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TITLE: Spiritual Fitness in the Warfighter: A Marine's Perspective

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Executive Summary

Title: Spiritual Fitness in the Warfighter: A Marine's Perspective

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Thesis: Spiritual fitness should be emphasized as an important contributing component of the military quad-fold of wellness (physical, mental, social, and spiritual), be evaluated annually, and before deployment, and be an evaluated requirement in a commander's command climate survey.

Discussion: The Commandant of the Marine Corps in his Spiritual Fitness ALMARS acknowledged the importance of spiritual fitness in the balance of a healthy Marine. Spiritual fitness should be a salient factor necessary in a Marine warrior in order to build a healthy, prepared, and effective combat warfighter and contributing citizen to our nation. To make this argument this paper reviews literature on spiritual fitness and spirituality in the military, examines the spiritual fitness in units and or persons during combat, and looks at the current spiritual fitness models in the military and potential metrics for assessment. It is the intent of the author at the conclusion of this paper to provide recommendations to commanders to help implement spiritual fitness into their unit's battle rhythm, esprit de corps, and overall individual and collective health of their Marines.

Conclusion: Spiritual fitness is not a call to worship or a charge to become religious. It is a means where by a Marine can achieve a more holistic balance to better personal health and resiliency, and it is arguably just as important as physical, mental and social fitness to a Marine's total mind and body well-being. A spiritually fit Marine is able to evaluate, reflect, and process who he or she is in terms of identity and core values; able to discern life's purpose and meaning; control

emotions and behaviors; is open to new ideas provided through education and experience; and able to display the ability to show resilience and strength during challenges and hardships.¹ It is the responsibility of the Marine Corps to provide a spiritual fitness template that provides recommendations to a commander on how to implement and maintain spiritual fitness in their unit. It is the responsibility of the commander to implement a method, training standards, and evaluation tracker that intimately develops, prepares, and holds accountable the Marines under his or her charge in developing their spiritual fitness. There is not a “right” method currently; however, having dialogue and an open command climate where spiritual fitness is an accepted topic of conversation and training is a good first step. A Marine Corps filled to capacity with spiritually fit Marines is a stronger, more resilient and better armed force prepared for future challenges on and off the battlefield.

¹ Patrick Sweeney et al., “Spiritual Fitness: A Key Component of Total Force Fitness,” *Joint Force Quarterly* 66, no.3 (July 2012): 37

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DISCLAIMER

THE OPINIONS AND CONCLUSIONS EXPRESSED HEREIN ARE THOSE OF THE INDIVIDUAL STUDENT AUTHOR AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT THE VIEWS OF EITHER THE MARINE CORPS, COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE OR ANY OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCY. REFERENCES TO THIS STUDY SHOULD INCLUDE THE FOREGOING STATEMENT.

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AAR	After Action Review (Reports)
ALMAR	All Marine Corps Activities
ASP	Aspects of Spirituality
ASPIRES	Assessment of Spirituality and Religious Sentiments
BITS	Back in the Saddle training
BMMRS	Brief Multidimensional Measure of Religiousness/spirituality
BSS	Building Spiritual Strength
BVS	Belief and Vales Scale
COSC	Combat Operational Stress Control
CREDO	Chaplains Religious Enrichment Development Operations
CRM	Comprehensive Resiliency Module
CRS	Centrality of Religiosity Scale
CSF	Comprehensive Soldier Fitness
CSF2	Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness
DoD	Department of Defense
DoDD	Department of Defense Directive
DoDI	Department of Defense Instructions
DSES	Daily Spiritual Experience Scale
DUREL	Duke University Religion Index
ESI	Expressions of Spirituality
EXCEL	Excellence in Character, Ethics and Leadership
FACIT-SWB	Functional Assessment of Chronic Illness Therapy-Spiritual Well-being Scale
GAT	Global Assessment Tool
INSEL	Institute for National Security Ethics & Leadership

LINKS	Lifestyle, Insight, Networking, Knowledge and skills
MBSR	Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction
MCFIT	Marine Corps Fitness Improvement Tool
MCO	Marine Corps Order
MCWP	Marine Corps Warfighting Publication
MMFT	Mindfulness-Based Fitness Training
MMRS	Multidimensional Measure of Religiousness/Spirituality
MNFI	Multi-National Forces Iraq
NVA	North Vietnamese Army
OIF/OEF	Operations Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom
POW	Prisoner of War
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome
RBBQ	Religious Background and Behavior Questionnaire
RFIRSB	Royal Free Interview for Religious and Spiritual Beliefs
R/S	Religion/Spirituality
SAI	Spiritual Assessment Inventory
SCSRFQ	Santa Clara Strength of Religious Faith Questionnaire
SEI-R	Spiritual Experience Index-Revised
SFA	Spiritual Fitness Assessment
SHALOM	Spiritual Health and Life Orientation Measure
SIBS	Spirituality Involvement and Beliefs Scale
SIWB	Spirituality Index of Well-Being
SNAP	Spiritual Needs Assessment for Patients
SNI	Spiritual Needs Inventory
SPS	Spiritual Perspective Scale
SS	Spirituality Scale
SSRS	Spirituality Self-rating Scale
SSS	Spiritual Support Scale

SWBS	Spiritual Well-Being Scale
UMAPIT	Unit Marine Awareness and Prevention Integrated Training
TFF	Total Force Fitness
US	United States
USMC	United States Marine Corps
VA	Veterans Administration
WHOQOL-SRPB	World Health Organization Quality of Life-Spirituality, Religiosity and Personal Belief

Preface

As a Spiritual Warrior in the Army of the Lord, my faith is very strong and it is what I personally draw on during times of difficulties and challenges. My faith keeps me calm in the middle of a storm and steadfast in knowing that Jesus is working whatever the situation is out for my good. My faith is where I draw my resiliency from, however, I never called it being spiritually fit. I learned about spiritual fitness during a prayer breakfast where a panel of O6 and higher commanders and senior enlisted Marines were talking about leading while staying true to their faith. After taking copious notes and talking to a few of the panelists further about their personal walks, I literally was inspired to write this paper.

Many people are due thanks for the outcome of this paper. First and foremost, my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ who kept me sane when the challenges of completing this paper along with the other priorities from the multiple hats I wore during this period of time beckoned and called. I want to thank my two advisors, Dr. Rebecca Johnson and CDR Maurice Buford, for being the best coaches an inexperienced writer could ever have. Thank you both for mind-melding with me, providing pep talks when my vision was lost and overall truly believing in me when at times I did not believe in myself. I want to thank those senior officers, you know who you are, who provided a listening ear to some of my ideas, offered positive and constructive feedback, provided additional references for me to review and utilize at my convenience, and overall became wonderful prayer partners through this journey. I want to thank Dr. DiDesidero, MacKenzie, and Christi for their help in research and reserving books for me, searching electronic databases for anything that contained the words *spiritual* and *military*, proof-reading and editing my drafts, and for their general encouragement and listening ears. Last but not least, I want to thank my amazing family, my husband, and my two boys for loving me despite me not

being the perfect wife and mother. Thank you to my husband for praying for me, encouraging me when I felt overwhelmed with work and being the mighty wind beneath my wings that kick-started my motivation and faith in myself and my abilities many, many times over. I could not have done this without all of my prayer warriors whose prayers I felt constantly pushing me and encouraging me during this period. Thank you

True, physical weapons are indispensable, but in the final analysis it is the human spirit, the spiritual balance, the religious fervor, that wins the victory. It is not enough to fight....It is the spirit which we bring to the fight that decides the issue. The Soldier's heart, the soldier's spirit, the soldier's soul, are everything. Unless the soldier's soul sustains him, he cannot be relied upon and will fail himself and his country in the end.

-Gen George C. Marshall

Success in battle is not a function of how many show up, but who they are.

-Gen Robert H. Barrow

We train to prevent combat casualties and equipment casualties. We also need to train to prevent moral casualties.

-RADM Kibben

Introduction

As noted in the above three quotes, spiritual fitness is the true weapon on the battlefield and determination of victory. Marine Corps Warfighting Publication (MCWP) 6-11, *Leading Marines*, states that “Marine leaders take care of their Marines’ physical, mental, and spiritual needs.”² General Neller, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, in a 2016 All Marine Corps Activities (ALMAR) declared that, “Spiritual Fitness is just as important as physical, mental, and social fitness to the well-being of each Marine and the Corps as a whole.”³ General Neller continues and states, “Research indicates that spiritual fitness plays a key role in resiliency, in our ability to grow, develop, recover, heal and adapt. Regardless of individual philosophy or

² Headquarters US Marine Corps, *Leading Marines, MCWP 6-11* (Washington, DC: Headquarters US Marine Corps, 1 August 2014), 2-3.

³ Commandant of the Marine Corps, *Spiritual Fitness*, ALMAR 033/16, October 03, 2016, <http://www.marines.mil/News/Messages/ALMARS/Article/962784/spiritual-fitness/>.

beliefs, spiritual well-being makes us better warriors and people of character capable of making good choices on and off duty.”⁴

Spiritual fitness, it would seem, is an undeniably salient part of the total force fitness and well-being of the military member. However, unlike physical, mental, and social fitness, the inherent subjective nature of spirituality makes it extremely difficult to objectively and directly evaluate a service member’s spiritual fitness. Despite the ambiguity and provocative nature of the topic of spiritual fitness, it has been a huge part of warriors in the history of America and of different cultures since the beginning of time. Upon entering adulthood, Native American warriors underwent a vision quest or a rite of passage that entailed fasting and prayer requesting guidance from the spiritual realm in determining purpose of life and reasoning for existence. Samurais used meditation to prepare for battle and the mental angst over killing. The Spartan army, the most feared army in ancient times, viewed spiritual fitness as an essential element in their warrior society.⁵ Spiritual fitness was present in the servicemembers that fought, bled and died in the many battles and wars in our nation’s history for the protection of the freedoms and inalienable rights that American citizens hold dear. Spiritual fitness had its place in the great armies of the past and it still has its place in the military of today.

The Marine Corps is America’s expeditionary force in readiness, the 911 response force when the nation is least ready and is in need of a quick and lethal reaction solution to a threat to our national security. As an organization filled with elite warriors, the Marine Corps has an obligation to the American people to ensure its warfighters are holistically healthy and fit to fight

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ *National Geographic History Magazine*, “Bred for Battle-Understanding Ancient Sparta’s Military Machine” <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/archaeology-and-history/magazine/2016/11-12/sparta-military-greek-civilization>.

any battle when called upon. The Marine Corps' desired end state is to send forward into battle a fully trained, combat-fit unit ready to close with and destroy the enemy, a unit that is unequivocally prepared for the conditions and rigors of combat and the seamless ability to transition into "non-combat mode" civilian life post deployment. However, in recent years this has come at a price. In an era where conflict is no longer sporadic but a constant threat requiring a high readiness, performance, resilience, and recovery loop, now more than ever the impacts from not only physical, social, and mental injuries but also spiritual traumas require the military as a collective whole to address the holistic view of health and fitness in our warrior fighters to ensure sustained safety of the nation at large.⁶

This paper endeavors to confirm the general assertion that spiritual fitness makes a Marine a better warfighter. Spiritual fitness should continue to be viewed as a salient factor necessary in a Marine warrior in order to have a healthy, prepared, and effective combat warfighter and contributing citizen to our nation. As the framework of spiritual fitness is deeply-rooted and intertwined in the Marine Corps warfighting ethos, motto, and core values, it should be emphasized in the Marine Corps as an important contributing component of the military quad-fold of health wellness (physical, mental, social, and spiritual), be evaluated annually, and before deployment, and be an evaluated requirement in a commander's command climate survey. To make this argument, this paper reviews literature on spiritual fitness and spirituality in the military, examines the spiritual fitness in units and individuals during combat, and looks at the current spiritual fitness models in the military. It is the intent of the author at the conclusion of this paper to answer the following questions: Is a unit truly combat ready if it does not

⁶ Wayne B. Jonas, et al., "Total Force Fitness for the 21st Century: A New Paradigm," *Military Medicine* 175, no. 8 (August 2010), 1.

incorporate spiritual fitness in its pre, during and post deployment training? In order to be fully combat ready, can a unit truly cultivate spiritual fitness, similarly to physical and mental fitness? In addition, the author will attempt to provide commanders recommendations to help implement spiritual fitness into their unit's battle rhythm, esprit de corps and overall individual health of their Marines. Although it must be stated that there can be negative as well as positive qualities of spiritual fitness, the focus of this paper is on positive aspects of spiritual fitness in the total fitness of a Marine.

Definitions

To begin this literature review, some important terms must be defined: *spiritual fitness, fitness, human spirit, and spirituality*. Of the many different definitions of *spiritual fitness* in the research conducted, the one that is most appropriate and succinct is the following defined by Army Regulation 600-63: “the development of the personal qualities needed to sustain a person in times of stress, hardship, and tragedy. These qualities come from religious, philosophical, or human values and form the basis for character, disposition, decision making, and integrity.”⁷ The Commandant of the Marine Corps in his Spiritual Fitness ALMARS acknowledged the importance of spiritual fitness in the balance and resilience of a healthy Marine. A healthy person, defined in the wellness and holistic counseling model is one who “has balanced the essential dimensions: intellectual, emotional, physical, social, occupational, and spiritual.”⁸ In “On Total Force Fitness in War and Peace,” ADM Mullen defines *fitness* as, “being in a state of

⁷ Jeffrey S. Wilson, “The Spiritual as the Nexus for the Ethical and the Legal,” in *Aspects of Leadership: Ethics, Law, and Spirituality*, ed. Carroll Connelley and Paolo Tripodi (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University Press, 2012), 415.

⁸ William R. Sterner and Lisa R. Jackson-Cherry, “The Influence of Spirituality and Religion on Coping for Combat-Deployed Military Personnel,” *Counseling and Values* 60, no. 1 (April 2015): 51.

adaptation in balance with conditions at hand.”⁹ In “Why Total Force Fitness?,” the author states that fitness specifically in the military is displayed in four essential ways: “prevention, health and well-being, resilience, and optimal functioning”¹⁰ that must be maintainable throughout the servicemember’s time in the military and upon transition to the civilian sector. As Marines, fitness is synonymous with readiness. A fit Marine is a ready Marine. A ready Marine is a Marine that not only can be counted on to carry his or her weight but be trusted to carry their fellow brother or sister in whatever capacity required. Marines are trained and conditioned to adapt to any change in a situation or environment, and increased emphasis on the necessity to include spiritual fitness in the annual training readiness will ensure that spiritual fitness becomes ADM Mullen’s “state of balance with the condition at hand.”

Each spirit of an individual servicemember is important to the mission to fight our nation’s battles. In “Spiritual Fitness: A Key Component of Total Force Fitness,” the authors define *human spirit* as, “the essence and animating force of the individual...the deepest part of the self, which includes one’s core values and beliefs, identity, purpose in life, vision for creating a meaningful life, knowledge and truth about the world (perspective), autonomy to lead one’s life, connection with others, and the quest to realize potential.”¹¹ Spirit is linked to numerous qualities that are associated with morality such as transcendence, enlightenment, self-actualization, and purpose and meaning.¹² Studies have shown that a developed and healthy human spirit has numerous benefits including the ability to “accept the reality of a situation,

⁹ Michael Mullen, “On Total Force Fitness in War and Peace,” *Military Medicine* 175, no. 8 (August 2010).

¹⁰ Jonas, et al., *Military Medicine*, 1.

¹¹ Sweeney et al., *Joint Force Quarterly*, 36.

¹² Kenneth I. Pargament and Patrick J. Sweeney, “Building Spiritual Fitness in the Army: An Innovative Approach to a Vital Aspect of the Human Development,” *The American Psychologist* 66 (2011): 58, <https://search-proquest-com.lomc.idm.oclc.org/docview/850838121?accountid=14746>.

develop creative coping strategies, find meaning in trauma, maintain an optimistic view of the future, access their social support network, generate the motivation to persevere, grow from adversity, and mitigate serious psychological problems such as posttraumatic stress disorder.”¹³

General Lejeune talks about spirit this way:

The Spirit of man springs from divinity. It is the God-like quality in man and through its workings in his heart, a transformation is wrought; buoyancy, courage, determination, forgetfulness of self, and love for comrades, his country and the organization to which he belongs dominates his whole being. In after life, he remembers that period of unselfishness and exaltation. It becomes the most sacred part of his life and he glories in the hardship and suffering he endured, the dangers he faced, the difficulties he overcame, the sacrifices he made, and the courage he displayed. In these memories, and in these only, lie “the glory of war.”¹⁴

This development of the human spirit is the true essence of Marine Corps enlisted and officer training. This shaping of the human spirit begins in the recruit training depots at Parris Island and San Diego, and in the officer schools at Quantico. Follow-on schools and the operating fleet continue this transformation sustainment resulting in a Marine who desires challenges, further growth, meaningful personal contact, is guided to select right from wrong, provides courage and hope to their fellow Marine, is selfless, and lives their life with integrity and responsibility.¹⁵

The strength, resiliency, and spirit of the warrior is the catalyst to victory in war. It was General George Patton who said, “Wars may be fought with weapons, but they are won by men. It is the spirit of the men who follow and of the man who leads that gains the victory.”¹⁶

A myriad of emotions and reactions outside of an individual’s inner circle of shared faith and belief system may occur when the topic of spirituality arises in conversation, a sensitive

¹³ Pargament and Sweeney, *The American Psychologist*, 59.

¹⁴ John A. Lejeune, *The Reminiscences of a Marine* (Quantico: Marine Corps Association, 1990).

¹⁵ Sweeney et al., *Joint Force Quarterly*, 35.

¹⁶ Ibid.

topic but one that is very relevant in today's military. The Navy Chaplain Corps breaks down the definition of *spirituality* "as that which gives meaning and purpose in life. The term may be used more specifically to refer to the practice of a philosophy, religion, or way of living. Spirituality has two primary expressions: (1) Human expression, refers to the essential core of the individual. Includes activities that strengthen self and build healthy relationships. (2) Religious Expression, refers to the application of faith. Includes activities that connect one to the Divine, God, and the supernatural."¹⁷ Appendix A defines spiritual fitness and spirituality and offers a self-assessment tool to assist in determining one's spiritual fitness meter level. In "The Influence of Spirituality and Religion on Coping for Combat-Deployed Military Personnel," Sterner states that "the concept of spirituality integrates aspects of purpose, meaning, transcendence, and connectedness, which may include a higher power."¹⁸ Spirituality is ingrained in the foundational underpinning of the Corps. The Corps is a band of brothers that new Marines are attracted to every day. Being a part of something greater than oneself and the opportunity to show courage and selflessness towards one's brother especially in combat is what Marines live for. Marines are spiritual by the nature of the ties that hold the Corps together. Semper Fi.

Comprehensive Fitness

Senior leadership acknowledgment of the relevance of spiritual fitness to the holistic well-being of a servicemember is more important than ever with the increased role of religious ideology in the war on terrorism, the asymmetric complexity of combat, and the unpredictable

¹⁷ United States Navy Chaplain Corps, *Spiritual Fitness Guide* (United States Navy Chaplain Corps, Washington, DC, May 2, 2012), PowerPoint presentation.

¹⁸ Sterner and Jackson-Cherry, *Counseling and Values*, 49.

future the military faces with non-state actors and rising powers.¹⁹ The spiritual element of the human dimension is increasingly the center of attention because of the danger of moral and spiritual injury and the high probability that, if left untreated, spiritual injury will cause the servicemember further mental, behavioral, and physical illness.²⁰

Many veterans are returning from the war on terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan with physical, psychological, spiritual, and moral injuries that require a team effort to address. It takes the military leadership chain of command, chaplain, medical doctors, and health care providers to ensure the servicemember receives the necessary treatment to heal, recover, and still be effective for future service, if warranted, as well as become a productive member of society. In the Marine Corps, Marines take care of their own. If a Marine is in need of care, it is the responsibility of his or her leadership to ensure that the Marine receives the care he needs whether that's emotional, mental, physical, or spiritual in order to be effective when called upon. In "The First Freedom," the author states that a great military leader understands the "ultimate weapon of war is man--not just raw, untutored man, with all his passions and foibles unharnessed, but total man, emotionally stable, morally responsible, his patriotism buttressed with conviction."²¹ Military members deploy to multiple theatres in the execution of their duties. However, in this past fifteen years of high operational and deployment tempo, the service's most valuable resource, the ultimate weapon - the servicemember and their family - is breaking. Service members and their resiliency tank is reaching empty with the increasing demands and burdens resulting in mental health issues including extensive PTSD cases, injuries, family break-

¹⁹ David J. Hufford, Matthew J. Fritts, and Jeffrey E. Rhodes, "Spiritual Fitness," *Military Medicine* 175, no. 8 (August 2010): 84.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 73.

²¹ "The First Freedom," High School New Service Brief, no. 6 DoD Publication NAVSO P-2429.

ups, and rising suicide rates. Of the veterans returning from the war on terrorism, “20 percent suffer from diagnosable PTSD and approximately 40 percent report stress-related symptoms and dysfunction that significantly compromise reintegration into a full, productive life.”²² In a study conducted by the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, “30 percent of soldiers will return home from Iraq with emotional problems.”²³ In another study conducted by the Army surgeon general’s Mental Health Advisory Team, “27 percent of noncommissioned officers (a critically important group in combat tours) suffer posttraumatic stress symptoms after three or four deployments, compared to roughly 12 percent who exhibit those symptoms after one deployment and 19 percent after a second deployment.”²⁴

As a result of the increased documentation of the returning service member’s mental health, the total health of the military member has become an emerging concern for top military leadership. In 2009, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff hosted a workshop consisting of over 70 health care professionals and spiritual leaders brought together to tackle the problem of resiliency and total health optimization in the Department of Defense (DoD) in the current combat environment. What resulted was a concept of a Total Force Fitness (TFF), a preventative focused, individual-centric, and family-centered program consisting of eight domains, as Figure 1 illustrates: spiritual, nutritional, social, physical, behavioral, environmental, psychological, and medical that are considered integral in the holistic fitness of a servicemember.²⁵ Defined as “a state in which the individual, family, and organization can sustain optimal well-being and

²² Jonas, et al., *Military Medicine*: 6

²³ Nancy Sherman, *The Untold War: Inside the Hearts, Minds, and Souls of our Soldiers* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc, 2010), 173.

²⁴ *Ibid.*,174.

²⁵ Beverly C. Land, “Current Department of Defense Guidance for Total Force Fitness.” *Military Medicine* 175, no. 8 (August 2010): 3-5.

performance under all conditions; well-being encompasses physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”²⁶ TFF is a top-down approach to tackling comprehensively the health problems of the mind and body that plague the military after fifteen plus years combating the war on terrorism. TFF challenges the service member to become a better warfighter by evaluating their fitness paradigm and looking at the holistic fitness metric and adjusting appropriately where as needed with improved training and evaluation methods.



Figure 1. Total Force Fitness Domains

Source: Jonas, Wayne B. et al., Why Total Force Fitness? *Military Medicine* 175, no. 8 (August 2010): 10

The current Department of Defense (DoD) guidance provided on the total health of the active and reserve military force are codified in several DoDD Directives and Instructions (DoDI). These directives and instructions touch upon four of the eight identified fitness domains for the holistic fitness of the military member. Spiritual, environmental, nutritional and social

²⁶ Joan A Walter, et al, “Program Evaluation of Total Force Fitness Programs in the Military,” *Military Medicine* 175, no.8 (August 2010): 103.

fitness have not been addressed as of yet. “Force Health Protection,” DoDD 6200.04 instructs military members to be mentally and physically fit to ensure success of the mission. Additionally, it identifies the required cooperation of commanders, military health professionals, and the servicemember to ensure this physical and mental fitness is in the condition of readiness at all times. DoDD 1010.10, “Health Promotion and Disease/Injury Prevention” ensures the implementation of policies and responsibilities to health promotion and disease/injury prevention programs to influence the health and readiness of the force. “DoD Physical Fitness and Body Fat Programs Procedure,” DoDI 1308.3 mandates that the servicemember maintains proper physical fitness by eating nutrient enriched foods, exercising, and keeping the right fitness habits. DoDI, 6490.4, “Requirements for Mental Health Evaluations of Members of the Armed Forces” informs the military member of the procedures and protection of rights when referred to a mental or behavioral health treatment program. DoDI 6130.4, “Medical Standards for Appointment, Enlistment or Induction in the Armed Forces” touches upon the physical and psychological fitness of the service member and DoDI 6490.03, “Deployment Health” mandates the documentation of deployed personnel locations for identification of any occupational exposures to reduce risk of disease.²⁷ With these DoDD and DoDI as a foundation, the DoD will need to continue to adapt to the new conversations that are conducted regarding the Total Force Fitness of the military to ensure active participation in the process and active backing in the continued effort to provide and serve service members with excellent and current healthcare.

In 2008, in concern for soldiers’ deteriorating mental health, particularly PTSD, suicide, domestic violence, drug abuse and sexual assault after returning from multiple deployments to

²⁷ Land, *Military Medicine*, 3-5.

Iraq and Afghanistan, the Army decided to invest in a service-wide resiliency program entitled Comprehensive Soldier's Program (CSF).²⁸ Using a 5-point star to illustrate its five components, physical, social, emotional, family, and spiritual, CSF combined the physical fitness requirement with several psychological fitness to derive a holistic approach to tackling a soldier's collective health. The CSF was to be provided to every soldier, both active duty and reservist, officer and enlisted, totaling 1.1 million service members at any given time. In addition to the five aforementioned components, CSF includes three functional elements: the Global Assessment Tool (GAT), Comprehensive Resilience Modules (CRMs), and Master Resilience Training. These elements facilitate the growth of the human spirit in each soldier: "spiritual core, self-awareness, sense of agency, self-regulation, self-motivation, and social awareness."²⁹ A servicemember's human spirit is influenced by external factors such as inclusion in various social organizations including family, culture, faith, and school. The CSF program conceptualizes the soldier's spiritual core as the cornerstone of an individual's belief and value system, where purpose of life and most innermost desires of fulfillment are envisioned. Self-awareness is insight received after a person conducts reflection and introspection of one's purpose, identity, and truth. The GAT is a 105-item psychometric questionnaire that is conducted on a computer. About 60 percent of the items are pulled from previous validated measures and thus offer a sense of reliability. The CRMs, the second portion, offers multiple-choice questions to quiz the comprehension level of the soldier after watching a 20-minute online distance learning presentation. The Master Resilience Training is the third portion of the CSF where senior experienced soldiers are trained by psychologists and then they are able to provide

²⁸ Nicholas J. L. Brown, "A Critical Examination of the U.S. Army's Comprehensive Soldier Fitness Program," *The Winnower* (June 2015): 3.

²⁹ Pargament and Sweeney, *American Psychological Association*, 61.

training to their unit. In 2012 the CSF program was rebranded as “Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness” (CSF2) with the added emphasis of family support to the resiliency effort³⁰

The Marine Corps initiated in 2012 a two-prong attack to tackle overall fitness, which included spiritual, body, mind and social fitness in the Corps, entitled Marine Corps Fitness Improvement Tool (MCFIT). Per MARADMINS 270/12 Marine Corps Fitness Improvement Tool Phase 1, MCFIT phase 1 was a paper-based tool accessible to commanders and their Marines to be utilized by the commander as another tool to evaluate their overall unit fitness. Phase 2 included a web-based assessment with the incorporation of analysis and the ability to report processes into the MCFIT application. MCFIT was designed to be anonymous and assist Marines in determining their overall fitness health and provide resources for self-improvement if needed.³¹ It was determined that the contract was not necessary and was not renewed in 2016.

There are several programs that are internal and external to the Marine Corps that Marines can look to for assistance on developing spiritual fitness. The Chaplain Corps is extremely critical to the institution, especially during combat. Chaplains offers solace, prayer, a confidential listening ear, a sounding board, provide guidance and insight, lead religious services, and play a lead role as the commander’s principle advisor for the Marine Corps Family Team Building program. As commanders set out to implement spiritual fitness, their Chaplain should be a huge part of the dialogue. The Chaplains Religious Enrichment Development Operation (CREDO) is a Chaplain Corps owned program originally created to combat drugs is now one of the largest programs that promotes spiritual fitness with its military financed retreats

³⁰ Brown, *The Winnower*, 3.

³¹ Director, Marine and Family Programs Division. *Marine Corps Fitness Improvement Tool Phase 1*, MARADMINS 270/12, May 15, 2012. <http://www.marines.mil/News/Messages/Messages-Display/Article/887496/marine-corps-fitness-improvement-tool-phase-1>.

geared toward marriage enrichment and spiritual and individual growth and development. The Warrior Transition Program developed in 2002 after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, is a program that assists in the transition of warriors returning from combat back to their normal lives. As part of CREDO, the Warrior Transition program announced in ALMAR 032/03 was a requirement of Marines returning from OEF/OIF in order to set Marines up for successful re-integration with their families and society. It provides an outlet for Marines and Sailors to talk about their combat experiences with Chaplains while still in theatre prior to redeploying.³² Tun Tavern Fellowship, based in Quantico, Virginia, is a Christian based organization that offers numerous locations Corps-wide to Marines who want to fellowship together alongside a faith-based community and work on spiritual fitness development. These safe havens provide spiritual mentorship, Bible study, social activities, and food and drink to Marines interested in just starting out their walk with God or continued maturation of their Christian faith. Similarly, The Anchor, a café and gathering place located only in Oceanside, California, is another Christian outreach organization that is geared toward providing a safe haven for Marines to go and receive spiritual mentorship. Originally founded in 1951 to provide spiritual support and mentorship to Marines and Sailors deploying in support of the Korea War and later Vietnam, The Anchor is a permanent fixture outside the gates of Camp Pendleton available to those Marines seeking spiritual support and fellowship to assist in dealing with the ramifications of combat and life battles.³³ The Lifestyle, Insights, Networking, Knowledge and Skills (LINKS) program indirectly assists the spiritual fitness of the Marine by helping the spouse acclimate into the

³² Mary D. Karcher, "Our Warriors' Spirit: The Vital Role of Chaplain in the Marine Corps," *Leatherneck*, (July 2004): 40.

³³ Sara Bock, "Safe Havens: Religious Organizations Encourage, Promote Marines' Spiritual Fitness," *Leatherneck* 100, no. 4 (April 2017): 47. <http://www.jstor.org>.

Marine Corps and develop resiliency skills, thereby reducing the stress on the Marine and increasing the overall well-being.³⁴

Core Values

As stated in the thesis of this paper the foundation of spiritual fitness is present and intertwined in the Marine Corps ethos, motto, and core values. Marines belong to a family, an organization that cultivates its own spirituality and belief systems that teach a code of conduct and motto of *Semper Fidelis* to God, Corps, and country. Marines are indoctrinated early on in the Corps' core values, beliefs, morals and values, code of ethics, and warrior ethos. Honor, Courage, and Commitment, the Marine Corps core values, are drilled into Marines, enlisted and officers, during basic training and continued in deliberate sustainment of the transformation throughout a Marine's career. Adherence to these core values allow the American people to continue to call upon the Marine Corps in times of distress. The foundational spiritual fitness that is tied to the brotherhood of being a Marine creates a civilian Marine that is a contributing and upstanding moral member of society and a good ambassador of the Marine Corps. The Honor, Courage, and Commitment core values provide strength, courage, and integrity for Marines to draw on during ambiguous and dynamic moments during active service and when transitioned to a civilian Marine. These core values should complement an individual's cultivation of their own personal spiritual fitness. Numerous Medal of Honor recipients, prisoners of war, and fellow Marines returning from combat or imprisonment have lived this belief of others before self and have buttressed Honor, Courage and Commitment core values with their own spiritual fitness. According to Joseph Lamonde, former Chaplain of the Marine

³⁴ Herb Richardson, "Giving Navy Chaplains Corps Guidance," *Leatherneck*, May 1999, 49.

Corps, "...Spirituality as an individual, as a Marine, is built upon fundamental goodness... [Spirituality helps a Marine not to practice a particular faith] but become ethical citizens, filled with integrity, and capable of living up to our core values."³⁵ Chaplain Lamonde expounded upon the Corps' responsibility of not only making a recruit look like a Marine on the outside but also, "through continuous emphasis on core values, cohesion, and sustainment, the individual Marine discovers the fundamental goodness that exists within all of us. We inspire Marines to aspire to reach their greatest potential. They begin to feel and understand the spirituality of being a good person, of being a good Marine."³⁶ Direct engagement on the topic of Spiritual Fitness should be included in the Corps' entry level training curriculum in order to instill those attributes and characteristics early in the life of a Marine.

Leading Marines states that Major General Lejeune included spirituality as part of the trifactor of a Marine's morality, with the other two legs as physical and mental or professional. The physical aspect of morale is very familiar to the Marine and part of the genetic makeup of wearing the title Marine. Physical fitness is trained toward, included in a unit's esprit de corps battle rhythm, and evaluated with annual physical fitness tests. Mental fitness is the backbone of the Marine Corps boot camp experience. The combination of physical and mental fitness allows the Marine in combat to push past the bodily pain and discomfort and focus on smart decision-making required to accomplish the mission. The third leg, spiritual readiness, the resiliency in living the life of being a Marine and facing combat, is possessed by every Marine and is drawn

³⁵ Fred Carr Jr., "His Mission is to Help Marines Discover the Spirit That Sets Them Apart as Warriors of Peace," *Marines* (December 1998): 23.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

from when difficult situations and stressors are being faced.³⁷ Marine Corps Order (MCO) 1500.61 highlights spiritual fitness as included in the fitness functional area of the Marine leader development and the necessity of spiritual fitness to promote that well-rounded Marine able to sustain and recover during challenging moments.³⁸

The Marine Corps' core values create a Marine who respects the chain of command. As the senior officer in the Marine Corps, the Commandant carries a significant amount of responsibility to the American people in the recruitment, training, manning and equipping the Marine Corps in order to effectively fight the nation's battles. Commandants Charles C. Krulak and Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr, believed strongly in spiritual fitness. In *Marine Corps Generalship*, General Krulak stated,

My belief in the Living God played a significant role in my life as a Marine. I became a Christian while attending the U. S. Army Command and General Staff College and from that moment on, Christ played a major role in almost every decision I made...as a husband, father, and Marine officer. The more senior I became, the more time I spent on my knees. I did NOT pray for Chuck Krulak...I prayed for those in the Chain of Command, I prayed for wisdom in making decisions, I prayed for my Marines, and I prayed for the Marine Corps. I did not evangelize, but I was not afraid to let people know where I stood regarding my religion. While Commandant, I am sure that the vast majority of my Marines knew that I was a Christian. No major decision was made by me as Commandant that I did not pray about first. I am not ashamed about that fact. Knowing all of the living Commandants, I am convinced that each of them shared a deep sense of faith and that my beliefs were not unique."³⁹

General Shepherd believed strongly in his God and spiritual fitness. He stated,

I felt that we needed the help of the Almighty to carry us on in this war that we were fighting for Christianity. The fact that we had landed [on Guam during World War II] on Easter Sunday morning had somewhat of a spiritual effect, and I felt that it was only with

³⁷ Headquarters US Marine Corps, *Leading Marines, MCWP 6-11* (Washington, DC: Headquarters US Marine Corps, 1 August 2014), 2-8.

³⁸ Commandant of the Marine Corps, *Marine Leader Development*, MCO 1500.61, July 28, 2017, 3, www.marines.mil/Portals/59/Publications/MCO%201500.61%20CANX%20MCO%201500.58.pdf?ver=2017-07-28-142109-457.

³⁹ Edgar F. Puryear, Jr., *Marine Corps Generalship* (Washington, D.C: National Defense University Press, 2009), 453.

God's help that we were able to overcome the adversities with which we were faced. Being a religious man myself, I gave full support in every possible way to my chaplains. I attended services regularly...In battle is when men need spiritual help. In combat there is only one person who can help you and that is God.⁴⁰

It is important to acknowledge senior leadership's views on important topics, as they create directives and push down guidance for the organization to execute. Acknowledging, spiritual fitness from the senior most leader in the Corps ensures a powerful backing when trying to set up units' spiritual fitness programs.

Combat

A Marine's occupation is combat as a basically trained rifleman or a rifle platoon commander. As the nation's 911 force, combat is synonymous with the Marine Corps. Since the conception of the Marine Corps in 1775, Marines have fought in every clime and place ensuring the safety and security of our nation. In "Spiritual Fitness," the authors state that a *Joint Operating Environment* report forecasted, "that future integrated close combat will place increased demands on the physical, psychological, and spiritual domains of fitness."⁴¹ Conflict with adversaries who have a common religious faith that does not honor traditional means of warfighting and who hide behind religious ideologies will continue to challenge the resilience of American servicemembers. As an organization, it is incumbent to gird our men and women with the proper training to guard against and minimize mental health and behavioral issues caused by spiritual or moral trauma such as PTSD or depression.

Spiritual Fitness plays a significant role in ensuring the military member is combat ready and can positively cope with the negative aspects of combat. Service members and their families

⁴⁰ Ibid., 454.

⁴¹Hufford, Fritts, and Rhodes, *Military Medicine*, 73.

face increased stress and challenges preparing for a combat deployment. The military member may have stress induced by awaiting orders, fear and uncertainty of deploying to an unknown theatre, anxiety caused by family separation and anxiety caused by reintegration with family upon redeployment. The family of the servicemember may be dealing with the stress caused by a one-parent household, separation anxiety, and the apprehension caused by the redeployment of the spouse. On the other hand, there are some families for whose combat deployments do not create additional stress and they can cope with the uncertainties and stressors that deployments bring. However, the majority of service members return from war with mental health issues such as posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression, violence, and other issues that arise during the traumatic experience of reintegration into society and family roles.⁴² Military leaders, not only Chaplains, need to understand the relevance of spiritual fitness to a service member's well-being.

Leadership is a huge part of implementing and cultivating spiritual fitness in a unit, especially in combat. General Fields asserts in *Spiritual Leadership in the Battle Space: Who is in Charge? A Personal Essay* that it is the commander's duty, as it is in establishing good order and discipline in his or her unit, to take responsibility for the spiritual leadership development of his or her Marines in order to properly equip a Marine for the battle space.⁴³ Gen Fields shares in his personal essay how as the commanding officer of his unit during Operation Desert Storm,

⁴² Douglas Yeung and Margret T. Martin, *Spiritual Fitness and Resilience: A Review of Relevant Constructs, Measures, and Links to Well-Being*, RAND Project AIR FORCE Series on Resiliency (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2013)

https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR100/RR100/RAND_RR100.pdf.

⁴³ Arnold, Fields, "Spiritual Leadership in the Battle Space: Who is in Charge? A Personal Essay," In *Aspects of Leadership: Ethics, Law, and Spirituality*. Edited by Carroll Connelley and Paolo Tripodi, 455. Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University Press, 2012.

his Marines not only looked to him to provide that tactical leadership but also spiritual leadership which strengthened the unit's spiritual fitness. In his critique of his role as a commander of a unit in combat he reflects that if he had received spiritual leadership training he would have been prepared for the assumption of spiritual leader to his Marines and could have provided better support to them.⁴⁴

In a survey conducted by the United States Army Research Branch in the Information and Education Division of the War Department, enlisted Army soldiers returning from World War II shared that what enabled them to cope with the challenges of combat was faith and loyalty in each other and prayers for strength. Of the combat veterans World War II, 79 percent believed that their experiences had increased their faith in God. Of the 1, 433 enlisted infantrymen surveyed in 1945 in Italy, 84 percent of privates and 88 percent of noncommissioned officers reported that prayer was the coping mechanism that permitted them to deal with the horrors of combat. Of the company grade officers surveyed in the European and Pacific areas of responsibilities, 60 percent shared that prayer was the significant factor in getting them through challenging moments. Senior officers surveyed recalled that prayer was an immeasurable factor in shouldering the burdens of command, leadership, and decision-making. In these surveys, prayer alone was not an indicator of faith or religion, however, it may have been utilized as a coping mechanism out of psychological self-defense from the tragedies seen in combat.⁴⁵

In a sampling of Vietnam veterans, a study conducted revealed “a positive connection between spiritual conflicts among combat exposure and depression.”⁴⁶ Another study conducted

⁴⁴ Ibid., 468-469.

⁴⁵ John Brinsfield and Peter A. Baktis, “The human, spiritual, ethical dimensions of leadership in preparation for combat,” *Fires* (July-August 2011):62. sill-www.army.mil/firesbulletin/.

⁴⁶ Sterner and Jackson-Cherry, *Counseling and Values* 60, 50.

with 24,000 active-duty servicemembers reflected that servicemember's who had an increased level of spiritual and religious fitness demonstrated positive reactions toward symptoms associated with depression. Additionally, the results showed that servicemembers whose spiritual levels were low demonstrated mental health concerns of different levels. Furthermore, moderate combat exposed servicemembers, in the same study, whose spiritual levels were medium and low correlated positively with symptoms of depression. These same servicemembers with moderate combat exposure and moderate spiritual levels were predicted to demonstrate a higher risk for symptoms of PTSD.⁴⁷

Another Army survey, Excellence in Character, Ethics and Leadership (EXCEL) provided the largest sample of soldiers in a combat zone assessed for their spirituality. It was conducted in 2006 on soldiers assigned to Multi-National Forces-Iraq (MNF-I) and looked at how spirituality affected the ethics and resiliency of soldiers in a combat zone. The EXCEL survey was originally aimed at a sample size of 6,000, including Marines; however, due to logistical considerations, findings only reflect data on 1, 250 soldiers.⁴⁸ Spirituality was just one of the topics looked at during this survey; others included leadership, physical and emotional well-being, values and behavior, and ethical attitudes. The survey was divided into four versions: "version A (which featured just the core questions), version B (which featured core questions plus spirituality questions), version A Leader (which featured core questions and was given to leaders), and version B Leader (which featured core questions plus spirituality questions

⁴⁷ Ibid., 51.

⁴⁸ EXCEL surveys were paper and pencil and were collected from 2, 572 soldiers deployed to Iraq from 20 June 2009 to 24 July 2009. Version B and version B Leader were the focus groups on the survey and 1, 366 completed both versions which 1, 263 provided valid responses.

and was given to leaders)”⁴⁹ Appendix A provides the fifteen questions related to spirituality. The fifteen items measured spirituality via three dimensions: “spiritual worldview, prayer/personal piety, and connection to a faith community.”⁵⁰ The three factors of spirituality that emerged from the survey that when present in a warfighter correlates to positive characteristics and the ability to shield some physical and psychological hazards included the need to be connected to other people, participate in religious activities, and have a hopeful outlook in life. These three factors fall under spiritual fitness and reinforce the positive dividends associated with being spiritually fit. Feeling needed ties into the pride the Marine Corps has in its small size, esprit de corps, and “no Marine left behind” philosophy. Additionally, feeling needed on a deeper level is about the connection to the entire human race and appreciating that the enemy is also a human being and thus should be treated with respect as you would your brother or sister Marine. This higher connection to humanity may minimize mistreatment of POW, abuse of the enemy and the killing of innocent civilians. Actively participating in religious activities and functions provide an outlet of expressing a servicemember’s spirituality. Prayer, corporate worship, and chapel attendance are some identified religious activities that can make a warfighter more resilient and stronger in their personal ethics and values. When a service member has a hopeful outlook on life despite their environment, it shows resiliency. Additionally, having a hopeful outlook in a combat zone could mean that the guilt of taking another human life in battle has been addressed and properly processed by that servicemember and thus enabling the servicemember to move from that

⁴⁹ Franklin Eric Wester, *Soldier Spirituality in a Combat Zone: Preliminary Findings About Correlations with Ethics and Resiliency*, Institute for National Security Ethics and Leadership (Washington, DC: National Defense University, 2009).

⁵⁰Ibid.

unnatural action into more positive thinking.⁵¹ Of note in the EXCEL survey was the emphasis that the soldiers placed on the belief in the benefits of prayer - personal prayers and prayers provided by family members and friends – and the practice of prayer. Acknowledgement of these two facts about prayer decreases the provocativeness of spiritual fitness and provides justification for increased encouragement of spiritual fitness growth and practice

In the correlation table below, Table 1, spirituality is shown to have a high correlation with a warfighter’s positive affectivity, indicating a possible strong link between awareness of spirituality and psychological health. A spiritually fit Marine has positive affectivity and has a higher chance in mitigating risks associated with depression and suicide.

Variable \ Spirituality Scale	Connection to Others	Religious Identification	Hopeful Outlook	Total Spirituality Score
Positive Affectivity	.339**	.321**	.424**	.442**
Negative Affectivity	-.157**	-.084**	-.215**	-.185**

Notes: N = 1107-1220. . * p <.05. ** p <.01.

Table 1. Spirituality Correlation with Emotional Resilience

Source: Wester, Franklin Eric. *Soldier Spirituality in a Combat Zone: Preliminary Findings About Correlations with Ethics and Resiliency*. Washington, DC Institute for National Security Ethics and Leadership, National Defense University.

⁵¹ Ibid.

Similarly, Table 2 shows the inverse relationship between a soldier’s spirituality and physical health. As stated previously, spiritual fitness in the Marine Corps is now on par with the importance of having good physical fitness. Physical fitness is a large part of maintaining resiliency in the face of uncertainty and challenges.

Variable \ Spirituality Scale	Connection to Others	Religious Identification	Hopeful Outlook	Total Spirituality Score
Somatic Complaints	-.140**	-.064*	-.154**	-.146**
Fatigue	-.162**	-.124**	-.160**	-.183**

Notes: N = 1107-1220. * p <.05. ** p <.01.

Table 2. Spirituality correlation with Physical Resilience

Source: Wester, Franklin Eric. *Soldier Spirituality in a Combat Zone: Preliminary Findings About Correlations with Ethics and Resiliency*. Washington, DC Institute for National Security Ethics and Leadership, National Defense University.

In *What it is like to go to War*, the author writes, “the violence of combat assaults psyches, confuses ethics, and tests souls.”⁵² A warfighter in combat plays the role of God when he takes the life of another human being. Danger to himself, his family, and the institution can be had if he is not properly prepared for the burdens of killing and the impact it can have on his mental health, both psychological and spiritual.⁵³ CAPT Eli Takesian, a Chaplain who served two tours in Vietnam with Marines, understood the importance Marines placed on spirituality during combat:

In combat, a confrontation between life and death, a moment of truth, a Marine presents no facades when he worships. He offers God no argument, no defense, only himself, as he is humbly. He is acquainted with death: Christ’s his buddy’s, that of the NVA [North Vietnamese Army] he’s killed, even the possibility of his own. Pontius Pilate, Roman

⁵² Karl Marlantes, *What it is Like to go to War* (New York: Grove Press, 2011), xi.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 1.

soldier, penitent thief, Jesus' disciples, Christ himself: he identifies with them all. When receiving bread and wine, he knows precisely what he tastes: death and life, judgement and hope, bitterness and salvation.⁵⁴

William Manchester, a Marine who served in World War II described his survival in the ascent of Sugar Loaf on Okinawa where 7, 547 died in his book, *Goodbye Darkness: A Memoir of the Pacific War*. During a moment of revelation as to why he returned to battle against orders after suffering an injury as, "...It was an act of love. Those men on the line were my family, my home. They were closer to me than I can say, closer than any friends had been or ever would be....Men, I now know, do not fight for flag or country, for the Marine Corps or glory or any other abstraction. They fight for one another."⁵⁵ Manchester showed spiritual fitness in this passage by his belief in a higher calling of his purpose on the battlefield. He was there because of his love for his fellow Marine, the brotherhood of the Corps, the cohesiveness and survivability of the Marines in his unit, the selfless love and willingness to sacrifice his life for others and for greater cause.

Iwo Jima, a little island in the Pacific, provided the bloodiest battle in World War II in the fight against the Japanese. Photographer Joseph Rosenthal captured the American flag raising on the top of Mount Suribachi in a photograph that has epitomized the spirit of teamwork, brotherhood, tragedy, and triumph. Over 76,000 Marines of the 3d, 4th, and 5th Marine Divisions captured that island, yet 5, 931 Americans died and 17, 272 more were wounded.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ CAPT Eli Takesian, "Ministering to Marines in a Sustained Combat Environment," *Marine Corps Gazette* 85, no. 2 (February 2001): 56.

⁵⁵ William Manchester, *Goodbye Darkness: A Memoir of the Pacific War* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1979), 62, quoted in John Brinsfield and Peter A. Baktis, "The human, spiritual, ethical dimensions of leadership in preparation for combat," *Fires* (July-August 2011):62.sill-www.army.mil/firesbulletin.

⁵⁶ Donald F. Crosby, "Through the Gates of Hell," *Company: A Magazine of the American Jesuits* 7 no.2 (Winter 1989).

During the Vietnam War, Admiral Stockdale, a United States Navy pilot became a prisoner of war (POW) in North Vietnam's Hoa Lo Prison – the infamous “Hanoi Hilton”- for seven and a half years. Admiral Stockdale not only displayed stoicism during his imprisonment, to which he credits the teachings of stoicist, Epictetus as providing him the strength and self-discipline to survive but also spiritual fitness. His personal faith sustained him during his trying time in Hanoi Hilton and allowed him to not only survive during multiple torture sessions but also motivate and sustain fellow American prisoners. Admiral Stockdale remarked during an interview, “I never lost faith in the end of the story. I never doubted not only that I would get out, but also that I would prevail in the end and turn the experience into the defining event of my life, which, in retrospect, I would not trade....You must never confuse faith that you will prevail in the end – which you can never afford to lose – with the discipline to confront the most brutal facts of your current reality, whatever they might be.”⁵⁷ Admiral Stockdale received the Medal of Honor for his extraordinary bravery, courage, valor, and leadership as a POW.

Coming home fit after combat is an important part of developing spiritual fitness. A spiritual fit Marine is resilient and battle hardened, capable of processing combat and noncombat activities. Edward Tick states, that the final step in the long road home for the veteran is completing this initiation as a warrior. A veteran does not become a warrior merely for having gone to war. A veteran becomes a warrior when he learns to carry his war skills and his vision in mature ways. He becomes a warrior when he has been set right with life again.”⁵⁸

⁵⁷Narasimha Chari, “The Stockdale Paradox,” *VenChar*, last modified January 15, 2005, http://www.venchar.com/2005/01/the_stockdale_p.html.

⁵⁸ Edward Tick, *War and the Soul: Healing our Nation's Veterans from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder*, (Wheaton IL: Quest Books, 2005), 251, quoted in Franklin Eric Wester, *Soldier Spirituality in a Combat Zone: Preliminary Findings About Correlations with Ethics and Resiliency*, Institute for National Security Ethics and Leadership (Washington, DC: National Defense University), 2009.

General Vandegrift, former Commandant of the Marine Corps, commanded 1st Marine Division in the Battle of Guadalcanal. He stated, “the percentage of men who devoted much time to religion might not make a very impressive showing. The average Marine, or Soldier, or sailor, is not demonstrative about his religion, any more than he is about his patriotism. But I do sincerely believe one thing; every man on Guadalcanal came to sense a ‘Power’ above himself. There was a reality there greater than any human force. It is literally true-there are not atheists in foxholes-religion is precious under fire.”⁵⁹

Spiritual fitness in combat is arguably easier to see, more tangible than in garrison. A warfighter does not have to identify with a particular religion to have spiritual fitness. Spiritual fitness provides the qualities for a Marine to cope during challenging times. These qualities can be religious or not. They should be identified, acknowledged, and developed early so in times of strife and uncertainty, the well for drawing is already there to be drawn from and utilized as support when dealing with friction.

A veteran of Operation Desert Storm and former commanding general of U. S. Army Forces Command, General John Hendrix stated, “Spirituality is an individual matter. We must not cross the line between church and state. But in general, spiritual fitness is important to any organization. Spiritual fitness helps shape and mold our character. Spiritual fitness provides each of us with the personal qualities which enable us to withstand difficulties and hardship. When properly exercised, spiritual fitness enhances individual pride in our unit.”⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Brinsfield and Baktis, *Fires*, 62.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

Spiritual Fitness can increase a service member's readiness and improve resilience and convalescence after sustaining a combat-related injury. In "Spiritual Fitness," the author states that, "early identification of spiritual risk factors in individuals can minimize future dysfunction and negative impact on the unit. Four categories of operationally relevant outcomes include: (1) resilience and recovery from deployment-and combat-related trauma, (2) optimized prevention and/or resolution of moral injury, (3) cohesive unit climate supportive of peak performance, and (4) mature and engaged spirituality that fosters finding meaning/purpose and effective coping."⁶¹ Appendix C describes relevant variables and metrics associated with the above four operational outcomes. In addition to the previous mentioned benefits, Table I reveals further general benefits of spirituality as evidenced in the *2001 Handbook of Religion and Health*, a comprehensive collection of 1,200 peer-reviewed research studies dating from 1800s to 2010 that analyzed spiritual and religious components of various religious groups. The collective studies showed that "at least two thirds of these studies report that religious/spiritual people experience more positive emotions (well-being, happiness, life satisfaction), fewer emotional disorders (depression, anxiety, suicide, substance abuse), more social connections (social support, marital stability, social capital), and live healthier lifestyles (more exercise, better diet, less risky sexual activity, less cigarette smoking, more disease screening, better compliance with treatment)."⁶² Appendix D provides evidentiary support of the benefits of each component of psychospiritual fitness and recommended metrics for assessment.

⁶¹ Hufford, Fritts, and Rhodes, *Military Medicine*, 78.

⁶²Brian Koyn, "Religious Participation: The Missing Link in the Ready and Resilient Campaign," *Military Review* 95, no.5 (September/October 2015): 121. <https://search-proquest.com.lomc.idm.oclc.org/docview/1709827646?accountid=14746>.

Benefit	Supporting Evidence
Hope and Optimism	*"80% or more the studies reported a positive association between religiousness and greater hope or optimism..." *No published studies have shown the opposite (p.215)
Less Depression	*Most studies investigating religion-depression association have found religious associated with less depression. *Of eight clinical trials located, five showed that religious intervention increased the spread of recovery from depression. (p. 216)
Fewer Suicides	*"In studies that correlated suicide with some measures of religious belief or activity (i.e. religiousness) the vast majority found an inverse relationship between religious and suicide." (p. 217)
Less Anxiety	*"The majority of studies found less anxiety and fear among the religiously involved including 80% of the five perspectives cohort studies and 86% of the clinical trials." (p.217)
Less Alcohol and Drug Abuse	*76 of 86 studies (88%) "reported significantly lower alcohol use or abuse among more religious subjects" and none reported the opposite. *48 of 52 studies "found significantly less drug abuse among the more religious..." (p.218) *Significantly for the military most studies of the alcohol-drug-abuse association with religiousness have been conducted among adolescents and college students.
Greater Marital Stability	*"Divorce and separation are significant predictors of poor mental health and suicide (Rossow 1993)..." (p. 219) *More than 90% of studies show greater marital happiness, lower rates of divorce and separation, and greater family stability among the more religious." (p.220) *Clearly divorce and separation are of major importance to the military.
Less Risky Behavior	*Considering a variety of risky from smoking to sexual promiscuity to the wearing of seat belts behaviors, the Handbook reports a general association between religiousness and less risk taking. *It should be noted that avoidance of some risks is more strongly associated with some spiritual traditions than others (e. g., Mormons are much less likely to smoke or drink alcohol because of denomination teaching). (pp. 358-381)
Longevity	*Considering a variety of causes, "When the religious variable was operationalized as religiousness 75% (n=39) of the studies found that those who were more religious survived longer..."(p. 386)

Table 3. Spirituality Benefits and Supporting Evidence

Source: Hufford, David J et al. Spiritual Fitness, *Military Medicine* 175 no. 8 (August 2010)

In *A Table in the Presence* written by LT. Carey H. Cash, Chaplain to the Marines and Sailors of 1st Battalion 5th Marine Regiment (1/5), and attached Army and Special Forces (SF) units during 1/5's deployment to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, documents the spiritual fitness, growth, and development of the men in his unit before and during the Spring of 2003, observing several 'first' events as the first ground combat unit to cross the line of departure in Iraq and was the first to have a service member killed in action by enemy gunfire. During the unit's preparation to cross the line of departure, Chaplain Cash states that his unit spent forty days in Kuwait spiritually preparing for battle, soul-searching, and conducting

personal inventory. He states that there was a “hunger for God and a hunger for spiritual resolution.”⁶³

In a 2002 meeting that Major General Jim Mattis, 1st Marine Division Commanding General had with his battalion commanders, he advised his commanders to ensure their Marines were fit, not only physically and mentally, but also spiritually. Chaplain Cash paraphrased him as saying, “Ensure that each one of your men has made peace with his God and is ready, if called upon, to face the dangers of battle, and his own mortality.”⁶⁴

Metrics

There are numerous metrics and assessments that have been used to evaluate religiosity and spirituality as they relate to spiritual fitness. Appendix C provides a list of 35 assessments that are military friendly and do not require specialized training to conduct. Each of the assessments were compared for (1) completion time of the assessment with the threshold being 15 minutes, (2) if the assessment required another person to conduct, (3) target population of the assessment, (4) if the behavioral, affective, and/or cognitive aspects of spiritual fitness were assessed, (5) psychometrics of the assessment [testing the reliability of the scaled measurement], and (6) if there was any associated cost of the assessment.⁶⁵ Of the 35 assessments, the most widely used is the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWBS). The SWBS measures spiritual well-being and quality of life using two dimensions, Religious Well-Being (RWB), which focuses on a person’s relationship with God and Existential Well-Being (EWB), which focuses on a

⁶³ Carey, Cash, *A Table in the Presence* (Nashville: W Publishing Group, 2004), 58.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 91

⁶⁵ Suzette Brémault, et al, “Measures of spirituality for use in military contexts: a scoping review,” *Journal of Military, Veteran and Family Health* 2 no. 1 (2016):59, <http://jmvfh.utpjournals.pess/doi/pdf/10.3138/jmvfh.3627>.

person's view of the purpose of life and life's satisfaction.⁶⁶ Appendix D provides some details on each of the 35 assessments in the way of characteristics and psychometric properties.

The Wellness Inventory, created in 1975 by Dr. John W. Travis is a 120 item online and interactive assessment that sets out to measure the "whole person" in 12 areas: physical, emotional, spiritual, behavioral, nutritional, and social well-being. It was designed to assist individuals in gaining insight into their health utilizing a five-step process: assessment completion, receipt of assessment scores, identification of improvement areas with incentive to change, and creation of a personal wellness plan of action with recommendations of online resources and tools designed to motivate implementation of identified areas of growth. The Wellness Inventory is a comprehensive assessment as well as an educational tool that can be tracked and retaken every six months to help an individual monitor their total force fitness.⁶⁷

The Global Assessment Tool (GAT) utilized by the United States Army as a component in their Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness (CSF2) program is a computer-based interactive assessment tool that measures fitness in four domains: social, family, spiritual, and emotional. Created in 2009, the GAT based off the principles of positive psychology was developed by the US Army research psychologists with assistance from researchers and psychologists at the University of Michigan to build resilience and enhance performance, and readiness in their soldiers. Similar to the Wellness Inventory, individuals receive immediate

⁶⁶ David R. Brown et al., "Spirituality Assessments: Limitations and Recommendations" VISTAS Online https://www.counseling.org/docs/default-source/vistas/vistas_2007_brown.pdf?sfvrsn=ff811fbc_11.

⁶⁷ Kimberly M. Firth and Katherine Smith, "A Survey of Multidimensional Health and Fitness Indexes," *Military Medicine* 175, no. 8 (August 2010): 112-113.

feedback in those four areas in addition to a personal assessment of strengths and improvement areas with recommendation on how to address deficiencies.⁶⁸

Mind-body techniques such as those mostly practiced in Eastern cultures have spiritual practices including “breathing exercises, positive mental imagery, systematic relaxation, prayer, meditation, yoga, and creative outlets such as art, music, or journaling.”⁶⁹ Mind-body skills can be included into unit’s pre-deployment training anywhere with minimal equipment to “improve functioning and performance, enhance concentration and focus, and prevent and treat a variety of stress-related diseases.”⁷⁰

Mindfulness-based meditation, originating from a Buddhist practice, but offered worldwide in a non-religious format, is a spiritual practice that can promote tolerance by nurturing the previously mentioned characteristics that has demonstrated a plethora of therapeutic benefits for wellness and performance enhancement.⁷¹ Mindfulness training is developing the ability to objectively analyze one’s own thoughts and feelings. With individual practice and group instruction, service members are able to “respond to situations and make decisions from a reflective and objective mindset, rather than out of fear, habit, or emotionally charged reactivity.”⁷² Since 1985, mindfulness training has been used in the United States military and has also been proven to “enhance pre-combat negotiations and national security decision-making by cultivating cultural, situational, and self-awareness and introduce a “choice point” between

⁶⁸ Ibid., 114-115.

⁶⁹ Hufford, Fritts, and Rhodes, *Military Medicine*: 76.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid., 75.

⁷² Ibid., 77.

stimuli and habitual, unconscious and emotional reactions, thereby enabling decisions that are more supportive of mission goals.”⁷³

A type of mindfulness-based meditation is mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) which has demonstrated in training programs to reduce the negative effects of stress. MBSR is offered to veterans of Operations Iraq Freedom and Enduring Freedom (OIF/OEF) suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) at several Veterans Administration (VA) hospitals. The Mindfulness-Based Mind Fitness Training (MMFT) program designed specifically to a unit’s pre-deployment training cycle includes, “evidence-based techniques and exercises for enhancing mental agility, emotion regulation, attention, and situational awareness.”⁷⁴ The MMFT program, initially tested at Marine Reserve units has shown resilience and mental fitness against stressors is increased.⁷⁵

Recommendations

Spirituality, under the right leadership and guidance, can prove to be an inspiration to become a better Marine as well as a force-multiplier for unit cohesion, fidelity to mission, resiliency maturity, improved force readiness and protection, and a celebration of diversity.⁷⁶ It

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 75.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Hufford, Fritts, and Rhodes, *Military Medicine*, 76.

is my opinion that spiritual fitness does indeed help a Marine become a better warrior and, as such offers a higher quality return on investment as a civilian Marine in society. The spiritual fitness of a Marine is the responsibility of each individual Marine but also the responsibility of the commander. Therefore, the following recommendations are intended to foster informed dialogue and promote action by Marine leadership to actively engage in individual and unit spiritual fitness development and maturation.

Recommendation 1: Talk it out, Set the Atmosphere

Talking about spiritual fitness and what makes a Marine spiritually fit becomes a huge ice breaker in bridging the provocativeness of the subject of spirituality. Spiritual fitness is often misrepresented as religious and often not discussed openly because of the fear of offending someone. A Marine does not have to be a religious or a “spiritual” person as it relates to God to be considered spiritually fit. An atheist can be spiritually fit. Spiritual fitness is a means by which a Marine can achieve a more holistic balance to better personal health and resilience. This action, activities or qualities sustains a Marine during challenging times and moments of stress and conflict. A Marine can practice spiritual fitness by spending time in the outdoors or practicing meditation. Studies have shown the positive benefits of spending time outdoors or practicing meditation to decrease depression, anxiety and other negative symptoms associated with not being in a good state of mental and spiritual well-being. When a commander creates an environment that openly promotes the development of a Marine’s mind and body total fitness which includes spiritual fitness, it signals to every Marine that spirituality is an “approved” topic of conversation because it is part of the overall fitness development of a warfighter. When the commander delineates a spiritual fitness “time” focused on spiritual fitness hardening and

education similar to how time is allotted for physical training (PT) it further signals the importance of time designated in increasing one's spiritual fitness.

Recommendation 2: Education

Numerous Marines find comfort and strength in their personal spiritual fitness and religious affiliations. Attempting to manipulate or coerce a warfighter into religious observance when he or she does not practice spiritual fitness in that manner is unethical. What is ethical and should be done by Headquarters Marine Corps, similar to what is currently done with nutrition, smoking, depression, and other categories of wellness is education of the force from a singular source, United States Marine Training and Education Command (TECOM). As the primary training command in the Marine Corps responsible for the development, training, resourcing and evaluation of the Corps, TECOM should take for action the establishment of a spiritual fitness training curriculum and a comprehensive research driven database that clearly provides scientific data defending the positiveness and relevance of spiritual fitness and the effect it has on one's well-being and overall fitness. The Commandant's acknowledgement of the importance of spiritual fitness in his Spiritual Fitness ALMAR 033/16 was the first step in prioritizing his mission to better equip Marines for future challenges and conflict. In order to adhere to the Commandant's guidance and direct follow-on steps, I offer that TECOM be directed to create this comprehensive knowledge bank in which Marines and commanders can draw from to conduct unit training and spiritual fitness hardening. This database should also be the tool that a commander can rely on to pull resources from to utilize in the establishment of spiritual fitness in his or her unit. Additionally, the spiritual fitness training curriculum should standardize a spiritual fitness package that provides all the educational materials and supplies to

include a list of internal and external resources and programs and be provided to every Marine. Education should not only come in the form of papers and factual data, but also engaged vignettes, knee cap to kneecap conversations about some hard topics such as moral injury in relation to spiritual fitness, and practical applications and role playing of ‘What if’ scenarios to assist in the facilitation of thinking about those contingency plans for when personal or unit tragedy occurs. A commander must facilitate the constitutional right of that Marine to worship God and exercise the right to religious freedom; however, he or she must be careful to not only provide those religious rights and resources to those who desire to worship freely, but also not force or pressure those Marines who prefer to exercise their spiritual fitness in a non-religious expression. Both should be reinforced with core values, respect for other’s religious freedoms, and duty and loyalty to self, fellow Marines, and country.

Recommendation 3: Innovative Training

Prior to a combat deployment, a Marine unit will go through a pre-deployment training period: physical training, drills/exercises, live fire ranges, classes pertaining to operational security, rules of engagement, ethics, specific country culture inundation classes, administrative, medical, and legal classes, family readiness in addition to specific military occupation specialty training just to name a few. I offer that spiritual fitness be included in this battle hardening pre-deployment period. This is not to be confused or combined with ethics training; however, there may be some similarities. I offer that the unit’s Chaplain and Commanding Officer are the primary instructors of this spiritual fitness training focused on arming Marines with realistic “how to cope with....,” fill in the blank with any number of potential horrors that may be experienced on the battlefield. This imagery inoculation will permit the commander and thus the

unit to get ‘left of boom’ of the severity of the PTSD that will happen just based on the physical, mental, psychological, and spiritual trauma induced by combat. Understanding that there are only so many hours in a day and as a Marine Corps, the amount of annual training, and training to do just about anything is more than the hours in a day, adding another mandatory period of training in the already full rucksack is viewed unfavorably. However, spiritual fitness is important and thus must be viewed as valuable and necessary to ensure survivability and development of healthy fitness and well-being habits by our greatest asset, our Marines.

Recommendation 4: Acknowledgement of Human Factors in All Combat Related Activities

Taking care of Marines before, during and after a combat deployment is the foundation of leading Marines. During combat, spiritual fitness must continue to be developed. Debriefs and after-action reviews (AAR) should not only talk about what was physically seen in the environment or enemy activities during a patrol, or what occurred outside the wire but, they should also discuss each individual’s resiliency tank. Acknowledging this addition of the human factor in a group setting not only alerts fellow Marines in that unit but also provides a venue to address possible coping problems after seeing a particular traumatic event or action. As stated previously, Marines take care of their own. Arming Marines with more information in order to do so provides them an ability to truly be first responders to identifying risk factors that could potentially be deadly for that individual Marine or the unit as a whole. Current programs in place now do not directly address spiritual fitness: Combat Operational Stress Control (COSC) program, Unit Marine Awareness and Prevention Integrated Training (UMAPIT), Back in the Saddle training (BITS).

Recommendation 5: Empower the Chain of Command

Spiritual fitness is a dual responsibility of the individual Marine and the commander. I offer that spiritual fitness is also the responsibility of the entire chain of command, beginning with the lowest echelon level. In the true spirit of how the chain of command should work, if a Marine is in need of something, he or she should be talking to his or her fire team leader first, then up the chain of command the issue goes. But in order for that junior Marine to feel empowered, the commander must ensure that, as a unit, spiritual fitness is being developed, honed, and matured. That fire team leader, squad leader, platoon commander, company commander should have a well of spiritual fitness stored up for themselves as well as to impart on a fellow Marine in need. For some that comes naturally based on individual spiritual fitness development, but for the majority it does not and thus must be taught, and they must be provided resources to build up a spiritual fitness depository. If a unit is not enforcing the proper use of the chain of command, then it needs to be fixed. To increase the resiliency and unit cohesion of the unit, each Marine needs to feel part of the spiritual fitness development of the unit, which goes hand in hand with mentorship and leadership development.

Recommendation 6: Invest in the Review and Selection of a Spiritual Fitness Assessment

In addition to the Wellness Index and the Global Assessment Tool (GAT), Appendix E and F provide 35 Spiritual Fitness assessments that prior research designated as military friendly. I offer that Headquarters Marine Corps establish a Spiritual Fitness Assessment Task Force to conduct a deep dive into the benefits and negatives of the identified list of scales and assessments and determine if one or a meshing of several would provide the institution a reliable method to assess a Marine's spiritual fitness during all phases of deployment and while in garrison.

Conclusion

It was President Truman in 1951 who wrote, “As we build up our military strength to secure the free world from aggression, we must be equally diligent to strengthen the moral and spiritual life of our armed forces.”⁷⁷ Spiritual fitness is just as important as physical, mental and social fitness to a Marine’s total fitness and it must be given the same top level attention and resource allocations in order to properly arm and thus require compliance to ALMARS and other HHQ guidance. Spiritual fitness is not a call to worship or an order to become religious. Spiritual fitness is a means in which Marines can achieve a more holistic balance to enhance personal health and well-being. A spiritual fit Marine is able to evaluate, reflect and process who he or she is in terms of identity and core values; able to discern life’s purpose and meaning;

⁷⁷ John Brinsfield, “Army values and ethics: A search for consistency and relevance,” *Parameters* 28, no.3 (Autumn 1998): 8, <https://search-proquest-com.lomc.idm.oclc.org/docview/198161531?accountid=14746>.

control emotions and behaviors; is open to new ideas provided through education and experience; and able to display the ability to show resilience and strength during challenges and hardships.⁷⁸ Numerous research studies have shown that spirituality in the military is a positive force multiplier and resiliency enabler. Acknowledging the importance of spiritual fitness protects and empowers military personal by equipping them with the education, resources, tools, and means to deal with stresses, trauma, and challenges. Research has also shown hands down that a unit going into battle will exponentially be more effective if spiritual fitness is part of the pre, during, and post deployment training. Gen Lejeune, whilst commander of 2nd Division in combat in France wrote, "...[It] is indeed true that in war the spiritual is to the material as three or even four to one."⁷⁹ Furthermore, unequivocally, spiritual fitness can be cultivated in a unit. It is the responsibility of the Marine Corps to provide spiritual fitness education and a template to initially work off of that provides recommendations on how to implement and maintain spiritual fitness in a unit. It is the responsibility of the commander to implement a method, training standards, and evaluation tracker that intimately develops, prepares, and holds accountable the Marines under his or her charge. As with any critical capability, commanders should be evaluated in command climate surveys as to the spiritual health of their unit and the collective total of the individual spiritual fitness of their Marines. Additionally, spiritual fitness should be evaluated annually, and during all phases of deployment. It is with the utmost importance that the spiritual fitness of each Marine during the mentioned times convey in some method their level of spiritual fitness. The preponderance of research identifying that assessing spiritual fitness early and often can potentially mitigate and get left of boom of serious mental health issues such as depression, suicide, anxiety, etc. The Spiritual Fitness Guide Self-Assessment tool

⁷⁸ Sweeney et al., *Joint Force Quarterly*, 37.

⁷⁹ Puryear, Jr, *Marine Corps Generalship*, 380.

provided by the Navy Chaplain Corps (Appendix A) can be utilized by both the individual Marines and the commander to help determine Marines' spiritual meter. General George C. Marshall, a five-star general who served as a General of the Armies of the United States during World War I, Army Chief of Staff in World War II, and Secretary of Defense during the Korean War,⁸⁰ remarked, "It is in the national interest that personnel serving in the Armed Forces be protected in the realization and development of moral, spiritual, and religious values consistent with the religious beliefs of the individuals concerned. To this end, it is the duty of commanding officers in every echelon to develop to the highest degree the conditions and influences calculated to promote health, morals, and spiritual values of the personnel under their command."⁸¹ A Marine Corps filled to capacity with spiritually fit Marines is a stronger, more resilient and tenacity filled armed force prepared for future challenges on and off the battlefield.

⁸⁰ The George C. Marshall Foundation, accessed February 19, 2018, <http://marshallfoundation.org/marshall/>.

⁸¹ Stewart W. Husted, *George C. Marshall: The Rubrics of Leadership*, (Carlisle, Pa: US Army War College Foundation Press, 2006) 179.

SPIRITUAL FITNESS GUIDE

This is a **self-assessment** tool to help service members consider their spiritual condition.

Spirituality may be used generally to refer to that which gives meaning and purpose in life, or the term may be used specifically to refer to the practice of a philosophy, religion, or way of living.

FIT	STRESSED	DEPLETED	DRAINED
<p>Potential Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Engaged in life's meaning/purpose ➤ Hopeful about life/future ➤ Makes sound moral decisions ➤ Fully engaged with family, friends, and community ➤ Able to forgive self and others ➤ Respectful of others ➤ Engaged in core values/beliefs 	<p>Potential Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Neglecting life's meaning/purpose ➤ Less hopeful about life/future ➤ Makes some poor moral decisions ➤ Somewhat engaged with family, friends, and community ➤ Difficulty forgiving self or others ➤ Less respectful of others ➤ Straying from core values/beliefs 	<p>Potential Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Losing a sense of life's meaning/purpose ➤ Holds very little hope about life/future ➤ Makes poor moral decisions routinely ➤ Weakly engaged with family, friends, and community ➤ Not likely to forgive self or others ➤ Strong disrespect for others ➤ Disregards core values/beliefs 	<p>Potential Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Feels like life has no meaning/purpose ➤ Holds no hope about life/future ➤ Engaged in extreme immoral behavior ➤ Not engaged with family, friends or community ➤ Forgiveness is not an option ➤ Complete disrespect for others ➤ Abandoned core values/beliefs

**Your chaplain cares about you and is committed to helping with your Spiritual Fitness.
Absolute confidentiality is guaranteed.**

Chaplain POC:

What is Spiritual Fitness?

Spiritual Fitness is a term used to capture a person's overall spiritual health and reflects how spirituality may help one cope with and enjoy life.

Spirituality may be used generally to refer to that which gives meaning and purpose in life. The term may be used more specifically to refer to the practice of a philosophy, religion, or way of living. Spirituality has two primary expressions:

Human Expression: Refers to the essential core of the individual. Includes activities that strengthen self and build healthy relationships.

- Examples include commitment to family, love of life, and esprit de corps.

Religious Expression: Refers to the application of faith. Includes activities that connect one to the Divine, God, and the supernatural.

- Examples include prayer, worship, and participation in the sacraments.
- Buddhism encourages pursuit of the Noble Path.
- Christianity has a focus on seeking the Holy Spirit.
- Islamic spirituality is derived from the Quran and following the Sunnah.

Your spiritual fitness is typically healthier if you practice your faith, beliefs, and other activities that support your spirituality.

Your spiritual fitness is typically less healthy if you neglect to practice your faiths, beliefs, and other activities that support your spirituality.

To learn more about spiritual fitness, contact your unit chaplain.

Appendix B: EXCEL Spirituality Questions with References

1. I feel that on a higher level all of us share a common bond.

- *Question source:* Piedmont-Spiritual Transcendance Scale

- *Original question:* I feel that on a higher level all of us share a common bond.

2. Although there is good and bad in people, I believe that humanity as a whole is basically good.

- *Question source:* Piedmont-Spiritual Scale

- *Original question:* Although there is good and bad in people, I believe that humanity as a whole is basically good.

3. There is an order to the universe that transcends human thinking.

- *Question source:* Piedmont-Spiritual Scale

- *Original question:* There is an order to the universe that transcends human thinking.

4. Although individual people may be difficult, I feel a bond with all of humanity.

- *Question source:* Piedmont-Spiritual Scale

- *Original question:* Although individual people may be difficult, I feel an emotional bond with all of humanity.

5. My spiritual life is an important part of who I am as a person.

- *Question source:* Allport's Extrinsic Religion⁴⁶

- *Original question:* Although I am religious, I don't let it affect my daily life.

- *Original question:* Although I believe in my religion, many other things are more important in life.

6. I feel deep inner peace or harmony.

- *Question source:* Existential Well-Being⁴⁷

- *Original question:* I feel deep inner peace or harmony.

7. I feel a sense of well-being about the direction in which my life is heading.

- *Question source:* Existential Well-Being⁴⁸

- *Original question:* I feel a sense of well-being about the direction in which my life is heading.

8. I have the sense of a larger of purpose in my life.

- *Question source:* Existential Well-Being⁴⁹

- *Original question:* I have been able to step outside of my ambitions and failures, pain and joy, to experience a larger sense of fulfillment.

⁴⁵ Jon Randolph Haber, Theodore Jacob, and David J. C. Spangler at VA Palo Alto Health Care System, "Dimensions of Religion/Spirituality and Relevance to Health Research," as published in *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 77(4), (2007): 265-288, Copyright © 2007, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

⁴⁶ "The Age-Universal" version of Allport and Ross's Religious Orientation Scale as reported by Haber, p. 278.

⁴⁷ "Spiritual Well-Being Scale" by C. W. Ellison as reported by Haber, p. 277.

⁴⁸ Haber, p. 277.

⁴⁹ Haber, p. 277.

Appendix B: EXCEL Spirituality Questions with References

9. I go to my place of worship (Chapel, Church, Synagogue, Temple) because it helps me to connect with friends.

- *Question source:* Fetzer/NIA Religious Support⁵⁰

- *Original question:* I go to my place of worship (Church, Synagogue, Temple) because it helps me to make friends.

- *Original question:* I go to my (Church, Synagogue, Temple) mostly to spend time with my friends.

10. I believe my personal prayers help me during this deployment.

- *Question source:* R/S Motivation, Devotion, & Coping

- *Original question:* How important is it to you to be able to turn to prayer when you are facing a personal problem?

11. I believe the prayers of my family and friends back home help me.

- *Question source:* This question was created by the Chaplain Corps to determine the recognized level of spiritual support from home.

12. I believe the presence and ministry of my unit chaplain brings value to the mission.

- *Question source:* This question is a military centric question created to meet the specific needs of the Chaplain Corps.

13. I feel good about my future.

- *Question source:* Existential Well-Being

- *Original question:* I feel good about my future.

14. I have forgiven myself for things that I have done wrong.

- *Question source:* Existential Well-Being

- *Original question:* I have forgiven myself for things that I have done wrong.

15. If I have a problem or difficult situation, the people in my chapel Community will comfort me and get me through it.

- *Question source:* Fetzer/NIA Religious Support

- *Original question:* If you were ill, how much would the people in your congregation help you out?

- *Original question:* If you had a problem or difficult situation, how much comfort would the people in your congregation be willing to give you?

⁵⁰ "Brief Multidimensional Measure of Religion and Spirituality" by Fetzer Institute/National Institution of Aging, as reported by Haber, p. 278.

TABLE III. Spiritual Fitness Components, Related Outcome Variables and Benefits, and Recommended Metrics for Assessment

Component of Spiritual Fitness	Benefits of Component, Including Referenced Evidence Where Appropriate	Options for Metrics
Spiritual Beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> —Less death anxiety and death depression⁹⁵ —Greater stability over time and under pressure —Confidence when encountering conflicting beliefs, including those of the enemy 	<p>Glock and Stark's Orthodoxy Index:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> —4 items, oriented toward Christianity Systems of Belief Inventory-15 —15-item spiritual beliefs inventory consisting of 2 factors: a 10-item factor regarding beliefs, feelings and experiences, and a 5-item factor assessing social support from one's religious community.⁷⁴ <p>Index of Spiritual Orientation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> —Intended to capture "non-traditional religious group orientations." —Includes belief, salience of religion, purpose in life and mysticism subscales.⁹⁵ <p>Spiritual Involvement and Beliefs Scale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> —26 items including behaviors as well as beliefs. —Although it includes elements that are not strictly spiritual (e.g., willingness to forgive), it is appropriate as a psychospiritual measure.⁹⁶ <p>Spiritual Connection Questionnaire (SCQ-14)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> —14-item questionnaire measuring beliefs and experiences of spiritual connection. —Designed to be consistent with both religious and spiritual-but-not-religious spirituality. —Higher scores found to be negatively correlated with "self-enhancement values" and positively correlated with "self-transcendent values."⁹⁷
Personal Spiritual Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> —Positive relationship of spiritual values to prosocial behavior.⁹⁷ —Strong though indirect evidence of a values-fitness association. —Consistent and predictable behavior. 	<p>Duke Religion Index (DUREL)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> —Contains 5 questions about frequency of organized and private religious practices, experience of connection to the Divine (could be used for transcendence, too) and the extent to which religious beliefs carry over into other aspects of life.¹⁰⁶
Personal Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> —General health benefits^{4,98} —Greater ability to manage symptoms of PTSD⁹⁹ —Improved functioning and performance —Enhanced resilience and recovery following combat⁹⁹ —Benefit to blood pressure, immune function, depression, and mortality.¹⁰⁰ —"Strong, consistent, prospective, and often graded reduction (approx. 25% after adjustment for confounders) in risk of mortality in church/service attenders."¹⁰¹ —Better mental health among previously healthy individuals subjected to serious illness or injury.¹⁰² —Ability to change pain perception.¹⁰³ —Potential buffer for distress derived from experiences of ego loss.^{104,105} 	<p>Sense of Coherence Questionnaire (SOC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> —Measures the important salutogenetic construct sense of coherence, which consists of the three subdimensions manageability, comprehensibility, and meaningfulness.¹¹¹ —High consistency (Cronbach α for SOC-13 ranges from 0.74 to 0.91) and considerable stability (e.g., 0.54 over a 2-year period).¹¹² —High level of content, face, and construct validity.¹¹²
Purpose and Meaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> —Greater acceptance of difficult situations and opportunities for post-traumatic growth leading to spiritual resilience.³ —Construing positive meaning from war experiences involving combat exposure or high perceived threat, associated with better psychological adjustment.^{107,108} —Remorse or self-blaming for combat-related experiences and actions can lead to guilt and shame, and shame linked to decreased empathy, increased focus on internal distress, greater psychopathology, remorse, self-condemning thoughts, and lower well-being.³ —Greater coping ability.¹⁰⁹ —Includes ability to find religious significance.^{89,110} 	<p>Sense of Coherence Questionnaire (SOC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> —Measures the important salutogenetic construct sense of coherence, which consists of the three subdimensions manageability, comprehensibility, and meaningfulness.¹¹¹ —High consistency (Cronbach α for SOC-13 ranges from 0.74 to 0.91) and considerable stability (e.g., 0.54 over a 2-year period).¹¹² —High level of content, face, and construct validity.¹¹²

TABLE III. Continued

Component of Spiritual Fitness	Benefits of Component, Including Referenced Evidence Where Appropriate	Options for Metrics
Self-awareness: Reflection and Introspection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> —Ability to reframe positively the stressors of deployment and recover more quickly from mental and psychological stress.⁷⁴ —Allows leaders to adapt to the external environment, potential adversaries, allies and local populations; to “shift gears” quickly, transitioning quickly from fighting in one moment to relating peacefully with the local community in the next; to access information from a wider variety of channels; and to display greater accuracy and more objectivity in gathering information.⁷⁴ —Improved attention and self-regulation.²³ —Increased efficiency of the executive attentional network leading to better task performance.¹¹³ —Enhanced attentional stability, reduced mean reaction time, improved target detection times, and increased efficiency by reducing task effort.¹¹⁴ —Protection against functional impairments in working memory capacity, which is used in managing cognitive demands and emotion regulation.²⁴ —Increased control over distribution of limited brain resources, which is significant in the dynamic, high-stress, and resource-scarce combat environment.¹¹⁵ —Reduced risk of physical, psychological, and spiritual injury. 	<p>Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory (FMI)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> —Short, 14-item version measures mindfulness as a one-dimensional construct that is associated with regular meditative practice.¹¹⁶ —Internal consistency high (Cronbach $\alpha = 0.86$).²⁵ —Can be used in subjects without previous meditation experience. —FMI correlates well with relevant constructs (self-awareness, dissociation, global severity index, meditation experience in years).¹¹⁶
Transcendence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> —Charitable or selfless actions and behaviors. —Well-being. —Feeling of connection/belonging. —Absence of loneliness/isolation. —Leaders who promote a “vision of transcendent service”^{41,42,117} in their units can transform something mundane “to something vibrant, where individual and collective spirituality are valued and reinforced, and spiritual development becomes a cultural expectation of the group for mission accomplishment for the greater good.”¹¹⁸ 	<p>Daily Spiritual Experience Scale (DSES)¹¹⁹</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> —A 16-item unidimensional instrument designed to measure frequency of positive spiritual experiences. —Assesses the perception of the connection with the transcendent as well as moments of interactions with the transcendent in daily life. —Items focus on experience rather than beliefs or behaviors. —Can be used to measure “vertical” transcendence. —Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.95$; test—retest reliability $\alpha = 0.92$.^{119,120} <p>Interpersonal Support Evaluation List (ISEL)⁸⁷</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> —Two domains of the ISEL measure belonging and perceived isolation. —Can measure “horizontal” transcendence.
Exceptional Spiritual Experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> —Reduced death anxiety.^{56,93,121,122} —Association between “bereavement visits” and healthy faster resolution of grief.^{46-48,53} —Avoidance of anxiety and potential interpersonal conflict produced by conventional stigmatization of such experiences as pathological. —Increased life purpose and satisfaction, a health-promoting attitude. —Decreased frequency of medical symptoms.¹²³ 	<p>Index of Core Spiritual Experiences (INSPIRIT)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> —7-item scale “measuring the occurrence of experience that convinces a person God exists and evokes feelings of closeness with God, including the perception that God lives within.”¹²⁴ —Not specific to exceptional experiences, but clearly would include them.¹²⁵ <p>Exceptional Experiences Questionnaire (EEQ):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> —Measures the frequency and evaluation of exceptional experiences as a multidimensional construct. —Factors: positive spiritual experiences, experiences of ego loss, psychopathological experiences, visionary dream experiences.¹⁰⁵

TABLE IV. Operationally Relevant Outcomes and Metrics

Operational Outcome	Related Variables	Recommended Metric for Each Variable
Resilience and Recovery From Deployment- and Combat-Related Trauma	<p>Key variable and metric: Resilience</p>	<p>Connor Davidson resilience Scale (CD-RISC) —Distinguishes between those with greater and lesser resilience. —Has been used in military populations. —The two-item version of the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC2) takes less than 30 seconds to complete and asks about one’s abilities to adapt to change and recover from illness or hardship, and distinguishes between those with greater and lesser resilience.⁶¹ —CD-RISC2 has demonstrated validity, good test-retest reliability, and significant correlation with the full, 25-item version of the CD-RISC.⁶²</p>
	<p>Other related variables and metrics: Post-deployment reintegration Symptoms of depression Well-being</p>	<p>Post-Deployment Readjustment Inventory (PDRI)⁶⁰ Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-2) —Included in the Post-Deployment Health Assessment and Re-Assessment (PDHA/ PDHRA) is the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-2), a 2-item depression instrument with high construct and criterion validity.^{60,61} Veterans RAND 12-Item Health Survey VR-12 —Derived from the SF-36, the gold standard used by the VA to measure health related quality of life.⁶²</p>
Optimized Prevention and/or Resolution of Moral Injury	<p>Key variable and metric: Risk factors for moral injury and spiritual resilience</p> <p>Other related variables and metrics: Knowledge about moral injury and its relationship to spirituality and stress. Preparation for exposure to, and handling of, traumatic combat experiences.</p>	<p>Deployment Risk and Resiliency Inventory (DRRI)⁶³ —Created with DoD and Veterans Affairs support to assess key deployment-related risk factors unique to contemporary warfare that can negatively impact service members health and well-being.⁶⁴ The DRRI scales assess: —Prewar factors such as prior stressors and early life experiences. —Deployment and war-zone factors such as stereotypical warfare experiences, one’s sense of preparedness and safety in the combat zone, and exposure to nuclear-biological-chemical agents and consequences of combat. —Postwar factors such as the extent of social support and stressful life events post-deployment.⁶⁵</p> <p>Knowledge questionnaire/“test” following training session on this topic. Existence of pre-deployment facilitated discussions with chaplains, including scenario building, role playing, etc.</p>

TABLE IV. Continued

Operational Outcome	Related Variables	Recommended Metric for Each Variable
<p>Cohesive Unit Climate Supportive of Peak Performance</p>	<p>Key variable and metric: Unit cohesion</p> <p>Other related variables and metrics: Unit climate that respects diversity and differing values. Purpose and mission clearly articulated by command. Genuine care and concern exhibited by unit members. Ethical behavior and decision making modeled by leadership.</p>	<p>Platoon Cohesion Index (PCI)⁸⁶ —Developed for use by company commanders and platoon leaders to assess cohesion in their platoons. —Consists of 20 items that form 3 horizontal, 2 vertical, and 5 organizational bonding scales. —Tested in 44 platoons of light and mechanized infantry from 2 posts. —Moderate to high intrascale, inter-scale, and scale-criterion correlations as well as predictive validity with platoon performance on field training exercises.</p> <p>Unit climate surveys</p> <p>Focus groups Observational research</p> <p>Interpersonal Support Evaluation List (ISEL)⁸⁷ —Provides a global measure of perceived social support across four domains (belonging, self-esteem, appraisal, and tangible help). —Adherence to rules of engagement —Presence of unit training.</p>
<p>Healthy, Mature, and Engaged Spirituality That Fosters Finding Meaning/Purpose and Effective Coping</p>	<p>Key variable and metric: Healthy spirituality</p> <p>Other related variables and metrics: Availability of individual and unit spiritual practice opportunities, including perception of freedom of spiritual / religious expression Accessibility of chaplain and chaplain-sponsored programs. Positive coping Perception of unit support</p>	<p>Spiritual Attitudes Inventory (SAI) —Has been tested and used in military populations.⁸⁹ —Includes 39 questions and takes approximately 3-5 minutes to complete. —Measures the following areas: (1) Religious spiritual practice as measured by the Duke Religion Index (DUREL),⁸⁸ $\alpha = 0.85$. (2) Religious/spiritual belief as measured by the Negative Religious Coping (NRCOPE) scale,⁸⁹ $\alpha = 0.73$ to 0.98. (3) Sense of purpose/connection as measured by the Existential Well-Being Scale (EWBS) (a subscale of the Spiritual Well Being Scale (SWBS)⁹⁰, $\alpha = 0.78$–0.81. (4) Sense of hope/control as measured by the internal/external subscale of the Multiple Health Locus of Control Scale (MHLC).⁹¹ $\alpha = 0.60$.</p> <p>Focus groups and semi-structured interviews</p> <p>Institutional records</p> <p>Coping Self-Efficacy Scale (CSES)⁹² —Measures perceived self-efficacy for coping with challenges and threats; 3 factors: problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping thoughts (and ability to get social support)</p> <p>Perception of Unit Support Scale (DRRI-US)⁸³</p>

Table 1. Characteristics of each assessment

Assessment	Time to complete (estimate)		Completed by		Population		Measures		Psychometrics		Availability		Free Cost
	<15 mins	>15 mins	Self	Interviewer	General	Clinical	Other	Affective	Behavioural	Cognitive	Cronbach's α > 70	Other psychometrics	
ASP ³²		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
ASPIRES ³³	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓*	✓	✓
BVS ³⁴	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
BMMRS ³⁵		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓*	✓	✓
Brief R-Cope ³⁶	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
BSS ³⁷	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
CRS ³⁸	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
DSES ³⁹	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
DUREL ⁴⁰	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
ESI ⁴¹		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
FACIT – SWB ⁴²	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
I/E RS-R ⁴³	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
I-WS/RI ⁴⁴	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
JRA ⁴⁵	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
MI-RSWB-E ⁴⁶		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓*	✓	✓
MMRS ³⁵		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓*	✓	✓
R-Cope ³⁶		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓*	✓	✓
RBBQ ⁴⁷	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
RFIRSB ⁴⁸	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓*	✓	✓
SCSRFQ ⁴⁹	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SAI ⁵⁰		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SEI-R ⁵¹	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SFA ⁵²		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SHALOM ⁵³	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SIWB ⁵⁴	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SIBS ⁵⁵		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SNAP ⁵⁶		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SNJ ⁵⁷	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SPS ⁵⁸	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SpUREK ⁵⁹	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SS ⁶⁰	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SSRS ⁶¹	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SSS ⁶²	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SWBS ⁶³	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
WHOQOL – SRPB ⁶⁴		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Total in each category	24	11	34	35	26	34	3	25	28	34	35	27	33 2

* Some scales lower than 0.70; affective = emotional aspects of spiritual fitness; behavioural = actions in support of spiritual fitness; cognitive = thoughts in support of spiritual fitness.

Appendix F: Psychometric Properties of Each Spiritual/Spiritual Fitness Assessment with Sample Question

Table 2. Psychometric properties of each assessment and example questions

Assessment	Area of Publication	Purpose of Assessment	Internal consistency	Other psychometrics	Example question
ASP ³²	Religion	Developed from expert survey; individual concepts of spirituality depend on context, worldview, and refer to immaterial comprehension of truth	Excellent (0.90+) on sample of German and Polish students ⁶⁵	NA	Convinced that man is a spiritual being; responses: 0 (does not apply at all) to 4 (applies very much)
ASPIRES ³³	Psychology	Measures depth of spirituality, functions of religion, religious sentiments, and spiritual transcendence. It is non-denominational	Fair/Excellent internal consistency (0.6–0.92) on a sample of adult students ⁶⁶	Evidence of discriminate validity on a sample of adult students ⁶⁶	How often do you read the Bible/ Torah/ Koran/Geeta; responses: 1 (never) to 7 (several times a week)
BVS ³⁴	Psychology	Measures depth of spirituality for use in psychological and health research	Excellent (0.94) on a sample from diverse social/ethnic backgrounds ³⁴	Acceptable test-retest reliability on diverse social/ethnic backgrounds ³⁴	I am a spiritual person; responses: 4 (strongly agree) to 0 (strongly disagree)
BMMRS ³⁵	Religion	Brief version of the MMRS and covers many aspects of spirituality/religiousness	Fair/Excellent (0.62–0.90) from sample of older adults ⁶⁷	Good convergent validity with R-COPE; good predictive validity with FACIT-SWB on sample of older adults ⁶⁷	I feel God's presence; responses: 1 (many times a day) to 6 (never).
Brief R-Cope ³⁶	Psychology/ Medicine	Measures belief in God to help with coping following a major event or illness	Excellent (median alpha = 0.92 for positive coping and 0.81 for negative coping) on sample from various ethnic backgrounds ⁶⁸	Good concurrent validity on sample from various ethnic backgrounds ⁶⁸	Looked for a stronger connection with God; responses: 1 (not at all) to 4 (a great deal).
BSS ³⁷	Nursing	Brief and valid measure of serenity for inclusion in a battery of instruments	Excellent (0.95) on sample of organ and non-organ transplant patients ³⁷	NA	I am forgiving of myself for past mistakes; responses: 1 (never) to 5 (always).
CRS ³⁸	Psychology	Measure of the centrality, importance, or salience of religious meanings in personality	Good/Excellent on 5-item (0.85) and 10-item questionnaires (0.93) from samples of students ³⁸	Good/Excellent concurrent validity with measures of religious identity (0.83) and religion monitor (0.67) from samples of students ³⁸	How often do you think about religious issues; responses: 1 (never) to 5 (several times a day)
DSES ³⁹	Medicine	Measure of spiritual experiences with the divine and how beliefs and understandings form part of life from a spiritual or religious perspective	Excellent (0.94) from samples of healthy women, arthritic patients, and university students ³⁹	Fair/Good inter-rater reliability from samples of healthy women, arthritic patients, and university students ³⁹	I feel God's presence; responses: 1 (many times a day) to 6 (never or almost never)
DUREL ⁴⁰	Psychiatry	Brief, comprehensive, easily used measure of religiosity that can be used in large epidemiological studies	Excellent (0.91) on a sample of undergraduate students ⁶⁹	Shows convergent validity with other measures of religiosity (rs = 0.71–0.86 ⁷⁰)	How often do you attend church or other religious meetings?; responses: 1 (never) to 6 (more than once/week)

Appendix F: Psychometric Properties of Each Spiritual/Spiritual Fitness Assessment with Sample Question

Assessment	Area of Publication	Purpose of Assessment	Internal consistency	Other psychometrics	Example question
ESI ⁴¹	Psychology	Broad measure of spirituality that ascertains cognitive-affective orientation to spirituality, experiential/phenomenology, existential well-being, paranormal and occult beliefs, and products of spirituality and religiousness	Good/Excellent (0.85–0.97 for scales) in sample of undergraduate students ^{71,72}	Satisfactory convergent and discriminant validity in sample of undergraduate students ^{71,72}	Discovering the meaning and purpose of life has to include an examination of one's spirituality; responses: 0 (strongly agree) to 4 (strongly disagree).
FACIT – SWB ⁴²	Psychology/Medicine	Provide inclusive measure of spirituality for research in people with chronic and/or life-threatening illnesses	Good (0.81–0.87 for scales) in sample of HIV patients ⁴²	NA	I feel peaceful; responses: 0 (not at all) to 4 (very much)
I/E RS-R ⁴³	Religion	Identify the relationship among religiousness and social relationships and personal beliefs	Good (0.80; intrinsic scale) in a sample of undergraduate students ⁷³	NA	I go to church because it helps me to make friends; responses: 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)
I-WS/RI ⁴⁴	Medicine	Valid measurement of the subjective and behavioural aspects of religion that addresses concerns regarding measurement and meaningful study of religion	Excellent (0.87–0.94) in a sample of HIV patients ⁷⁴	Excellent test-retest reliability and significant convergent and discriminant validity in a sample of HIV patients ⁷⁴	My beliefs give me a sense of peace; responses: 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)
JRA ⁴⁵	Psychology	Assess how often partners/families engage in spiritual activities together as a couple/group	Excellent for parents (0.96) and youth (0.97) in a sample of family members ⁷⁵	NA	My spouse (family) and I pray together; responses: 1 (never) to 7 (very often)
MI-RSWB-E ⁴⁶	Medicine	Measure spirituality in personality and health-oriented research related to personality dimensions, subjective well-being, and mental illness	Good (0.89) in a sample of college students ⁷⁶	Correlated with measures of spiritual well-being ($p < .001$) and measures of depression ($p < .001$) in a sample of college students ⁷⁶	My faith gives me a feeling of security; responses: 1 (totally disagree) to 6 (totally agree)
MMRS ³⁵	Religion	Multi-dimensional measure related to an individual's overall/global spirituality, for use in health and mental health research	Poor/Excellent (0.36–0.95 on scales) on sample of clients receiving alcohol treatment ⁷⁷	Fair/Good test-retest reliability on sample of clients receiving alcohol treatment ⁷⁷	My feelings of spirituality add meaning to the events in my life; with differing choices as a response
R-Cope ³⁶	Psychology	Assess degree to which various religious coping types are involved in dealing with negative events	Good (>0.75 for all but two domains) in sample of college students and hospitalized elderly ⁷⁸	Evidence of incremental validity with an adjustment scale in sample of college students and hospitalized elderly ⁷⁸	Redefining the stressor through religion as benevolent and potentially beneficial; responses: 0 (not at all) to 3 (a great deal)
RBBQ ⁴⁷	Psychology	Brief measure of religious practices that serve as a companion to measures of spirituality and purpose in life	Good (0.86) in a sample of individuals with alcohol misuse ⁴⁷	Strong test-retest reliability ($r = 0.97$) in a sample of individuals with alcohol misuse ⁴⁷	For the past year, how often have you ... thought about God; responses: 1 (never) to 8 (more than once a day)

Appendix F: Psychometric Properties of Each Spiritual/Spiritual Fitness Assessment with Sample Question

Assessment	Area of Publication	Purpose of Assessment	Internal consistency	Other psychometrics	Example question
RFIRSB ⁴⁸	Psychology/ Medicine	Measure of religious, spiritual, and philosophical beliefs that is not confined to any particular religious creed or school of philosophical thought	Fair/Good (0.60–0.81 for scales) on sample of clinicians, patients, and strongly religious people ⁴⁸	Excellent test-retest reliability (0.91–0.95 for scales) on sample of clinicians, patients, and strongly religious people ⁴⁸	Do you believe in a spiritual power or force other than yourself that can influence what happens to you in our day-to-day life; responses: 1 (no influence) to 10 (strong influence)
SCSRFQ ⁴⁹	Religion	Concise assessment to measure strength of religious faith, intended to be used in researcher and health care to examine a person's strength of religious faith	Excellent (0.95) in a sample of undergraduate university students ^{49,79}	Excellent split-half reliability (0.92) in a sample of undergraduate university students ^{49,79}	My religious faith is extremely important to me: responses: 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree)
SAI ⁵⁰	Psychology	Assess different levels of relationships with God from an object-relations perspective	Fair/Excellent (0.73–0.95 for scale) in a sample of Protestant university students ⁹⁰	Concurrent validity with other measures of spirituality in a sample of Protestant university students ⁸⁰	I have a sense of how God is working in my life; responses: 1 (not at all true) to 5 (very true)
SEI-R ⁵¹	Religion	Psychological study of faith and includes individuals on a variety of spiritual journeys (not one particular denomination)	Good (0.89) in a sample of healthy adults with differing religious backgrounds ⁵¹	Incremental validity with measures of religiousness in a sample of religious adults ⁸¹	I often feel strongly related to a power greater than myself; responses: 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree)
SFA ⁵²	Religion	Examine the connection between faith and health based on Fletcher's research and personal beliefs in Biblical truths	Excellent (0.97) in a sample of Catholic university students ⁸²	Good convergent validity and satisfactory criterion validity in a sample of Catholic university students ⁸²	There is a connection between a person's spirit, mind, emotions, and body; responses: 1 (strongly agree) to 7 (strongly disagree)
SHALOM ⁵³	Religion	Measures the ideals of spiritual health in four sets of relationships with the self, others, environment, and/or God	Excellent (0.92) in a sample of students ⁸³	Correlated with the Spirituality Well-Being Scale ($p < .001$) in a sample of students ⁸³	Importance of developing a love of other people; responses: 1 (very low) to 5 (very high)
SIWB ⁵⁴	Medicine	Measure the effect of patient reported spirituality on subjective well-being	Excellent (0.91) in a sample of outpatients ⁵⁴	Good test-retest reliability, concurrent, and discriminate validity in a sample of outpatients ⁵⁴	There is not much I can do to help myself; responses: 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree)
SIBS ⁵⁵	Medicine	Measure ones involvement in spiritual practices and spiritual beliefs	Excellent (0.92) in a sample of family practice patients and educators ⁵⁵	Strong test-retest reliability (0.92) and good concurrent validity (.80) with the SWBS in a sample of patients and educators ⁵⁵	I set aside time for meditation and/or self-reflection; responses: 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree)
SNAP ⁵⁶	Medicine	Broad measure to assess the spiritual needs of patients in a concrete, refined, comprehensive, systematic, valid, and reliable way	Excellent (0.95) in a sample of outpatients ⁵⁶	Fair test-retest reliability (0.69) in a sample of outpatients ⁵⁶	How much would you like help with . . . getting in touch with other patients with similar illnesses; responses: very much to not at all

Appendix F: Psychometric Properties of Each Spiritual/Spiritual Fitness Assessment with Sample Question

Assessment	Area of Publication	Purpose of Assessment	Internal consistency	Other psychometrics	Example question
SNJ ⁵⁷	Nursing	Broad measure to assess the spiritual needs of patients near the end of life	Good (0.85) in a sample of inpatient and outpatients hospices ⁵⁷	NA	In order to live my life fully, I need to ... laugh; responses: 1 (never) to 5 (always)
SPS ⁵⁸	Nursing	Measure saliency of a spiritual perspective in a person's life, to the extent they hold certain spiritual views and engage in spiritually related interactions	Excellent (0.93–0.95) in a sample of terminally ill, non-terminally ill, and healthy persons ⁸⁴	NA	In talking with your family or friends, how often do you mention spiritual matters; responses: not at all to about once a day
SpUREK ⁵⁹	Medicine	Examine how patients with chronic diseases view the impact of spirituality/religiosity on their health and how they cope with illness	Excellent (0.94) in a sample of individuals with chronic illnesses ⁸⁵	NA	I am searching for an access to spirituality/religiosity; responses: 0 (does not apply at all) to 4 (applies very much)
SS ⁶⁰	Religion	Measure perceived level of spirituality using a psychometrically sound instrument that would produce reliable and valid information to be used in a variety of settings	Excellent (0.96) in samples of university students ⁸⁶	Convergent and discriminant validity from samples of university students ⁶⁰	My spiritual beliefs help me to be a better person; responses: 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)
SSRS ⁶¹	Medicine	Measures an intrinsic orientation to spirituality rather than an extrinsic orientation	Excellent (0.82–0.91) in a sample of university students, inpatients, and therapeutic outpatients ⁶¹	Concurrent validity with measures of religiosity in a sample of university students, inpatients, and therapeutic outpatients ⁶¹	It is important for me to spend time in private spiritual thought and meditation; responses: 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree)
SSS ⁶²	Religion	Assess emotional, intimacy, and faith aspects of spiritual support	Excellent (0.92–0.95) in a sample of bereaved parents and college freshmen ⁶²	Excellent split-half reliability (0.94) in a sample of caregivers of people living with Alzheimer's disease ⁸⁷	I experience a personal, close relationship with God; responses: 1 (not at all) to 5 (completely accurate)
SWBS ⁶³	Religion	Measure spiritual well-being as defined by religious and existential factors	Good (0.89) in varied samples of healthy adults in different occupations and regions ⁸⁸	Face validity and reasonable construct validity in varied samples of healthy adults in different occupations and regions ⁸⁸	I have a personally meaningful relationship with God; responses: 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree).
WHOQOL – SRPB ⁶⁴	Medicine	Broad measure to assess quality of life aspects related to spirituality, religiosity, and personal beliefs	Excellent (0.93) in a broad sample of healthy and ill adults across 18 different countries ⁶⁴	NA	To what extent does any connection to a spiritual being help you to get through hard times; responses: 1 (not at all) to 5 (an extreme amount)

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