# The Value of Respect: What does it mean for an Army?

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The Australian Army has adopted ‘Respect’ as a new addition to the existing trio of values, ‘Courage, Initiative and Teamwork.’ This article explores what ‘respect’ may mean as an army value. The significance of ‘respect’ surrounding two incidents involving Australian Defence Force personnel while on duty in Afghanistan is considered. The first is the so-called ‘green on blue’ attack by an Afghan National Army soldier killing three Australian soldiers on August 29, 2012. The second concerns allegations of mutilation of suspected Afghan insurgents’ corpses by soldiers attached to an Australian Special Forces Unit on the April 28,2013. The incidents have resulted in internal military investigations. In the second incident with a view to possible prosecution for breach of the law of armed conflict and related disciplinary offences, and in the case of the green on blue attack leading to a civilian coronial inquest. The article discusses the training and modelling of behaviour required to instil such a value as respect.

KEYWORDS*:* Australia, Military, Respect, Values.

# IIntroduction

In 2013, then Lieutenant General David Morrison AO, Chief of the Australian Army, introduced the value of ‘respect’ as a fourth addition to the ideal values the army is expected to uphold. The other three are ‘courage, initiative and teamwork.’ In a speech delivered in Townsville, Lieutenant General Morrison outlined what he saw as respect:

It must be the glue that binds the other three [values] together. It is the quality which will both temper, and sharpen the hard edge that must be a part of our service if we are to survive and prevail in war. Respect for the legacy bequeathed…for all the men and women in our ranks… for the legacy we will leave… respect for who you are; for your self-discipline; for the standards of your personal behaviour; for the respect you show your mates and for their respect for you… (Morrison 2013).

Morrison’s motivation related to a litany of internal allegations of abuse, sexual assault and bullying that has plagued the Australian Defence Force (ADF) for many years (Sales 2013, Grey 1998).[[1]](#footnote-1) The Lieutenant General acknowledged the problem was a systematic cultural one, stating ‘to pretend otherwise, after so many repeated scandals and so much adverse scrutiny, is simply dishonest and self- delusional’ (Morrison 2013).

Kant established an understanding that all human beings should be accorded respect, even when individuals may be considered unworthy or unmeritorious (Betzler 2008). This respect is called for because of the inherent ‘humanness’ or intrinsic nature of the human being (Massey 1983). The value based concept has been described as a ‘basic respect’ (Hill 2000 p. 59) or ‘recognition respect’ (Darwell 1977, 2006). For military persons operating in a hierarchical command structure as part of a group exceptionally permitted to apply violence to other human beings, in restricted circumstances, the ideal of respect attaching to each individual human being is challenging. For instance, does respect differ between the human who is ‘Commander’ and the human who is part of the enemy forces, or part of one’s own forces? Should it differ and if so how and on what basis? These and other questions arise when addressing the meaning of respect as a value in the Australian army.

Two incidents involving Australian army personnel in Afghanistan raise issues around the value of respect. The first involves an Afghan National Army (ANA) soldier killing Australian soldiers while on a mentoring mission. Issues of respect are considered in regard to the attacker’s motivation, and the bereaved families’ response. The second incident concerns allegations around the removal of hands of possible Taliban insurgents, by one or more SAS soldiers, for the presumed purpose of identifying the deceased. Issues are raised concerning respect between soldiers and enemy combatants, for the laws of war and conduct on the battlefield, as well as respect to the Australian public, and families of the deceased in regard to providing transparency concerning the incidents.

The article addresses issues that arise around how respect should be understood in practice in the military (Keller 2001). Lieutenant General Morrison speaks of respect both at the institutional level and the personal (Morrison 2013). This approach acknowledges the reciprocity demanded by respect, albeit focused around the army as an organisation. Understanding one’s own values and how they may differ from others and that of the military organisation is an essential beginning to deep reflexive understanding of ethics and morality (Rokeach 1973; Wortel & Bosch 2011). The two incidents relating to Australian soldiers in Afghanistan are explored with this in mind. The facts of each are described in Part II. Part III then dissects how respect may play a role in these incidents. Finally, some observations are drawn in Part IV on how respect can be incorporated into military training and in Part V the impact of this in regard to both civilian and military responses.

# II. Two Incidents

## ‘Green on Blue’ Incident - Wahab

On August 28, 2012 an Australian platoon of twenty-four soldiers joined an Afghan National Army (ANA) outpost in Taliban territory at Wahab Patrol Base in Afghanistan. Their mission was to engage in a mentor exercise with the ANA. On the evening of the 29th a single ANA soldier, Sergeant Hekmatullah, approached the Australian ‘encampment’ and within 5 meters opened fire from a M16 attacking the Australian soldiers while they were relaxing and playing cards (Wahab Inquiry: par 4, 36). Hekmatullah’s attack killed Sapper James Martin aged 21, Private Robert Poate aged 23 and Lance Corporal Stjepan Milosevic aged 40 years and wounded two others. The Australian soldiers exhibited control in the circumstances. Only two soldiers returned fire, one towards the north guard tower and the other to the southern facing tower (Wahab Inquiry: pars 37, 142). Such attacks not only damage lives but inhibit the mission of training and handover to local military personnel when conducting peacekeeping and post conflict operations (see Long War Journal 2012). [[2]](#footnote-2)

Hekmatullah escaped, only to be captured in February 2013, after a significant search operation. Over three months of interrogation he confessed and was subsequently tried and is currently facing the death penalty in Afghanistan (McPhedran & Lion 2013, Kelly 2014). He referred to having seen the film of the burning of the Koran and the cartoon of the prophet Muhammad as motiving his action (McDermott & Hichens 2014).

The shooting resulted in an Inquiry Officer level Inquiry being appointed by the Chief of the Defence Force to report on the facts and circumstances of the incident. A redacted version of the inquiry conducted by an unnamed Colonel, available in the public domain, made a number of findings, none of which were considered to be causal factors resulting in the deaths (Wahab Inquiry). Parents and family of the deceased soldiers pushed for an open civilian inquiry. As a result a civilian coronial inquest was held in 2014. The Coroner’s findings released on September 22, 2015 raised concerns around communication failures at a higher level in the chain of command ( Lock 2015; par 170) and inadequate risk assessments taking seriously the need for risk minimisation ( Lock 2015; par 149, 159).

The Australian soldiers were led by Captain Lopez, a junior officer who first arrived in Afghanistan in June 2012. He had conducted several local patrols, but had no previous operational experience (Wahab Inquiry, par 133). In ensuring compliance with the order to segregate Australian and ANA soldiers, due to the unusual lay out and terrain of Wahab Base, a decision was made to station the Australians at one end of the base under makeshift tarpaulin shades strung between the Australian military vehicles (Wahab Inquiry: pars 65, 96). Captain Lopez reported to the internal inquiry that he chose not to station Australian soldiers in any of the lookout posts (Wahab Inquiry: par 98). Most importantly, because the mission was meant to build trust, he describes:

The first couple of days are all about building rapport and then seeing the results of that on the ground in the future. There’s such a high degree of trust that you need to place in them with the mission that we have. I was keen to encourage as much interaction as I could, because I believe that facilitates our mission (Wahab Inquiry: par 97c).

This thinking aligns with respect being a two way process (showing and receiving respect for self and to others) and is supported by the atmosphere being described as relaxed and friendly in line with the mission to mentor and build rapport (Wahab Inquiry: pars 118, 119). Earlier in the day both Australian and ANA soldiers, including Hekmatullah, had worked out in a makeshift gym (Wahab Inquiry: pars 70, 114). In the evening Australian soldiers played cards, watched movies or wrote letters. No barrier or stationary guards were in place between the Australians and ANA troops, and only a roving guard was placed on duty. The decision to have one roving guard in the evening had support from Sergeant Burke and the section commanders (Wahab Inquiry: par 99). The internal inquiry directed criticism at allowing the roving guard to wear physical training dress and not preventing unescorted access by ANA soldiers into the Australian area (Wahab Inquiry: pars 121,122). The latter was a matter that Captain Lopez admitted he had intended to restrict (Wahab Inquiry: par 112). These factors were described as errors of judgment made by Captain Lopez, Sergeant Burke and Major Gordon (Wahab Inquiry: par 116).

The inquiry was unable to determine why Hekmatullah attacked the Australian soldiers but ruled out cultural factors, concluding the ‘atmospherics’ were considered good; (Wahab Inquiry: par 66) there was no evidence of personal or cultural offence, nor insulting language or behaviour by any Australian soldier (Wahab Inquiry: pars 10, 44, 49). The inquiry noted that Hekmatullah had participated in the makeshift gym with Australian soldiers earlier in the day of the shooting, and claimed Hekmatullah may have been disgruntled for not being given leave or being able to send pay to his wife (Wahab Inquiry: pars 42, 43).The inquiry also concluded Hekmatullah’s actions were not linked to the Taliban despite him seeking their assistance when hiding after the incident (Wahab Inquiry: par 43).

Following the inquiry the Centre for Army Lessons Learned developed the ‘Inside the Wire’ Green on Blue Handbook to assist with educating Australian soldiers on the Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO) Cultural Compatibility Study before deployment (Wahab Inquiry: par 158, DSTO Cultural Compatibility Study). It is impossible to gauge the effectiveness of this, but insider attacks continued after this incident (Long War Journal).

## B. The mutilation incident - Zabul.

This incident involves allegations of mutilation of Afghan corpses by soldiers attached to an Australian Special Forces Unit on the April 28, 2013 [(Brissenden](http://www.abc.net.au/news/michael-brissenden/166894) 2013, Brown 2015). Media reports suggest the hands of three Afghanis, possibly Taliban insurgents, were removed allegedly for identification purposes. Geneva Convention I, article 15 prohibits the mutilation of corpses; as such this incident may have breached international humanitarian law.[[3]](#footnote-3) However, whether there has been a breach enforceable under Australian law, remains unclear as the offence of mutilation under the Australian Criminal Code relates only to ‘living’ persons’.[[4]](#footnote-4) The claims were made in August 2013, and there is still an absence of public information about the incident other than that it has been investigated internally within the military (Lee 2015). This secrecy, long after most Australian troops have left Afghanistan, raises concerns regarding transparency. The public funds the army and the soldiers act on their behalf and as such the public may rightly demand to know the truth.

Instead the reporter breaking the story, Michael Brissendon, and his source, were investigated by the Australian Federal Police in an attempt to prevent release of the information. This does not demonstrate the required respect the military leadership wishes to instil. If the incident has happened, as it has not been denied, it must be dealt with in a timely and transparent manner (Brown 2014, 2015). This is to respect those whose reputations remain under suspicion by delivery of certainty, the Afghan families in order to enable closure and respect for their deceased, and the Australian public to reassure that its soldiers demonstrate respect in dealing with others. Brown claims

As a supporter of the Australian military it gives me no pleasure to write these next sentences. Based on the available evidence, the Australian public would be forgiven for thinking that their military is unaccountable and the Department of Defence untroubled by its legislated duty to be transparent to the public and the parliament. There’s been no cover-up, nor to my knowledge have any lies been told. But the Defence Department is deliberately suppressing information about an incident of which it is not proud. And for all the damage it is causing to public confidence in the institution, the effect of this policy is much the same as if a cover-up had occurred (Brown 2014).

It is possible that under pressure to get fingerprints, and an alleged suggestion by a trainer that this was the most efficient way to obtain them, the grisly choice to amputate body parts occurred (Brissenden 2013).[[5]](#footnote-5)

# III. The role of respect in the two examples.

## Respect on the Battlefield

The Australian platoon sent on the mentoring mission to Wahab was part of a trust building exercise between the ANA and the international forces after a number of incidents had undermined trust and affiliation (Wahab Inquiry: par 62). These included allegations of soldiers from other States being involved in killing civilians, (Cockburn 2011, Shah & Bowley 2012, The Telegraph 2012) mutilating insurgents (Boal 2011) and disrespecting Afghan customs and religious beliefs (Long 2013). Perhaps the worst were two incidents involving the burning of the Koran, one by Pastor Terry Jones in Florida on March 20, 2011 (Shah & [Nordland](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/n/rod_nordland/index.html?inline=nyt-per) 2011) and a second involving US military personnel on Bagram Air base in February 2012 (Rubin 2012). The filming and distribution of this inflamed Afghan people and resulted in riots (Sameem 2011). Hekmattullah referred to the burning of the Koran as an incentive to kill Australian soldiers after his arrest when interviewed by Australian journalists (McDermott & Hichens 2014). This aligns with findings of Schaafsma and Williams (2012) that insult demonstrating lack of respect from an outgroup is experienced as racism and will result in anger towards any associated with the outgroup.

Schaafsma and Williams conducted a study into 720 adolescents in 33 high schools in the Netherlands across three diverse religious and cultural groups (Schaafsma & Williams 2012). The study tested ingroup and outgroup exclusion across the groups. It found that exclusion of an individual by outgroup members, irrespective of whether a majority or minority ethnic group, became a ‘categorisation threat’ leading to feelings of injustice and racist attitudes, resulting in increased hostility toward anyone identified as belonging to the outgroup (Schaafsma & Williams 2012, 830, 835). Whereas exclusion by ingroup members, (same ethnic or religious group), across all cultures, led to an ‘acceptance threat’ resulting in behaviour that seeks to reduce uncertainty and increase a sense of meaningfulness (Schaafsma & Williams 2012). This study found for those suffering an ‘acceptance threat’, fundamental religious beliefs provided a sanctuary of strong clear principles that supported the need to find meaning and a group with which affiliation and recognition could be felt (Schaafsma & Williams 2012, 831, 834).

One could think Captain Lopez had a difficult task when he was criticised for failure to maintain segregation of the ANA and Australian troops, given that the mission was to improve trust relations between the two groups. The inquiry acknowledged the difficulty a Task Force Commander is put in when asked to engage in mentoring activities which can be at odds with force protection requirements (Wahab Inquiry: pars 68, 69, Carson 2013). Local engagement with ANA was a significant requirement of the mentoring role. Captain Lopez noted ‘he didn’t want his first action on arrival at PB Wahab to be to “kick” several ANA out of their accommodation in order for him to secure a separate area from the ANA’ (Wahab Inquiry: pars 68, 97a.)

A DSTO Cultural Compatibility study was undertaken as a result of the green on blue attacks to better understand the relationship between army personnel and ANA (DSTO Cultural Compatibility Study 2012). One of the key findings of the study underpins the importance of understanding and demonstrating respect

… the ANA interviews and focus groups identify grievances underpinned by feelings of *humiliation* and the drive to restore *honour*as the most significant proximal cause of violence. These incidents appear to elicit a more intense emotive reaction suggesting that a significant percentage of attacks are driven by ‘acts of rage’ rather than a carefully planned or calculated process (DSTO Cultural Compatibility Study: 2).

A new mentoring process had been introduced that relied on an operational support model with reduced numbers, involving smaller teams and intermittent contact (DSTO Cultural Compatibility Study: 2). ANA participants in the DSTO study suggested there was a perception of fearfulness and/or lack of trust which led to failure in reaching expected friendship levels between the Australian Force’s and ANA soldiers.

Long’s (2013) research into the likely causes of these incidents supports this. Long assessed why dissatisfied ANA do not just desert; he suggests ‘…individual violence …seems to be driven by emotion rather than strategic calculation, so the answer is something that provokes an extreme emotional response’ (Long 2013: 176). The DSTO Cultural study identified ‘humiliation’ and lack of respect as key motivations for revenge. It illuminated the difficulties in conducting mentoring missions while trying to balance force protection, suggesting:

The new mentoring model has been interpreted as a violation of the friendship established by previous Mentoring Task Forces which was based on notions of *hospitality*(shared tea and meals) and *reciprocity*(expectations of Australian support and assistance in the provision of stores, maintenance and access to enablers) (DSTO Cultural Compatibility Study: 2).

Long (2013) suggests the significance of religious beliefs that are attacked by insult or other offence is the most likely explanation for ANA to suddenly engage in acts of violence. Given the lack of respect, it results in a common outcome, mostly their own death or capture (Long 2013). Respect includes a two way process showing respect even for ‘enemies’ cultural concerns. Hekmattullah’s case confirms that the burning of the Koran was of significance in his motivation to attack and the outcome was his capture and death sentence (McDermott & Hichens 2014). This supports the need for education across all ranks of soldiers in values such as respect and that the process of communicating respect may well reduce green on blue attacks.

Any improvement in cultural awareness is likely to help decrease the opportunity for conflict, communication breakdown and ultimately violence. If deeper ethical awareness and training around values, such as respect, were to prevail, a soldier, even if instructed to remove hands in order to identify battle dead, may pause to consider the moral lack of self-respect involved in such an action, beyond merely following orders or training. When something wrong may have occurred, lessons need to be learned and respect by the ADF observed to prevent the potential for future incidents.

## Respect for family members and the public

The incidents described bring forth civilian values in the increasing demand for transparent investigations such as coronial inquests or other public forms of inquiry. This includes respect for the Australian community and more particularly the bereaved families. The potential consequences of failure by Government to establish the proper systems to transparently investigate these incidents may lead ultimately to further threats to ADF personnel (Elks 2014).[[6]](#footnote-6) Rear Admiral James Goldrick has commented ‘…failure or tardiness to accept that there may have been wrong doing will result only in greater anguish, greater damage to the individuals involved and even greater collateral damage to their services…’ (Goldrick 2014:22). An isolated all-volunteer professional military can easily lose sight of civilian values. Janowitz (1960) has argued that military values must align more with the civilian values for civil-military relations to experience a positive outcome. To do this the army must be open to the society it represents as that society changes.

A separated military and civilian system often does not encourage the integration of these values. While military justice, including inquiries have undergone a ‘civilianisation’ by moving to replicate more closely the civilian system (Rubin 2002), they still remain a separate system in Australia. Until such time as this nettle is grasped, bereaved parents are likely to increase their demands for change given the influence of rights demands in other like Western nations (Lebel 2007).

A civilian who feels disrespected by the military, is likely to react as the families have in the green on blue incident. The inquirer in this incident recommended that the Chief of Defence Force consider taking administrative action against two soldiers, but did not suggest a Commission of Inquiry due to the likelihood it would not find any new material or evidence (Wahab Inquiry: Finding 22). The internal closed inquiry by the military of its own organisation can be seen as lacking transparency and justice. This is fuelled by media reporting such as occurred in the incident. The media reported:

If details revealed today by News Corp Australia about the army officer’s report into the murder of three young Australian soldiers in Afghanistan are any indication, it is no wonder that politicians and generals want to hide such reports behind a veil of secrecy. … the report lacks credibility and leaves the army wide open to charges of a cover-up. Much of the information blacked out in the document is freely available elsewhere and much of the blacking out simply muddies the waters for the reader. The rationale of “operational security’’ to justify many of the redactions is ridiculous. The families and the public have a right to know all the circumstances surrounding this crime. Three young Australians soldiers are dead and their families are devastated largely because — as the report clearly states — army officers failed in their duty of care (McPhedran 2013).

During the conduct of the inquiry the family members were not consulted, (Wahab Inquiry: par 161) although they were provided with briefing updates (Wahab Inquiry: par 162). They were upset with the internal heavily redacted report, suggesting it raised more questions than it answered (McPhedran 2013). They expressed concern that serious intelligence failures were possible and the military mission was flawed and not worth the potential loss of life, nor at minimum were appropriate safeguard arrangements in place for the Australian soldiers at Wahab base (Carson 2014). The bereaved family members considered it was time the army was scrutinised by the independent civilian system so deficiencies could be faced and addressed and accountability and transparency observed to ensure the Australian Defence Force learnt from mistakes and did not repeat them (McDermott & Hichens 2014).

Consequent upon the families demands, a civilian coronial inquest has been held in Queensland (Lock 2015). While it is possible, it is generally rare in Australia to have a civilian inquest into the death of soldiers in a conflict zone (Middleton 2007; Brown 2008).[[7]](#footnote-7)

These factors make it clear that respect, or disrespect, pervades the two incidents, both from the need to ‘win hearts and minds’ and the consequences of disrespect, or loss of self-respect, leading to sudden episodes of violence. Teaching the value of respect must therefore go well beyond the current practice in the Australian Defence Force Academy. Education must be distinguished from training and should not focus only on the pragmatic, such as identifying deceased persons in a battle zone as in incident two. It must educate individuals on the importance of being respectful through a philosophical, ethical and legal awareness, if respect is to exist.

# IV. Teaching respect in the academy

How can the army integrate an understanding of respect, what training should be provided and what is intended by the use of the word respect when identifying key values for the army? Deeper engagement with the philosophical and social-psychological meaning of respect and its communication is required.

The focus on warfighting and a Huntingtonian notion of the professional soldier no longer addresses the changing environment of asymmetrical warfare, humanitarian peacekeeping operations and post conflict or even occupation scenarios in which soldiers often find themselves. No longer are learning lists of appropriate behaviour and non-critical moral certitude enough. Justice Brereton reminds ‘[b]ecause we balance our military objectives with the avoidance of harm to non-combatants, we operate within constraints. That is what separates us from the terrorists, and gives our cause moral authority’ (Brereton 2010: 8).

Education in respect demands a deeper philosophical, even Kantian, understanding of respect (Collins 2015). However, Miller notes that ‘military institutions…are generally reluctant to embrace the messiness of philosophical inquiry’ (Miller 2004: 205). A study into cultural training awareness in the military using simulation exercises, found that while there was increased awareness of cultural differences, it did not result in changing values (Mills & Smith 2004). Understanding why one acts as one does in a reflexive way requires philosophical awareness as well as a practical vulnerability and openness to others’ viewpoints in a genuine dialogue that does not privilege the hierarchy or the trainer’s perspective (Miller 2004: 211). For this reason significant thought and time must be put into education of soldiers around a deep meaning of values, such as respect. Telling a soldier they must show respect does not make it happen.

A recent review into gender equality in Australia found the equity and diversity training in ‘Year One Familiarisation Training’ (YOFT) wanting (Department of Defence 2004: par 4). Only delivering in two hours a set of rules about ‘inappropriate behaviour’ and complaint processes (Australian Human Rights Commission 2014) is training but not education or an understanding of what respect means. A number of similar reviews have reported the need for changes that have not readily occurred (Grey 1998). Segregated gender briefings and prohibiting relationships between students in their first three months at the academy have not resulted in the desired culture change (Australian Human Rights Commission 2014; Grey 1998). Perhaps because such unrealistic prohibitions lack the respect for young adults needed in order to allow them to demonstrate self-respect by showing their ability to act as rational moral humans. What is needed is development of the understanding of values and communication through a more sustained philosophical inquiry so soldiers comprehend the reasons behind this education, and are not just learning rules or applying a decision making model given in training, leading to rote or robotic responses (Wortel & Bosch 2011).

A wealth of literature on empathy, group dynamics and behaviour, and social identity provide many suggestions for use in education around respect. One such study by Roberton, Daffern and Bucks (2012) nominates three skills that assist an individual to regulate difficult emotional states that are likely to arise in war zones. They are: emotional regulation, awareness and acceptance. An individual can both over and under regulate emotions when dealing with a difficult emotional experience:

An individual who uses deliberate emotion regulation adaptively when faced with a difficult emotion experience is able to contain the emotional experience sufficiently to continue to engage in goal directed behaviour (Roberton et al 2012: 74).

Roberton et al (2012) suggest, however, when overregulating, one is consistently trying to stop the emotional feelings. This can be done using various strategies such as avoidance of the experience, or cognitive attentional deployment by focusing on a less significant aspect, or reappraisal to select a meaning that more suitably aligns to one’s values, or behavourial avoidance of the cause of the emotion or modification. Possibly most significant for soldiers, is the long term consequences of the effect of suppression of emotion on their physical, psychological and social self, when using these strategies over a considerable period. In such situations where the ‘build-up’ becomes overwhelming, aggressive behaviour lacking respect and empathy, may be likely (Jackson 2010, Roberton et al 2012, Shah & Bowley 2012, Luckhurst 2012, Fisher 2013).

Understanding the importance of being able to express emotions in an appropriate manner related to the context is a vital component for dialogue that enables respect to be conveyed. At minimum, this requires being able to listen to the others’ concerns. Roberton et al report that overregulation of emotion results in a decreasing experience of positive emotion, but not negative, lowering self-respect and increasing anxiety (2012: 76). With situational factors such as the presence of weapons, in an already aggressive battle zone environment the provocation may only have to be minimal to evoke an aggressive response. In the green on blue scenario where a soldier perceives themselves as part of a minority group, in a tense environment demanding emotional overregulation over a long time in which self-respect has been diminished by egotistical or manipulative demands by individuals exhibiting superiority claims, the propensity to ‘snap’ seems self-evident.

Skill training around emotion to assist in understanding one’s emotional responses and what they mean can lead to a greater acceptance and awareness of appropriately respectful behaviour. Accepting emotions, such as fear, shame, and embarrassment, may be difficult for military personnel trained not to show emotional vulnerability (Roberton et al: 78). However, providing training for awareness in this important domain, and techniques for regulating emotions, can possibly help reduce aggressive responses and harmful behaviour, such as in intercultural mentoring exercises (Roberton et al). It can also create awareness of the importance of respectful behaviour in order not to diminish the others own self-respect, thus leading to their aggressive emotional responses.

Those suppressing emotion may not only be prone to violent outbursts but can also resort to alcohol and drugs as a maladaptive, but immediate way of alleviating emotional pain. Such behaviour can in turn lead to social isolation and further loss of self-respect, a major factor in tendencies to violence and aggression (Roberton et al 2012; Bowes & McMurran 2013). Having meaning and a sense of purpose, self-respect and self-esteem, supported by belonging to a group who hold shared values and norms has been shown to be essential for positive behaviour (Reijintes et al 2010).

Empathy also plays a significant role in respect. Lieutenant General Morrison has acknowledged its importance ‘…if militaries are required, as they continually are, to protect threatened societies from violence, their capacity for empathy and their respect for the diversity intrinsic to those societies can only make them more effective, not less’ ( Morrison 2014: 3). Treating others as you would have them treat you and showing an ability to feel and respond to others emotions and experience are essential elements of empathy.

The teaching of empathy in a military context can be found in the innovative example of the Consideration of Others program (CO2) inspired by US Military Academy Commandant, Major General Robert F. Foley (Foley & Goudreau 1996). This program has eight hours of facilitated small group discussion incorporating all military ranks addressing awareness of actions and their impact on others. This includes understanding, over a range of scenarios, what demonstrates sensitivity to the needs and feelings of others (Keller 2001:70). As Keller has noted, four aspects are indicative of respect: care, empathy, fairness and humility (71).

Underpinning respect is thus the need for deep awareness of a communicative ability. Dialogue in which no one leads but each interact is essential. Regular assessment of others’ perceptions of an individual’s ability in this area is therefore useful feedback to the individual (Keller 2001:73). Here personal narrative, knowing the story of how empathy and respect are ‘felt’ and ‘shown’, is vital and case studies involving story telling can be useful training tools (Agnew 2006). Notwithstanding the good of the CO2 program it remains ingroup focused dealing with relations between soldiers within the organisation. Respect also requires consideration of the ‘other’ or outgroup. Inability to empathise and to demonstrate respectful actions to another can give rise to emotions of shame within the other, eliciting a sense of unfairness that denies pride and a feeling of belonging (Sherman 1993). The social isolation and alienation that can accompany a denial of respect is closely aligned with violent responses, such as emotional opportunistic lashing out (Rice 2009).

Respect has both a cognitive component - requiring thinking well of another, and an emotional component - feeling well towards another. This requires a focus on the intra and interpersonal that aligns not only with empathy but also aspects of ‘emotionally intelligent justice’ (Sherman 2003). The latter has been described by Sherman as requiring innovation in which state agents, such as military personnel, ‘adopt a rational stance towards a presumably emotional [other], as well as towards the emotions of victims and communities, in order to persuade all citizens to comply with the law and repair the harm caused by past crime’(Sherman 2003:8).

To learn to deal with these emotions one must have a thorough grounding in education around emotional awareness. A person made to feel like a lesser human through disrespect, may seek to restore equilibrium through reciprocal treatment, including by perpetuating the perceived violence (Long 2013). For instance, studies in crime and restorative justice have discovered that the manner in which offenders are spoken to by figures of authority, such as police and judges, can have a positive effect on recidivism rates if it involves listening, showing emotional intelligence and respect (Paternoster et al 1998).

In a military organisation seeking to institute the value of respect, it behooves the organisation through its leadership and policies to demonstrate and model the principles of respect. Ethics and morality are aspects of professionalism, but they are also essential to all aspects of a human’s existence. Berghaus and Cartagena (2014) argue in the US this point is missed by the fragmented over-focus in military training on the professional soldier, leaving emotional domains and the soldier-as-citizen as a divided moral self. A similar situation applies in Australia. Cadets experience a six week indoctrination called the: ‘Year One Familiarisation Training’ (YOFT) in order to be socialised into the military. Other than a single short component on Equity and Diversity training, the first year focus is mainly on acquiring ‘military skills such as weapon handling, field craft, navigation and first aid. They also learn to use radio communication and how to live in the bush in tough training exercises’ (ADFA Military Training 2015).

For those attempting to teach values and sociology to military personnel, the experience is challenging (Danielsson & Weibull 2008). Connor and McDermott report when teaching a homogenous group of predominately Anglo white males, often with a military parent, civilian values become subordinated to military values (Connor & McDermott 2014:505). The idea of being a ‘grey person’, one who does not stand out, predominates. To attract attention to oneself often is perceived by cadets as likely to attract bullying (Connor & McDermott 2014:505). This is a concern as it leads to conformity of behaviour that may not necessarily always be ‘right’ behaviour. Ongoing sex scandals may evince such a possibility.

Lieutenant General Morrison has acknowledged the damage potential scandals can have stating ‘[o]ur fragile contract with the Nation was ruptured. Questions were asked as to whether we continued to reflect the very best values of Australia’ (Morrison 2013:4). The damage, if this is not achieved, he noted, extended to the shrinking population from which suitable recruits could be sought in Australia. This has to be factored together with the realisation that 69 percent of all recruits across the ADF leave before completing their training (Hoglin & Barton 2015: 60).

# V. Conclusion

The value of respect and our pursuit of self-respect lies in the realm of ethics, not legal principle. As such it is not protected by laws, but we know when it has been violated and such occurrences have lasting consequences. Training in emotional awareness and empathy therefore needs a greater focus within the military academy to ensure understanding. A conforming organisation such as the military, meets certain intrinsic human needs better than others. For instance, the need to belong may be well met, however, the need for personal control of one’s world, to feel that one actually exists as an individual that can maintain high self-respect is more likely to be challenged by operational necessity demanding a highly rigid and conforming group. Failure in awareness of the consequences of this will continue to bring hardship and distress to those on the battlefield along with those connected to this, as well as the public.

To avoid the consequences that may arise from the loss of respect the military needs to both provide appropriate individual education and also model respect by avoiding perceptions of cover-ups through ensuring matters are properly investigated. Existing laws cannot be overlooked and if they are failing they need review to ensure they operate appropriately. As Brown (2015) notes ‘[i]t is worth considering why the [ADF] is not able to implement its own policies, nor comply with the law when it comes to transparency’ (33).

When Geneva Conventions are possibly breached, such as in the mutilation incident, or the burning of the Koran as alleged in the green on blue incident, there is need to ensure the Australian force is seen to be respecting the laws of war. The DSTO Cultural inquiry demonstrated that cultural ‘slights’ may have an inducing effect on insider attacks, thus, far from protecting the states national interests, disrespect may well escalate violence. The ADF had an opportunity to model respect by engaging in a full investigation into the mutilation incident. Without this respect is denied. If something wrong was done, lessons need to be learned and respect by the ADF observed so it does not undermine subsequent operations. That this requires proper and transparent superintendence is connected to showing respect in a two-way process designed to prevent any payback from future insider attacks. Coroner discover the therapeutic benefits of such transparency. Underpinning this is an understanding of the significance of the meaning of respect at a deep philosophical and meaningful level.

The value of respect as included in the mantel of Australian Army values is not meant only to be superficially understood as a respect for hierarchy. Lieutenant General Morrison introduced respect as a new core value in the Australian army because he understood clearly its importance for the civil-military relationship. He stated of this relationship:

We belong to the Nation. We are funded by their taxes. We recruit from their families and ultimately we prosper, or we wither away, dependant on their ongoing trust and support. That is integral to our contract with the nation (Morrison 2013).

Ensuring this vision is a reality requires an educative agenda at all levels for a deep understanding of the meaning of respect. Education that can ensure respect becomes an embedded behaviour must be supported within military education (Danielsson & Weibull 2008:102). If this was to be achieved then incidents such as those described in this article may be minimised, if not avoided.

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Biography

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1. There have been 13 major related inquiries in the past 16 years. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The US have suffered greater numbers of casualties from ‘green on blue’ attacks. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Geneva Convention (I) for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field*, opened for signature 12 August 1949, 75 UNTS 31 (entered into force 21 October 1950); Article 3 ‘At all times, and particularly after an engagement, Parties to the conflict shall, without delay, take all possible measures to search for and collect the wounded and sick, to protect them against pillage and ill-treatment, to ensure their adequate care, and to search for the dead and prevent their being despoiled.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *International Criminal Court (Consequential Amendments) Act (Cth)* 2002; Sch 1: s 268.47. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Brissenden, ‘ABC has learned that an investigator from the Australian Defence Force Investigative Service (ADFIS) lectured a group of special forces soldiers and told them that it did not matter how the fingerprints were taken and that if they could chop off the hands of the dead and bring them back to base for fingerprinting, that would be acceptable.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. S Elks ‘There have been 66 service-related deaths in the ADF in the five years prior to April 9, 2014. Of those, 32 occurred in Afghanistan. Only one of those was investigated by a COI that of the death of a soldier in 2011 in a helicopter crash. Colonel Waddell said the higher level investigation was ordered in that case because it was a “major loss of capital equipment’. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The 2008 NSW Coronial Inquest into Pte Jake Kovco’s death in Iraq in 2006 was the last such Coronial inquiry. This Inquiry was surrounded with a great deal of controversy. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)