

Studying Military Narrative Identities:

Influence of Military Experiences on Narrative Identities

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to conduct an exploratory analysis of how military identities are developed via lived experiences within the military. Participants (N=8) included current and past military members with varying jobs and ranks from the United States Air Force. Semi-structured interviews were conducted remotely via Zoom, allowing participants to describe their experiences with military life. Reflexive thematic analysis (TA) was used to identify five emergent themes including: Poor Leadership, Rank, Teamwork and Mutual Support, Influential Mentors and Challenges Being a Woman. The study highlights how military life influences autonomy, rank progression, and resilience, while also promoting community through mentorship, support networks, and teamwork within the military community.

Keywords: Psychology, Narrative Identities, Military, Military Narrative Identities, Identities, Qualitative, Qualitative Research

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Introduction

The United States is ranked among the top ten countries with highest number of military personnel, with approximately two million members across all branches (World Population Review, 2024). Despite this, relatively little research has explored the identities of service members. Research that has been conducted suggests that those in the military experience high rates of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and suicide, difficulties with reintegration and limited resources (Purdue, 2019). At the same time, resilience has been found to be one of the most significant forms of personal growth seen in this population (Chopik et al., 2020). These strengths and challenges are often misunderstood by the general public such that military members are frequently judged by society, often due to limited awareness and understanding of their experiences. This research project will add to our understanding of those in the military by having individuals who are currently serving, or have in the past, tell their own stories.

Narrative identity refers to a person's developing life story, including memories from their past and their imagined future, which together creates a sense of purpose and direction (McAdams et.al., 2013). This way of understanding identity is particularly relevant when studying military identities. Military culture plays a big role in shaping an individual's narrative identity, with factors like status, role, rank and location influencing their experiences (Grimmell, 2015). Understanding this population requires listening to the stories and perspectives of military personnel, as personal narratives provide details into how military experiences shape their identities. Research conducted in other countries, for example Norway, highlights how military experiences contribute to significant professional development and identity formation. Military members often develop resilience, adaptability, and leadership skills due to the stress they encounter during their time in service (Lien et al., 2021). These experiences become key chapters in their life stories.

The current study proposed an exploratory analysis of the impact military experiences have on the military identities of United States Air Force members. The data shed light on how different roles and experiences, such as deployment and exposure to trauma, shape military identities. Examining military experiences across different stages offered an opportunity to explore how service members navigate challenges such as mental health stigma, gender discrimination and the pressure to balance their personal and professional life.

Literature review

Identity is a concept that can be studied from numerous perspectives, each focusing on how individuals understand themselves and their roles in society (Fearon, 1999). Narrative identity specifically focuses on the stories people create of lived experiences to make sense of their lives. These stories often contain components such as agency, which reflects a sense of control over one's life and communion, which emphasizes relationship and emotional connections (McAdams & McLean, 2013). Identity is influenced by roles, societal expectations and cultural contexts (Fearon, 1999). Researchers measure narrative identity by analyzing how individuals use the stories they tell to find meaning in life events or conflicts. Studying narrative identities highlights how story telling plays a big role in shaping how people understand themselves and their place in the world (McAdams & McLean, 2013).

The Life Story Interview, first introduced by Robert Atkinson in his book, *The Life Story Interview* (1998), is qualitative research tool designed to study how individuals tell their life stories (Atkinson, 1998). This method allows participants to share their experiences in their own words, providing insight into how they make sense of their lives and form their identities. Dan P. McAdams later released a revised version in 2007, which expanded the interview's scope, purpose and focus areas. This updated version has been widely used to study personality, identity and life

narratives (McAdams, 2007). Through recorded and transcribed interviews, researchers gather data that not only captures the events of a person's life but also reveals how they interpret and connect with those events. By enabling participants to freely share their life stories, this approach ensures their narratives reflect their unique experiences, offering a deeper understanding of how they create and comprehend their sense of self.

In research related to military narrative identities, resilience is one of the most frequently studied themes as it offers insight into how service members and their families make meaning from their experiences (Easterbrooks, 2013). Resilience can be defined as the ability to adapt after adversity, allowing individuals to overcome trauma and continue normal functioning, even under significant stress. For military personnel, resilience has unique characteristics that focus on specific challenges faced by this population such as frequent relocation, intense training, and long separations from loved ones (Easterbrooks, 2013). This type of resilience can extend beyond those who serve, including their families who also face the pressures of military life. These experiences and resilience shape how service members construct their identities, emphasizing strength and adaptability as defining characteristics of their experience.

Posttraumatic Growth (PTG) is another concept that provides important insights on military narrative identity formation, particularly in relation to resilience. PTG refers to the personal growth that happens during the process to overcome hardship, such as the challenges faced during deployment (Habib et al., 2018). For military personnel, PTG manifests as reports for a greater appreciation for life. Many members express gratitude for the cultural encounters that broaden their worldview (Habib et al., 2018). Military members also mention seeing their return home as a rewarding experience. Due to extensive deployments, military members tend to form close ties with fellow members as a "protective mechanism" that greatly contributes to their sense

of resilience and PTG, which shapes their sense of identity (Habib et al., 2018). Through these experiences, service members create narratives that emphasize resilience and personal growth in the face of adversity.

Conversations concerning toxic leadership in the U.S. military highlight how environmental influences shape identity. Toxic leadership is characterized by manipulation, control, and mistreatment, significantly impacting the well-being and narratives of military members (Reed, 2015). This type of leadership contributes to increased psychological and emotional struggles including burnout and stress. On the other hand, effective military leadership has been linked to resilience and positive identity formation among military members. Leaders who successfully foster a positive environment, provide emotional support and promote different coping mechanisms among unit members lead to high levels of resilience and a collective sense of well-being (Lester & Mroz, 2020). Strong leadership not only improves performance, but it also helps service members interpret their experiences in ways that foster a sense of purpose and wellbeing.

Mental health stigma presents another challenge to identity development in the military. Stigma is defined as “a prejudice or negative stereotype” (Greene-Shortridge et al., 2007). It can discourage people from seeking care which worsens disorders such as PTSD and anger. For many service members, stigma exists on two levels: societal forms, which involves judgement or lack of empathy for people with mental illnesses, and personal stigma, which entails self-blame (Greene-Shortridge et al., 2007). National studies show that around 55% of military members are unwilling to seek help. Receiving mental treatment is often associated with lower self-esteem levels among this community (Greene-Shortridge et al., 2007). Mental health stigma not only

restricts access to necessary mental health care, but it also hinders the development of a good and unified self-identity within the military.

Anger and PTSD are far more common among military personnel compared to nonmilitary populations. A study examining the relationship between anger, trauma and deployment status discovered that these disorders were more common in military members who had been deployed, particularly among males, and in females who had never been deployed (Worthen et al., 2015). Findings suggest that while deployment may influence the prevalence of these conditions, it is not the only contributing factor. The study emphasizes the complexity of mental health challenges faced by military members, with factors such as gender and external stressors playing a significant role in the development and prevalence of anger and PTSD among the military community (Worthen et al., 2015). These findings highlight the multidimensional character of mental health concerns in the military, which are influenced by both personal and environmental factors.

High-stress civilian occupations, such as firefighting, provide useful comparisons in investigating how workplace experiences influence identity formation. Similarly to military personnel, firefighters experience high levels of emotional and psychological distress, which are frequently suppressed due to societal expectations of toughness (Richardson & James, 2017). Studies reveal that a strong sense of connection to working for the fire department would enable firefighters to develop coping strategies embedded in teamwork, shared experiences and resilience. Findings also highlighted that emotional vulnerability was often suppressed due to the expectation of toughness associated with the firefighting profession (Richardson & James, 2017). These findings suggest that the ways individuals navigate workplace trauma and role expectations significantly contribute to how they construct their identities.

The motivation for the current study derives from a desire to enhance the voices of military personnel, allowing them to share their own stories rather than being beholden to external labels or narratives. Military experiences are sometimes misconstrued by people outside of the group. This study aims to understand the complexities of these experiences by looking into how military service influences narrative identity. Semi-structured interviews, a qualitative method, were used to create an open space for military members to express their experiences in ways that a quantitative approach could not capture. This method facilitates the process to gain insight into military narratives. To identify patterns in the data, reflexive thematic analysis was used, taking into consideration the researcher's biases and influence on interpretation. This approach allowed the collection of extensive, descriptive data that shed light on service members' life experiences. Through informed consent and confidentiality measures, including the use of pseudonyms, participants were assured privacy. Given the scarcity of research on military narrative identities, the goal of this research project is to add to the current body of knowledge on this topic by allowing military personnel to share their own stories, leading to deeper insight into how military service shapes identity.

Method

Participants

The study included eight (N=8) United States Air Force members, each assigned pseudonyms for confidentiality. The sample was evenly split between females and males, with an average age of 34.3 years, the median was 35 and modes were 35 and 36. One participant identified as Hispanic, one as mixed and the rest (75%) were white. The sample included both active-duty members (N=5) and veterans (N=3) with years of service ranging from 10 to 20 years. Participants held diverse roles including Mental Health Technicians, Security Forces, Civil Engineer, Military

Training Instructor, Information Operations, and Engineering. The rank distribution included both enlisted personnel and officers.

Participants were recruited via snowball sampling. This occurred via word of mouth and using a recruitment script shared among participants. All participants were over the age of 18, served in the USAF, and consented to participate in the study. Socio-demographic information such as age, gender, race, military status, years in service, role and rank were obtained (See Table 1).

Table 1

Demographic Information

<i>Name*</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Race</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Years in service</i>	<i>Role</i>	<i>Rank</i>
Zeno	29	Male	White	Veteran	10 years	Mental Health Technician	E-6
Naomi	36	Female	White	Active duty	15 years	Mental Health Technician	E-7
Kate	35	Female	White	Active duty	14 years	Mental Health Technician	E-7
Talia	35	Female	White	Veteran	12 years	Security Forces	E-7
Steve	39	Male	White	Veteran	20 years	Civil Engineer	E-6
Emilia	30	Female	Hispanic	Active duty	10 years	Military Training Instructor	E-6
Cameron	36	Male	White	Active duty	14 years	Information Operations	O-4
Andres	34	Male	Mixed	Active duty	10 years	Engineering	O-4

*Names changed to pseudonyms for protection of participant identity.

“Veterans” are retired personnel

E-6 = Technical Sergeant, E-7 = Master Sergeant, O-4 = Major

Materials/Procedure

Participants were asked questions from a shorter, edited version of The Life Story Interview (McAdams, 2007). This version was tailored with the goal of removing any questions that would trigger participants into a PTSD episode or other distressing memories. The interview questions were approved by thesis advisors and an Air Force Psychologist.

Interviews were scheduled and conducted remotely. Before the interview, participants were asked to read and sign the informed consent agreeing to participate in the study. All participants were audio-recorded using Otter.ai, a textual data collection software.

Once the interviews were finished, participants were debriefed and thanked for their participation. The interviewer also emailed participants a resource sheet which contained general Air Force crisis resources. They were also informed to email the primary investigators (PIs) if they had questions about the study or their participation.

Analysis

Participants were given a pseudonym and numerical code during the transcription process. After the interviews were transcribed, a reflexive thematic analysis (TA) was used to analyze the data. This type of analysis assists the researcher “exploring and interpreting a qualitative dataset, and telling a story about patterns of meaning” (Joy et al., 2023). TA was done by creating codes and then themes based on those codes. All interviews were read in full. Each participant’s response was organized by questions. Then, responses were read a second time to take notes on responses and highlight experiences that seemed memorable. Responses were then assigned to different codes. Once the data was divided into different categories, important themes were created. An experienced qualitative researcher served as a secondary coder and examined all codes for

consistency and validity. Extensive discussions were held to ensure that the interview data met the standard criteria for theoretical coding.

Results

Leadership & Mentorship

One prominent theme that emerged from the analysis focused upon the leadership and mentorship experienced by military members. Poor leadership emerged as a common experience in participants' narratives, characterized by neglect of their wellbeing and disregard for their individual needs. It was described as a prevalent element of military culture, supported by the expectation of toughness even in difficult times. Poor leaders were described and criticized for making poor management decisions and failing to acknowledge their troop's humanity. For example, members of security forces described times where leaders disregarded their emotional responses as unacceptable. Lack of empathy and understanding was identified as a barrier to the successfully developing supportive and effective leadership within the military.

Advancing within the military is a difficult process that has a significant impact on service member's military experiences. Participants described that attaining higher ranks gave them higher autonomy, while being in lower ranks often led to challenges to advance within the military. In lower ranks, participants frequently felt like workers focused on following orders and completing tasks with little say in any decision making. As they ascended through ranks, their jobs transformed toward greater leadership which gave them greater sense of authority and responsibility. Six participants described their experiences as significantly more meaningful after achieving higher ranks. Talia (35, Veteran) shared that her high point was making it to Master Sergeant after being in the Air Force for only 11 years.

On the other hand, some participants described difficulties navigating the ranking system. Steve (39, Veteran) stated “the biggest challenge in the military, I have to say for me anyway, it's just making the ranks. Because again, as I told you, if you're not in that part of the circle, you're not in the circle.” Three participants described poor leadership as a barrier when it came to rank advancement. Steve (39, Veteran) also mentioned that favoritism among leadership played a big role when it came to promotions, with leaders often supporting only individuals within their preferred “circle.” The ranking system was described as an impactful aspect of participants’ military narratives. It shaped their personal and professional growth, sometimes enhancing their sense of accomplishment and belonging, while at other times leading to many obstacles to progress.

Support and guidance play an important role in shaping service member’s experiences, frequently impacting how they navigate the challenges of military life. Mentors were those who provided necessary support during difficult times, especially for individuals who experienced poor leadership. Five participants highlighted that when they found themselves facing the difficulties of military life, they needed someone to turn to for advice or guidance. Having a mentor was found to contribute to an overall more positive military experience. Mentorship not only impacted participants but also inspired them to become mentors themselves. Seven participants described being mentors as a meaningful part of the military narratives. Some were motivated by the advice they received from their own mentors, while others wanted to fill the void they had felt by providing the support they had lacked to others. Mentorship emerged as a powerful and transforming element of most military narratives. (See Table 2.)

Table 2

Leadership & Mentorship

<i>Name*</i>	<i>Poor Leadership</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Influential Mentor</i>
Zeno	X	X	X
Talia		X	X
Steve	X	X	X
Naomi	X		X
Kate		X	X
Emilia	X	X	X
Cameron	X	X	X
Andres			X

*Names changed to pseudonyms for protection of participant identity.

Struggles of Military Life

The challenges of military life go beyond professional responsibilities, also including personal relationships, finances and the experiences of underrepresented groups in the military. Strained relationships emerged as a recurring theme, with five participants describing how military life negatively impacted their social, familial, and romantic relationships. Long working hours, limited vacation time and frequent relocations are factors that make it challenging to maintain relationships. Zeno (29, Veteran) described:

“Due to the rigidness of the structure in the military and how much bureaucracy there is in getting anything done even taking a little time off. I wouldn't be able to be as spontaneous as some of my civilian counterparts and at times it did kind of strained relationships. It

made it difficult on some of my friendships with folks that weren't in the military because I couldn't pick up and go to this fun thing."

Participants highlighted the struggle to meet the military's demanding expectations as well as fulfilling the social and emotional needs of relationships outside the military. Trying to balance often created isolation and was harmful for their connections.

Women in the military face significant challenges such as being sexualized and feeling they must strive for success. Two female participants described this as part of the military narrative identity. Talia (35, Veteran) shared "I feel like these guys thought like maybe they had a chance. They even talked about like Facebook stalking me before I got there looking at my profile picture." Participants highlighted feeling constant pressure to overperform to gain recognition and be taken serious in the military. Naomi (36, Active Duty) described:

"Throughout the years, I've subconsciously worked harder, tried harder, tried to be one of the guys. Be better than every guy in the room because I had to. And then now, you're kind of like the outside looking in. I noticed that a challenge as a female, I don't always have the same seat at the table as most men do in the military. So, I always subconsciously was Type A and pushed myself in there. I made myself a seat at the table. I don't worry about it as much. But that I would say that that is a challenge"

Their narratives emphasize the challenges faced by women in the military, where they must deal with gender biases and the need to constantly prove their worth in order to thrive.

Military personnel also face substantial financial issues, with poor compensation being an added stressor to their already demanding lifestyles. Financial struggles were described as added stress to lives of military personnel as military allowances and pay fails to keep up with the rising expense of life. Andres (34, Active Duty) shared his frustration with the Basic Allowance for

Housing (BAH), explaining that it adjusts based on location but fails to adjust with swings in living cost. Participants emphasized that demanding workloads and low monetary compensation left them feeling financially strained and unable to provide the necessary support for their families. These problems highlighted the financial demands that military members encounter as well as the negative impact this has on the military narratives. (See Table 3.)

Table 3**Struggles of Military Life**

<i>Name*</i>	<i>Strained Relationships</i>	<i>Challenges Being a Woman</i>	<i>Low Monetary Compensation</i>
Zeno	X		
Talia	X	X	X
Steve	X		X
Naomi	X	X	
Kate			
Emilia			
Cameron			
Andres	X		X

*Names changed to pseudonyms for protection of participant identity.

Personal Health & Wellbeing

The demands of military life frequently negatively impact personal health and wellbeing, with concerns such as physical injuries, being overworked and stress influencing service member's experiences. Health related challenges were highlighted by two participants though they were not universal experiences. Zeno (29, Veteran) shared that he injured his wrist during while serving abroad. Although the injury wasn't severe, it required months of physical therapy for a full

recovery. Feeling overworked also emerged as a concern with four participants describing limited to no vacation time. Cameron (36, In Service) shared his frustration with feeling overworked and underpaid compared to others in the military. These problems demonstrate how military life could potentially impact personal health and wellbeing negatively impacting the military narratives.

The emotional toll of military service is significant, with many members experiencing personal loss and traumatic events that influenced their military experience. Service members were emotionally impacted by the loss of a loved one while serving. Emilia (30, In Service) shared, “my close friend committed suicide.” In addition, two participants described experiencing traumatic experiences during their time in service. These stories illustrate the emotional and psychological toll that military life can have on USAF members, emphasizing the critical need for mental health support within the military community. Zeno (29, Veteran) described:

“We're not supposed to see the traumatizing things we're supposed to help people who have been traumatized. I was sent to respond to one of these things. And I responded to the ER mostly to help the ER staff, a child had been run over by a car. And when I got down there, it wasn't a post-disaster response. It was still actively going on. So I was shoved in a room with a bunch of people, trying to save a child that was... bent out of shape”

These narratives emphasize the weight of loss and suffering that many service members take on, emphasizing the importance of addressing mental health concerns in the military. (See Table 4.)

Table 4

Personal Health & Wellbeing

<i>Name*</i>	<i>Health Issues</i>	<i>Overworked</i>	<i>Coping with Loss & Trauma</i>
Zeno	X	X	X
Talia	X	X	
Steve		X	X
Naomi			
Kate		X	X
Emilia		X	X
Cameron		X	
Andres			

*Names changed to pseudonyms for protection of participant identity.

Support & Fellowship

A sense of companionship and mutual support is critical such that many rely on these bonds for motivation amid difficulties during deployment. Seven participants highlighted a strong sense of teamwork and mutual support as a meaningful part of their military experiences. Service members, particularly those deployed, build close bonds with each other through shared experiences. Being separated from their families and friends, they find themselves relying on each other for motivation and support. Deployment often involves living in an environment where they work seven days a week and navigate unfamiliar and sometimes difficult conditions. Positive relationships within the military become a vital source of comfort and familiarity. Steve (39, Veteran) shared:

“You're my troop. It was like a brother and sister kind of deal. We'd do everything together. We always hang out, every time we do events like hey, you want to go hiking or whatever go running, etc. Like any kind of big events, we do as a group, and everybody fully participated. It wasn't like, oh, I don't want to hang out with you. It's more just like hey, let's do it together so we can have fun”

Military Culture

Military culture significantly impacts the lives of service members, including how they deal with mental health and personal relationships. Mental Stigma was a significant theme among three participants, especially among those who served in Security Forces. In the military, individuals who are going to therapy for a mental health concern are often placed on Do Not Arm (DNA) status, which means they are considered unfit to carry a firearm. For Security Force members, whose primary role involves carrying weapons and protecting their base, this status can severely impact their confidence and how they are perceived by others. This contributes to mental health stigma which often discourages service members from seeking help out of fear of losing their job or respect from others. Naomi (36, In Service) described:

“So if you ever went to mental health you would lose your weapon, which means you can't do your job. So everybody around you knew that you were... you are what's called Do Not Arm. That's for a reason. And then they would be like, oh, well gosh, I wonder why [Naomi] is DNA and can't carry a gun”

Maintaining romantic relationships while serving in the military can be difficult because it demands juggling their demanding careers and personal obligations. Three participants shared their experiences of finding their significant other during their time in service. These narratives highlighted the challenge of maintaining a romantic relationship, particularly when one partner is

not in the military or does not come from a military background. Participants said it is easier to sustain a marriage when both partners understand the demands of military life. However, participants also described facing difficulties due to their demanding careers when both partners were in the military. Specific challenges include finding childcare and limited time with families. These experiences highlight the complexity of military marriages, in which understanding and ability to share responsibilities are critical to maintain a good relationship. (See Table 5.)

Table 5

Support & Fellowship and Military Culture

<i>Name*</i>	<i>Teamwork & Mutual Support</i>	<i>Mental Health Stigma</i>	<i>Military Marriages</i>
Zeno	X		
Talia	X	X	X
Steve	X		
Naomi		X	
Kate	X	X	
Emilia	X		X
Cameron	X		
Andres	X		X

*Names changed to pseudonyms for protection of participant identity.

Discussion

Two themes of narrative identity that emerged through the interviews were agency and communion. Communion highlights connections and shared experiences of military personnel, while agency represents individual accomplishments, independence and resilience.

Agency

Participants' experiences with leadership, navigating the ranking system and overcoming military life challenges, such as gender bias and low monetary compensation, indicated agency (or struggles with achieving agency). Numerous individuals emphasized the importance of autonomy, especially as they advance in rank. Higher ranks resulted in more fulfilling military experiences. Poor leadership was described as leaders who failed to attend to the needs or recognize the humanity of their troops. Participants also described challenges navigating the ranking system, such as favoritism and hierarchies, often hindering their sense of agency.

Communion

A crucial element of military narratives, focused on the relationships service members formed while serving. This evidenced the importance of communion. One of the main themes was mentorship whereby participants described how obtaining guidance helped them feel a sense of belonging and a shared purpose. Many participants also mentioned feeling satisfaction when mentoring others. Another essential component of communion, especially for those who had been deployed, was teamwork. Participants highlighted how close they were to their fellow service members. These relationships helped participants deal with the difficulties of military life by offering them emotional and mutual support. Participants also mentioned how military experiences, such as frequent moves and little vacation time, made it difficult to keep lasting relationships. Difficulties of communion in the military were also brought to light by gender biases, such as the pressure women face having to prove their worth to others.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Mental health and well-being don't fit into agency or communion but were highlighted as an important part of military experience. Participants described the challenges of maintaining

one's mental health and wellbeing while facing the demands of military life. Their sense of control over their lives was reduced by experiences of trauma and being overworked. Many military members showed resilience when adapting and enduring through these challenges.

Strengths and Limitations

The study had several limitations that should be noted. The limited sample size (N=8) reduces the findings' generalizability to the larger populations of United Air Force members. The use of snowball sampling may have also added selection bias, as participants were more likely to share common experiences or opinions due to the recruitment strategy. Another limitation is the possibility that remote interviews could have an impact on the depth of participant responses whereby some participants might feel less comfortable addressing sensitive matters virtually.

The study also had several strengths worth highlighting. Focusing exclusively on Air Force members allowed for deeper analysis on participants' narratives of a specific branch in the military. The limited sample size (N=8) allowed for a more in-depth analysis of participants' narratives which could be overlooked in larger studies. Lastly, the collection of rich qualitative data allowed for a deeper understanding of the topic, contributing to the limited already existing research on military narrative identities.

Conclusion

This study aimed to explore the military narratives of United States Air Force personnel, focusing on their experiences through the lenses of agency and communion. The findings emphasized the importance of leadership, mentorship, and military culture in shaping service members' military narrative identities. Participants' narratives shed light on the difficulties of poor leadership, ranking systems, and financial stressors. These also emphasized the influence of mentorship, mutual support, and shared purpose. The study highlights how military life

influences autonomy, rank progression, and resilience, while also promoting community through mentorship, support networks, and teamwork within the military community.

The interaction between agency and communion provides a deeper understanding of the relationship between individual goals and collective military values. This exploratory study lays the groundwork for future research into the elements that contribute to the development of military narrative identities. This kind of research leads to a greater understanding of how military service influence identity.

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