

# the multi-faceted **COST** of participation in combat (16)

The Bethlehem Gadfly Memorial Day, Serious Issues June 2, 2019

*(16th in a series of posts on Memorial Day)*

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Gadfly:

Only recently have people begun to think realistically about the multi-faceted **COST** of participation in combat — in the game of killing other human beings.

Setting aside considerations more commonly regarded as “humane,” this phenomenon has its actual economic effect, although — **SOMEHOW** — its quite real price (e.g., the budget-item of caring for **MORALLY INJURED** veterans in our medical facilities) has yet to figure in our spreadsheets when we count the cost of war.

Here are a couple of interesting items that start to introduce the topic of moral injury ~

**THE MORAL INJURY PROJECT** — Syracuse University

**MORAL INJURY** is the damage done to one’s conscience or moral compass when that person perpetrates, witnesses, or fails to prevent acts that transgress one’s own moral beliefs, values, or ethical codes of conduct.

Within the context of military service, particularly regarding the experience of war, “moral injury” refers to the lasting emotional, psychological, social, behavioral, and spiritual impacts of actions that violate a service member’s core moral values and behavioral expectations of self or others (Litz et al., 2009). Moral injury almost always pivots with the dimension of time: moral codes evolve alongside identities, and transitions inform perspectives that form new conclusions about old events.

> <http://moralinjuryproject.syr.edu/about-moral-injury/>

[M]y principal concern is to put before the public an understanding of the specific nature of catastrophic war experiences that not only cause lifelong disabling psychiatric symptoms but can ruin good character.

— Jonathan Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character* (Introduction”)

Addison