



Individual Attributes, Values, and Goals of an All-Military Women Antarctic Expedition

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BACKGROUND: While participation of women in the military has increased, research on performance of female teams engaged in arduous physical activity in isolated, confined, and extreme (ICE) environments remains sparse.

METHODS: A team of six British military women completed the Multidimensional Personality Questionnaire-Brief Form, Triarchic Psychopathy Measure, and Personal Values Questionnaire (PVQ) prior to embarking on an expedition that traversed the Antarctic continent. Questionnaires were completed weekly on the ice; repeat of the PVQ and individual semistructured debriefing interviews were carried out within 9 d post-expedition.

RESULTS: Personality findings indicated a generally well-adjusted group with notable individual differences in personality and personal values. Positive affect and camaraderie among teammates was evident throughout, although pace vs. distance in the strategy of the daily trek was a continuing point of tension. Honesty in communication was viewed as key to team effectiveness. A significant post-expedition decline in the tradition value (Pre $M = -0.55$, $SD = 0.99$; Post $M = -0.82$, $SD = 1.12$) and an increase in the conformity value (Pre $M = -0.26$, $SD = 0.46$; Post $M = 0.18$, $SD = 0.27$) was found.

DISCUSSION: Congruence in personal and team goals among group members engaged in highly challenging activities is crucial for optimal team performance. Presence of two highly dominant individuals has a negative effect on team dynamics. Application of study findings to space exploration is considered.

KEYWORDS: women teams, isolated, confined, and extreme environments, personality, personal values.

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The role of women in the military has changed over the past several decades. Issues of equal opportunity, evolving changes in stereotypical attitudes about women and men's behavior and capabilities, a lesser focus on physical strength, and a declining availability of male recruits have led to policy changes in many countries. In the United Kingdom, the Women's Royal Army Corps was disbanded in 1992 and women were integrated into the regular Army, but barred from certain combat roles.¹¹ In September 2017 the Royal Air Force (RAF) became the first branch of the British Armed Forces to allow women into all its roles, including ground close combat. The Army and the Royal Navy were scheduled to begin accepting female recruits for the Infantry and Royal Marines, respectively, by the end of 2018.

While over time the number of women serving in the military in different countries has increased, research on personal characteristics, attitudes, and team dynamics of women engaged in arduous physical pursuits in isolated, confined, and extreme (ICE) environments remains sparse. The personal values of team members, defined as broad motivational goals that serve as guidelines for action, were a particular area of interest in terms

of its influence on team dynamics.³¹ Possible changes in values as a result of a significant life event, in this case the expedition experience, were also examined.

Close evaluation of personal characteristics, values, and team performance in a polar ICE environment may provide an analog for performance in other types of challenging environments, including military deployments. In addition to severe cold and other physical challenges, polar expedition teams need to deal with team dynamics related to decisions about the pace of the trek and the distance covered each day.

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What can we learn

C:
ology and resilience?

¹ Sqn Ldr Jodie Blackadder-Weinstein

Definition of *resilience* in English:

resilience



(also **resiliency**)

NOUN

[mass noun]

- 1 The capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness.
‘the often remarkable resilience of so many British institutions’
- 2 The ability of a substance or object to spring back into shape; elasticity.
‘nylon is excellent in wearability, abrasion resistance and resilience’

+ More example sentences

+ More example sentences

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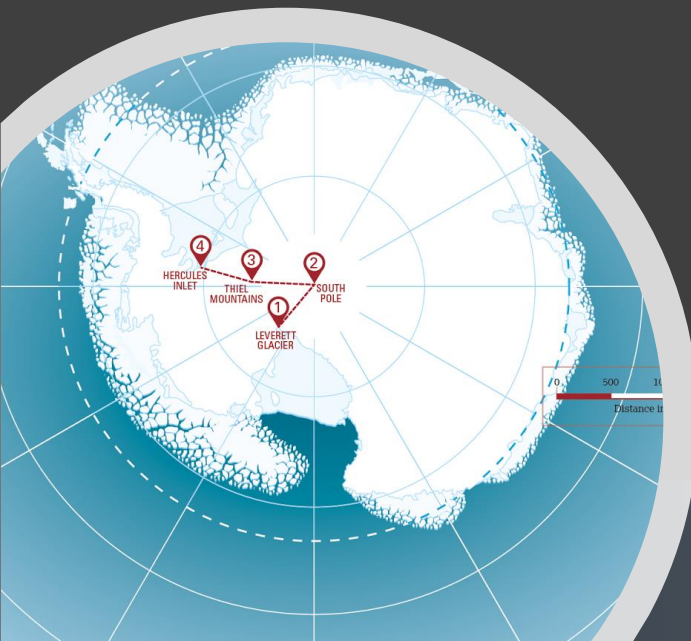


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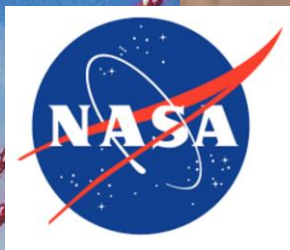
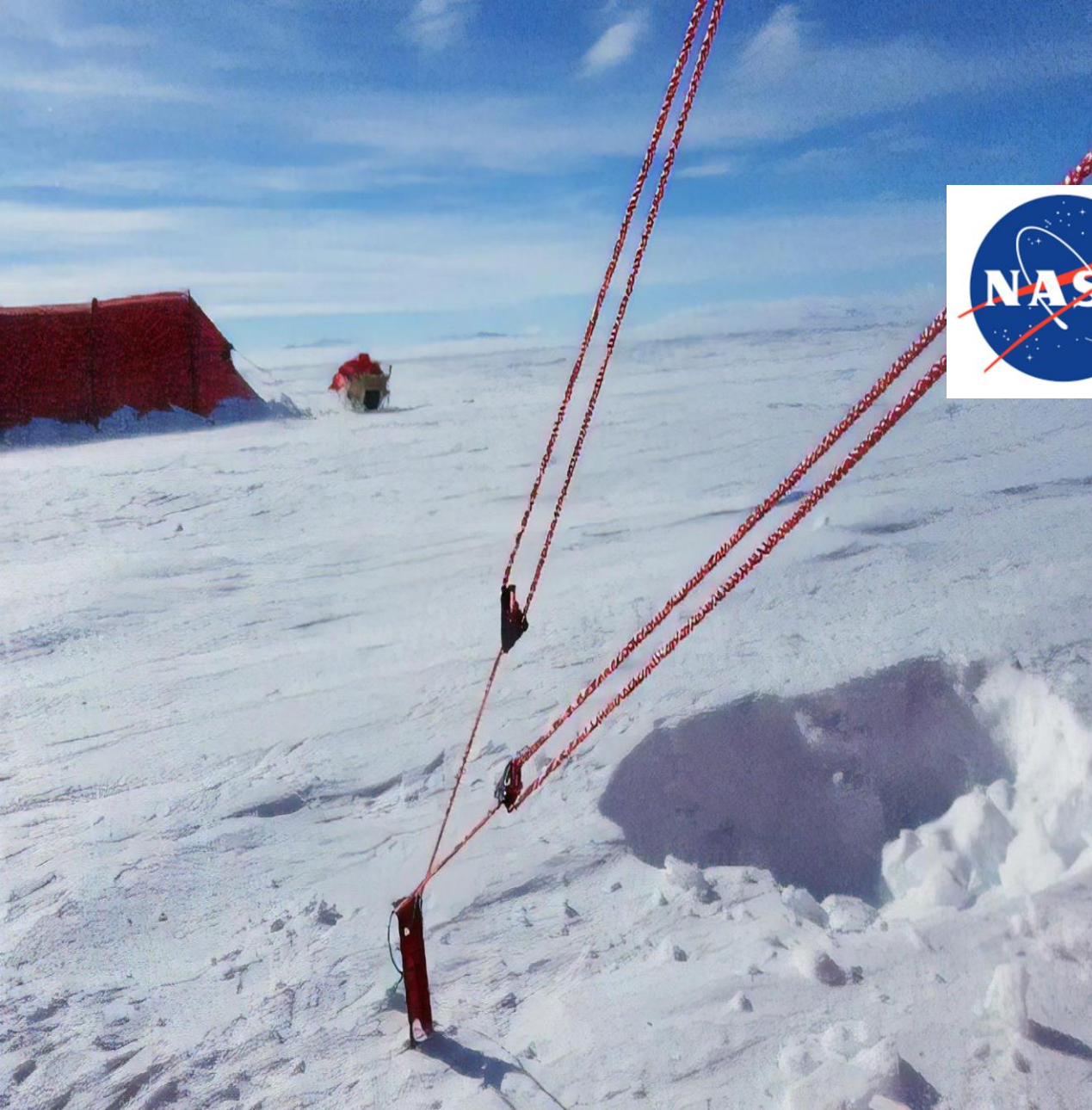
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- Opportunistic research
- Physiological
- Psychological
- Endocrine

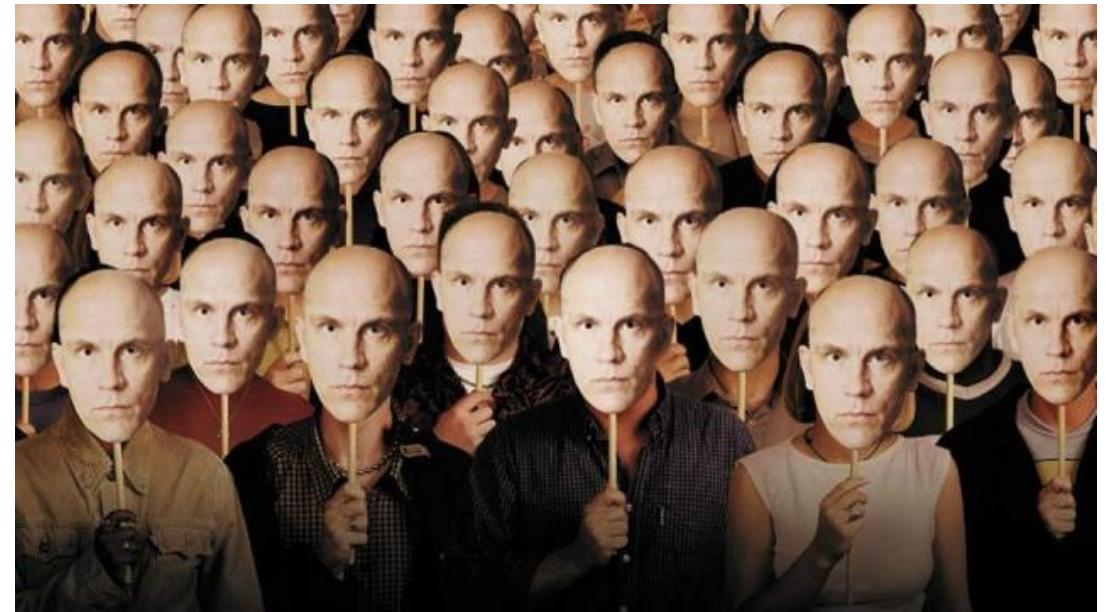


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Psychological study



Values - Pre and Post Exped Difference





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Pace vs Distance

(Differing Agendas)



Pace vs Distance

The importance of
having a shared goal

Do all of the team
share that goal?



Honesty the
best policy?



Honesty the best policy?

Do you have regular team meetings involving all of your team?

What if they have a different opinion to the group?



Team member
conflicts affecting
the team



Team member conflicts affecting the team

How do you
manage team
conflict?

Managing different
personalities in a
stressful environment?



What would be done differently/repeated?

SELECTION NEWS



8 month follow up currently being explored...

What
Next?



...and then finally at 2 years.



