Finding the Fire Within:
Military Wives and the Complex Journey of Individuation

by
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Abstract

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This thesis employs heuristic and hermeneutic methodologies to explore the lives of military wives from a depth psychological perspective. The author investigates the obstacles inherent within the military lifestyle that may hinder military wives' journeys through the complex process of individuation. The hindrances explored include dependence, marginalization, and myriad psychological challenges such as depression, anxiety, stress, and grief that result from frequent separations from loved ones, transiency, deployments, lack of control, and loss of identity. This thesis posits that individuation is critical to achieving wholeness and a healthy psyche; however, for military wives, their lifestyles place them at a distinct disadvantage in the individuation process as compared to civilian women. Informing psychotherapists of this unique population's struggles enables therapists to work more effectively with military wives. This work suggests possible clinical applications of the findings and discusses the clinical implications of the research.

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge and thank several people who have showered me with their love, patience, and support throughout my life and/or during my thesis writing process, helping me produce a high quality product during an overseas move. To my thesis portfolio evaluator, Gioia Jacobson, who reminded me to "Keep Calm and Love Hestia," and who kept me smiling, no matter how overwhelmed I felt! To my editor, Elaine Rosenberg, whose services went beyond editing and kept me grounded. To all of my mentors at Pacifica, especially to Sukey Fontelieu and Lou Ann Wallner, who somehow sensed when I needed a hug or a good cry. To my therapist, Laurie Colson-Young, who knew and accepted the true me—without the mask—faults and all. To my Dad, James, who taught me to look ahead and have no regrets—your wisdom carried me through much of my life. To my brother, John, taken from us way too soon, you are in my heart, and I have dared to take chances despite my fears because I know you are always with me. To my sister, Christina, who has always been there, and who keeps me laughing, mostly at myself. To my brother, David, whose enduring encouragement I have always felt, even when we are apart. To my Dad, whose unwavering love and support has always been there to fall back on, allowing me to progress. To my Mom, who literally and figuratively has saved me, too many times to count, and who has always reassured me of how perfect and special I am to her. To my most treasured gifts, my beautiful children Bailey and Allyson, who have unknowingly inspired me daily to make the best decisions because I want to be a good mom, and whose energy has kept me going.

Finally, to my soul mate Rich, who believed in me when I did not have the strength to believe in myself. Your unconditional love has given me an opportunity to find and become the real me, and to experience a life I never even dreamed possible; and for that, I am eternally grateful. Thank you all!

Dedication

I dedicate this work to the countless military wives who have come before me to pave the way, and to those who currently walk beside me on this journey. These women, so beautifully strong and yet fragilely feminine, have encouraged me and given me strength in my darkest hours. May we all find the fire of Hestia to carry us through!

To those men and women who bravely sacrifice their own happiness and sanity so that the rest of us can sleep peacefully and safely in our beds at night, I also dedicate this work to you. Especially to my own hero, my husband, whose protective bubble provided the safe container for me to grow, and whose unconditional love has encouraged me to thrive beyond my wildest dreams!

And to the children in these military families, who somehow manage to carry on, even when the world around you seems to be crumbling. You are a true inspiration and a testament to the resiliency that unconditional love and faith in relation can provide. You are my heroes!

For all current and future psychotherapists, I dedicate this work to you, with the hope that we do not ever lose sight of these true American heroes, who are at home, suffering silently and alone. These women need your wisdom, your empathy, and your validation as they journey through their complex process of individuation.

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Chapter I
Introduction

Area of Interest

Using a depth psychological perspective, this thesis explores the unique challenges present in the lives of military wives and investigates the obstacles that the military lifestyle creates on their pathway toward the complex process of *individuation*. The Jungian concept of individuation is what Jungian analyst Murray Stein (2012) referred to as the process of psychic growth that leads to a conscious awareness of wholeness (p. 233). As a military wife, I have lived through many challenges of the military lifestyle. Through my personal experiences, as well as learning about experiences of other military wives through my research, I have found that women who marry *career military members*, those military members who have served for 10 years or longer, often find themselves in situations in which they are unable to focus on their own inner psychic growth.

Being in a marginalized group, a group outside the mainstream of society (Coppin & Nelson, 2005, p. 34), affects military wives, and when compounded with the overwhelming challenges of the military lifestyle, can exacerbate their already astonishing feelings of inadequacy, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, stress, grief, lack of identity, and shame (Alt & Stone, 1990; Green, Nurius, & Lester, 2013; Kelly, 1995; Palmer, 2008). The subsequent minimization of these women's struggles, by both the military and civilian worlds that do not understand the unique experiences these

women endure, leaves them at a disadvantage to overcome the challenges of their lifestyle sufficiently enough to progress through the process of individuation.

Wives specifically, not all spouses, are considered for this thesis because the discrimination and hurdles faced by husbands of female military members are often entirely different than those faced by military wives (Alt & Stone, 1990, p. 175). Additionally, the process of individuation can vary for men and women due to differing values placed on relationships (Stein, 2006, "Introduction," para. 11). This thesis also only considers military wives who are married to career military men, not just those in a 4- or 8-year commitment, because it has been my experience that the mind-set of those families is different when there is not a long-term military career goal.

This thesis is of particular interest to me because for the past 5years I have been a military wife. I have gone from being an independent executive to a military dependent and student, and I have processed through many of the trials that this transition has brought, including the marginalization by both military and civilian societies. Throughout my education in counseling psychology, I have been disappointed at the lack of material presented on military wives. The intent of this thesis is to bring attention to military wives' struggles to individuate, thus increasing awareness, and ultimately recognition, of this true American hero's journey.

Guiding Purpose

The United States has been involved in a multitude of military actions over the past 15 years, causing an influx of people to join the military, especially following 9/11 (Kelley & Jouriles, 2011). The women who marry these active duty military members often do not realize the responsibility and psychological challenges that come with being

the spouse of a military member (Alt & Stone, 1990, p. 4). The lifestyle of military wives is dramatically different from that of civilians (Ahmadi & Green, 2011; Alt & Stone, 1990; Cretekos, 1973; Custer, 1890; Eubanks, 2013; Kelley & Jouriles, 2011; LaGrone, 1978; Marshall, 1947; Palmer, 2008). Newlywed military wives quickly discover new feelings caused by marginalization in a civilian-dominant society because civilians often lack knowledge and empathy for the struggles military wives endure. In my experience as a military wife, I have felt unseen, misunderstood, and judged by civilians, which caused anxiety and increased my need for enmeshment within my only support system: my family. Some military wives choose to stay confined within military-only communities, such as the base, as a way to feel a sense of belonging and acceptance in their new roles (Alt & Stone, 1990, pp. 3-8).

However, on base military wives do not receive the same conveniences that active duty members do (Ahmadi & Green, 2011; Alt & Stone, 1990; Marshall, 1947), which may further reinforce the marginalization of military wives by the military. Dependent, the title the military gives military wives, forces many women into a role that feels unnatural and unsupportive of their own personal development (Alt & Stone, 1990; Dobrofsky, 1976). Additionally, many services offered to the military member are not available to dependents on base (Ahmadi & Green, 2011, p. 131). Dependents are required to leave the confines of the military base for many services, including mental health services, where they must interact with civilians, some of whom may not understand or empathize with the uniqueness of their lives (p. 136). This treatment of military wives may cause them to feel pulled between two separate worlds, neither of which feels welcoming. As a result, these women often struggle with loneliness, identity

issues, depression, anxiety, and decreased self-esteem (Ahmadi & Green, 2011; Kelley & Jouriles, 2011; Palmer, 2008).

Clinical Applicability and Rationale

This thesis explores how military wives' lives differ from civilian wives', and how a military lifestyle may in fact stunt the individuation process. By shedding light on this unseen population, I hope to raise awareness of military wives and their unique struggles so that psychotherapists will have a clearer understanding of the sacrifices these women make. Better-informed clinicians will be more effective in working with military wives, perhaps developing treatment plans designed specifically for their complex needs.

This thesis is an important contribution to the field of counseling psychology because it illuminates the need for civilian therapists working with military populations to become familiar with the unique struggles of military wives. In training to become a psychotherapist, there is much emphasis placed on understanding diversity and its impact on individuals. However, military wives are often an overlooked population in psychotherapeutic training programs, so it is understandable that many therapists may not comprehend these women's experiences. This lack of knowledge and training may reaffirm the marginalization felt by military wives. By examining this issue from a depth psychological perspective through the exploration of individuation, I hope to help clinicians gain more insight into military wives, thereby better serving this population.

Methodology

Research problem and question. This thesis explores the process of individuation and an individual's need to navigate this journey successfully. Numerous challenges arise for military wives on their paths toward individuation. These challenges

include marginalization within both military and civilian cultures, as well as numerous psychological challenges that the military lifestyle presents, all of which may accumulate to create obstacles along the pathway of military wives' individuation process. There are myriad ramifications that can result from a blocked individuation process that will be explored later in this work. The research in this work is guided by this question: What are the psychological side effects of the military lifestyle on military wives, and how does this lifestyle, along with the inherent expectations that accompany it, affect the individuation process in this population?

Research methodology. The research in this thesis has been gathered using qualitative methods, and compares and analyzes the findings through a depth psychological lens. The information was acquired using both heuristic and hermeneutic methodologies, but because the topic derived from personal experience, heuristics provide the predominant framework of the thesis. For the hermeneutic process of data analysis, texts and articles containing scholarly, scientific, literary, or theoretical writings have been used. According to depth psychologists Joseph Coppin and Elizabeth Nelson (2005), "Although an established and well-articulated method often will serve—there are many to choose from after all . . . blending or revising established methods assists the inquiry" (p. 133). As a military spouse myself, it is valuable to this work to include my personal experiences. However, because I want the research findings to be applicable to all military wives, the hermeneutic method is incorporated for a balanced and objective perspective.

Both the heuristic and hermeneutic methods of research have benefits that merit discussion. Psychologist Clark Moustakas (1990) described the heuristic process as

starting with a problem that contains a personal component that the researcher wants to explore. The heuristic process guides the researcher toward a better understanding of the self and the surrounding world (p. 15). Heuristic methodology is powerful because it is based on personal experience, allowing the researcher direct access to the emotions of the experience. Because the researcher is both participant and witness, it is important for the researcher to develop self-objectivity, which is a primary challenge of heuristics.

Using the hermeneutic method, the researcher compares various components of a concept that are presented by multiple sources. According to Coppin and Nelson (2005), the findings allow the researcher a better understanding of the concept because the variety of perspectives presents a broad contextual manner that may not have been available from a single author (p. 29). Merging information from multiple sources enables the researcher to create hypotheses based on how the findings interact with one another. By observing the patterns that emerge from a variety of sources, the researcher can more confidently draw solid conclusions from numerous sources reporting similar information. Unlike the heuristic method, the hermeneutic method removes all experiential components from the research. It is important that the study include research from varying perspectives as it may be easy for the researcher to overlook findings that do not align with the researcher's own perspective, thus twisting the data to fit the researcher's argument.

Ethical Concerns

Because this thesis uses heuristic methodology, there are some inherent ethical concerns. The main concern is related to confidentiality—both my own and my family members', as well as that of those who might be impacted by the sharing of my personal

experience. Therefore, care is taken to avoid direct mention of specific stories without changing the identifying facts or representing them as amalgamations.

This thesis topic may cause a significant reaction for some readers, so it is important to consider all perspectives, not simply my own. It is not my intention to create guilt or discomfort in military personnel by exposing the challenges of military wives. I do not want to harm anyone, military or otherwise, by the production of this thesis, so it is important to be cognizant of the possible implications of my writing.

Overview of Thesis

Chapter II provides a review of existing literature, defines individuation (Jung, 1928/1990; Singer, 1994; Stein, 2006), as well as discusses the process of individuation (Gordon, 1986; Stein, 2006), and the possible ramifications of blocking the process of individuation (Hollis, 2000; Schmidt, 2005; Stein, 2012; Walsh, 2011). This chapter also explores the challenges military wives face living in a culture that values independence over dependence (Nadler & Chernyak-Hai, 2014; Swanson & Fouad, 2014), and offers a discussion on military wives as dependents (Alt & Stone, 1990; Dobrofsky, 1976) as well as the marginalization of military wives by both civilian and military societies (Bradshaw, 1988; Custer, 1890; Kunst & Sam, 2013). Chapter II then examines the challenges military wives face living a military lifestyle and the psychological effects of those challenges such as depression, anxiety (Ahmadi & Green, 2011; Cretekos, 1973 Green et al., 2013), and deployment related stress (Everson, Herzog, Figley, & Whitworth, 2014; Verdeli et al., 2011).

Chapter III provides a hermeneutic and heuristic analysis of the challenges of the military lifestyle. In this chapter, through the process of sharing my own story and

including research data and experiences of other military wives, I highlight the hardships we suffer as a segment of the population that does not fit in to either the military or the civilian world. This chapter relays my story of being a military wife, from the beginning stages of becoming a military wife through the ongoing challenges, and ultimately, I describe how I settled into my role. Along the way, I explore my psychological journey, integrating Psychologist Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Walsh, 2011) and Stein's (2006) process of individuation. This chapter also explores certain ramifications for the military wife who fails to individuate and looks at how the archetype of Hestia can be an effective metaphor for military wives taking back control over their lives. Chapter III concludes with a discussion of the clinical applicability of the research findings.

Chapter IV provides a comprehensive summary of the preceding chapters. This chapter summarizes the literature review from Chapter II and the heuristic and hermeneutic findings from Chapter III. Chapter IV then explores the clinical implications of the findings, and concludes with suggestions for potential future areas of research on this topic, as well as my closing thoughts.

Chapter II
Literature Review

Introduction

The literature review begins by defining individuation (Jung, 1928/1990; Singer, 1994; Stein, 2006). Next, it examines the process of individuation (Gordon, 1986; Stein, 2006) and some proposed consequences of not individuating (Hollis, 2000; Schmidt, 2005; Stein, 2012; Walsh, 2011). This chapter then delves into the real world challenges of military wives. This discussion begins by highlighting the individualistic nature of U.S. culture (Nadler & Chernyak-Hai, 2014; Swanson & Fouad, 2014) and considering the phenomenon of military wives as dependents (Alt & Stone, 1990; Dobrofsky, 1976). Chapter II then focuses on the marginalization of military wives by both civilian and military populations and the ensuing psychological implications of this marginalization on these women's psyches (Bradshaw, 1988; Custer, 1890; Kunst & Sam, 2013). This chapter concludes by examining the myriad psychological effects that result from living a military lifestyle that makes it difficult to successfully adapt to in order to proceed to the next level of individuation (Ahmadi & Green, 2011; Black, 1993; Green et al., 2013; Makowsky et al., 1988; Palmer, 2008).

Individuation

Definition. Founder of analytic psychology, Carl Jung (1928/1990), developed the concept of individuation and defined it as "becoming an 'in-dividual,' and, in so far as 'individuality' embraces our innermost, last and incomparable uniqueness, it also

implies becoming one's own self. We could therefore translate individuation as 'coming to selfhood or self-realization'" (p. 147). Stein (2006) described individuation as the process of reaching one's personality potential through incorporating conscious and unconscious materials of the inner world and the outer world ("Introduction," para. 11). Jungian analyst June Singer (1994) recognized individuation as "the conscious realization and integration of all the possibilities immanent in the individual" (p. 136). This realization disrupts the desire for conformity with the collective and instead, there is a "rejection of those prefabricated psychic matrices—the conventional attitudes—with which most people would like to live" (p. 137). As the individual turns inward and discovers his or her true inner self, there is no longer the need for affirmation from the outside world.

Process. The process of individuation, much like the definition of individuation, can vary slightly, depending on the theorist. This thesis discusses Stein's (2006) theory of individuation, in which he identified three main stages of life that contribute to the process of individuation. These stages are containment, adapting, and centering ("Introduction," para. 13).

The containment stage occurs during the first phase of life, when the mother nourishes and protects the individual (Stein, 2006, "The containment/nurturance stage of individuation," para. 1). This stage lasts until the individual is completely independent in the world. In modern society, the containment stage and the next stage, the adapting stage, overlap for an extended period, and the individual lives between both stages.

In Stein's (2006) adapting stage, the individual leaves the contained maternal world and resides in the outside paternal world where the individual must conform to

laws and rules ("The adapting/adjusting stage of individuation," para. 2). Anxiety increases around performance and the individual develops defenses. The *ego,* the center of consciousness (Stein, 2012, p. 233), assumes a mask to fit in to standards imposed by the stereotypes of the outside world. This mask, referred to in depth psychology as the *persona*, is a social construct that enables the individual to adapt to the world and live up to the expectations placed on him or her (Stein, 2006, "The centering/integrating stage of individuation," para. 5). Jung described the persona as "a mask for the collective psyche, a mask that feigns individuality, and tries to make others and oneself believe that one is individual, whereas one is simply playing a part. . . . Fundamentally, the persona is nothing real" (as cited in Singer, 1994, p. 159).

The world of the adapting stage is what Stein (2006) referred to as reality, where there are psychological, physical, social, cultural, and economic challenges. The individual must be capable of facing and adapting to reality's challenges in order to move beyond this stage ("The adapting/adjusting stage of individuation," para. 7). This is a fundamental tenet of the exploration of the research question that reappears throughout the thesis.

In the third stage of individuation, called centering, Stein (2006) explained that conformity no longer fits the individual and he or she begins to question the collective beliefs previously held. This questioning of beliefs is often the result of a tragedy or a synchronistic event that makes the individual mistrust previous assumptions. As the individual focuses on the inner self, he or she becomes aware that the persona is a social construct and not the true self; the ego separates from the persona and defenses decrease, allowing the true inner self to become realized and appreciated for its uniqueness. The

Self, the underlying structure of the psyche, surpasses the ego and becomes the guiding influence of authenticity from within. The ego answers to the inner Self instead of the outside world, and the lowering of defenses allows the unconscious to come to life ("The centering/integrating stage of individuation," para. 5).

Stein (2006) explained that in the centering stage, the psyche begins integrating pieces of the Self that split off and became repressed during earlier stages of development. Certain elements of the Self are inhibited in prior stages of development because the ego prioritizes what it can process while adapting to the outside world and represses whatever it cannot process. However, during the centering stage, the repressed and lost pieces of the individual reintegrate into consciousness because the ego answers to the inner Self instead of the external society. This ultimately makes the individual psychologically whole ("The centering/integrating stage of individuation," para. 11).

Jungian analyst Michael Fordham. according to analytic psychologist Rosemary Gordon (1986), believed that the ego must be strong enough to integrate the painful, shameful, forbidden, and repressed *shadow* aspects of the individual into consciousness (pp. 224- 225). Stein (2012) defined shadow as "the rejected and unaccepted aspects of the personality that are repressed and form a compensatory structure to the ego's self ideals and to the persona" (p. 234). The more that the individual integrates unconscious material, the stronger the ego grows, allowing the individual to uncover additional repressed aspects of the Self (Fordham as cited in Gordon, 1986).

Ramifications of not successfully individuating. According to Stein (2012), Jung believed that people try to suppress unpleasant emotions or feelings, but these unconscious materials, when suppressed, can become neuroses. Jung posited that the

energy required to suppress the unconscious would deplete the individual from other life experiences and block one's ability to attain wholeness and satisfaction in life, the ultimate goal of individuation (p. 188- 189).

Maslow (as cited in Walsh, 2011) believed people would get sick, destructive, violent, hopeless, or indifferent if unable to reach their fullest potential, which Maslow saw as human nature's drive (p. 459). Maslow believed that ignoring human nature caused emotional pain and pathology that could lead to a distorted view of the self, resulting in an inauthentic, and therefore, unfulfilled life. Because this occurs unconsciously, the source of these ill feelings would go unrecognized, and cause one to feel negative, untrusting, and alienated or marginalized. This lifestyle would direct individuals toward external sources of happiness, rather than focusing on internal needs, leaving the individual doomed to suffer psychologically (pp. 469-470).

Jungian analyst James Hollis (2000) wrote, "Jung defined neurosis as suffering which has not yet found its meaning" (p. 36). A neurosis develops from an unconscious wound earlier in life, and it symptoms make the wounds known (p. 10). The neurosis's meaning is discovered through the course of individuation, wherein individuals process these fragmented and repressed aspects of themselves that reside within the unconscious, and integrate them into consciousness. One could deduce, therefore, that failure to individuate would result in continued neuroses.

Jungian analyst Martin Schmidt (2005) explored the process of individuation, and stressed that individuation required integrating the collective and the personal elements because focusing on only one aspect leads to mental health crises. Schmidt also emphasized that the ego has to be strong enough to handle all aspects of the unconscious

to be able to work toward individuation. Schmidt proposed that the ego's strength depends on how well one can manage anxiety, and how well it can create, mourn, and repair relationships. For those individuals whose ego strength is unable to manage this, the individuation process will remain stuck, and the Self may feel like it is under attack both from outside and from within, leading to the formation of stronger defenses.

Real World Challenges of Military Wives

Military wives face unique challenges every day, whether their husbands are home or deployed. Stein (2006) underscored the importance of individuals successfully adjusting to all challenges that arise in the adapting stage of the individuation process to move on to the centering stage. Stein did not make any special accommodations for individuals with particularly challenging lives, leading one to believe that all individuals, regardless of the intensity of challenges they face, must successfully complete the adapting stage before progressing to the centering stage ("The adapting/adjusting stage of individuation," para. 2). The following segment of the literature review explores many of the unique challenges facing today's military wives.

U.S. individualistic society. There was a time in American history when the family was the main priority (Alt & Stone, 1990, pp. 44-45). However, as professors of counseling psychology Jane Swanson and Nadya Fouad (2014) pointed out, modern day U.S. culture has changed. Currently there is a much higher priority on the individual and individual needs, rather than the needs of the group or the family. Swanson and Fouad wrote, "The United States is considered to be an individualistic society as opposed to a society more oriented to the collective" (p. 30). Because the individual is the most important thing, often a job fits what is best for the individual's needs, rather than what is

best for the family as a whole. Jobs are rated on what the individual accomplishes, which translates to more respect for positions that fulfill that priority. Jobs that do not serve the individual's own needs are, therefore, less respected.

The "dependent." In the U.S. Military, wives of military members are dependents of the military. The term *dependent* carries many associations, so it is important to consider the definition of the word, which is "contingent on another. subordinate; relying on, or requiring the aid of another for support; hanging down; one who relies on another especially for financial support" ("Dependent", 2003, defs. 1-5). This military imposed title on military wives positions them as inferior within the military culture (Alt & Stone, 1990, p. 30).

Sociologist Lynn Dobrofsky (1976) wrote about the military's treatment of military wives. She hoped feminism would empower military wives to become aware of their individual consciousness and abilities for personal growth, especially because they "have no official independent status as a person or as a member of the military" (p. 2). Military wives cannot sign documents, make agreements, or participate in functions without their husbands. Dobrofsky wrote,

> She [the military wife] has a lack of personhood. She is marginal in that she is recognized as an associate member of the military structure "sponsored" by her husband while at the same time, she must relinquish most of her autonomy and identity with the overall social structure of civilian society. (p. 2)

Dobrofsky identified isolation as a key factor to military wives' oppression—they must live within rigid rules, in conformity, with a high rate of mobility, thus preventing them from forming any roots and becoming independent.

Researchers Arie Nadler, a social psychologist, and Lily Chernyak-Hai (2014), a professor in behavioral studies, explored the psychological implications of being

dependent. When a person asks for help, there is a power differential in the relationship—one person exhibits dependence on the other. According to Nadler and Chernyak-Hai's study, dependence implies to the helper weakness and inability of the requester. However, helpers interpreted the request for help in two ways: either out of weakness, or out of strength, based on the helper's perspective of the requester. If the requester had a high social status, the helper perceived the requester as capable—the request was temporary and out of the requester's control and, therefore, the helper willingly helped. Conversely, the lower the status of the requester, the more he or she was regarded as chronically dependent and weak; the helper felt resentment, especially if he or she believed the requester had control over the situation. This research provides excellent insight into how people treat dependents.

Marginalization by civilian and military cultures. Psychologists Jonas Kunst and David Sam (2013) explored the psychological effects of different acculturation strategies, including marginalization, integration, assimilation, and separation. When marginalized, individuals abandon their heritage cultures but do not embrace the dominant culture. Of all of the cultural modification strategies, Kunst and Sam deemed marginalization the most psychologically difficult because individuals feel caught between two cultures, but members of neither. This pull creates problematic psychological health issues in sociocultural adaptability. Kunst and Sam suggested this could be due to a lack of coping resources because individuals cannot rely upon either culture to help them through their challenges. Marginalization negatively affects a person's capacity for psychological adaptation because marginalized individuals' social identities are devalued, thus devaluing how they see themselves. Shame, which

psychologist and author John Bradshaw (1988) described as an agonizing internal experience that makes one feel cut off, both internally and externally from relating to anyone—even oneself (p. 5)—is an emotion that can result from marginalization (Custer, 1890; Kunst & Sam, 2013). People who cannot identify in either world feel like outsiders; conversely, affiliation with a group reduces feelings of uncertainty and secures a stable sense of self.

Wife of General Custer, Elizabeth Bacon Custer (1890), wrote of her time as a military wife, telling stories of blatant exclusion from civilian society. Her family suffered discrimination by property owners and were unable to rent homes because of the temporariness of their leave as a military family. Custer felt she did not dress, cook, or behave in the same way as civilian women, and her needs were no longer the same as civilian wives. Custer felt different from civilian women, and could not relate with civilians any longer, despite being raised as a judge's daughter with a good education.

The Psychological Challenges of Military Wives

Depression, anxiety, and stress. Psychiatrist Constantine Cretekos (1973) focused on common issues facing military wives living in military culture, which ranged from somatic to psychological issues, but most commonly included anxiety and depression. Researchers in behavioral health, Halima Ahmadi and Scott Green (2011), added that substance use is another common symptom of stress among military wives. Cretekos (1973) wrote, "Pathological mourning reactions are occasionally seen in response to orders. In this case, the wife, deeply depressed and overwhelmed with rage, cries intermittently or continuously throughout the day" (p. 36). Cretekos also stressed the overwhelming effects military wives' suffering has on the military members,

"Situated in a pivotal position, she may aid her husband in withstanding military pressures or encourage him to succumb to those pressures. She plays a crucial role in fulfilling the military mission: to preserve the fighting strength" (p. 36).

Professors of social sciences Sara Green, Paula Nurius, and Patricia Lester (2013) researched military wives compared to civilian spouses to assess the effects of stressors on the psychological well-being of military spouses, depending on variables such as education, age, and support systems. The researchers specifically studied anxiety and depression because these were the two most common forms of distress described by the wives. The results demonstrated that military wives reported higher levels of psychological distress, anxiety, and depression compared to civilians. This phenomenon corresponded with a lower level of resources available to military spouses, mostly in terms of lack of social support and lack of income. The Green et al. study determined that combat deployments, uncertainty in the future, and lack of control provide additional layers that compound daily family stressors.

Deployment: Stress of separation. Psychologists Helen Verdeli et al. (2011) examined the impact of deployments over the past 20 years on the mental health of military spouses, focusing on depression and anxiety. When the military member is physically absent, such as during a deployment, his rules and place in the family must be maintained. This adds to the wife's challenges of managing changes in her family role, increased tasks and demands, financial concerns, and feelings of loneliness. However, overriding all of these stressors is the fear for her husband's safety.

Verdeli et al. (2011) found that there has been a significant change in the mental health of military families involved in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation

Enduring Freedom (OEF). Family members have typically experienced increased stress and mental health issues with deployments, but in the past, these symptoms would subside once the family member returned. However, since the onset of OIF and OEF, mental health issues have been more consistent and profound in military families. Verdeli et al. suggested that this is due to the frequency and length of deployments and the high rates of injury and death, which increase military spouses' feelings of lacking control. Even when their husbands are home, military wives live in a constant state of anxiety knowing that their husbands might be deployed again at a moment's notice. The depression and anxiety rates in military wives are more than double the general population and are on par with the rates of anxiety and depression found in soldiers following combat.

Professors of social sciences R. Blaine Everson, Joseph Herzog, Charles Figley, and James Whitworth (2014) evaluated parental, family, and personal stress in wives of military members. The researchers found that rank and number of deployments directly affected family stress, and that rank and length of deployment affected parental stress. Rank, number of deployments, and length of deployment all affected the spouse's *personal stress*, which Everson et al. defined as the "internal perception of deficits in general physical and emotional well-being that normally serve the individual when stressors increase and coping resources are overwhelmed" (p. 423). Stress was higher when children were involved, likely due to becoming a single-parent family and experiencing an increase in concern over the child's well-being when the father was gone. The wife's stress was also associated with increased daily household duties, balancing work and family, staying emotionally connected with her husband, and fear for

her husband's safety. As the number of deployments increased, stress increased; this indicated a cumulative effect of stressors, perhaps due to unresolved feelings from prior deployments in addition to the feelings surrounding the new deployment. This research showed that the correlation between the husband's lower rank and the wife's higher stress level was likely related to the wife's younger age, less experience in the military, less knowledge of resources, and having younger children. Rank, number of deployments, and length of deployments are uncontrollable by the military wife; therefore, these factors are likely accompanied by feelings of helplessness, which, according to Everson et al., also increased stress levels.

Family dynamics and transiency. Psychiatrist Don LaGrone's (1978) research found several problematic family dynamics in his study of 792 military family members seeking treatment at a base mental health clinic. The study was conducted over a 2-year period during which LaGrone attempted to identify common themes responsible for family members seeking treatment. These issues included the family's relationship to the military, the father's absence, and transiency (p. 1040). LaGrone identified triangulation patterns between the father and the military, making the family outsiders against this strong coalition. The father's absence strongly influenced the functioning of the family system as other family members adapted to fill the family's needs. Transiency every 2 years made developing meaningful relationships very difficult, increasing isolation and depression in the military spouse. In addition, civilians viewed the military family as transients and did not trust them, leaving the family even further isolated, confined solely to the base.

William Black, Jr. (1993), assistant clinical professor of family medicine at Eglin Air Force Base, explored the effects of military-induced family separations. Black stressed the differences between civilian and military lifestyles, which include frequent moves, the constant potential of deployments, frequent family separations, isolation from family support systems, low pay, young age, and young children in the home. Black acknowledged that each factor might not be overwhelming in itself; however, the military family must deal with all of these factors piled up at once as an aggregate, placing the family at a high risk for crisis. Topping off this stress is the knowledge that the military member can die in the line of duty, which is the main factor causing psychological distress as evidenced by the dramatic increase in symptoms of depression and psychosomatic complaints in family members during deployments.

Counselor Paula Makowsky, grief and loss researcher Alicia Cook, associate professor Peggy Berger, and professor of child and family studies Judith Powell (1988) researched the psychological effects of relocating by measuring the levels of stress civilian women experience when moving either voluntarily or involuntarily. The study focused on women because previous research determined that moving had the most profound effect on the women in the family. Makowsky et al. postulated this was due to the women's roles as wife, mother, and community liaison, as well as their loss of relationships and identity within the community where they had lived. The researchers determined that involuntary moves had a significantly more profound effect on women's perceived stress than the voluntary moves did; this was due to the depression associated with these women's feelings of a loss of control over their lives.

In her doctoral dissertation, former counseling psychologist in the U.S. Army Susan Kelly (1995) evaluated the anxiety levels of military members and their spouses over the first 12 months of relocation. In her study, Kelly compared civilian and military moves, noting the major difference between the two is that civilians typically move for voluntary career advancement, whereas military moves are involuntary and do not advance careers. However, the psychological impact to both military and civilian families was similar in that both felt loss, which led to a period of grief. The loss correlated to a change in the familiar environment, loss of job or role in the family, loss of personal relationships, and perhaps most importantly, a loss of self-identity. Kelly found that women define themselves through relationships, so losing these may be the hardest part for women who relocate because as they uproot, they must sever ties to their families, friends, and communities, all of which help them maintain their self-identity (p. 16). The process of re-acclimating takes between 18 and 24 months, but most military families move every 2 to 3 years; right around the time they are comfortable in their new environment, they must pack up and begin the process all over again. What Kelly declared most ironic is that when the military member is ordered to a new duty station the spouse also is expected to move, leaving behind employment, family, and friends, causing the military wife to become more dependent on her husband for her emotional needs. However, the military inevitably then requires the military member to deploy, and the wife is expected to be strong, self-sufficient, and maintain the family structure while her husband is gone. These two conflicting roles imposed by the military lifestyle create anxiety-riddled relationships that are destined to be challenging (pp. 152-153).

Psychologist and researcher Cale Palmer (2008) reviewed factors in military families that contribute to psychological risk and resilience, including relocation, deployment, and post-deployment reunion. Although frequent relocation is a hardship on military families due to their inability to maintain support systems, a lack of stability, and detrimental effects on finances and possible spouse employment, Palmer believed that relocation was a positive aspect of military life. He suggested that frequent relocations increased family coping and provided a stronger parent–child bond. Palmer proposed that the problem with frequent relocations is actually linked to the military spouse's attitude toward moving. If the military spouse is unhappy about it and does not adjust well, then neither will the family. Palmer also explored how the military member's deployment causes periods of increased emotional distance, shock, disbelief, numbness, tension, and irritation for the spouse, which he described as anticipatory grief and fear, or perhaps anxiety and depression, or dysphoria. After the deployment, when most would envision a happy reunion, the family instead faces enormous challenges and stresses as each member attempts to resume his or her role within the family system—this also often results in significant anxiety and depression.

Grief. Grief is a common psychological issue in military spouses found throughout the research (Black, 1993; Cretekos, 1973; Goldsworthy, 2005; Kelly, 1995; Palmer, 2008). Social worker Kellie Goldsworthy's (2005) research on grief indicated that grief can manifest in myriad ways, including anger, sadness, guilt, despair, and helplessness. Black (1993) suggested that interventions with military wives should include the stages of grief because each wife goes through them, sometimes beginning before her husband leaves, starting when he first receives his orders. Black determined

that 6 weeks after separation is the time when most wives will either accept the separation or go into a deep depression (p. 278). The challenge here, compared to grief due to death, is that although there is a physical separation, there is not a psychological separation—which occurs with death—and contact between spouses may be continuous throughout their time apart, actually prolonging the stages of grief.

Loss of identity. The loss of self-identity or diminished self-esteem is a common theme throughout the research gathered for this thesis (Eubanks, 2013; Kelly, 1995, Kunst & Sam, 2013; Makowsky et al., 1988; Marshall, 1947). Katherine Powell (2004), psychological and developmental researcher and professor, investigated the developmental psychology of adolescent girls and the changes they undergo while attempting to develop their self-image. Powell succinctly defined *identity* as a sense of self (p. 77). As responsibilities and expectations arise, girls must find resolutions to the issues, and as they successfully do this, they form a sense of identity. Those who are unable to do so will lack self-esteem and a sense of identity, impeding their progression into more advanced stages of development. The ability to overcome conflicts independently enables the building of self-esteem, which Powell defined as self-respect, or how one feels about one's identity, achievements, and self (p. 77). A young girl's desire to individuate but remain in relation to others, especially her parents, presents conflicting identity issues because there is a delicate balance between her need for separateness and connectedness. This balance has a direct effect on her self-esteem; the more connected she is, the higher her self-esteem because females base sense of self on connectedness to the world. Powell pointed out that many theorists perceive self-concept as multidimensional, consisting of self-esteem and self-image, but also based on the

individual's intrapersonal experiences and perception of his or her personality when interacting with others. Self-esteem forms from internal perspectives, experiences in life, relationships, and surroundings.

Tracy Eubanks (2013), a registered nurse and military wife, wrote about the common phenomenon of military wives suffering the loss of their self-identities while assuming new roles and responsibilities. Military wives become a part of the military when they marry a military member, and these women must play a supporting role to their husbands. This loss of identity is, in large part, due to basic military protocol. For example, to schedule a doctor's appointment on base, military wives must provide their husbands' social security numbers, not their own, for identification. Additionally, Eubanks pointed out that each move requires military spouses to leave a bit of their old selves behind and recreate themselves to fit into the new location, ultimately causing identity problems.

Katherine Marshall (1947) was married to General George Marshall, who served as the Army Chief of Staff during World War II. Marshall wrote of her struggle to fit in to the military's lifestyle and the expectations as a military wife. When she became a military wife, Marshall was no longer an individual, something she did not anticipate. She wrote of her frustration with the military's treatment of her as an appendage to her husband, devoid of any interests of her own. From her first military event, when she realized she knew nothing of military protocol, to her treatment as a second-class citizen with no rights of her own, Marshall identified with feelings of marginalization throughout her time as a military wife.

Chapter III
Findings and Clinical Applications

> "They remind me of Army wives," I said.
>
> "What? The kites?"
>
> "No," I answered, "the tails. They have no say as to where they go, but they are always there, trailing along in the rear."
>
> "How high do you think a kite would fly without its tail?" he mused. "If the tail is too heavy it falls to the ground, if too light it flies a devious course, but if well balanced the kite soars high. There is nothing more important to a kite than the good appendage that steadies it."
>
> Marshall, 1947, p. 52

Introduction

Jungian depth psychology provides a valuable approach to psychotherapy that incorporates all aspects of an individual's psyche, making it the ultimate lens to use when exploring the process of individuation and the perceived roadblocks one experiences on the journey of individuation. This chapter explores the process of individuation, including elements that may hinder the process for military wives, and possible ramifications for this impediment. Heuristically and hermeneutically, this chapter highlights the unique challenges that many military wives endure, including marginalization in both military and civilian cultures and myriad psychological challenges, which create complications in the individuation processes.

The heuristic and hermeneutic research for the thesis provides evidence of unique challenges military wives encounter in the military lifestyle. "The data available on military spouses support the idea that they, and their families, tend to live under a set of circumstances that comes with unique stressors" (Ahmadi & Green, 2011, p. 136). This

work further examines how these challenges hinder the individuation process. This thesis proposes that because the challenges military wives encounter are unique to that population, these women are at a disadvantage in their process of individuation. Green et al. (2013) pointed out,

> Military spouses are often grappling with issues much less common to their civilian counterparts, such as sustaining a family in the face of frequent moves, distance from kin networks, the demands of military culture, and the deployment of a spouse. When compared to a non-military community sample, military spouses reported higher scores of perceived stress, with higher stress being negatively correlated with mental and physical well-being. (pp. 753-754)

It is important to note that the individuation process is unique for every person. Similarly, each military wife encounters challenges differently, and no two will have an identical experience. Therefore, it is essential to consider the findings in this thesis from a broad, universally applicable perspective that is relevant to military wives in general, understanding that each person's journey will be unique. Here, I share my story.

My Journey

Becoming a military wife. I came from a broken home. My father, a Vietnam veteran and highly skilled airline mechanic, and my mother, a registered nurse and intensive care unit manager, were high school sweethearts who grew up together, and then grew apart. Both of my parents were hard workers who achieved excellence in their careers. My stepfather was a highly respected surgeon who brought himself up from nothing, utilizing the GI Bill after World War II to attend college. My parents were a guiding symbol for me of what hard work could accomplish in life, and they each instilled in me the importance of being strong, independent, and capable of providing for myself from a very young age. It was clear to me that regardless of whom I married, nothing was forever, so I needed to be able to rely on myself. I worked hard through

college and created a career that surpassed my peers; to say I was driven was an understatement. The mask of courage and confidence I constructed helped me fit in with the good-old-boys industry I was a part of, and I was proud of my heartless and competitive reputation. I defined myself by the executive position I held by the age of 31, and despite being divorced with two young children, my career was my priority in life.

I met my current husband on an online dating service; the flexibility of internet dating and getting to know someone via email complemented my hectic lifestyle and allowed me to cut through the fluff. I was physically attracted to his pictures online, but there was something about our email exchanges that set him apart—sensitivity mixed with a great sense of humor. So, despite his occupation in the military, I decided to meet him for coffee. I had an aversion to dating a man in the military because the thought of becoming "viewed only as the 'dependent wife' of the military man, with [my] status (or lack of it) totally based on his standing in the military" (Alt & Stone, 1990, p. 7) was incomprehensible to me.

Given my no-nonsense attitude in life, the idea of love at first sight was laughable. However, when I climbed out of my car and our eyes connected for the first time, I was thrown for a loop. I remember thinking, "Oh shit . . . I'm in trouble," as I tried to appear confident, thanking God for the composed mask I was so accustomed to wearing. Our 30-minute coffee date turned into 5 hours; we both fell head-over-heels in love that day, and never looked back. I had no idea what it meant to date someone in the military, and he had no idea what it meant to date a corporate executive, but we both knew we had to try.

Six weeks into our relationship, my husband received orders that his primary duty station was going to move overseas in the next 6 months. The move was unaccompanied,

so he could not bring a family, and the tour was 15 months long. He was heartbroken, but I knew we could get through anything. I can now see my reaction as disbelief, shock, and denial, all part of the grief process. During the next 6 months, our relationship was anxiously driven into fast forward: we moved in together, started making long-term plans, and a few weeks before he moved overseas, we got married; it was my second marriage, his third. I was officially a military wife.

Military wifedom. I vividly remember the day, less than eight months after meeting him, that I dropped my husband off at the airport for his move overseas. My children and I walked with him to the bottom of the escalator, as far as we were permitted. I felt my heart ripping from my chest and the air being sucked from my lungs as we said our good-byes. I never imagined something could hurt so badly. He got on the escalator, tears in his eyes, looking back at my two children and me as we huddled together, crying. My 4-year-old daughter broke free from us and raced up the escalator throwing her arms around his leg and cried; she sobbed loudly, begging him not to leave us. People around us paused, touched by the emotional display of a little girl saying goodbye to her airman-daddy; my heart broke even further, knowing how hurt my children were by his departure. I now knew what it was to be a military wife, to stand at the airport gates with my children and wave goodbye, not knowing if I would see my husband again.

I do not know how I made it through the next few months; I just remember crying all the time. Military wives Betty Alt and Bonnie Stone (1990) wrote, “She [the military wife] knows that a military career means long stretches alone, but until she lives empty months by herself, she won’t fully comprehend how debilitating being alone can be”

(p. 54). That feeling of loss can only compare to how I felt when my brother John died; the wound could not be soothed or comforted, and would not go away. It was a pain so deep it cut to my core, affecting every aspect of me. I knew my husband would be home in 15 months, but it felt like he was gone forever, and I mourned my loss. According to Alt and Stone, "Each time her husband left, [the military wife] had to work through grief that psychologists have said is as intense as that experienced by new widows" (p. 55).

My husband phoned regularly, but that exacerbated the wound at times, and I found myself worried whether he was being faithful. "The relational turbulence experienced by military families demonstrates how depressive symptoms and relationship satisfaction are mediated by relationship uncertainty" (Kelley & Jouriles, 2011, p. 460). I resented my husband for having another life without kids, a wife, or bills to pay; all he had to do was go to work and the gym while I was left to look after everything else back home and worried about him constantly. We fought every time we talked—I missed him so much but was so angry at the same time—I felt like I was going insane. I hated the military and what had become of my relationship; I remained a civilian and rejected the part of my husband's life that took him away from me.

Four months into his 15-month overseas assignment, my husband deployed for a military conflict, and my anxiety levels increased even more. Now, not only was he half a world away, he was also in harm's way, and it would be virtually impossible for me to stay in contact with him. I needed help, desperately. "War, and its modern extension, terrorism, have an immediacy for a military wife that her civilian counterparts cannot imagine" (Alt & Stone, 1990, p. 55). I tried talking to family, friends, and coworkers, but their typical responses were: "You chose this lifestyle," "You knew what you were

getting yourself into when you married him," or "I couldn't live like you do," all said with a tone of judgment. Alt and Stone (1990) pointed out, "Each day military wives fight the terror of the unseen enemy, knowing their men may never come home again" (p. 8). This was my first experience with deployment, and I could not handle this new layer of anxiety on my already teeming plate. I went to see a civilian counselor because military counselors would not see dependents, but the counselor was unfamiliar with the military, asking me to explain overseas assignments and deployments. She focused on the practical side of things rather than my emotions.

I wonder how different I would have felt if I had been reassured that most wives react to deployments with a whole range of feelings, including "numbness, shock, irritation, tension, disbelief . . . increased emotional distance . . . emotional distress, loneliness, dysphoria, anticipatory fear or grief, somatic complaints, and increased medical care and depression" (Palmer, 2008, p. 209). It might have helped me to know that what I was experiencing, although upsetting, was completely normal. Instead, my counselor suggested I focus on myself, get plenty of self-care, and stay busy. I left counseling feeling dejected and even more alone—it was as though no one in the world understood what I was going through. I tried to keep a stiff upper lip and pretend that everything was okay because as Cretekos (1973) mentioned, "[The] ability to weather separation allows [a woman's] husband to fulfill his military obligation" (p. 36); I did not want my issues to be a distraction to my husband.

Months went by and eventually life became more manageable. I was a different person than before I met my husband, and I no longer prioritized my career as I had previously. I was so vulnerable, and it took tons of effort to wear what I clearly

recognized as a mask. I felt alone and isolated because no one related to or empathized with my situation; I felt marginalized. Life while my husband was overseas was nearly intolerable, and I, like "most wives, endorsed a pattern that appear[ed] consistent with general psychological distress" (Kelley & Jouriles, 2011, p. 460). The emotional plate I carried around daily always seemed full—of stress, anxiety, worry, doubt, sadness, pain, resentment, hurt, loneliness, grief, despair—but I learned to carry it as long as it all stayed in balance and nothing else was added to it. However, the moment the slightest thing happened to upset the plate's equilibrium, I was a disaster, with its entire contents spilled all over me. "Characteristics of the military lifestyle, including deployment, increase the stressors affecting service members and their families. These stressors place military family members at risk of developing depression" (Ahmadi & Green, 2011, p. 129). I was highly emotionally reactive, and people around me walked on eggshells, not sure what they were going to get from me moment to moment. Green et al. (2013) explained this common phenomenon.

> The effects of deployment on family systems are deeply contextualized within that family's experience suggesting that effects of deployment may best be understood in a framework of cumulative stress. This pile-up notion is consistent with evidence showing that cumulative stress assessment that includes both ongoing stressful life conditions (e.g., economic strain, marginalization) as well as specific salient events or factors (e.g., injuries, family ruptures, frightening events) aids in capturing the overall stress burden and, indirectly, the kind of load that individual's biological as well as psychosocial systems are bearing. (p. 755)

My experiences were not uncommon; in fact, according to researchers (Ahmadi & Green, 2011; Cretekos, 1973; Green et al., 2013; Kelley & Jouriles, 2011; Palmer, 2008), my feelings were altogether normal. However, I had no previous experience in this military world, and no one to normalize my feelings.

Then it happened: that one, life defining moment when everything changes and there is no going back. A superior at my job who I naively respected took advantage of my vulnerable condition and violated my trust, both emotionally and physically. The corporation protected my perpetrator, and I was left broken and alone. My career—my self-defining instrument—was obliterated along with every resource and support system I had built around it to give me a false semblance of wholeness. When my career world fell apart, I no longer knew who I was. I had nothing. I was broken to my very core, shattered completely, and violated in more ways than I could describe. To make matters worse, I was alone and felt I could not even fall back onto my deployed husband for fear that the news would influence his ability to perform his mission. "The military pressures wives not to communicate fully to their husbands but to withhold negative news while they are deployed" (Alt & Stone, 1990, p. 88).

The military's dependent. Needing to be held and made to feel secure, I turned to the military, certain they could help me. I sought assistance from a special unit on base, designed specifically for this purpose; however, because I was a dependent, they turned me away after I revealed the painful, shame-filled story of the traumatic incident. I wanted to fight back legally, but the legal office on base would not help me as a dependent. I could not even make an appointment at the mental health clinic on base with a psychiatrist for the psychological issues I was having because they could only make appointments for active duty members. As a dependent, I was not entitled to the same services as active duty military members. "The military views the woman's main job as supporting her husband and this military bureaucracy. She is to suffer in silence, and not rock the boat" (Alt & Stone, 1990, p. 59). I felt completely betrayed by the military. I was

cast off the base at a time when I needed the safety and community of the military. I felt discouraged, ashamed, marginalized, and insignificant; my depression and anxiety worsened. It was difficult asking for help, but to then get turned away only compounded my feelings of isolation and desperation. I felt like a disowned child, cast out upon the world, left to fend for myself without any idea of where to go or what to do.

The image of the U.S. military as parents creates a dual relationship for military wives, in which the military functions as both the maternal and paternal figures. The military simulates a container, holding its dependent children, the military wives, and providing them a safe environment with resources such as housing and other benefits. In Jungian terminology, *archetypes* are "an innate potential pattern of imagination, thought, or behavior that can be found among human beings in all times and places" (Stein, 2012, p. 233). This maternal archetype container parallels Stein's (2006) containment stage of individuation, resulting in a state of dependence that produces the archetypal child: the dependent military wives. Stein wrote,

> Nurturers are providers, helpers, sustainers. This attitude on the part of the nurturer, in turn, creates or inspires a corresponding attitude in the recipient of nurturance. Nurturers conjure children, and children attach themselves to nurturers. The recipient's attitude is one of radical dependence upon the perceived nurturer. This attitude may be quite conscious or largely unconscious. . . . Recipients often struggle mightily against their caregivers, not realizing how profound the real dependence actually is. ("The containment/nurturance stage of individuation," para. 8)

I felt like the military's child, completely dependent upon them, yet when I sought help, they cast me aside. The military was, in that moment, very archetypally paternal—demanding, imposing rules and expectations, and creating challenges such as unequal treatment, marginalization, isolation, instability, and uncertainty. This felt like a betrayal because I was already in the throes of depression, anxiety, grief, and trauma. "Everyone

associated with the military will deal repeatedly with these matters of authority and dependence versus independence" (Ridenour, 1984, p. 4), including military wives.

This sometimes maternal, other times paternal, treatment leaves women like me in a state of flux that increases anxiety because we never know what to expect from the military—am I supposed to be dependent or independent? As mentioned in Chapter II, Kelly (1995) poignantly described the irony of military wives' forced dependence on the military and their husbands through constant uprooting and isolation. Yet, the military then inevitably deploys their husbands, and expects the wives to be strong and maintain the family structure during their husbands' absence. All of this must affect military wives' ability to individuate because she remains stuck between the containment and adjusting stages. Stein wrote (2006),

> Prolongation of the first stage of individuation creates the specific problems and attitudes so characteristic of adolescents . . . impatience, rebelliousness, feelings of inferiority, being marginalized, and frustration. Ready to leave the world of childhood but not yet prepared for the tasks of adulthood, they are truly "betwixt and between." ("The containment/nurturance stage of individuation," para. 12)

Military wives, many of whom had successfully left the containment stage before marriage, likely experience frustration when caught back in the containment stage.

As a result of my trauma, I felt outcast from both the civilian world and the military world; I felt alone and marginalized. In LaGrone's (1978) research he noted that "some of the women interviewed said they felt little support from friends and relatives and none from the military. They were supposed to be good waiting wives and not to complain" (p. 1041). I physically made it through my ordeal, but psychologically I was a mess. I attempted to retain a shred of dignity through a lawsuit, and when I was the victor, I waited for the weight to lift from my chest, or the clouds to clear from my head,

or for my heart to feel whole—sadly, it never happened. The night terrors continued, the panic attacks worsened, and soon I was a meager shell of the person I had once been. Nothing could take away the pain of what had happened. I felt doomed, destined to live the remainder of my life in a post-traumatic hell—alone. The next 6 months were a blur. I was not living; I was barely surviving.

My new beginning. My husband came home from his 15-month overseas assignment, and, together, we headed to his next base assignment. Like the countless military wives before me, "it was wonderful to be together in our own home once more after . . . separation" (Marshall, 1947, p. 52). We quickly settled into our new home and I did not feel any resentment about leaving the old base behind; in fact, it was nice having a fresh start together as a family. However, I was a completely different person, and we had to get to know each other once again. Each family member adjusted their roles to accommodate my husband's return, but despite our numerous changes, we reintegrated smoothly. It felt amazing no longer having to carry that plate of emotions all alone; my husband was back beside me. "When there is lead in your heart and it suddenly disappears, joy rushes in with such force that it is almost unbearable" (p. 172).

I volunteered as a board member of the PTA at the school my children were attending on base. There, I met a whole group of military wives and was introduced for the first time to the real military world. "As a 'camp follower'—highly mobile, often lonely, sometimes bored—the military spouse tends to find companionship mostly among others of her kind" (Alt & Stone, 1990, p. 48). These women were remarkable! They were nothing I had imagined military wives to be; these were amazing women, full of countless skills, astonishing talents, and endless drive. They somehow managed to

balance their personal needs with the needs of their families and the military. They certainly devoted time to their families, but they also volunteered numerous hours on base and within the community, forming a military all their own, with a mission to provide support in any capacity possible. This reminded me of military wife Lydia Spencer Lane's (1987) statement, "I had 'gone for a soldier,' and a soldier I determined to be" (p. 22). This was a truly altruistic society and I jumped into these wives' world; it felt good to be me.

I also began my master's program at Pacifica Graduate Institute; the school was fascinating, and most importantly, it fit nicely with the military lifestyle, something that was now always in the forefront of my mind. One thing I learned from my first few years as a military wife was the only thing I could be certain of was uncertainty. Sadly, I could not depend on having my husband home the way a civilian wife could. Deployment orders could drop at any time, so I needed to enroll in a program flexible enough for me to care for my two young children while earning my master's degree—Pacifica offered this flexibility.

However, even at Pacifica, I soon recognized that the military lifestyle to which I had grown accustomed did not fit. Everyone seemed so progressive, completely independent from the constraints of relationships; those who were married rarely spoke of their partners, and no one ever referred to their spouses as their husbands or wives. I felt completely different from almost everyone around me. Being on the receiving end of the projections of a military wife was painful, and I felt it each time I identified as one and spoke of my husband or my role on base. I easily recognized these projections because I had recently held those same beliefs about military wives myself. This became fodder for

my personal therapy and material for my thesis, as I realized that even highly educated and sensitive people held misconceptions about military wives.

Looking inward. Fortunately, I found a personal therapist who understood the military lifestyle, having previously been a military wife herself. With my therapist's unconditional positive regard and empathy, I found a safe container to explore my persona and the purpose of the mask I wore throughout my life. I talked at length about my defenses and not letting others know the real me. On the surface I appeared hardened and bitter, able to withstand the harshest of worlds; yet on the inside, I was completely alone and scared. This concept of two polarizing halves kept coming up throughout my therapy: the real me and the mask, the logic and the emotion, the strong and the weak, the champion and the failure, the independent and the dependent. This theme of fragmentation encircled every aspect of my psyche, and I yearned to feel whole without knowing why. It was not until I began reading Jung's ideas about individuation that things began to make sense. Jungian analyst Donald Kalsched (2013) wrote about Jung's idea that individuation—"the idea of wholeness" (p. 165)—is the main thing humans search for in life. The fragmentation within the psyche is simply a defense mechanism to protect the psyche; part of the process of individuation is reintegrating those dissociated fragments back into consciousness, to make the individual whole.

I began to explore my inner world with purpose, applying class material to my personal therapy sessions. It was as though the coursework related to me at just the right time in my own personal journey. When I read Jungian analyst Marie-Louise von Franz (1979/1993), there was a familiarity to her writing, as though I had lived it. She described how shamans were selected for their work despite their protests, and had to be taken

away, “mutilated and reduced to a skeleton” (p. 275). It is from these basic skeletons that the “renewed shamans can be remade” (p. 275). I hardly consider myself a shaman, perhaps more of a wounded healer, yet something had been working in harmony with the universe guiding me toward the process of individuation. In the past, my career was too successful, the money was too good, and my schedule was too busy; I would never have had an opportunity or a reason to turn inward and work on myself. Much like the shamans, ripped away from their world and stripped down bare bones, a traumatic incident occurred, reducing me to a shell of my former being. Just as the shaman is eventually reborn into a spiritual healer, my trauma forced me to adjust my life’s path, which brought me here, where I have been afforded the privilege of working on my own soul. Reframing my trauma gave it important meaning and allowed me to move forward in my inner journey instead of remaining stuck in that post-traumatic hell I feared.

The outward pull of military life. Although I am just beginning to understand the individuation process, it is easy to be pulled back into the outside environment, to focus on the world around me instead of the world within me. Even as I write this thesis, I am in the throes of this tug-of-war, resulting in anxiety and stress. Six months ago, my husband received orders to go to Germany for an accompanied—meaning his family can join him—3-year tour. Our family leaves in November, just 6 months before I graduate from Pacifica and right in the middle of writing my thesis. To say I feel overwhelmed is an understatement, and the feedback I have received feels cold and dismissive. “Just get it done before you go” seems to be the most common suggestion I hear. Nowhere have I felt compassion or acknowledgement for the additional burden I must shoulder, and, although it has not been said, I feel a resounding echo of, “You knew what you were

getting yourself into when you married him." I feel unseen, unacknowledged, dismissed, and marginalized by a civilian society that does not understand the stressors I am struggling to balance. I feel incredibly alone.

Because I have not completed my degree program, I will fly back to California monthly to attend class. These are additional financial, physical, mental, and emotional stressors I did not consider when I enrolled in the master's program because I did not anticipate moving before finishing my degree. The internship hours I need before licensure will likely be on hold for the next 3 years while I reside in Germany. None of this is within my control. "Military life, with moves every three years or sooner, is not a life of easy transitions" (Alt & Stone, 1990, p. 12). Without a voice to express my frustration I feel marginalized, which affects my self-esteem, making me feel inferior and dependent on a massive institution that does not recognize me, or my individual needs. I feel as if all of my hard work has been for naught. I feel discouraged, saddened, and hopeless about my plight. Most importantly, however, these highly emotional reactions remove me from the space of being able to do my inner work, of being able to further my journey toward individuation.

As a mom, I also worry about my children and the effects this lifestyle has on them—this will be our third base in 5 years and our fifth move. I worry about my children's lack of concern over leaving friends and family behind. I worry they will fall behind in their education, having to miss 2 months of school while we attempt to find housing; the military does not have a house waiting for us and my children cannot enroll in school until we have a permanent address. With two young children, the anxiety of not

knowing something as basic as where we will live and how long we will be in limbo is a huge component of my stress. This, too, prevents me from focusing on my inner work.

Out of control. So how do I, a mere mortal, focus on my internal journey of self-discovery when the world around me is constantly recreating itself, beyond my control? When Kelly (1995) interviewed hundreds of military wives for her dissertation, she commented that there was "a sprinkle of denial, anxiety, confusion, anger, resentment, depression, and phases of acceptance and adaptation to the move . . . found somewhere in each of the descriptions" (pp. 8-9). There is no stability, nothing to count on. Stein (2006) emphasized the need to face, adjust, and conquer challenges of the external world in order to move beyond the adapting stage and into the centering stage of the individuation process. When considering my current situation, I cannot help but think of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, wherein the basic needs of an individual must be met before moving on to higher order needs (Lester, Hvezda, Sullivan, & Plourde, 1983, p. 83). Psychiatrist and professor Roger Walsh (2011) also associated Maslow's concept of self-actualization with Jung's internal drive for individuation, acknowledging that although not synonymous, there is an overlap in these concepts (p. 459).

According to psychology researchers David Lester, Judith Hvezda, Shannon Sullivan, and Roger Plourde (1983), there are five main stages of Maslow's hierarchy of needs: physiological, safety, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization (p. 83). Maslow's first four stages fall within Stein's (2006) containment and adapting stages, with Maslow's final stage of self-actualization corresponding to Stein's centering stage of individuation. Relating Maslow's hierarchy of needs with the challenges military wives face makes it easier to see where the individuation process may be stifled.

For military wives like me, the military lifestyle creates so much instability it seldom feels like our basic needs have been met. Or, if they have, it feels temporary, because the military can change anything, anytime. The idea of actually progressing to a high enough level to enter the self-actualization or centering stage, and stay in it, seems ludicrous because none of the other stages remain stable long enough to adequately support exploration into that final stage. Lester et al. (1983) found in their research that there was a strong correlation between feeling in control of one's life and feeling a high level of satisfaction with one's hierarchy of needs being met. Those participants who felt like others controlled their lives or that their lives were controlled by chance, had little satisfaction in their physiological, safety, belongingness, and esteem needs (p. 84). Therefore, perhaps the paramount locus hindering military wives from individuating could be simplified to a lack of control over their own lives.

Hollis (2000) proposed that the more overwhelming the world is, the higher the sense of powerlessness one feels. He wrote that people learn "in the face of the powerful Other out there, patterns of avoidance, aggression, or most likely, compliance with the demands of the environment. The more adaptation . . .[is] necessitated by environmental demands, the greater the degree of self-alienation" (p. 106). The more one is alienated from the self, the less the individual is capable of working inwardly. This may feel like an oversimplification, but it resonates deeply within me. It clicks. Identifying loss of control as a root cause impeding individuation in military wives provides therapists with a goal for reframing the concept of control, underscoring its importance in individuation.

Rebalancing. It is difficult to define what helped me reach a point in therapy where the chaos of the military lifestyle, despite its constant upheavals, ceased to be as

disruptive in my personal life. I am fortunate in that I have been given time for inner work, and I have chosen a profession that requires me to turn inward and explore my self. When I began this journey, I did not have enough ego strength to do the work myself. I needed the partnership within the therapeutic alliance to serve as a nurturing container and help me build my ego strength. Through exploration and psychoeducation using depth psychology skills, I was able to explore my persona and defenses, and eventually began to incorporate parts of my repressed unconscious. For me, it took a strong relationship with my therapist, someone who I knew understood what I had been through, not necessarily from her personal experience, but because she let me explore my own experience of being a military wife and the effects that role had in my life.

Ramifications for Failing to Individuate

Chapter II presented some theories regarding the ramifications for failing to individuate (Hollis, 2000; Schmidt, 2005; Stein, 2012; Walsh, 2011). However, it is important to relate this back into the world of military wives. As illustrated heuristically and hermeneutically, the lives of military wives are full of challenges that result in psychological complications such as depression, anxiety, and stress (Ahmadi & Green, 2011; Cretekos, 1973; Green et al.). For military wives who are further affected by the inability to individuate, a variety of ramifications will likely compound their psychological distress, resulting in lives complicated by neuroses (Hollis, 2000; Jung, 1928/1990), a lack of a sense of wholeness (Kalsched, 2013; Stein, 2012), reduced satisfaction in life, emotional pain, a distorted view of self (Walsh, 2011), inauthenticity (Jung, 1928/1990; Stein, 2006; Walsh, 2011), a sense of being unfulfilled in life, negativity, distrust, alienation (Walsh, 2011), and marginalization (Bradshaw, 1988;

Custer, 1890; Kunst & Sam, 2013; Marshall, 1947). The process of individuation is imperative to a healthy psyche and to achieving a meaningful life (Jung, 1928/1990; Schmidt, 2005; Singer, 1994; Stein, 2006, 2012; Walsh, 2011). Therefore, military wives must learn how to progress with their inward journey of individuation, despite the challenges and lack of control that the military lifestyle creates. This is the task presented to those therapists who willingly heed the call to assist these great American heroes.

Taking Back Control: The Archetype of Hestia

As I grew psychologically and learned about archetypes, I longed to identify an archetype for the military wife. However, I had a hard time pinpointing just one until I learned of Hestia. In simple Greek mythological terms, Hestia is the Goddess of the Hearth; but, she is so much more than that. To me, Hestia is the ultimate military wife archetype. According to Jungian analyst Jean Shinoda Bolen (2004), Hestia is best represented by the sacred fire that ancient homeowners brought with them from one home to the next, "linking old home with new, perhaps symbolizing continuity and relatedness, shared consciousness and common identity" (p. 108). Hestia, in this case, was not in control of where she went per say, but she herself embodied some degree of stability through the flames of constancy. This sacred flame, to me, is like military wives, the one common core element of the military family that moves from location to location, and makes the house a home.

As an archetype, Hestia provides a woman with a feeling of intactness and wholeness within herself because, according to Bolen (2004), Hestia does not focus on her external world, but rather on her internal experiences (p. 111). She seems to me to be within the individuation process of centering that Stein (2006) described. Bolen (2004)

wrote about how Hestia trusts her intuition and believes in what is personally meaningful, providing a sense of calmness, even in a world of chaos and disorder, a trait that is invaluable for military wives (p. 111). Hestia does not have attachments to people or to external items, she is whole within herself. Applied to military wives, the military lifestyle of frequent moves, separation from loved ones, dependence on others, and all of the stressors previously discussed, would not have the same effect on a woman possessing the Hestia archetype. Bolen wrote, "Hestia represents the Self, an intuitively known spiritual center of a woman's personality that gives meaning to her life" (p. 130). To me, Hestia is a perfect example of a military wife in the process of individuation and an excellent archetypal image for military wives to work with as they begin their individuation process.

Clinical Applications: Helping Military Wives Find the Fire Within

Based on my experiences as a military wife, as well as the experiences of other military wives I researched, I have learned that the challenges I encountered are common for many military wives. Just the knowledge that there is a commonality of my experience reassures me that I am not alone, and decreases my feelings of isolation and marginalization. This allows me to feel a sisterhood with the other military wives who have shared my journey. Unfortunately, military wives are conditioned to remain stoic and resilient instead of sharing their experiences openly. It would be helpful for therapists who are working with military wives to feel confident in normalizing the experiences these women may be having. Acknowledgment of military wives' unique challenges along with normalization and validation of emotions, especially over the loss of control in life, may help therapists align with military wives.

Equally important for working with military wives is allowing their personal stories to be heard and listening empathically for imagery to explore. Through the use of imagery, therapists may help military wives create meaning out of their experiences and provide connection with others who have had similar challenges. Skills such as reframing will assist therapists in providing military wives with another perspective from which to view their situations. Demonstrating understanding over their lack of control as the root cause of many of their psychological issues may help military wives feel both validated and understood.

Ultimately, providing military wives with the safe container of therapy that acts as a stable foundation from which to begin the inward journey is the greatest gift the therapist can provide these amazing American heroes. From this safe therapeutic space, these women may discover for themselves that although their outer world is unpredictable and outside of their control, they alone rule their true locus of control in the world. Perhaps through identifying with an archetype like Hestia, military wives may discover their inner world and achieve wholeness through individuation.

Chapter IV
Summary and Conclusions

Summary of the Literature Review and Heuristic Findings

The complex process of individuation is believed to be a critical component of achieving wholeness and authenticity in one's life (Jung, 1928/1990; Stein, 2012; Walsh, 2011). Stein (2006) defined three stages as vital to the process of individuation: containment, adapting, and centering. Each stage, he posited, must be successfully mastered, before moving into the next stage. The containment stage is the beginning phase of life, wherein the mother nurtures, protects, and nourishes her child. The adapting stage is when individuals are released to the more paternal world, where life is dictated by rules and social norms, and individuals develop personas to fit into the world around them. The third stage, the centering stage, is when individuals realize that the outside world does not fit their internal landscapes, and they begin questioning the collective beliefs once held as they become aware of their personas and search to find their authentic selves. This process of individuation helps reintegrate repressed aspects of the self, making individuals whole, thus removing neuroses and other psychological impairments that result from the repression of aspects of the self.

For some populations, adjusting to challenges in Stein's (2006) adapting stage may prove difficult if their lifestyle is particularly overwhelming. This thesis explored what psychological effects the military lifestyle has on military wives and how this lifestyle, along with the inherent expectations that accompany it, affects the individuation

process in this population. Maslow's hierarchy of needs—physiological, safety, belongingness, esteem and self-actualization—suggests that basic needs must be met before higher needs can be met, ultimately resulting in individuals turning inward for the process of self-actualization (Lester et al., 1983), a process similar to individuation (Walsh, 2011). However, for military wives like me, basic physiological needs are sometimes unmet. Safety, a higher order need, is often unmet for military wives, as they are frequently alone in unfamiliar places without the support of the military despite their dependence on it (Alt & Stone, 1990; Makowsky et al., 1988; Palmer, 2008), something I personally experienced while my husband was deployed. Feeling as sense of belonging may be one of the rarest commodities of all for military wives (Black, 1993; Makowsky et al., 1988; Palmer, 2008), who, as illustrated in both Chapters II and III, often feel marginalized and unwelcomed by both military and civilian cultures (Bradshaw, 1988; Custer, 1890; Kunst & Sam, 2013). With their spouses deployed, military wives are often completely alone (LaGrone, 1978; Kelly, 1995; Palmer, 2008) and because of frequent moves, are unable to establish roots within a community (Eubanks, 2013; Kelly, 1995; Marshall, 1947). Esteem is another hierarchical need that is greatly impacted by the military lifestyle, as explored throughout Chapters II and III. Esteem is compromised for military wives through the military's forced dependency of these women (Alt & Stone, 1990; Dobrofsky, 1976). The marginalization of military wives (Custer, 1890; Kunst & Sam, 2013), and the shame that comes as a result of the marginalization, also impacts their sense of esteem (Bradshaw, 1988; Custer, 1890; Kunst & Sam, 2013). The ensuing depression, anxiety, stress (Ahmadi & Scott, 2011; Cretekos, 1973; Green et al., 2013), and deployment stress (Everson et al. 2014; Verdeli et al., 2011) brought about by the

military lifestyle, which includes changes in family dynamics (LaGrone, 1978; Black, 1993) and frequent moves (Makowsky et al., 1988; Kelly, 1995; Palmer, 2008), often results in these women living in constant varying stages of grief (Black, 1993; Goldsworthy, 2005) while experiencing a loss of identity (Eubanks, 2013; Kelly, 1995; Powell, 2004) and control of their lives (Kunst & Sam, 2013; Makowsky et al., 1988; Marshall, 1947). Without steady achievement of these lower hierarchical needs, neither self-actualization nor individuation can progress because the individual remains stuck in the adapting stage, resulting in continued neuroses, and an inauthentic, unfulfilled life (Stein, 2006, 2012; Walsh, 2011).

Clinical Implications

My lived experience led me to the field of counseling psychology, where I have witnessed, through my personal therapy and my educational experiences, a lack of attention directed at military wives; it is for this very reason that I produced this thesis. My intention is to illuminate these unseen American heroes in the field of psychology so that their unique experiences might be understood, acknowledged, and validated by psychotherapists. Although I was fortunate to find a therapist who had previously been a military wife, it is not necessary for therapists to have lived the experience. Rather, it is essential that psychotherapists recognize and validate the differences between the lives of military and civilian wives, thus creating sensitivity to this population's struggles.

Through empathy and creating a strong therapeutic alliance, better informed clinicians may help decrease feelings of marginalization among military wives. Once the therapeutic relationship has been established, the therapist can work with the client to understand the experiences of being a military wife, uncovering the feelings and

meanings associated with these experiences to reduce dependency, marginalization, shame, grief, and loss of identity and control. Perhaps through reframing experiences, the underlying neuroses of depression, anxiety, and stress can be examined as re-integration of repressed aspects of the self occur as the client journeys into the individuation process.

Suggestions for Future Research

The research I conducted for this thesis opened up many new components of the military wife's experience for me. My research suggests that there is a need for more knowledge of the military lifestyle and its side effects, especially around the challenges it presents for a military wife's individuation process. There is much value in continuing to explore which treatment options would best serve this population of women, including illuminating what resources are currently available to military wives, which resources are actually utilized, and what barriers, if any, there are to treatment. Research on treatment methods, treatment resources, and barriers to treatments for military wives are so multidimensional they would likely require a standalone thesis project.

The concept of archetypes came up throughout my research. I found myself wanting to explore the archetypes of military wives, archetypes of dependents, archetypes of warriors, and archetypes of heroes. However, I had to exclude branching out into this area due to the constraints of this thesis project. There is value, especially from a depth perspective, in further researching military wives and their relationships with their husbands and the military from an archetypal perspective in order to gain a better understanding of this population. In addition, the idea of exploring the archetypes of the warrior/hero prompted a thought: Perhaps the marginalization of military wives occurs

because they carry the shadow projection of their husband's feelings of dependency and inadequacy, making military wives scapegoats to the warrior/hero archetypes.

Concluding Thoughts

Change has to begin somewhere, and although the people who read this thesis may be inspired to learn more about military wives and their challenges, until there is a shift within the field of counseling psychology that recognizes these unseen American heroes, I fear there will be little change. I am hopeful, however, that this thesis will inspire others to continue to research this population of women, develop more effective means to support them, and help them gain the recognition they deserve.

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