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Veteran Peoplehood: A Theoretical Framework

RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

The Veteran Peoplehood Model can provide a unifying theoretical framework for the field of Veterans Studies. Veteran Peoplehood will also enrich and expand the field by providing a model for purposeful inquiry as well as support the primary goals of Veterans Studies; namely, increasing understanding between civilians and veterans and improving veteran-centric healthcare, economic programs, academic programs, and legislation.

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Long before Homer's Odysseus found his way home from war and the centuries since Tacitus (ca. 16 BCE/2009) wrote of a veteran identity,[1] veterans have bonded over their experiences. Even now, veterans spot one another in restaurants and politely nod, or pass each other with a smile in recognition of their distinct community that only becomes more specific with the service in which they served, the military occupational specialty in which they worked, and the locations in which they operated. Perhaps more critical to the recognition some veterans have for each other is how civilians understand them. The latter point refers to the days of Tacitus when veterans were presumed to be a respected class but "often attributed a significance that in reality [they] probably frequently lacked" (Haynes, 2013, p. 340). To that end, applying a framework to the veteran identity will benefit veteran communities and civilians alike.

Veteran identity, often stereotyped by poor representation in movies or books, is distinct and best represented by considering it within the Peoplehood Model, which "accounts for particular social, cultural, political, economic, and ecological behaviors" (Holm et al. 2003, p. 12). Primarily borrowed from American Indian Studies, the model has been noted as "valuable and useful as a general theory" (Stratton & Washburn, 2008, p. 51), leading to a Veteran Peoplehood Model that can provide a unifying theoretical framework for Veterans Studies. The model's strength is that it applies to more than one group. Given the legal status, underrepresentation, and marginalization of veterans within the larger society, utilizing the Peoplehood Model to describe the veteran experience is fitting. That is not to say the veterans and American Indians have the same experiences, even though the latter serve in America's Armed Services at higher rates than any other ethnicity in the country (Lawrence, 2022). Peoplehood will also enrich and expand the field by providing a model for purposeful inquiry supporting the primary goals of Veterans Studies, namely, increasing understanding between civilians and veterans and improving veteran-centric healthcare, economic programs, academic programs, and legislation.[2]

The concept of Peoplehood, applied by Edward H. Spicer (1970) in his work on Southwestern Indigenous tribes, identified differences and similarities within cultural regions based on specific organizational factors. These factors were next considered by George Pierre Castile, Gilbert Kushner, and William Y. Adams as the persistent identity of enduring people and cultural systems (1981). Robert K. Thomas (Cherokee) later elaborated on the concept of Peoplehood in many ways, one of which was to include "sacred history" as a defining component. With Bob Cooter, Thomas further discussed how some Peoplehood factors overtook "precedence over kin ties" (Cooter & Thomas, 2003, p. 214).

In 2003, Tom Holm (Cherokee/Marine Corps), J. Diane Pearson, and Ben Chavis proposed the Peoplehood Model to extend sovereignty for Native American societies. Peoplehood was, in part, necessary to describe a central paradigm for the interdisciplinary field of American Indian studies and built on "a substantial body of theory, scholarship … law and policy, US history, anthropology, ethnohistory, business, economics, political science, literature, art, and music" (Holm et al., 2003, p. 8).

The Veteran Peoplehood Model creates a comprehensive theoretical framework for Veterans Studies, refocusing the "fragmented" (Lira & Chandrasekar, 2020, p. 46) research and "inconsistent communication between researchers of veteran issues and those who implement veteran policy" (Lira and Chandrasekar, 2020, p. 46). Beyond stories and experiences, the Peoplehood Model considers veteran identity through four interconnecting components, which are not all required in every conceivable example for consideration within the model. Understanding these components, how they connect, and how they define veteran identity is critical to grasping how history, law, political science, sociology, healthcare, and other topics affect veterans and how veterans interact with society. The analytic value of understanding veterans through the lens of Peoplehood moves beyond ethnicity, religion, gender, social class, and nationality.[3] Similarly, Peoplehood functions more than symbols of what *might* be. The model organizes details to reflect the power of what *already exists* and is often overlooked or unrecognized by non-veterans.

LANGUAGE

Learned in service, veterans have long had a language of their own, the first component of Peoplehood. Often replete with seemingly nonsensical acronyms and terms that have slowly leaked into the general lexicon over the generations, phrases such as "Catch-22," "good to go," and "Roger, that!" are quickly identifiable as veteran-speak, explicitly stemming from time in service. More than just jargon, language carries culture and identity as it interconnects within the Veteran Peoplehood Model. Language is not more important than the other three components, but one among equal and interconnecting components. Language constantly changes based on society, time, place, and interactions across the spectrum of warfare.

Similarly, some phrases die out as generations come and go. In the 1980s, "beer gardens" allowed active-duty members to gather and share stories. It allowed those with combat experience to share knowledge and insight with "boots" or "Nicky Newguy." While "beer garden" may have fallen from the general lexicon (although likely not

completely gone), storytelling continues, perhaps under a different name.

Relationships live within language. Terms such as "brother" and "sister" between veterans of any service, even those unfamiliar with each other, are commonplace, transcending blood relations. Such nuance was captured by William Shakespeare's (ca. 1599/2003) *King Henry V* when before the Battle of Agincourt, he urged his men to immortality, saying, "We few, we happy few, we band of brothers; For he to-day that sheds his blood with me shall be my brother" (lines 21–23). Although language identifies veterans, a more specific language within this component further identifies a branch of service, a particular theater of service, or combat experience. In other cases, language identifies a different experience, such as a Navy/Coast Guard/Marine Corps member participating in a time-honored ritual of crossing the equator in a ship and evolving from a simple "pollywog" to becoming an illustrious "shellback" in the Order of Neptune. Likewise, the Air Force's "Roof Stomp" and the Army's West Point "Pillow Fight" (banned in 2015) are similar examples in the US military.

Veteran language is distinctly different from the way civilians speak in its "nuances, references, and grammar" (Holm et al., 2003, p. 13), such as "chest candy," denoting awards worn on the uniform, or "gedunk," "pogey bait," and "boodle" denoting junk food in various branches. Language can be symbolic and further connect history and the ceremonial cycle. Language also distinguishes place in the same way place defines language. Examples of this characteristic are readily evident in the "birthplace" of the Marine Corps at Tun Tavern, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; or Marines being "born" at Parris Island, South Carolina, San Diego, California, or Montford Point, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. Similarly, other services acknowledge their "birth" and "birthplace" according to their history. And while language unites veterans and their active-duty counterparts, it might also create a barrier between non-veterans who cannot actively participate in such discourse.

HISTORY

Active-military members, and by extension, veterans, carry the history of their branch of service. In the context of Veteran Peoplehood, history is an understanding of events, mores, and traditions instilled through military service and post-service experiences that shape how veterans make sense of the past, find meaning, and orient themselves within their communities.

History is evident in the stories related to the creation of each branch of service, and it follows through duty stations, deployments, and combat experiences. History lives on battle streamers, medals awarded, and ribbons adorned. When one member looks at another member's combat action ribbon or combat medal, they share an instant bond and recognize they have "chewed the same dirt," even if it was in different parts of the world and at different times. History translates events into understandable language (words, dreams, metaphors) and helps veterans endure suffering. While some awards are service-specific, others, like the Medal of Honor or Purple Heart, speak to recognizable events across all branches.

History solidifies Veteran-group identity by giving meaning to shared deprivation. The hardship endured in war and peace, in combat and on training missions, deployed and at home, weaves the sociocultural coherency of the veteran experience. Punctuating this experience further is the knowledge every service member carries with them that debilitating injury and even death are distinct possibilities no matter how safe their assignment is. Veterans must create space to exist side-by-side with ever-present death as a bedfellow. History instilled during service gives the veteran the eschatological foundation, which provides meaning to sacrifices.

History reflects through dreams as stories, messages, or warnings. It is common for veterans to dream of their time in service, positively and negatively. Like the dreams of "Wink" and "Amanda," the latter dreamed about circumstances relating to the former without knowing details beforehand, as documented by Stanley Krippner (2016) in "Dreams from Deceased Veterans?" Joseph Campbell (2016) explained such stories as "symbolic images and narratives, metaphorical of the possibilities of human experience and the fulfillment of a given culture at a given time" (p. 2).

History also transcends time and connects events across generations. For instance, in 1986, during a military exercise in South Korea, I was walking down the sidewalk in Pohang with a small group of Marines. As we walked, an elderly South Korean gentleman stepped off the sidewalk and into the street as we passed. Once we were beyond him, he stepped back onto the sidewalk and continued his journey. This act troubled me greatly, as it was reminiscent of Black Americans stepping out of the way of white Americans in the deep South circa the 1960s. I spoke limited Korean, so I asked my Korean linguist buddy to ask the man why he stepped off the sidewalk. The man replied, "In 1950, you [Marines] saved me and my country. You risked your lives so that I might live. I stepped off the sidewalk out of respect for all you have done for us." As I was only 18 years old, there was no way I had any direct role in the sacrifices made for him and his country. But because we all wore the uniform of a US Marine, the respect he gave us transcended time, just as the actions, the revered history of the "Frozen Chosen" and the Marines in 1950–1951 reflected upon us.

History influences veteran identity through social mores, as any Marine can attest to when walking across the First Sergeant/Master Sergeant's grass in the company area. Corps/core values, leadership traits, and principles are additional examples and potentially different than those of non-military/non-veteran organizations. A commonly held perspective, and at times a difficulty experienced by veterans transitioning from service, is the difference between military core values and civilian values (Castaneda, 2019). For example, a leadership principle in the military expects one to "know your [team] and look out for their welfare."[4]

By contrast, the perception is that civilian leadership often only looks out for itself at employees' expense. The difference between civilian and military worldviews is further noted in the adoption of military leadership into non-military institutions through *The Art of War for Business Leaders*, *Semper Fi: Business Leadership the Marine Corps Way*, and "Lessons on Leadership Skills from The Marines" (Ford, 2021), to name just a few examples. The example is not to suggest that civilians do not possess leadership strategies but that military systems have found their way into non-military environments.

The Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), a legal system within the military and veteran communities, also influences identity. Once considered the exclusive domain of active-duty servicemembers, Veterans remain connected to the UCMJ. In *US Appellee v. Dinger,* No. 17-0510 (2018), a retiree/veteran was court-martialed rather than held accountable by a civil trial. Again, in *Larrabee v. Del Toro,* No. 21-5012 (2022), a Fleet Marine Corps Reserve member was court-martialed, and the action did not violate the Grand Jury Clause of the 5th Amendment. Relatedly, Veterans Treatment Courts are a growing avenue within the legal system, specifically when service experience connects to legal statuses, such as combat-produced posttraumatic stress experienced in a non-combat environment that leads to legal problems.

As noted by Holm et al. (2003), sacred history consists of a "distinct culture, customs, and political economy" (p. 14). While many servicemembers and veterans consider their organization's history sacred, the Veteran Peoplehood Model differentiates from its Native American counterpart by noting history without referencing the "sacred" component. Military customs and courtesies incorporating veterans post-service include standing at attention during the raising and lowering of the colors (National Ensign) and the playing of the national anthem, as well as respecting the chain of command in a civilian workplace, at a minimum.

Additionally, the political economy of veterans is evident from early America, where they received land grants, albeit land taken from Native Americans, and veterans continue to receive pensions and disability compensation in contemporary times. According to the US Census Bureau (2021) (Giefer & Loveless, 2021), there are currently 18.2 million veterans, nearly half of whom receive "service-related cash or noncash benefits" (para. 1) through the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The VA commands a budget of over $378 billion (USASpending.Gov, 2023) in the fiscal year 2023 (not including benefits offered by states to veterans). The political power of veterans not only generates revenue but it influences votes and public policies, as well as the economy of a healthy business. Veteran-owned businesses, specifically with leaders possessing wartime experience, are "trained in the art of responding to volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environments," leaving them "poised to lead" the American economy (Nicholson, 2020, para 1). Such companies employ "5.8 million Americans and bring in a revenue of $1.14 Trillion annually" (Nicholson, 2020, para 1).

History includes pivotal stories like the Newburgh Conspiracy of 1783, when soldiers' pay and promised pensions were not forthcoming or unfunded, and the Bonus March of 1932, as approximately 20,000 World War I veterans sought pledged payments for their service, money deferred until 1945.

CEREMONIAL CYCLE

The third component of Peoplehood, ceremonial cycle, deftly reflects the interconnectivity of language (the first component), which tells the history (the second component) and denotes territory/place (the fourth component). Ceremonial cycle is recurrent, acknowledging remembrance or retelling of events. It includes healing ceremonies to create balance and harmony in a person or a place. In Veteran Peoplehood, the ceremonial cycle refers to the ritual observances that occur at recognized milestones throughout service, such as graduation from boot camp, presentation of medals, and retirement. It also includes such examples as the Sunset Parades conducted by "The Commandant's Own," the Marine Corps Drum and Bugle Corps, and the precision-focused Silent Drill Platoon (the repetition of the parade is an example of the ceremonial cycle). The language of the parade, set in words, music, and action, tells the story (history) of the Marine Corps War Memorial, which displays the flag raising on Mount Suribachi, Iwo Jima (territory/place). Similarly, the Army guards at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, or the Air Force "Singing Sergeants" exemplify the ceremonial cycle. Such repeated acts of remembrance are a few examples of the ceremonial cycle as it interacts with the other components of the Peoplehood Model.

Spirituality lives in the ceremonial cycle. There is room for numerous perspectives in both active duty and veteran populations, reflecting the interconnectivity of the components within Veteran Peoplehood. It stands to reason, at least to some, that faith or spirituality may be vital to some active duty/veterans and nonexistent in others, given the mastication of combat. Despite the paradox, the World War I axiom "we have no atheists in the trenches" (The Western Times, 1914) often rings true. Combat and related experiences impact a veteran's worldview, further influencing healthcare, specifically mental health treatment. Coll and colleagues studied this concept in 2011, noting, "Understanding multidimensional and multicultural worldviews in veteran clients is an important undertaking in promoting cultural competence in mental health practitioners treating veterans" (p. 75). The veteran worldview often sees a stigma with disability compensation or care, or mental healthcare, which could limit employment opportunities, relationships, and other prospects.

Relatedly, medical practitioners, some of whom have limited or no military experience, have prescribed medication that worsened symptoms or misdiagnosed healthcare issues (Castellano, 2021), resulting in veterans not receiving care or, at times, altogether avoiding it (Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General, 2019). The problem became so pervasive that the American Psychological Association published a story about their concerns regarding using inappropriate medication (see Smith, 2012).

Non-veterans can also misinterpret military ceremonies. For instance, Veterans Day and Memorial Day signify two entirely different concepts. The former celebrates all American veterans of honorable service regardless of whether they served in war or peacetime. In contrast, the latter honors those who died in service to their nation or from injuries sustained during battle. (Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs, 2006). Neither day is a cause of celebration with fireworks, but non-veterans could become confused with the two holidays and how to honor service.

Some active-duty servicemembers and veterans believe dreams carry messages (but likely so do non-veterans for different reasons). Military members have noted dreaming or having premonitions of specific actions to take or not to take, which could lead to good and bad results, such as avoiding a patrol because "your number will come up (you will die)."[5] Relatedly, an example of a veteran's dream as premonition is President Abraham Lincoln, a veteran of the Black Hawk War, dreaming of his assassination 10 days before it occurred. (Teillard, 1911). Dreams also help solve problems, turning nightmares into lucid dreaming techniques that change outcomes (Berry, 2011).

Veterans likewise possess many rituals born of their time in service, such as the previously mentioned shellback and blue nose rituals for traveling to specific geographical locations to those rituals conducted within veteran service organizations. Additionally, rituals for Native American veterans, such as smudging, sweats, and purification ceremonies, offer healing options beyond or in conjunction with Western medicine. Similarly, acupuncture, healing touch, and Cranio-Sacral therapy are becoming more commonplace in veteran treatment (Fox31 News, 2014).

TERRITORY/PLACE

It should be no surprise that territory/place is an essential facet of Veteran Peoplehood. While serving in uniform, wars are fought over territory, lives are lived and lost, memories are formed, and nightmares are made real. Some traumatic experiences have lasting effects, such as Agent Orange, Burn Pits, and Gulf War Illness. The ailments, disabilities, and contaminants born from territory/place often lead to protests, new public policies, and fights for healthcare. Veterans connect to land through blood, sweat, and tears. They take a part of the land with them and often leave a portion or all of themselves. When they die, their final resting "place" is often a national or state cemetery for veterans, replete with a burial ritual (ceremonial cycle). A veteran's connection to territory/place is a "lived experience" (Rodman, 1992, p. 641).

Locations where veterans went to boot camp/recruit training, attended military occupational schools, been stationed, and served leave an indelible mark. Memories, feelings, and stories strengthen the connections with territory/place. The importance of place is visible in poems, drawings and paintings, and other expressions. One example, captured by Haley Britzky (2022), documented military-turned-veteran experiences during the evacuations at the Hamid Karzai International Airport in Afghanistan: "I feel like I'm still there," said one veteran (para. 15).

Col. Charles H. Waterhouse, a Marine Corps combat Veteran who served in World War II (wounded at Iwo Jima), painted, sculpted, and illustrated his fellow Marines, honoring many who didn't return. Noteworthy in his representations are his fellow veterans and specific times, battles, and places. Waterhouse painted individuals like Medal of Honor recipient Sergeant John Basilone who fought in the South Pacific, and places like Dong Ha, South Vietnam, where Col. John W. Ripley worked under a strategic bridge planting explosives for 3 hours to stop an enemy advance (Clayson & Hagan, 2021). Such places are "fraught with important spiritual and ceremonial significance" (Stratton & Washburn, 2008, p. 57) through the sacrifices made, the history created, and the act of remembrance produced.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN

Considering the Veteran Peoplehood Model as an analytical framework moves beyond theory, it is also an active structure that contributes to a better understanding of veterans, leading to improved community-building, healthcare, economic programs, academic programs, legislation, and other outcomes. Veterans' experiences are often unique, a fact that is frequently overlooked or ignored. For instance, other than military service, how often is a 19-year-old representing an entire nation dropped in a foreign country with millions of dollars worth of equipment, responsible for the lives of others, and told to "do good"?[6] The leadership and critical-thinking skills honed under such circumstances are often misunderstood or ignored by the non-veteran community. The confusion could be related to how military skills translate into civilian opportunities (Prudential, 2012), but it could also be related to other misunderstandings, lack of awareness, privilege, and/or biases. Veteran Peoplehood can provide a comprehensive lens through which to consider such experiences.

In business, veterans are often offered low to mid-level occupations that do not take advantage of their skills and experience, perhaps due to misconceptions held by the employer (Competitive Edge Services, 2013). Relatedly, some employers are critical of veteran's needs, such as time for a medical appointment related to a service disability (Competitive Edge Services, 2013). Veteran Peoplehood's interdisciplinary and interconnected components can assist in reframing employer misperceptions about "unproductive" time as rehabilitative, improving production time. Noteworthy examples of organizations that understand the capabilities of veterans include The Mission Continues and Team Rubicon, with a combined revenue of more than $69M in 2020.[7] The Mission Continues, founded by Veteran Eric Greitens, connects communities in need with veterans prepared to address various conditions. Similarly, Team Rubicon, founded by William McNulty and veteran Jacob Wood, provides disaster response in dangerous environments and harnesses battlefield skills to serve those in need.

Veteran Peoplehood can provide a better understanding of social issues and advance policies affecting veterans. Consider that some veterans have served in arduous environments only to return home as second-class citizens. Negative sentiment has often been common, from racial problems to a perception that veterans do not deserve additional consideration for benefits or compensation. Native American veterans, such as Dennis Banks (Ojibwe), an Air Force veteran, recognized the similarities between the federal government's treatment of Native Americans and the treatment by the American government/Japanese police toward farmers in the Sunagawa Struggle. His observations led to his co-creation of the American Indian Movement in Minneapolis. Similarly, Black veterans returned from service and agitated for equality and an end to Jim Crow racism after service from the US Civil War into the 1970s.

Relatedly, in the proceedings of The American Legion 35th National Convention (1953), National Commander Lewis K. Gough noted a "vociferous and extensively publicized" (p. 11) anti-veteran sentiment related to veterans benefits. Decades later, in 2014–2015, whistleblowers from the Wait Time Scandal in the US Department of Veterans Affairs also told of a solid anti-veteran sentiment amongst agency employees who believed veterans should not receive benefits and disability compensation. These beliefs were so strong that some employees were said to intentionally lose critical documentation or even complete files on veterans, drag their feet on claims, or set them aside and declare them nonexistent.[8] Although there is less anti-veteran sentiment than in the 1950s and 1970s, mainly civilian attitudes towards Korean and Vietnam veterans, an undercurrent remains, underscoring the importance of public policies and social justice programs supporting veterans.

Still, while laws support healthcare and disability compensation for veterans dealing with Gulf War Illness, more than 80% of the claims for that care have been denied, according to the Government Accountability Office (2017). Similarly, while laws support veterans dealing with Agent Orange contamination, the VA has rejected most disability claims for decades, as the Government Accountability Office (2022) documented. Policies should ensure access to care and track outcomes to determine weaknesses in policy or lack of interest in following established policy. Public offices could benefit from Veteran Peoplehood as a transformational framework that assists in interpreting veteran experiences and needs. It would also be appropriate for such offices to consider hiring veterans from the top post to positions along the entire structure, focusing on military and veteran policy. In that vein, US and state congressional offices should all have at least one veteran on staff who knows the terrain and can bridge the gaps between veteran-centric policy and practice.

Academia recognizes the financial resources veterans bring to their organizations through the GI Bill, which provided $94B from 2009 to 2019 (Government Accountability Office, 2019). While the return on the public investment may still be unidentified for the Post 9/11 GI Bill, the return on investment for the original GI Bill, the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, was $7 for every $1 invested (The American Legion 100th Anniversary Commemorative Coin Act, 2017). That means the investment in veterans returned a staggering amount of revenue to the American taxpayer. But beyond fiscal returns, the group of veterans taking advantage of the new policy in 1944 also produced

"3 Presidents of the United States, 3 Supreme Court justices, 14 Nobel Prize winners, 24 Pulitzer Prize winners, 91,000 scientists, 67,000 doctors, and 450,000 engineers" (Institute for Veterans & Military Families, 2019, Financial aid, para. 4), and numerous other influential women, and men. Still, academia has slowly recognized this unique culture common to veterans, regardless of their distinctive experiences. The Veterans Studies baccalaureate program at Saint Leo University is the first 4-year degree of its kind in the nation to recognize the value of an interdisciplinary program. The degree will help eliminate the typical biases and misunderstandings held by civilians and prepare military and veteran students to serve their fellow veterans in numerous fields upon graduation.

Veteran Peoplehood fosters a culturally specific understanding of the interconnected experiences of veterans of any service branch, having a particular set of laws surrounding their identity, employment, education, and care. Veterans represent a unique identity, including a distinctive language with various dialects, histories, and ceremonies, often born in a specific place. The details within these four components: language, history, ceremonial cycle, and territory/place have been well documented but often studied independently. Through Veteran Peoplehood, the four components examine their relationships with each other as a unifying theory analyzing and considering veterans, their needs, and their contributions, potentially simplifying the veterans' odyssey from military service to community service and beyond.

Considering veterans' identity through the complex and unifying framework of the Peoplehood Model highlights the (mis)perception that the academic discipline of Veterans Studies is a nascent field. Perhaps it is new to academia, but that is because it is only now receiving the attention it has long received in public policy, history, science, and more. Veterans have created and recreated their stories for millennia through art, literature, and song, disseminating their unique individual experiences and shared culture. Applying the lens of the Veteran Peoplehood Model—which recognizes veterans' distinctive language, histories, ceremonies, and ties to specific places—to the veteran identity provides scholars with a theoretical framework to continue identifying and documenting veterans' contributions.

NOTES

1. Tacitus wrote of veterans reenlisting and serving under their own banner in *Annals*.
2. Family members are an essential aspect of Veteran Peoplehood.
3. This point regarding Peoplehood is mentioned in my book *Reinterpreting a Native American Identity* on page 8.
4. Other service branches have similar axioms.
5. Conversation between the author and another Marine while serving in a combat zone.
6. This was my experience in 1986.
7. Based on publicly available financial reports.
8. Based on investigations with the Department of Veterans Affairs and substantiated credible evidence of whistleblowers' claims.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The author has no competing interests to declare.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Dr. Eric Hannel is a Combat Veteran with 20+ years in the Marine Corps, a decade in the US House of Representatives (staff), and many years in academia.

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