

Super Soldiers: The Ethical, Legal and Social Implications

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“The Spartan city-state produced what has been perhaps one of the most ruthless military forces in recorded history . . . Today, with the advent of unmanned systems that operate across land, sea, air and space, our hopes are attached to the idea that we will soon be able to fight our battles with soldiers pressing buttons in distant command centres.”¹

Technology has had many positive and negative effects in society throughout the turn of the 21st century. But what happens when military technology clashes with the International Laws of War when the topic of creating super soldiers is introduced? In *Super Soldiers: The Ethical, Legal and Social Implications*, editors Jai Galllott and Mianna Lotz travel the legal, ethical, and social implications using military technology to create enhanced soldiers on the battlefield would have in a global setting.² Galllott and Lotz suggest that to better understand the complex legal framework of super soldiers and

¹ See JAI GALLLOTT & MIANNA LOTZ *SUPER SOLDIERS: THE ETHICAL, LEGAL AND SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS* 1 (Jai C. Galllott & Mianna Lotz, 2015).

² See Galllott & Lotz, *supra* note 1, at 1.

the impact it would have globally, a critical analysis of the International Laws of War and Geneva Conventions are required.

While this book is broken down into thirteen different chapters, consisting of many different authors, editors Jai Galliot and Mianna Lotz are certainly qualified to edit and spearhead this newly published book. Galliot is currently a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the University of South Wales in Sydney, Australia. His area of expertise revolves around newly developed military technology and cyber warfare. He also has a profound background in military warfare strategies and applied ethics. Galliot earned a PhD in military ethics from Macquarie University and is a former Naval Officer in the Royal Australian Navy. Lotz is currently a Senior Lecturer in the Development of Philosophy at Macquarie University. Additionally, she possesses a background in bioethics, applied ethics, and social philosophy.

This book appears to be written in a way that slants military technology to be this evil aspect that the military uses in order to advance certain military objectives. Galliot and Lotz describe current wars are being fought by “messy business[men].”³ This book begins with chapter 2, by defining, describing, and “justifying” what super soldiers are specifically. Chapter 2 further details what human-machine systems are, and how they directly relate to super soldiers as a theoretical post-humanist approach is described to explain how creating super soldiers is possible. Then, the book turns to chapter 3, where the distinction between man and machine is explain and how the thin line separating the two cannot become blurred. Additionally, a new approach is introduced to better explain the relationship between human bodies and technologies.

³ See Galliot & Lotz, *supra* note 1, at 1.

Chapter 4 takes a bit of an unexpected turn where it details that not all enhancements are artificial. A deep look into traditional military enhancements and how the war in the Middle East is sparking new “cultural training.” Additionally, chapter 4 highlights how diversity in training for military soldiers will help avoid cultural incidents during warfare. Next in chapter 5, the issue of “military necessity” and how that term specifically relates to military technology enhancement is explored. This chapter suggests that soldier enhancements are inconsistent with the long-term goal of peace and “military necessity.” Chapter 6 dives into Western democracies, where the difference between traditional military enhancement and artificial enhancements are detailed. Chapter 6 also explores how military enhancements in technology aid in creating private military contractors and mercenaries.

Discussion of failed previous advancements in military technology are discussed in chapter 7. From the simply bow and arrow, to modern-day drones, and everything in between are discussed in chapter 7 and how some flaws in military technology were used. Chapter 8 takes an interesting look at the relationship between the military, technology, and the effect it ultimately has on the individual soldier. This chapter also describes the potential for substance abuse by military veterans, and how advanced in military technology may be a leading cause. Chapter 9 examines the biological effects military technology may have on soldiers when experiencing extreme morally challenging situation during war. A look into the psychologically appropriate levels of soldiers in order to be effected by military enhancement are also mentioned.

Chapter 10 explores the notion of military surgical innovations and how it may play a role in human soldiers. Chapter 10 also discusses the ethical implication with

experimenting on human soldiers as well as the dangers and risks that may be experienced. Chapter 11 investigates the responsibility to actually enhance soldiers for the military. Chapter 11 additionally details the general nature of responsibility the military has in war theory to actually enhance soldiers. Chapter 12 details emerging military technology and how those technologies play a role in the military today. Chapter 12 also suggests that it would be impossible for new military technologies to fully conform to the legal operations of the Geneva Conventions. Finally, chapter 13 considers how the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) should respond to the challenges posed by super soldiers being used as warfighters on the battlefield.

This book was most likely written to appease higher education students and other proclaimed successful educational scholars. While this book is very informative, there is a slight slant that bends the message of this book to automatically assume that using military technology to create or enhance super soldiers is ethically, morally, and legally wrong. There was very little objective analysis, often resulting in one-sided data to determine a one-sided answer and solution. Most of the authors have a background in ethics, especially the editors, and I think more of a background in actual military infantry experiences may have been helpful. It is very easy to give advice and criticize something you have no first-hand experiences of. I would like to have seen both arguments in the book surround super soldiers, rather than just the one side provided. Overall, this book is good people to live on theory, but for the realists in the world, this book is just another example of how anti-war scholars can twist theory to produce a massively on-sided argument.

