair when it comes to giving awards.?

Is the promotion process unjust/unfair?

10. Do you think orders should be followed no matter what?

Probes: Have you been given orders that you did not agree with?

How did that make you feel?

Did you end up following those orders?

11. Have you had any financial or housing problems in the last year?

Probes: Do you think your housing allowance is sufficient?

Do you have a lot of debt that you need to repay?

Do you have trouble paying bills?

12. How do you think the military views violence?

Probes: Does the military think violence is justified outside of combat? If so, when?

Does your unit or people in your unit think violence is justified outside of combat?

Does/has your military training taught you to justify violence?

13. How important is honor and respect?

Probes: What does the military think about the use of violence to achieve/maintain honor and respect?

What does your unit think about the use of violence to achieve/maintain honor and respect?

Do you believe it is acceptable to use violence to achieve/maintain honor and respect?

Is it worth being punished for doing so?

14. Is there too much “yelling” or verbal abuse in the military?

Probes: How does this “yelling” make you feel?

15. Do you suffer from a lot of physical pain due to your work? How does this pain affect you, your work, family, etc?

Probes: Do you worry about getting injured/losing your life due to work?

How does knowing that friends and co-workers may be injured or die make you feel?

16. Some people feel lost or just like a “number” in the military? Is this true for you?

17. What types of things cause you stress, upset you, or make you feel bad?

Probes: Do you feel stressed as a result of the type or work that you do?

How often do you feel stress?

How would you rate (high, low, etc.) the stress?

Is this stress justified (part of the job) or is it unnecessary?

18. How does the possibility of taking a life for your job make you feel?
19. How does the potential of a loss of civilian life due to your duty make you feel?
20. Do you see violence in your current work?
- 20a. How does being exposed to violence you see in your work make you feel?
21. Are there people you can talk to about your stress or other problems you are having with the military?
22. As a soldier, how do you think you are supposed to deal with stress?

Probe: On your own?

Are there people you can turn to for help? In your unit? Family?
Friends outside of the military?

Do you feel that talking about or getting help for stress or problems
is a sign of maturity or weakness?

23. How important do you think your work is?
24. How much do you like the military?

Probes: How well do you get along within your unit?

How well do you get along with your commanding officers?

25. Do you think soldiers should uphold a high moral standard?
26. What effects do you think the military has had on you?

Probes: Do you think you have more self-discipline because of the
military?

27. Do you think the public holds soldiers to a higher moral standard?

Probes: Do you think most people appreciate the contribution the
military makes to society?

Do you think the public tends to view soldiers as killers?

Ok, now I'd like to ask you some more questions.

- 29. What race/ethnicity do you consider yourself?
- 30. Are you in the 18-25 age range, 26-35, 36-45, 46-55, or over 55?
- 30b. What are your future plans?
- 31. What is the highest level of education you have completed? (GED, high school diploma, some college, Associates Degree, Bachelor's Degree, Masters Degree or higher)
- 32. What area of the country would you say you are from?
- 33. Growing up, what was the highest education completed for the head of your family's household? (GED, high school diploma, some college, Associates Degree, Bachelor's Degree, Masters Degree or higher)
- 34. Do you receive any financial support from anyone?

Probes: From your parents or other family?

From other friends?

- 35. Have you ever been married?
- 35a. Are you currently married or do you live with your partner? Tell me a little about him/her?

Probes: How old is your spouse/partner? In the 18-25 age range, 26-35, 36-45, 46-55, or over 55?

Is your spouse/partner from another country?

How many unaccompanied tours have you done? (0, 1-3, 3-5, more than 5)

Does your spouse/partner work?

How much does s/he make a year? Less than \$15K, \$16-20K, \$21-25K, \$26-35K, \$36-45K, \$46-60K, Over \$60K

Does he or she work off post?

Do you receive financial support from his/her parents?

Do you have share household responsibility (chores, childcare, etc.) with your spouse/partner?

Do you fight a lot with your spouse/partner?

Do you feel that you get enough time with your spouse/partner?

Does your spouse/partner worry about you because of your work?

Has being deployed or on an unaccompanied tour caused problems in your marriage.

How well do you get along with your spouse/partner?

How much do you love/like your spouse/partner?

36. How many children do you have? Tell me about your kids.

Probes: Are you paying child support?

How well do you get along with your child/children?

37. Prior to enlisting, did you have friends who engaged in any criminal activity? Tell me a little about these friends.

Probes: Did you admire these friends?

Did you enjoy being around them?

Were these friends ever arrested?

38. Do any of your military friends now engage in criminal activity? Tell me about them.

Probes: Do you admire these friends?

Do you enjoy being around them?

Have these friends ever been arrested?

39. Were you ever in a gang or did you have gang ties prior to enlistment? Tell me about that experience.

40. Are you in a gang now or do you now have gang ties? Tell me a little about it.

41. Were you ever arrested before joining the military? Can you tell me about it?

Probes: What did you get arrested for?

How did getting arrested affect you?

Were there things you did that you could have been arrested for?

42. Have you been arrested since joining the military? Can you tell me about it?

Probes: What did you get arrested for?

How did getting arrested affect you?

Have you done anything that you could have been arrested for?

Have you been arrested in the last year?

43. Did you get into many fights growing up? Why do you think you did or did not?

44. Did you have a quick temper growing up? How did/does this temper impact you?

45. Did you get into a lot of trouble growing up? Why do you think you got into trouble?

46. Do you like to take risks? Is it exciting to do something that is against the rules? Why?

Now I am going to ask you how likely it is that you think certain things will happen. Please explain your response.

47. Do you think that it is likely that you would be arrested for fighting?

47a. For domestic violence?

47b. For drug use?

47c. For theft?

47d. For insubordination?

47e. For going AWOL?

Now I am going to ask you how much you like certain things and how important things are. Again, feel free to elaborate on your response.

48. How important are the core military values (leadership, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, personal courage) to you personally? Why?
49. How important do you think the military is to society? Why?
50. How important/special do you think your unit is to society? Why?
51. How do you think the military feels about honor and respect? Does it value honor and respect?
52. How do you think your unit feels honor and respect? Does it value honor and respect?
53. What do you personally think about honor and respect? Do you value honor and respect?
54. Do you think soldiers should be committed to upholding the core military values (leadership, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, personal courage)?
- Probes:** Are you committed to upholding those values? How committed?
55. Is loyalty important as a soldier?
- Probes:** How loyal are you to the military?
How loyal are you to your unit?
How loyal are you to your squad?

Now I am going to ask about how often you did certain things in the past year. Please explain your response.

56. Do you drink or use other substances to deal with stress? How often? Why do you think this is?
57. Do you seek fights with other people to deal with stress? How often? Why do you think this is?
58. Do you gamble? How often? Why do you gamble?
59. Do you consume alcohol? How often? Why do you drink?
60. Do you smoke cigarettes? How often? Why do you smoke?

Now I am going to ask you about certain things you may have done. If any of these questions make you uncomfortable or if you do not wish to answer, just let me know. If you answer yes, I will ask you some follow up questions. Nobody will have access to your answers but me, and after I enter them into the computer - I won't even know who said what; answers will be confidential and anonymous.

- 61.** While in the military, have you ever physically hurt your spouse or romantic partner?

If yes, why did you do it? Please explain the incident(s).

Probes: How many times in the last year?

Has this happened pre-deployment, upon your return, both?

Has this happened on post, off post, or both?

- 62.** While in the military, have you ever stolen something (including cash) less than \$50?

If yes, why did you do it? Please explain the incident(s).

Probes: How many times in the last year?

Has this occurred while on duty, off duty, or both?

Has this happened pre-deployment, upon your return, both?

Has this happened on post, off post, or both?

Have you done this during deployment?

- 63.** While in the military, have you stolen something (including cash) more than \$50?

If yes, why did you do it? Please explain the incident(s).

Probes: How many times in the last year?

Has this occurred while on duty, off duty, or both?

Has this happened pre-deployment, upon your return, both?

Has this happened on post, off post, or both?

Have you done this during deployment?

64. While in the military, have you ever intentionally damaged someone else's property?

If yes, why did you do it? Please explain the incident(s).

Probes: How many times in the last year?

Has this occurred while on duty, off duty, or both?

Has this happened pre-deployment, upon your return, both?

Has this happened on post, off post, or both?

Have you done this during deployment?

65. While in the military, have you ever used marijuana?

If yes, why did you do it? Please explain the incident(s).

Probes: How many times in the last year?

Has this occurred while on duty, off duty, or both?

Has this happened pre-deployment, upon your return, both?

Has this happened on post, off post, or both?

Have you done this during deployment?

66. While in the military, have you ever used other drugs (meth, cocaine, etc.)?

If yes, why did you do it? Please explain the incident(s).

Probes: How many times in the last year?

Has this occurred while on duty, off duty, or both?

Has this happened pre-deployment, upon your return, both?

Has this happened on post, off post, or both?

Have you done this during deployment?

67. While in the military, have you ever been in a physical fight?

If yes, why did you do it? Please explain the incident(s).

Probes: How many times in the last year?

Has this occurred while on duty, off duty, or both?

Has this happened pre-deployment, upon your return, both?

Has this happened on post, off post, or both?

Have you done this during deployment?

68. Have you ever gone AWOL?

If yes, why did you do it? Please explain the incident(s).

Probes: How many times in the last year?

Has this occurred while on duty, off duty, or both?

Has this happened pre-deployment, upon your return, both?

Has this happened on post, off post, or both?

Have you done this during deployment?

69. While in the military, have you ever had sex with someone other than your spouse?

If yes, why did you do it? Please explain the incident(s).

Probes: How many times in the last year?

Has this occurred while on duty, off duty, or both?

Has this happened pre-deployment, upon your return, both?

Has this happened on post, off post, or both?

Have you done this during deployment?

70. While in the military, have you been kicked out of a place for being drunk/disorderly?

If yes, why did you do it? Please explain the incident(s).

Probes: How many times in the last year?

Has this occurred while on duty, off duty, or both?

Has this happened pre-deployment, upon your return, both?

Has this happened on post, off post, or both?

71. While in the military, have you ever physically hurt someone with your friends?

If yes, why did you do it? Please explain the incident(s).

Probes: How many times in the last year?

Has this occurred while on duty, off duty, or both?

Has this happened pre-deployment, upon your return, both?

Has this happened on post, off post, or both?

Have you done this during deployment?

72. Have you ever intentionally failed to follow orders?

If yes, why did you do it? Please explain the incident(s).

Probes: How many times in the last year?

Has this occurred while on duty, off duty, or both?

Has this happened pre-deployment, upon your return, both?

Has this happened on post, off post, or both?

Have you done this during deployment?

73. **Last question; would you be willing to recommend one or two people who you know that are in the military or have been in the military, who you believe have committed any criminal offenses while in the military, and who you think might be willing to participate in an interview?**

If so, can you provide me with their phone numbers? If you'd rather not give me their numbers, please give them my e-mail address and phone number and ask that they contact me.

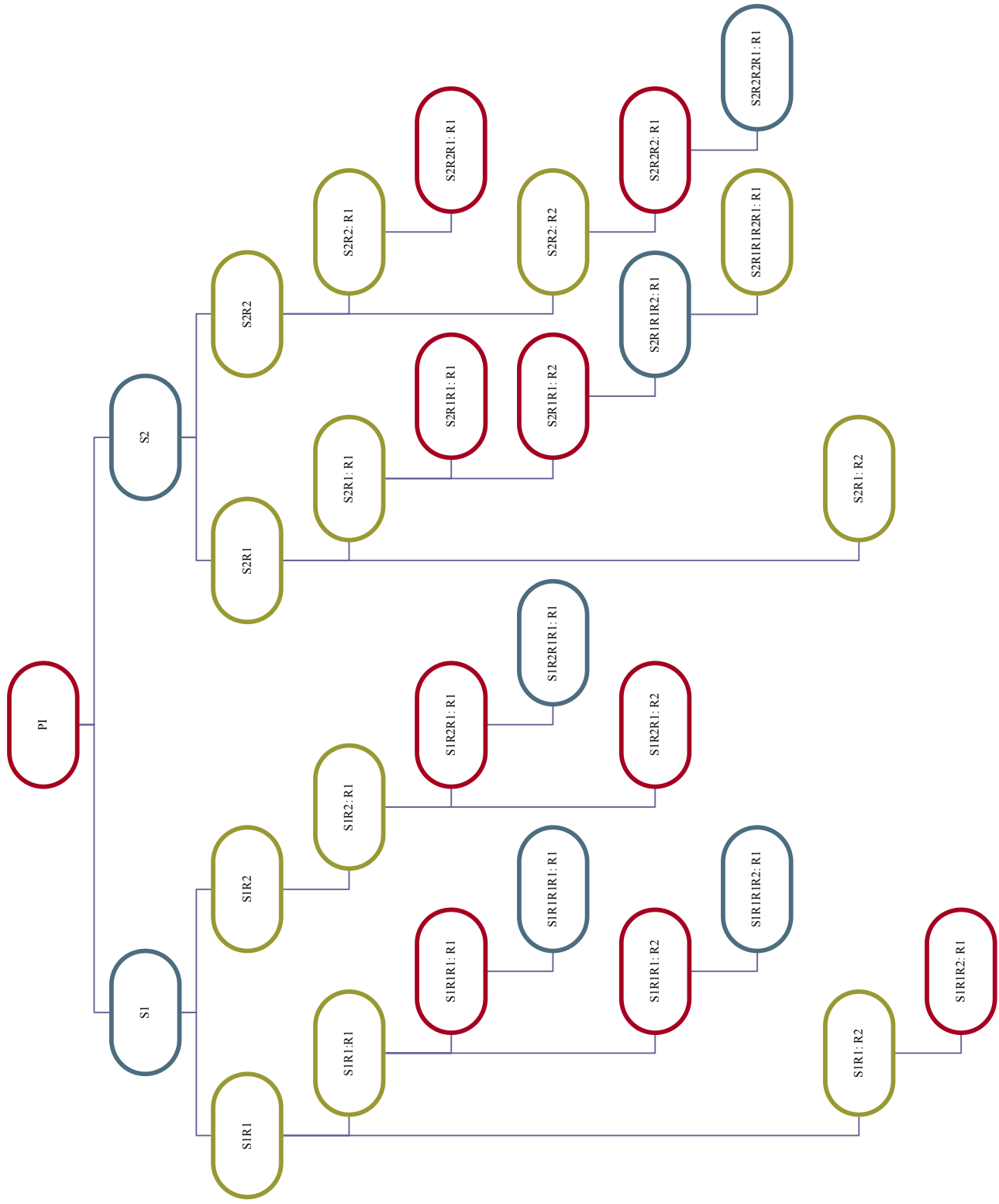
**jake.bucher@bakeru.edu
(785) 594-8475**

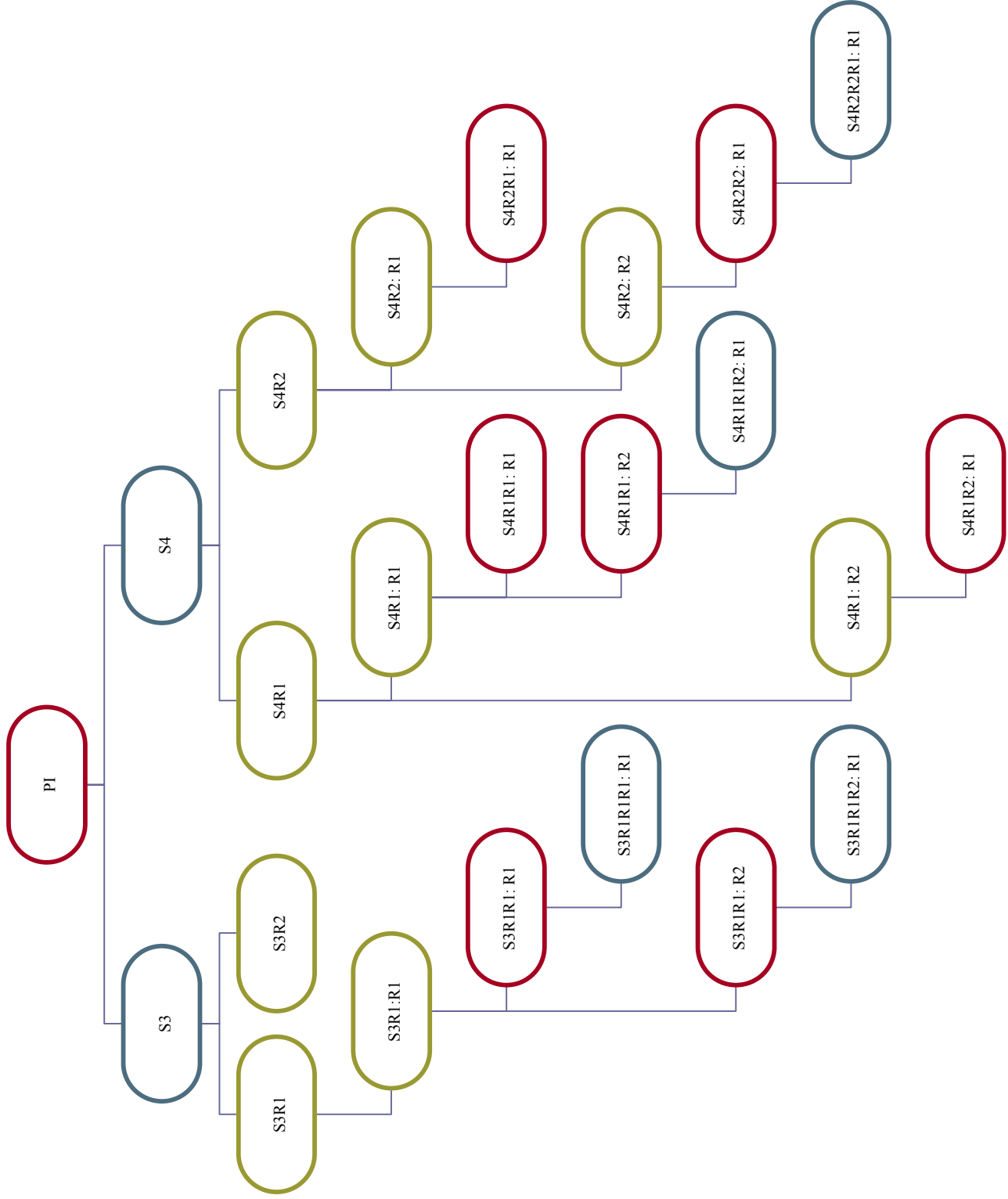
Thank you for taking the time to talk with me. Your time and help are greatly appreciated.

Appendix Two: Map of Snowball Sample

Key

Label	Value
S1	Seed 1
S2	Seed 2
S3	Seed 3
S4	Seed 4
S#R#	Seed 1,2,3,4 Recommendation 1,2 of corresponding seeds
S#R#R#	Seed 1,2,3,4 Recommendation 1,2 of corresponding seeds Recommendation 1,2 of corresponding recommendations
S#R#R#R#	Seed 1,2,3,4 Recommendation 1,2 of corresponding seeds Recommendation 1,2 of corresponding recommendations Recommendation 1,2 of corresponding recommendations
S#R#R#R#R#	Seed 1,2,3,4 Recommendation 1,2 of corresponding seeds Recommendation 1,2 of corresponding recommendations Recommendation 1,2 of corresponding recommendations Recommendation 1,2 of corresponding recommendations





Appendix 3: Initial Phone Call Script⁴⁷

Hello, may I please speak with _____?

Hi _____, my name is Jake Bucher and I got your phone number from _____. I am doing some research on military members and _____ said that you might be willing to participate in an interview.

Do you have a couple of minutes? If so I can tell you a little bit more about the research.

This study is entitled “The Camouflage Collar: Examining Crime among the Military”. The purpose of this study is to determine what causes some soldiers to engage in criminal activity. I am a former soldier and have no interest in finding criminals or in innocence or guilt, the interest lies in the various factors that led to individuals to engage in criminal behavior.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to participate in an interview where you will be asked questions regarding your background, experiences, and thoughts on military life as well as criminal behavior. We can do this interview over the phone or in person. The interview will last at least a half hour.

Participation in this interview is entirely voluntary. You have the right to refuse to be in the interview. If you decide to be in the interview and change your mind, you have the right to drop out at any time and there will be no consequences and nothing you have said will be used. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer.

I will keep your records private. Your name will not be included in any other data. The interview will be recorded, and I will have the only access to the audio file and to the transcription. The transcription will be kept on my computer that is password protected.

There are no reasonably foreseeable physical risks or discomforts to you. There is the possibility that answering questions may cause you some stress. If this occurs, feel free to skip questions or stop the interview.

If the information that you share is in any way unintentionally leaked to the public, you could face military and/or legal action. However, every effort will be made to keep all identifying information confidential. Again, your name will not appear in any data.

Would you be willing to participate in this interview? (**Verbal Consent**)

Would you prefer to do it over the phone or in person? (When would be a good time? Where should we do the interview?)

⁴⁷ Adjustments to this script were made if the participant called me first, and/or as necessary given the conversation