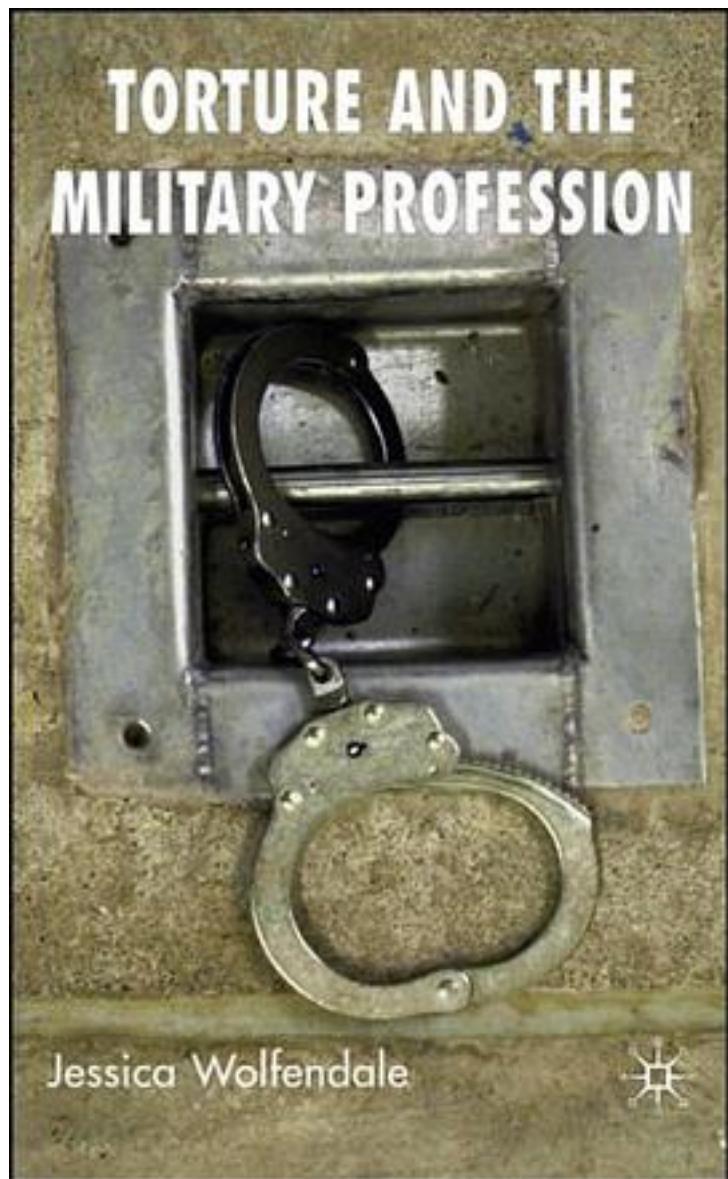


Torture and the Military Profession



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Torture is banned in international law and condemned by government and military officials. Yet military torture is widespread. Despite the military's claim to be a profession bound by high moral standards, military personnel are involved in the illegal and immoral use of torture. This discrepancy between rhetoric and reality demands explanation. What's wrong with the military profession? Torture and the Military Profession explores this question by bringing together a philosophical analysis of military professional ethics with an examination of military training and the training of torturers. Jessica Wolfendale argues that by claiming professional status, the military is constrained by high moral standards that forbid the use of torture. Yet in most cases it is military personnel who are torturers. She demonstrates that this discrepancy between rhetoric and reality occurs not because of human weakness but because basic and elite military training instils dispositions linked to crimes of obedience, aided by a perverted version of professionalism. By undermining the ability of military personnel to uphold the laws of war, she argues that this training seriously undermines the military's claim to be professional. If the military is genuinely committed to its stated moral values, then it must radically rethink current training methods.

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目录:

[Torture and the Military Profession](#) [下载链接1](#)

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