

# Expanding Benefits Perceptions of the Value of Military Service: A Cross-Generational Perspective

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## Revisiting the US Military Enlistment Benefits Discussion

The purpose of the present research is to discover whether there are more benefits to having served in the US military than post-service educational funds for education, home or small business loans which current recruitment marketing focuses on. The Citizen Soldier as an influential symbol is central to the historical-cultural context of military service in the US. Its persistence may signify the potential importance of other-than-calculative motivations in responses to pre-enlistment promises. This article investigates this possibility and if this is so, what are those other benefits and what is their relevance to recruitment in the All-Volunteer Force (AVF) era?

Recent military theory recognizes the limits of defining benefits *a priori* in limited utilitarian terms like undergraduate college funding, home or small business loans, and restricting research samples to enlistment prospects (Krebs, 2009; Karsten, 2001). Further, investigations using quantitative research techniques limited to rating pre-defined lists of benefits on their importance can easily be unaware of what they are not measuring. However, marketing research often discovers what could motivate prospects by learning how a brand's users describe the benefits of its product or services. This requires qualitative exploratory research in which participants shape their own narratives (Fontana & Frey, 2000).

## From Commitment to Calculation? Cultural Evolution of the Citizen Soldier

The relationship between US citizens and military service has evolved through a series of historical episodes in which individuals have served in uniform through a combination of volunteerism and legally mandating or drafting men into service (Krebs, 2009). Conscript duty, however, left the US scene in the early 1970s, and has shown no sign of staging a comeback ever since. Under the new AVF, the armed services now had to recruit their new members entirely on the labour market. Over the next 25 years, military recruitment strategies shifted emphasis towards individualized, self-interested motivations to enlist. An example is the US Army's advertising slogan "Be All You Can Be". Planners presumed that prospects and their parents would find the promise of eventual calculable resources offered by the various GI Bills such as money for college tuition, home or small business loans to be the most compelling reasons for enlistment. Recruitment programmes and military scholars alike came to restrict enlistment motivations largely to *homo oeconomicus* considerations (Moskos, 2002). Research on recruitment issues narrowed its focus to examining which new or increased combinations of post-service financial benefits would increase propensities to enlist.

Then, Karsten (2001) recognized that enlistment prospects compare the relative appeal of military service to civilian career alternatives. He re-examined the (GI Bill) benefits of military recruitment vs. the often more persuasive appeals of non-military career paths in the booming economy of the 1990's. His research suggested that the reality of mission definitions as peacekeeping might help redress enlistment and retention problems (*ibid.*, p.67). However, the Iraq and Afghanistan wars undermined this view by shifting the perceived role of the military back in the warrior direction. Global terrorism has contributed to maintaining this shift.

Writing in the Post 9/11 world, Krebs (2009) questions the limited focus on post-enlistment financial benefits with several challenges to current theory and assumptions about the spectrum of military service benefits. First, he asserts that the focus on rational-calculative motivations to enlist logically eclipses the existence of a broader set of possibilities, pointing out that *homo oeconomicus* as a concept forecloses explicit recognition of any other than self-interested motivations (Krebs, 2009, p.161). Then he challenges research that investigates the benefits question with enlistment prospects that do not have actual military experience. Finally, he insists that the influence of cultural processes on the meanings and influence of symbols are important factors in understanding civil-military relations, prompting us to consider the numerous alternative messages and paths to maturity available in the cultural environment of today's Millennial prospects.

## **A Marketing Perspective**

Marketing approaches to defining benefits of goods and services have evolved since World War II from emphasizing tangible functional benefits to using Maslow's well-known hierarchy of needs to recognize important social, emotional and aspirational benefits (O'Guinn, Allen & Semenik, 2015, p.82). Subsequent research indicates that the culture in which they make choices influences consumer perceptions (Sherry, 2005). Sherry even argues (p.46) that brands have become totems or cultural signposts for consumers living in a continually changing social environment. Branding studies routinely inventory brand choice alternatives, as consumers perceive them and identify the perceptual brand equities of competitors, looking for an advantageous point of difference for their brand. Best practice in brand marketing today depends on finding the emotional and social meaning of a brand that evokes desire of the target audience to affiliate with it (Fournier, 1998). Brand marketing restricted to describing its tangible-utilitarian or calculative benefits has become inadequate in today's symbol-rich message environment.

In US history, the idea of the Citizen Soldier was a unique societal achievement in civil-military relations and a symbol that fostered national social cohesion and political solidarity in the early days of the United States as a nation (Janowitz, 1983, p.26). Today we would call the Citizen Soldier a "naturally occurring brand", a symbol whose meanings were created over the decades since 1775 through cultural-historical processes rather than deliberately marketed as consumer brands (Wright-Isak & Swaleheen, 2013).

## **The American Cultural Context for Recruitment Efforts**

After World War II, scholars charted a shift towards increasingly self-interested outlooks (Riesman, 1950; Lasch, 1991). Yet, for the Millennial generation coming of age in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, things are less simple, and confusion threatens (Noble *et al.*, 2009; Silva, 2012). Our national tolerance for racial and ethnic integration has progressed, and legitimations for alternative lifestyles and civil rights for various subgroups in America have increased, sometimes dramatically. These have not been smooth transitions and many are far from resolved even today. The result is that today's prospective recruits live in a more diverse and changing cultural environment within which the Citizen Soldier survives in the guise of the volunteer joining for a short military career.

Millennial youth in America are indeed entering adulthood in a time of choice proliferation rather than national consensus on what is expected as appropriate men's and women's roles in society or even what defines a family. These evolving normative elements of the national culture are important factors in understanding the environment in which young Americans grow up (Crampton & Hodge, 2006; Noble *et al.*, 2009; Silva, 2012). The Citizen Soldier may mark a relatively constant path to maturity in contrast to a fluctuating set of social norms regarding appropriate paths to manhood and womanhood.

The need for deliberate military marketing efforts has increased in the AVF situation, so that by now the military is a major advertising client. For example, the recent US Navy recruitment advertising account at Y&R alone was for \$85 million (AdAge, 2015). Like consumer brands, in the AVF era the US Soldier, Sailor, Marine or Airman is a concrete manifestation of the Citizen Soldier "brand" symbolizing voluntary personal commitment to country which could be used in marketing strategies that broaden the spectrum of benefits perceived to result from serving in the military. The first step is to understand whether this broader spectrum actually exists.

### **Exploratory Research – Methods of Discovery**

In order to overcome the three Krebs critiques of US recruitment research, branding research techniques are applied. First, to account for cultural influences by using the idea of "brand", a concept-based symbolism, as a cultural phenomenon that powerfully influences consumer choice and communication. Second, by examining the perceptions of those who have already served, rather than restricting inquiry to anticipatory perceptions by those who have not yet (or may never) serve. Third, by borrowing established sociology and marketing discovery (exploratory) research methods to provide opportunities for participants to describe their own perceptions, experiences and evaluations, unconfined by limited response options to benefits questions. Exploratory research uses qualitative in-depth interviews with a few consumers who are brand users to discover previously unknown or unacknowledged aspects of their perceptions of a brand, rather than quantitative approaches using large samples and questions with pre-defined answer-sets.

The purpose of the two approaches appropriately differs, as does the use of the data acquired. Exploratory research seeks to discover previously unrecognized or de-

emphasized variables and describe them in sufficient detail to provide a more thorough understanding of a social phenomenon. It seeks to verify or modify existing assumptions about a research topic. Qualitative methods' advantages include their ability to capture the individual's point of view, examine the constraints of everyday life, and secure rich descriptions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p.10). Analysis is inferential and seeks to identify variables and new patterns. The use of such data is to inform marketing strategy in new ways, and to provide the basis for more consumer-informed sets of variables for follow-up quantitative research testing. Thus, exploratory samples can be as small as 10 participants to yield useful discovery (Zaltman & Zaltman, 2008).

For marketing research, "representativeness" of qualitative samples is often more valuable when defined relevant to the investigative question than by an array of participant socioeconomic, age, race, ethnicity or gender attributes. The main requirement is that participants have experience with the brand so they can tell us their perceptions of what it means to them, what it stands for, and what *they see as its benefits to them* based on their experience with and perceptions of the brand. The contribution of brand user samples is to reveal possible additions to the already recognized spectrum of brand benefits, or other brand perceptions that may not have occurred to those managing the brands' marketing strategy and messaging.

Like sociologists, market researchers use the results of discovery methods to design the measures for quantitative follow-up research with representative large samples that can in turn verify likelihood that the discovered variables are characteristic of a larger population. The discovery-exploratory approach used here directly addresses Krebs' (2009) criticisms about limiting response options to pre-defined measures based on assumptions that financial benefits are the primary motivations to enlist.

### **Discovering Unrecognized Military Service Benefits: Research Design**

Marketing research on brand equities uses a two-step method to identify the full spectrum of benefits that consumers associate with a brand via a first-step qualitative inventory of consumers' perceptions of the value of a brand and its symbols, offering them the opportunity to construct their own interpretations of its meanings (Sherry, 2005). The second step is quantitative research to determine the relative importance of the items discovered in step one. This article describes how step one of this approach used qualitative exploratory techniques to answer the question of whether there should be additions made to the familiar set of GI Bill tangible-financial benefits (Janesick, 2000, p.282). Addressing Krebs' second criticism, the fieldwork was conducted with participants "*experienced with the citizen soldier 'brand'*" – military veterans.

#### **An Exploratory Sample: Generations of Servicemen**

The participants include a subsample of Millennial Generation veterans and another made up of older generations of veterans from World War II, Korean and Vietnam War

eras. Investigating the idea that contrasts actual behaviours in service and rhetoric about service may provide indicators of multiple motivations to enlist (Krebs, 2009, p.165) calls for conversations with those who have served. Emergent themes of such interviews would reflect a respondent’s own internalization of the ideal symbolized by the Citizen Soldier, observable in his or her reflections on and perceptions of his or her military experience (*ibid.*, p.168).

**Table 1** : OIF – OEF Millennial Subsample

| <b>Person</b>  | <b>Years Served</b> | <b>Military Brand</b> | <b>MOS/ Job</b> | <b>War</b> | <b>Combat Region</b> |
|----------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|------------|----------------------|
| Participant 1  | 3                   | Army                  | Infantry        | OIF-OEF    | Iraq/ Afghanistan    |
| Participant 2  | 4                   | Army                  | Infantry        | OIF-OEF    | Iraq/ Afghanistan    |
| Participant 3  | 4                   | Army                  | Armour Crewman  | OIF-OEF    | Iraq/ Afghanistan    |
| Participant 4  | 5                   | Marines               | Communications  | OIF-OEF    | Iraq/ Afghanistan    |
| Participant 5  | 4                   | Marines               | Armour Crewman  | OIF-OEF    | Iraq/ Afghanistan    |
| Participant 6  | 8                   | Army                  | Armour Crewman  | OIF-OEF    | Iraq/ Afghanistan    |
| Participant 7  | 4                   | Army                  | Communications  | OIF-OEF    | Iraq/ Afghanistan    |
| Participant 8  | 4                   | Marines               | Heavy Artillery | OIF-OEF    | Iraq/ Afghanistan    |
| Participant 9  | 4                   | Marines               | Infantry        | OIF-OEF    | Iraq/ Afghanistan    |
| Participant 10 | 3                   | Army                  | Medic           | OIF-OEF    | Iraq/ Afghanistan    |
| Participant 11 | 5                   | Marines               | Infantry        | OIF-OEF    | Iraq/ Afghanistan    |
| Participant 12 | 5                   | Marines               | Infantry        | OIF-OEF    | Iraq/ Afghanistan    |

**Legend:** MOS – Military Occupational Specialty; OIF – Operation Iraqi Freedom; OEF – Operation Enduring Freedom.

**Table 2** : World War II, Korean Conflict & Vietnam War Subsample

| <b>Person</b> | <b>Years Served</b> | <b>Military Brand</b> | <b>MOS/Job</b> | <b>War during Service Period</b> | <b>Service or Combat Region</b> |
|---------------|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Participant 1 | 20                  | US Air Force          | Fighter Pilot  | Vietnam War                      | Vietnam                         |
| Participant 2 | 4                   | Army                  | Infantry       | Vietnam War                      | Vietnam                         |
| Participant 3 | 4                   | Army                  | Infantry       | Vietnam War                      | Vietnam                         |
| Participant 4 | 4                   | Marines               | Infantry       | Korea                            | Korea                           |
| Participant 5 | 20                  | Army/ USMC Reserves   | Infantry       | Korea/Vietnam                    | Korea                           |
| Participant 6 | 3                   | Army                  | Armour         | World War II                     | Europe                          |
| Participant 7 | 4                   | Marines               | Radioman       | Korea                            | Korea                           |
| Participant 8 | 4                   | Navy                  | Officer        | Korea                            | Korea                           |
| Participant 9 | 4                   | US Air Force          | Clerk          | Korea                            | US                              |

In this military marketing situation, the primary qualifier for participation is a wide range of military experience. It is reasoned that those who were in combat would be familiar with the most negative extremes of the experience. The Millennial subsample were combat veterans recruited from students currently in college undergraduate degree programmes using their GI Bill benefits, thus also experiencing the most tangible positive benefits of serving. The older generations of veterans were included because their lengthy

50-70 years of post-service lives would indicate the persistent salience of any benefits they described that matched those of the more recent veterans. Recruitment to participate took place at the local Military Museum during weekly meetings of the various local “war alumni” associations like the Korean War Veterans’ club, etc. Table 1 and Table 2 above show characteristics of both subsamples. In Table 2, Participants 1 and 5 had 20 years of service ; like the others, they began their military service during the war in which they served but each subsequently extended his initial enlistment into a full career.

### **Research Questions and Interview Procedures**

The exploratory interviews focused on two broad questions : whether enlisted personnel perceive a broader spectrum of benefits than the GI Bill list, and how they describe those benefits. Each veteran participated in two-three interview sessions for as much as four to ten hours each, yielding 120 hours of interviews across the sample of 21 veterans. Participants were encouraged to shape their own narratives and to discuss topics in their own preferred sequence after reading the questions below :

1. How did you come to enlist in the military?
2. What do you see today as the benefits or value of your military service ? (Please consider all the benefits to you – during your service, as well as post-service benefits).

Interview sessions took place with time gaps varying from a few days to 4 months in-between. Participants reported that the multi-session schedule allowed them to present details that might not have emerged but for their reflection between sessions. The interviewer had ample time to follow up on themes offered by each veteran and worked in partnership with each in advancing his narrative (Fontana & Frey, 2000).

### **Analysis Plan**

Analysis of these qualitative data is inferential, focused on identifying as many benefits in addition to the currently assumed financial ones as the narrative data offer. Use of terms such as “many”, “some”, “most”, or “several” are more appropriate than numbers of mentions of a particular benefit to avoid the misinterpretation of qualitative findings as projectable or capable of statistical probability that they represent a larger population, which they are not. The purpose of the research is to identify a broader range of benefits and to describe what those are in the language veterans use.

The unit of analysis is the 120 hours of interviews – its content is examined for the occurrence of benefits different from and in addition to the financial ones already assumed to be motivational to recruitment prospects, with the understanding the findings will be verified and relative importance established through subsequent quantitative research incorporating them as measures to be rated. The analytical place of the individuals in the sample is to provide rich descriptions that help design future measures in language that approximates how participants themselves understand the benefits of serving.

## Observations

### 1. How did you come to enlist ?

The ways in which the older generations of veterans talked about how they entered military service is noteworthy for how they reflect their times in history. Several of these men joined via the draft. Many of the narratives recounted an almost accidental set of circumstances that led to their presence in the military. The prospect of the draft prompted many veterans to enlist in advance. Some enlisted because they held strong patriotic beliefs that everyone should serve and the war meant overriding family obligations or personal inclinations to make the sacrifice to do so. There was a sentiment that enlisting without waiting for a draft notice was an act of greater virtue because it was voluntary. This sentiment is consistent with the symbolic significance of the Citizen Soldier brand's voluntarist dimension.

Others enlisted because the imagery of the Citizen Soldier presented an acceptable path to adulthood. There were variations on this theme – for some, the imagery of the Marine or Soldier was aspirational, for some high school education in a military school environment prepared them to embrace the military path to manhood. As one Korean War veteran put it:

My parents sent me to a military prep school because they thought the discipline would be good for me so I had a military orientation. But as a kid of 12 or 13, I always played soldier anyway. I went to a semester of college and didn't really care about it, so I went into the Marine Corps in 1950 – it was really more of a chance thing – and I never really wanted to go to Korea. I had signed on though, so it was my first lesson in following through on a commitment [Korean Veteran #4].

In comparison, most Millennials, who live served in an all-volunteer force era, began with narratives about coming of age. Family orientations or dysfunctions, long-held aspirations to be in the military, opportunity to develop one's own sense of manhood were all more immediate components of what they remembered as driving their enlistment decision. Their themes were consistent with recent research from the Army's survey on active duty personnel that describes enlistment motivators on a spectrum from "Institutionalist" to "Occupationalist" (Burland, 2013, drawing on Moskos, 1977).

Many Millennials were explicit about enlisting to fulfil personal ideals and had formed perceptions of military life based on images and meanings that were part of their childhood cultural milieu. Their narratives offered utilitarian benefits in addition, rather than in contrast, to experiential, social and emotional benefits. An example:

I did not join for the GI Bill. I'll use it now that I've earned it, but that wasn't my reason for joining. It will sound funny, but I always wanted to be a soldier. Since I was a kid I played Army and saw myself in a uniform. (...) I enjoyed playing war games and I liked the way military people were portrayed in TV shows like 'Tour of Duty' – I liked the bonds they shared [Millennial #10].

What the generations had in common was the influence of the Citizen Soldier as a symbol that offered a model of adulthood that appealed to them, for some since childhood.

2. What do you see today as the value of having served ?

Veterans from earlier eras had the benefit of decades of hindsight with which to consider the value of having served. GI Bill benefits were not motivational factors for World War II veterans because they had completed service before they were legislated. GI Bill benefits were a potential motive for enlistment by Vietnam War personnel. Nevertheless, the benefits described by all the older veterans closely resemble those of the Millennial veterans: the bond among brothers, maturity, discovery of aptitudes and abilities they did not know they had, and the powerful sense of being part of something greater.

Older generations of veterans talked about the impact of time on their recollections. Their war experiences did not diminish in intensity; over their lives, these men gained perspective that enhanced their recognition of how profound a change their service made in their own identities and characters. Whereas Millennial veterans were still discovering themselves, the older generations of veterans were discovering the lasting impact of their long-ago military service experiences.

Millennial veterans describe the post-service GI Bill benefits as valuable, but they spent more time describing their time in the service as providing the numerous “*lessons of lifelong benefit*” that older veterans also described. Below are examples of the intangible (altruistic, social, experiential or self-expanding) benefits that emerged from the narratives of all three generations:

*Self-Discovery – Satisfying the Quest for Identity and Meaning*

This theme includes development of new skills involving the discovery of previously unknown abilities. Many described the satisfying discovery of unanticipated ability to perform under stress situations. Discovery of previously unrecognized aptitudes, proving oneself to one’s family or peers, and learning what one is good at prompted optimism for each man about whom he was becoming:

It [my military service] became the rest of my life. Everything I did afterwards was the way the military taught me. I never accepted anything as a challenge – there is no such thing as “it can’t be done”, it was just another mission and you do it no matter what. Our guys [in this Korean War Vets group] all have been married over 40 years. When we had difficulties we knew you didn’t give up – you talked it out until it got right [Korean Veteran #5].

The biggest benefit would be that in 4 ½ years I grew up 10. I came out much more advanced than any of my high school friends [Millennial #7].

Of course, I have learned skills, and earned a living, but now I know I keep commitments well. Even when...even in difficult situations [Millennial # 2].

I became more mature. You learn to take more responsibility for yourself. (...) I learned a lot about myself. I had a lot of time to think. I became purposeful. I made to-do lists. I’m in the reserve now and they made me a squad leader. I see myself changing [Millennial #3].

### *Solidarity*

Solidarity as the powerful bond among unit members was a theme often emotionally expressed as feelings of belonging. These referred to a specific unit as well as to the larger military community. The self-consciousness of the bond is retrospective, perhaps due to the nature of the interviews. The emotional intensity of the retelling was as great for Korean or Vietnam veterans 30-40 years later as it was for recently returning Millennial veterans:

You go in at 18 or 19 and you become a man in the first 10 months. Becoming a man means that you learn you have 6 guys and if the sergeant says ‘charge that wall’ every one of you is gonna do it – together. That makes a bond that can’t be broken. All these years later it’s still there [Korean veteran #4].

I have three close friends from Vietnam. Today we are still good friends even though we have opposite political viewpoints and differ on other things. (...) Half my unit didn’t come back from the twice a day interdiction flights we took over the [Ho Chi Minh] Trail where this man’s runs were to disrupt the flow of supplies from North Vietnam. Each time we lost a man [here he stopped to bow his head for several minutes, overcome with emotion], we held a wake back at base. I don’t know why but it is as strong missing them today as it was all those years ago [Vietnam veteran #1].

Every man has a different story but you can relate to it. It’s why we don’t talk about stuff to civilians ; we tell each other [now, years later] because we know we understand each other in a way not possible for anyone who wasn’t in it [Korean veteran #5].

I hated the Army when I was in, and now I miss it badly. [When asked why :] The team, I miss the team. I may or may not succeed on my own, but as part of a team where I do my part I can be sure I succeed when the team succeeds. [Millennial #3].

You make a lot of lifelong friends ; you meet people from all over the country. Being in the service was like being in a family or a fraternity [Millennial #3].

[After he was shot :] So they tell me I’m goin’ home and I say “no way”, the only way I’m going home is in a box. I started working out when the surgeon didn’t know so I would be able to walk and stay with my unit [Millennial # 9].

### *Purpose*

The satisfaction of feeling motivated by more than self-interest occurred through numerous opportunities to render important service to others during their military experience. Older veterans did not bring up this theme – perhaps, as many described it, because decades since their wars their lives offered subsequent opportunities to make a difference in a wide variety of ways. For Millennials, this theme began as one of several motivations to enlist – the desire to help or give of oneself. Fulfilling these opportunities resulted in a heightened sense of personal integrity – and pride in one’s ability to do something effective, which offered them a powerful sense of purpose:

[Of his military service:] I don't have any delusions that anything will fill that void. But the Secret Service may do it somewhat. What I think it will provide is a sense of greater purpose. There will be a greater meaning to it, a point to what I'll be doing – even when it's as boring as standing watch [Millennial #6].

I'm studying history. I like the fact that I've become what I've done. Most historians write history – *I am* history [Millennial #5].

What I miss most in normal civilian life (...) I still miss having a true sense of purpose when I wake up every morning. Before the service I was in college, I didn't really care, and now I have this sense of determination [Millennial #9].

### *Achievement*

Rather than expressing achievement as fulfilled ambition in the sense of gaining wealth or status, participants described the satisfactions of excelling beyond one's previous abilities combined with being a contributing member of a successful team. Some, consciously or not, based achievement on competing with oneself for one's own betterment. For others, it was competing to contribute excellence to the team. Personal fulfilment arising from keeping commitments to fellow team members is a distinctive aspect of this theme, and constitutes a powerful dimension of belonging. Examples:

The Army taught me discipline, teamwork, the value of diversity and giving everyone a chance no matter what their background. It made me the person I became. I never questioned Vietnam, but after – in my career at Citibank – no matter how serious a situation, if I didn't understand why we were doing something, I would push for an answer [Vietnam veteran #3].

I learned how to respect other peoples, other cultures, other races, other backgrounds. I am prejudiced against assholes. I learned a lot about myself – the Army moulded me as a person [Vietnam veteran #3].

The Army is the closest I can come to a [place where there is] mutual respect that supersedes flaws or differences [Millennial #6].

Fallujah was the high point of my enlistment, when I operated at my best, doing what I was trained to do [Millennial #5].

### **Conclusion: A Broader Benefit Spectrum**

These narratives revealed a broader spectrum of benefits and value to military service than is contained in the tangible financial items of the various GI Bills. Among all generations the tangible and intangible benefits of service were not understood as trade-offs; instead, they were discussed as integral to a multidimensional value of military service that spans a broad range of benefits, a benefit-spectrum pattern also observed in civilian consumer research (Ostrom & Iocabucci, 2005).

The importance these veterans place on the lasting impact of the lessons they learned indicates that there is much more to be discovered about the multidimensional value of the military service experience, with ramifications for maintaining satisfaction among service personnel, developing selective recruitment strategies, and effectively targeting receptive prospect audiences.

## Implications for Military Marketing and Branding

In their emphasis on intangible benefits, veterans expressed the value of having served in ways that reflect the symbolism of the Citizen Soldier. The convergence of the descriptions of the different generations of veterans offers indirect evidence of the potential for the symbol Citizen Soldier as a brand to convey the multidimensional value of military service as a pathway to achieving adulthood. Before its use in marketing and marketing communications strategies for consumer brands, quantitative research is in order to verify this potential among a variety of target audiences by designing research to measure each item for the *degree to which* it is characteristic of the military experience, and its *degree of importance* to service members and enlistment prospects.

It remains to describe how to use the data described above. In branding research practice, marketers would convert these types of consumer narrative into measurement items for rating in surveys using representative samples stratified to include a variety of consumer types. In this military scenario, follow-up quantitative research would survey service members (current “brand users”) and prospects alike, stratifying the sample to include more than the males who participated in the exploratory phase (e.g., women, various races and ethnicities, survey participants with other military-relevant characteristics). The following is an example of how to transform these data into measures for second phase research:

| <b>Theme</b>                | <b>Intangible Benefits Measures*</b>   |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Altruistic</b>           | Satisfaction of knowing I served my country<br>Belonged to something that has significance<br>Gained a sense of purpose greater than self-interest   |
| <b>Personal Development</b> | Discovered new abilities I didn't know I had<br>Earned/ deserved respect<br>Did a lot of growing up<br>Expanded the familiar world of my childhood<br>Improved/ overcame negative family circumstances<br>Had a hell of a lot of fun |
| <b>Social</b>               | Belonged to a community that mattered<br>Found/ made friendships of real importance to me<br>Proud to have fulfilled a family tradition  |

\* E.g. rated on an agree-disagree scale that each is a benefit of military service.

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