



Mess and RUSI Vancouver Members News 5 July, 2011

Wednesday Lunch

Haven't been to lunch for a while? Why not? Lunches are doing well but we would still like to see you there.

Just a reminder standard Mess dress rules apply when attending our lunches:- gentlemen wear suits (jackets/blazers) and ties, ladies the equivalent. Summer dress is now in effect. This does not mean we are going casual; we just remove jackets and ties when it gets too hot in the Mess and many of the long-time members will keep their jackets and ties on as long as the weather is cool.

Our Senior Gunner Officer visits Afghanistan.

MGen Stuart Beare was promoted to LGen during a recent tour in Afghanistan. The promotion was made by the CDS, Gen Walt Natynczyk, accompanied by the MND, the Hon Peter MacKay and Gen Dave Petraeus, Comd ISAF (and soon to be the Director of the CIA). LGen Beare is to take up his new appointment in NDHQ as Comd CEFCOM in September. Check out the attached PowerPoint presentation.

A Canadian Forces Appreciation Program announced.

Effective 23 June 2011, the CF Appreciation Program will provide the CF community with access to a wide array of international, national and local discounts for goods and services, with emphasis on leisure travel, including individual as well as family holiday packages, and many other goods and services of interest

CF community members with access to the Program include:

- Regular and Reserve Force members and their families;
- Former military members and their families;
- DND employees and Staff of the Non-Public Funds, Canadian Forces, and their families; and
- Foreign Military members serving with the Canadian Forces, and their families.

The CF Appreciation Program can be accessed primarily online at www.CFAppreciation.ca. Initially, this website will focus on the following Program components:

The CF R and R club provides access to timeshare vacation rentals at highly discounted

prices. Through a partnership with the armed forces vacation club, a product of Wyndham worldwide, spacious accommodations at 3,500 resorts, apartments, condominiums and homes in more than 80 countries will be offered to the CF community at competitive prices. From sandy beaches to snow-capped mountains, the CF R and R club provides unique, well-deserved and well-priced vacation accommodations and CF discounts, which are explained below. The discounts made available to CF community members through the CF Appreciation Program build on the successes of the Canex discount Program (CDP) as well as on local discount programs operated by Military Family Resource Centres and local community recreation associations. All discounts that were formerly available through the CDP have been integrated into the broadened and enhanced selection of discounts offered by the CF Appreciation Program.

Discounts are available in the following eight categories:

- accommodations
- attractions
- entertainment
- dining
- home lifestyle
- shops and services
- transportation and travel

In preparation for the launch, the CF Appreciation Program has focused on offering discounts for attractions across Canada and in the USA. It is recommended that users check the site often, as discounts, contests and special offers will be added frequently. The website also provides the opportunity to give feedback in order that the CF Appreciation Program may evolve to meet the changing needs of the CF community administered by the director general personnel and family support services, Mr DE Martin, the CF Appreciation Program aims to enhance the morale and welfare of CF community members by providing unique opportunities for rest, recreation, and strengthening of family bonds

The Moral Logic of Survivor Guilt

By [NANCY SHERMAN](#)

July 3, 2011

If there is one thing we have learned from returning war veterans — especially those of the last decade — it's that the emotional reality of the soldier at home is often at odds with that of the civilian public they left behind. And while friends and families of returning service members may be experiencing gratefulness or relief this holiday, many of those they've welcomed home are likely struggling with other emotions.

Is the sense of responsibility soldiers feel toward each other irrational?

High on that list of emotions is guilt. Soldiers often carry this burden home — survivor guilt being perhaps the kind most familiar to us. In war, standing here rather than there can save your life but cost a buddy his. It's flukish luck, but you feel responsible. The guilt begins an endless loop of counterfactuals — thoughts that you could have or should done otherwise, though in fact you did nothing wrong. The feelings are, of course, not restricted to the battlefield. But given the magnitude of loss in war, they hang heavy there and are pervasive. And they raise the

question of just how irrational those feelings are, and if they aren't, of what is the basis of their reasonableness.

Capt. Adrian Bonenberger, head of a unit in Afghanistan that James Dao and other journalists of The New York Times reported on in their series "[A Year at War](#)," [pondered those questions recently](#) as he thought about Specialist Jeremiah Pulaski, who was killed by police in the wake of a deadly bar fight shortly after he returned home. Back in Afghanistan, Pulaski had saved Bonenberger's life twice on one day, but when Pulaski needed help, Bonenberger couldn't be there for him: "When he was in trouble, he was alone," Captain Bonenberger said. "When we were in trouble, he was there for us. I know it's not rational or reasonable. There's nothing logical about it. But I feel responsible."

But how unreasonable is that feeling? Subjective guilt, associated with this sense of responsibility, is thought to be irrational because one feels guilty despite the fact that he knows he has done nothing wrong. Objective or rational guilt, by contrast — guilt that is "fitting" to one's actions — accurately tracks real wrongdoing or culpability: guilt is appropriate because one acted to deliberately harm someone, or could have prevented harm and did not. Blameworthiness, here, depends on the idea that a person could have done something other than he did. And so he is held responsible or accountable, by himself or others.

But as Bonenberger's remarks make clear, we often *take* responsibility in a way that goes beyond what we can reasonably be *held* responsible for. And we feel the guilt that comes with that sense of responsibility. Nietzsche is the modern philosopher who well understood this phenomenon: "Das Schlechte Gewissen," (literally, "bad conscience") — his term for the consciousness of guilt where one has done no wrong, doesn't grow in the soil where we would most expect it, he argued, such as in prisons where there are actually "guilty" parties who should feel remorse for wrongdoing. In "The Genealogy of Morals," he appeals to an earlier philosopher, Spinoza, for support: "The bite of conscience," writes Spinoza in the "Ethics," has to do with an "offense" where "something has gone unexpectedly wrong." As Nietzsche adds, it is not really a case of "I ought not to have done that."

But what then is it a case of? Part of the reasonableness of survivor guilt (and in a sense, its "fittingness") is that it tracks a moral significance that is broader than moral *action*. Who I am, in terms of my character and relationships, and not just what I do, matters morally. Of course, character is expressed in action, and when we don't "walk the walk," we are lacking; but it is also expressed in emotions and attitudes. Aristotle in his "Nicomachean Ethics" insists on the point: "virtue is concerned with emotions and actions;" to have good character is to "hit the mean" with respect to both. Moreover, many of the feelings that express character are not about what one has done or should have done, but rather about what one cares deeply about. Though Aristotle doesn't himself talk about guilt, it is the emotion that best expresses that conflict — the desire or obligation to help frustrated by the inability, through no fault of one's own, to do so. To not feel the guilt is to be numb to those pulls. It is that vulnerability, those pulls, that Bonenberger feels when he says he wasn't there for Pulaski when he needed him.

The sacred bond among soldiers originates not just in duty, but in love.

In many of the interviews I've conducted with soldiers over the years, feelings of guilt and responsibility tangle with feelings of having betrayed fellow soldiers. At stake is the duty to those soldiers, the imperative to hold intact the bond that enables them to fight for and with

each other in the kind of “sacred band” that the ancients memorialized and that the Marine motto *semper fidelis* captures so well. But it is not just duty at work. It is love.

Service members, especially those higher in rank, routinely talk about unit members as “*my* soldiers,” “*my* Marines,” “*my* sailors.” They are family members, their own children, of sorts, who have been entrusted to them. To fall short of unconditional care is experienced as a kind of perfidy, a failure to be faithful. Survivor guilt piles on the unconscious thought that luck is part of a zero-sum game. To have good luck is to deprive another of it. The anguish of guilt, its sheer pain, is a way of sharing some of the ill fate. It is a form of empathic distress.

Many philosophers have looked to other terms to define the feeling. What they have come up with is “agent-regret” (a term coined by the British philosopher Bernard Williams, but used by many others). The classic scenario is not so much one of good luck (as in survivor guilt), but of bad luck, typically having to do with accidents where again, there is little or no culpability for the harms caused. In these cases, people may be *causally* responsible for harm — they bring about the harm through their agency — but they are not morally responsible for what happened.

But to my ear, agent-regret is simply tone-deaf to how subjective guilt feels. Despite the insertion of “agent,” it sounds as passive and flat as “regretting that the weather is bad.” Or more tellingly, as removed from empathic distress as the message sent to the next of kin, after an official knock on the door: “The Secretary of Defense regrets to inform you that....”

Indeed, the soldiers I’ve talked to involved in friendly fire accidents that took their comrades’ lives, didn’t feel regret for what happened, but raw, deep, unabashed guilt. And the guilt persisted long after they were formally investigated and ultimately exonerated. In one wrenching case in April 2003 in Iraq, the gun on a Bradley fighting vehicle misfired, blowing off most of the face of Private Joseph Mayek who was standing guard near the vehicle. The accident was ultimately traced to a faulty replacement battery that the commander in charge had authorized. When the Bradley’s ignition was turned on, the replacement battery in the turret (a Marine battery rather than an Army one) failed to shut off current to the gun. Mayek, who was 20, died.

The Army officer in charge, then Capt. John Prior, reconstructed the ghastly scene for me, and the failed attempts in the medic tent to save Mayek’s life. He then turned to his feelings of responsibility: “I’m the one who placed the vehicles; I’m the one who set the security. As with most accidents, I’m not in jail right now. Clearly I wasn’t egregiously responsible. But it is a comedy of errors. Any one of a dozen decisions made over the course of a two-month period and none of them really occurs to you at the time. Any one of those made differently may have saved his life. So I dealt with and still deal with the guilt of having cost him his life essentially.... There’s probably not a day that doesn’t go by that I don’t think about it, at least fleetingly.”

What Prior feels are feelings of guilt, and not simply regret that things didn’t work out differently. He feels the awful weight of self-indictment, the empathy with the victim and survivors, and the need to make moral repair. If he didn’t feel that, we would probably think less of him as a commander.

In his case, moral repair came through an empathic, painful connection with Mayek’s mother. After the fratricide, Prior and his first sergeant wrote a letter to Mayek’s mother. And for some time after, she replied with care packages to the company and with letters. “Oh it was terrible,” said Prior. “The letters weren’t just very matter of fact — here’s what we did today; it

was more like a mother writing to her son.” Prior had become the son who was no longer. “It was her way of dealing with the grief,” said Prior. “And so I had a responsibility to try to give back.”

In all this we might say guilt, subjective guilt, has a redemptive side. It is a way that soldiers impose moral order on the chaos and awful randomness of war’s violence. It is a way they humanize war for themselves, for their buddies, and for us as civilians, too.

But if that’s all that is involved, it sounds too moralistic. It makes guilt appropriate or fitting because it’s good for society. It is the way we all can deal with war. Maybe, instead, we want to say it is fitting because it is evolutionarily adaptive in the way that fear is. But again, this doesn’t do justice to the phenomenon. The guilt that soldiers feel isn’t just morally expedient or species-adaptive. It is fitting because it gets right certain moral (or evaluative) features of a soldier’s world — that good soldiers depend on each other, come to love each other, and have duties to care and bring each other safely home. Philosophers, at least since the time of Kant, have called these “imperfect duties”: even in the best circumstances, we can’t perfectly fulfill them. And so, what duties to others need to make room for, even in a soldier’s life of service and sacrifice, are duties to self, of self-forgiveness and self-empathy. These are a part of full moral repair.

[Nancy Sherman](#) is University Professor of Philosophy at Georgetown and has served as the first Distinguished Chair in Ethics at the U.S. Naval Academy. She is the author of several books, including “[Stoic Warriors: The Ancient Philosophy Behind the Military Mind](#)” and “[The Untold War: Inside the Hearts, Minds and Souls of Our Soldiers](#).”

Community Legal Assistance Society Program



Community Legal Assistance Society

providing specialized legal assistance to promote social justice since 1971

CLAS is a NPO of 15 lawyers and about 25 support staff. We represent clients in human rights, mental health, social welfare, and disability law from the initial tribunal/court level, right up to the Supreme Court of Canada. We do not bill for any of our services and also have a fund to pay for expert witnesses and other disbursements. Since last December, we have been offering free legal services for Canadian Forces members, past & present.

The Community Legal Assistance Society (“CLAS”) is pleased to announce that we are now accepting the cases of former Canadian Forces Members who are dissatisfied with the determination of their eligibility for pension from the Veteran’s Review and Appeal Board (“VRAB”).

As with all CLAS services, we will not be charging any fees for legal representation. To this end, we intend to complement the capable services offered by the Royal Canadian Legion and the Bureau of Pension Advocates, by taking members’ cases to Federal Court for judicial review of VRAB decisions.

These services will be in addition to those we already offer and in regards to which we encourage members to contact us, including:

- housing issues under the Residential Tenancy Act;
- debtor-creditor issues

- general disability law issues;
- human rights abuses under the provincial Human Rights Code;
- Charter of Rights & Freedoms litigation; and
- Provincial social welfare programs.

For more information, please visit www.clasbc.net Interested members may contact the following CLAS representatives:

David Mossop, Q.C.; Senior Counsel;
dmossop@clasbc.net (604) 685 3425 Ext. 352

From the ‘Punitary’

A young man had been working as a bag boy in a supermarket for several years. One day the supermarket got new orange juice machines. The bag boy was excited and asked the manager if he could work the juice machines. The manager turned him down. The bag boy said, "But I've been working here for five years. Why can't I run the juice machines?" The manager said, "I'm sorry, but baggers can't be juicers."

Murphy’s Rules of Combat Operations.

Radar tends to fail at night and in bad weather. (especially during both)

Job Opportunity

FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATOR (PART TIME – 20 hrs/wk)
 New Westminster

Prominent local registered charity requires an experienced Financial Administrator with experience in the charities sector. Responsibilities include:

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