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FROM THE EDITOR

The Who of Leadership

Douglas R. Lindsay, Editor in Chief, JCLD

It is common in the leader development space for people to talk about the “why.” At a fundamental level, this makes sense. We should know why we are doing something, or in some cases, not doing something. We should know why we feel the way that we do. We should know why we are choosing to work somewhere. We should know why we are showing up the way that we are. Understanding our why, helps us to contextualize what is going on around us and provides fidelity to the decisions and sacrifices that we are willing to make. People often will refer to this as their passion or their purpose. Regardless, it serves as an orienting function for ourselves, and even those with whom we interact. As leaders, we must understand this, and we must get our why right or we could be operating out of alignment with our actions.

If we have a clear enough why, it keeps everything else in focus. That doesn’t mean we won’t take detours, but it does mean that we have a way to find our way back. It doesn’t mean we won’t make mistakes, but it provides guidance on how to recover from those missteps. When we look at our why as it relates to being a leader, it helps us to frame what our leadership is all about, its larger purpose. At the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) this is codified in the mission: To educate, train and inspire men and women to become officers of character motivated to lead the U.S. Air Force and Space Force in service to our nation. Endemic in that statement are several whys. There is a why around the notion of being a leader. There is a why around the type of leader, a leader of character, one should aspire to be. There is a why around a cause bigger than oneself. There is a why around professionalism. Finally, there is a why around service. Individually, each of those whys are worthwhile. Put together, however, they form a superordinate why that can be a powerful motivating force for one’s life. Those who journey down such a road quickly realize, however, it is not without bumps, bruises, or sacrifice. They also realize it is about more

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than themselves. A leader of character takes the time to understand, consider, and value those they are entrusted to lead. That is, in part, why USAFA developed the Leader of Character Framework¹ that focuses on living honorably, lifting others, and elevating performance. It is an aspirational framework that not only helps one to understand how they are to be a leader, but also how to provide, protect, and develop those they lead...the who. If the why is our orienting function, then the who is our value proposition.

Whether in formal leadership position or not, we all have influence on those around us. A leader understands this influence and endeavors to maximize that value. Not in a self-serving manner, as is often highlighted in headline news, but in a way that supports the *why* and the *who*. Granted, this is no easy task. There are a myriad of challenges and inducements to act in opposition to the *why* and counter to the value of the *who*. In fact, leaders often fail not because of a lack of knowledge or expertise, but because of failure to manage the discretion that they are given. For that reason, organizations spend billions of dollars every year on leader development. They realize that the balance between the *why* and the *who* is vital.

Coincidentally, what often hangs people up is that they feel that they are not leaders or it does not apply to them because they are not in a formal leadership position. The shortsightedness of these thoughts is that they deny the individual of the awareness of the influence and impact that they currently have. It not only robs the individual of their development and the impact that they have, it also affects the organization. We lead from where we are, whether that be a follower or a formally appointed leader. Our organizations need us to lead where we are. The people around us need us

to lead where we are. Our teams need us to lead where we are. This manifests itself in many different ways. It is reflected in the actions that we take at work, when people are around, and when they are not. It is revealed in the words that we say and the language that we use. For example, when a leader's decision is counter to our own opinion, what are we doing and saying to either support or impede that decision? What impact do our words and actions have on the success of that decision? How are we influencing and leading those around us in those situations? If we notice an area that needs development in ourselves, what are we doing about it? Are we willing to make the investment in ourselves to be better for those around us—to show up better tomorrow than we did today? That is leadership, and it doesn't require a formal position or title. However, it does allow us to support and influence the *who* of our organizations.

It involves a developmental mindset that is fully aware of how we are showing up in the present, but also is mindful of what we will need to be, leadership-wise, in the future. It is about developing leadership capacity in ourselves, but also in those around us. While this sounds rather straightforward, the challenge often comes in balancing those aspects with also being technically proficient at our tasks. Often, we tend to place the urgency of our tasks ahead of potentially more distal development of self and others. This makes sense, of course, because we can often get immediate feedback if we are not performing on our task whereas feedback on our development may come down the road. Therefore, people often tend to prioritize the task—the *why* or what—at the expense of the *who*. The reality is that it is a balance of the two. Effective leaders do not sacrifice one for the other. They mutually support the *why* and the *who*. They see development as a core competency of what they are doing. They see the influence and development of those around them

¹ <https://caplalacaplfwstorprod01.blob.core.usgovcloudapi.net/web/character-development-project/repository/developing-leaders-of-character-conceptual-framework.pdf>

as part of their why and their identity as one who leads. They don't see the who as a means to an end for what they need to do, but as a critical component. Think back to the effective leaders you have worked with before. What words do you use to describe them? There are likely words that describe who they were and what they did. However, chances are there are more words to describe who they were (person) versus just what they did (task). That is because effective leaders make those around them better. The powerful message here is that everyone can develop in those areas and it doesn't require a certain title or rank. It requires intentionality, perseverance, and humility.

With this in mind, we clearly need to understand our why. We also need to understand the who and we are included in that who. Leadership, at least effective leadership, comes with an awareness and understanding of both. Regardless of where you are at in your leadership journey, you can lead here and lead now.

In This Issue

In this Issue of the JCLD, you will notice two distinct parts. In the first part, there are several articles focusing on the USAFA Leader of Character (LoC) Framework. These articles are designed to explain what each of the three areas of the framework means: Living Honorably, Lifting Others, and Elevating Performance. Each article is a deep dive for those who want to understand how to develop specific habits and behaviors of a leader of character. While focused for those at USAFA, all leaders can learn from these articles regardless of your domain. In the second part, we continue our annual connection to the National Character & Leadership Symposium (NCLS)² held every February at the United States Air Force Academy. NCLS is a multi-

day, intentionally focused symposium on character and leadership. It brings together a wide range of local, national, and international leaders around a particular theme. The theme lines up with one of USAFA's organizational outcomes. This year's theme was ethics and respect for human dignity³.

The issue begins with an orienting article by Scott Heyler (USAFA Class of 1994) and Michele Johnson who discuss the Leader of Character Framework at USAFA. They begin by explaining how the framework came to be, and then go on to discuss how it is integrated at the institution. They finish by setting up the need for the following three articles on each of the specific components of the framework.

The first of the three LoC articles focuses on how a leader lifts others. In this article, Johnson and colleagues discuss what it means to lift others by examining how to exert a positive influence on others. They walk the reader through five leader responsibilities that underlie lifting others. The responsibilities are being mindful of others, helping others envision their best possible selves, motivating others to work toward their best possible selves, guiding others in their progress, and creating and nurturing a culture of accountability. This in-depth review of leader responsibilities includes behavioral examples to help guide the reader on how to integrate them into their own leadership and leadership development.

The second article examines the importance of living honorably. Mark Jensen and Adam Pelsner discuss what it means to live honorably as leaders in the profession of arms. They walk the leaders through a review of honor to include linguistics, history, philosophy, and

² <https://www.usafa.edu/character/national-character-leadership-symposium-ncls/>

³ A copy of the white paper that explains the outcome can be found at: <https://www.usafa.edu/app/uploads/Ethics-and-Respect-White-Paper-approved.pdf>

then propose a model for honorable living that includes aspects for the code and community. They summarize by stating, “Leaders living honorably belong to a virtuous honor community (the military organization) with a unique and specific good (defense of the nation), a hierarchical organization (the system of rank and advancement), and an honor code.” Included throughout the article are specific recommendations for leaders.

The third article in this section by Heyler and colleagues reviews how a leader of character elevates performance, for themselves, and those around them. They recommend, based on evidence from the military and business experiences, several constructs that form the foundation for elevating performance. They are flexible and adaptive leadership, moral performance/positive organizational ethics, and ethical culture. They tie those constructs into the Air Force Major Performance Areas—executing the mission, leading people, managing resources, and improving the unit—in order to provide guidance on how to elevate the performance of individuals and organizations. Taken together, the three preceding articles, along the Leader of Character Framework, serve as a guide for developing leaders of character.

Switching sections in the issue, we turn to the NCLS theme of ethics & respect for human dignity, which is one of institutional outcomes at USAFA. The institution expects cadets to graduate with a combination of knowledge, skills, and responsibilities reflected in nine outcomes.⁴ This section begins with an in-depth look at what is meant by ethics and respect for human dignity. Authors Pelser and Jensen step the reader through what it means by addressing moral knowledge, respect for human dignity, moral decision-making, and how one can develop habits of moral

excellence. It is a great read for those interested in understanding one of the critical aspects of becoming a leader of character.

The next article is a follow up to a provocative article that Drs. Leonard Wong and Steve Gerras of the U.S. Army War College wrote in 2015 about dishonesty in the U.S. Army. Their new article titled *Still Lying to Ourselves: A Retrospective Look at Dishonesty in the Army Profession* highlights the reactions to the original article and subsequent actions that have been taken. They step the reader through several stages of denying the obvious, to taking notice, and finally, to understanding what it really means for the profession. It is an enlightening journey to help a large organization grapple with, and ultimately address, a significant challenge.

We follow that thought-provoking piece with some reflections on ethics at the tactical level by U.S. Navy RAMD (Ret) Margaret Klein and CDR (Ret) Timothy Demy. In this article, they share about some of the key tensions and questions that exist in most squadrons and tactical units. Through their own personal reflections and experiences, they highlight how ethical decisions and actions are critical at all levels of the organization. While ethics are often thought of at the organizational level, the insights that they share indicate how it is vitally important especially at the tactical level.

David Keller (USAFA Class of 1990), Director of the Hollingsworth Center for Ethical Leadership for the Corps of Cadets at Texas A&M University, next discusses efforts they have taken to advance the core value of respect within students and faculty. He begins by covering some of the challenges Senior Military Colleges (SMCs) face, and then moves on to how they went about implementing their Corps Leadership Development Model. This article

⁴ <https://www.usafa.edu/academics/outcomes/>

highlights intentional steps that they took to create alignment through programs and competencies aimed at increasing respect.

Laura Parson and colleagues next discuss how they are implementing their Ethical Leadership Framework at Air University (AU) to create alignment across its leadership development programs. Specifically, through qualitative and quantitative analysis, they identify 18 competencies of Air Force ethical leadership by collecting and analyzing data from across the Air University enterprise (students, faculty, staff, etc.). As a result of this study, they will use this information to help guide curriculum development in order to support the development of these competencies for all Air University students.

Continuing the theme of ethics and respect for human dignity, Peter Reiley of The Pennsylvania State University discusses how leadership and character development can be influenced through ethics education. In his article, he discusses several situations in the military that can make ethical challenges difficult to recognize and overcome. He follows this with a discussion on how intentional ethics education can be utilized to help overcome those challenges to support both joint and multinational efforts.

In a unique contribution to the JCLD, Christian Miller and Cadets Caden Wilson, Marc Brunner, and Madelyn Letendre offer their thoughts on honesty and character. The article begins with each cadet offering a critique on Miller's previous work on honesty and character. They offer their insights on where they feel Miller has missed the mark on his conceptualizations of virtue labeling, honesty and utilitarianism, and motivation as it relates to honesty. In an eloquent series of responses, Miller answers each of the critiques and

expertly displays how we can address criticism when it is levied against our ideas, thoughts, and work.

We follow with an article by Charles Dusch about General Benjamin O. Davis, Jr. This is the first of a two-part biographical essay where highlighting Davis' career beginning with his upbringing, and moving through his time as the Commander of the 332nd Fighter Group. In this detailed essay, Dusch walks the reader through several pivotal times in Davis' career highlighting his courage under fire, his exacting standards and discipline, his tenacity and commitment, and his ability to innovate and find a way forward.

The final article is by Greig Glover (USFA Class of 1983). Glover, a former hospital CEO for Mayo Clinic Health Systems, shares his experiences as they relate to the COVID-19 crisis. Through firsthand accounts, he shares what it was like working in the health care industry as COVID-19 took over the health care system. His insights, personal examples, challenges, successes, and lessons learned as the health care field struggled and adapted to the global pandemic, offers a unique perspective on struggle and perseverance in the midst of unprecedented challenges.

Book Reviews

As an added contribution to the field of character and leadership development, we include several book reviews intended to highlight some of the great work that is being done in these domains. Since there are too many books to read, as thousands come out every year on these topics, we endeavor to highlight several of them in every issue that can aid you in your own development. For this issue, we would like to offer three such reviews. The first is a review of *Rotten: Why Corporate Misconduct Continues and What to Do About It* by Marc Epstein and Kirk Hanson. The book talks

about corporate misconduct, why it exists, and what can be done to mitigate it. Through leveraging their decades of experience and past examples of misconduct, they discuss steps that can be taken to prevent it from happening. It is an important read regarding what organizations can do to minimize misconduct. The second review is on *Grit – The Power of Passion and Perseverance* by Angela Duckworth. In this work, Duckworth examines the power grit has to improve performance through presenting examples across many different domains (e.g., corporate, athletics, etc.) as well as through her own research. She finishes the book discussing how to build grit. It is a great read for those looking for ways to improve their performance. The third review is of *Wellbeing at Work: How to Build Resilient and Thriving Teams* by Jim Clifton and Jim Harter. In this book, the authors discuss practical ways that one can assess, intervene, and even enhance wellbeing. They do this through examining the concepts of feedback for hybrid teams, the importance of interesting work, and career wellbeing among other important topics. They finish their work by presenting practical examples that can be utilized in the “new normal” work environment. It is hoped that through examining these books, you will be able to support your ongoing developmental efforts.

Profile in Leadership

In every issue of the JCLD, we have a section where we do a deep dive on a leader, since we know that intentional investigation of what previous leaders have done can help robust and inform our own leadership and character development. Understanding what these noted leaders were dealing with, the decisions they made, and the outcomes that resulted, are very informative and help us learn from one another. For this issue’s profile, John Abbatiello (USFA Class of 1987) examines General James H. “Jimmy” Doolittle.

He keys in on Eighth Air Force Memorandum 75-1, which dealt with crew rotations during World War II. Through his examination, Abbatiello describes Doolittle’s decision processes and need for moral courage in countering the culture of the time regarding aircrews and targeting. He highlights examples, such as the targeting of Berlin, to show how Doolittle, even though he was at opposition with his superiors, was able to effect change in organizational culture.

Looking Ahead

Historically, the JCLD has been published three times a year. In the future, we are undergoing a revision that will add changes to the format and content of the Journal. We will still keep our focus on character and leadership development, but we will incorporate formal sections (e.g., Research, Program/Intervention, Insights, etc.) that will help to organize the content into more predictable segments. More will follow on the upcoming changes, but they will take place over the next 12 months.

If you have an interest in submitting manuscripts to the JCLD or know of someone who would be interesting to have a conversation with, please contact me at douglas.lindsay@afacademy.af.edu with your ideas.

FEATURE ARTICLES

Enhancing the USAFA Leader of Character Framework: What Does it Mean to Live Honorably, Lift Others and Elevate Performance?

Scott Heyler, United States Air Force Academy

Michele Johnson, United States Air Force Academy

When we arrived at the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) in 2006 as Air Officer Commanding (AOC) Master's Program students, we were excited for the opportunity to learn about how we could effectively mentor cadets to become the leaders of tomorrow's Air Force. We took classes on group and individual counseling skills, as well as different theories of leadership. The number one strategic goal of USAFA at that time was to "focus on character and leadership development." In our program, however, we did not explicitly discuss how to develop leaders of character. Because of the transient nature of military organizations and the lack of a unifying approach to character and leader development at USAFA at the time, we faced a significant challenge in deciding, individually and collectively, how to approach the work of developing leaders of character. Each USAFA Mission Element (e.g., Dean of Faculty, Department of Athletics, Cadet Wing et al.) worked hard to accomplish this goal, but without a unifying framework, the task was challenging. Developing leaders of character was a noble goal, but it was difficult to find anyone or any document that could explain what the Academy actually meant by the term "leader of

Dr. Scott Heyler is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Management at the United States Air Force Academy. He graduated from USAFA in 1994 with a bachelor's degree in Management. He served in the Air Force for over 26 years prior to his retirement in 2020. Dr. Heyler held leadership positions at the squadron, group, wing, major command and air staff levels, and in the joint environment while on active duty. He served in positions in the United States as well as in Germany and Afghanistan. He was the Air Officer Commanding for Cadet Squadron 29 at USAFA from 2007-2009. He received his PhD in Management from Auburn University in 2014. His research interests lie in ethical decision making and organizational leadership. He has published articles in *The Leadership Quarterly* and several other management journals. He teaches in the areas of organizational leadership, power and influence, and business ethics.

character.” It was one of those ideas where “we know it when we see it”, but there was not a true definition on which to focus.

In 2011, a group of USAFA scholars created the document, *Developing Leaders of Character: A Conceptual Framework* (Center for Character and Leadership Development (CCLD), 2011). This paper was grounded in academic research and helped to define a *leader of character*. A leader of character is defined as someone who *Lives Honorably* by consistently practicing the virtues embodied in the Air Force Core Values, *Lifts Others* to their best possible selves, and *Elevates Performance* toward a common and noble purpose. This document gave USAFA a much clearer picture of what it was trying to develop and allowed personnel to focus their efforts accordingly.

Unfortunately, this framework was not widely embraced outside of the Center for Character and Leadership Development (CCLD), and it languished, unutilized, until a few years ago. In the spring of 2019, the USAFA Superintendent Lt. Gen. Richard M. Clark decided to adopt the *Leader of Character Framework* as the foundational model, upon which all character and leader development programs at the Academy, are based. With this command-level direction and support, USAFA was able to make progress in implementing this framework to assist all personnel in their efforts to develop leaders of character. Based on direction

through the USAFA Strategic Plan (USAFA, 2021), Mission Elements across the institution began making strides to “institutionally embrace the Air Force Core Values and Leader of Character Framework.”

In 2022, to cement this alignment, the Officer Development System (2013)¹ was rewritten as the USAFA Manual 36-3526, *Developing Leaders of Character at USAFA*. This document incorporates the original framework and vignettes from USAFA personnel to help cadets and permanent party see themselves in the model. It gives a clearer idea of what characteristics and values define a leader of character, and encourages alignment and integration across USAFA Mission Elements and the headquarters. USAFA personnel are currently working to codify the different assessment mechanisms that exist to help measure progress in developing leaders of character. They are also identifying shortcomings and benchmarking effective assessment tools from other organizations with the ultimate goal of establishing an integrated and effective assessment program for character and leader development at USAFA.

While the Leader of Character Framework helps us understand what a leader of character is and how one is developed at USAFA, it does not give much detail about

¹ USAFA Pamphlet 36-3527, Officer Development System (2013), originally published in 2004, offered leadership development guidance based on three critical objectives embodied in our Oath of Office – identify, commitment, and competence.

Dr. Michele E. Johnson is an Assistant Professor for Officer Development Integration in the US Air Force Academy's (USAFA) Center for Character and Leadership Development. In this role, Dr. Johnson partners with faculty and staff to integrate character and leadership education and training across the 47-month cadet course of instruction. Dr. Johnson also teaches leadership core classes to junior and senior cadets. In addition, during her 25-year active duty career, Colonel (Retired) Johnson commanded squadrons at USAFA and Basic Military Training (BMT), and earned her master's and doctoral degrees from the University of Colorado. Prior to her current position, Dr. Johnson served on the faculty at Air University in the School of Advanced Air and Space Studies and was Dean of Students at the Air Command and Staff College. Her extensive experience encompasses pre-commission education at USAFA, enlisted accession education at BMT, and officer professional military education at Air University.

the subcomponents. As a result, we were left wanting to know more. Specifically, what does it mean to live honorably, lift others, and elevate performance in our day-to-day roles? We needed a better understanding of each of these components – a call to action and a way to bring them to life across USAFA.

A new team of USAFA scholars took up this task. What follows in the next three articles are propositions about what it means to live honorably, lift others, and elevate performance. With a systems approach, we look at each of the components and give a better understanding of how cadets, faculty, and staff can live out each of the components of the Leader of Character Framework. The aim is to help cadets, faculty, coaches, and staff members bring these components to life in cadet squadrons, in classrooms, and on the athletic fields. A few of the common themes across the papers include accountability, community, and culture. The writing teams are from a range of disciplines and academic departments, so you will see different perspectives in the ways the three framework components can be operationalized. One of the strengths of the Leader of Character Framework is that there are numerous ways to approach developing leaders of character. These three papers highlight complementary perspectives as all members work together to accomplish the USAFA mission.

Organizations are complex systems and their leaders need to understand that decisions made in one area can have impact across the organization. One cannot live honorably in a vacuum—living honorably happens in the context of interactions with others. It is also critical that the environment created by leaders encourages honorable living. Lifting others is not just about leaders interacting with subordinates; leaders need to be mindful of others, help motivate and guide them to work toward their best possible selves, and encourage a culture where people are encouraged to look out for one another. Finally, elevating performance is not only about working harder and making the most

productive individual contributions, although that is critical. More importantly, it is about creating an environment where individuals can thrive and thereby elevate the performance of the organization as a whole. This starts with an adaptable and flexible leadership approach while also establishing an ethical culture. Under the auspices of an ethical culture, one can then apply different leadership and management constructs to ensure performance is maximized.

Our hope is that the following three articles provide some tools and techniques that will assist in your efforts to apply the *Leader of Character Framework* in your day-to-day roles at USAFA, regardless of your position. The Air Force and Space Force need leaders of character to ensure future success. It is our job to ensure they are developed effectively.

♦ ♦ ♦

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FEATURE ARTICLES

Lifting Others

Michele Johnson, United States Air Force Academy

Steven Jones, United States Air Force Academy

Robert Reimer, United States Air Force Academy

Hans Larsen, United States Air Force Academy

Introduction

During one of their many conversations, Colonel Murphy mentioned to Captain Johnson that she would be a squadron commander someday. Although she was a little surprised, she appreciated his confidence. As her supervisor, Col Murphy believed in Capt Johnson's abilities when she was not yet able to see for herself. He projected an image of what the future might look like, and he projected an image of a "possible self" she could not yet imagine. Knowing someone else was mindful of her development motivated Capt Johnson to work toward achieving that possibility. Prior to Col Murphy saying she would be a squadron commander someday, she could not think that far into the future. She was busy completing day-to-day, short-term tasks. However, Murphy knew it was part of his responsibility to develop her in the longer term. Even as a busy group commander, he was mindful of others and their roles in the organization. He helped Capt Johnson see a version of herself she could not yet visualize; he motivated her to work toward that possibility; and he took the time to guide her along the way. In short, Col Murphy's actions represented what the Air Force Academy describes as lifting others.

In another vignette, a few years prior, Senior Master Sergeant Prudich closed the office door and said, "LT, let's talk." Nervously, First Lieutenant Johnson listened to his feedback. He proceeded to mentor her, a young officer who had exhibited a bit of an attitude when things did not go exactly as planned with one of their senior-ranking

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co-workers. The Senior Non-Commissioned Officer knew it was part of his role to develop the young officers he worked with, even though they outranked him. Looking back, Lt Johnson appreciated the time SMSgt Prudich took to motivate her and to guide her back to a better path. His efforts to lift others reminded her that she could do better, and he held her accountable to that for the rest of the time they worked together.

What can we learn from these stories? They illustrate what lifting others looks like in action. Effective leaders accomplish the mission and lift others to their best possible selves. *Lifting others* involves “exerting a positive influence upon themselves and others” (Quinn & Quinn, 2015, p. 2). We can all think back to someone who helped guide us in our personal or professional development. Someone who lifts others can be a parent, a friend, a supervisor, a coach, an instructor, or even a subordinate. In addition, the act of lifting others does not have to be a big, formal act. Lifting others also happens in small moments.

Lifting others is a process that describes accomplishing tasks and the mission with a specific focus on developing others. The process involves interdependent relationships within an organizational context. Developing the untapped potential in those around us is an important way to achieve the mission. The purpose of this paper is to examine the practice of lifting others as a strategy to being a leader of character. The Air Force Academy defines a leader of character as someone who respects the dignity of others and

practices habits consistent with the Air Force Core Values by: *Living Honorably, Lifting Others to their best possible selves, and Elevating Performance* toward a common and noble purpose (USAF Manual 36-3526, 2022). While lifting others has been broadly defined by the Air Force Academy (CCLD, 2011), our contribution is to take a deeper look and move from broad concepts to practical application.

Lifting others is something practiced and habituated by leaders. We present five leader responsibilities to suggest key actions individuals can practice in their daily roles as leaders and leader-developers. Five leader responsibilities essential to lifting others include:

- being mindful of others,
- helping others envision their best possible selves,
- motivating others to work toward their best possible selves,
- guiding others in their progress,
- creating and nurturing a culture of accountability

Before exploring each of these responsibilities, we want to clarify our use of the term leader. We use the term to refer to any person who influences others to contribute to organizational effectiveness. Lifting others does not require members to supervise anyone or to hold a formal leadership role, but does require them to practice influence. Anyone who is influencing others is acting as a leader and can practice lifting others to enhance organizational performance. Lifting others may involve, but does not require a particular status

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within an organizational hierarchy. In our opening vignettes, Col Murphy outranked Capt Johnson, and he was in a good position to lift Capt Johnson. However, SMSgt Prudich lifted Lt Johnson when he mentored her, even though she outranked him. Most organizational contexts are rooted in hierarchical relationships – the military and the Air Force Academy are no exception. However, there are many circumstances where junior organizational members can practice lifting higher-ranking members. In short, any individual can lift another person, and another person can be lifted by any individual.

Leader Responsibilities

In recognizing the importance of lifting others in the process of developing leaders of character, the following questions remain—What responsibilities do we have as leaders when it comes to lifting others, and how can we best develop the skills to lift others? The following five responsibilities are not exhaustive but help to operationalize the practice of lifting others and provide ways in which we can develop lifting others as a skill set.

Responsibility #1: Lift others by being mindful of others.

To be able to engage in the process of lifting others, leaders first need to be mindful of others- prioritizing relationships with those around them and what those relationships need in the context of the organization. Being a leader is more than just giving motivational

speeches and setting a great vision. Leaders also need to be aware of, and have regard for, the people they work with, whether in a supervisory role, as peers, or as subordinates. Being mindful of others allows leaders to get to know the people they work with and to see them more clearly as individuals who want to feel valued. Being mindful of others also helps us realize we are not alone in our endeavors. The people who are alongside us in our professional and personal developmental journeys can help us as we learn and grow.

Empathy. A key skill for becoming mindful of others is having empathy toward others (Quinn & Quinn, 2015). Dr. Brené Brown, a researcher on leading with courage and vulnerability, defines empathy as “connecting with people so we know we’re not alone when we’re in struggle” (Brown, 2019, p. 1). She goes on to explain that, “Empathy is a way to connect to the emotion another person is experiencing; it doesn’t require that we have experienced the same situation they are going through” (Brown, 2019, p. 1).

The good news is that our empathy skills are not static—we can develop our empathy skills over time, but it takes practice. Practicing empathy can be as simple as being kind, being curious, refraining from judgment, actively listening, and communicating that the other person is not alone in their feelings (Brown, 2018, 2019). The positive influence of having empathy for another person includes being able to take

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another person's perspective, which helps break down biased stereotypes, and accepting and appreciating the differences we see in others (Goleman, 1995). As an added bonus, focusing on helping others by empathizing with them often results in improvements in our own performance (Quinn & Quinn, 2015). Overall, being mindful of others, to include prioritizing relationships with those around us and practicing our empathy skills, is an excellent way to build a foundation for our lifting others toolkit.

Responsibility #2: Lift others by helping them envision their "best possible selves."

The Leader of Character Framework (CCLD, 2011) intentionally focuses on lifting others to their best possible selves, and it is the last portion of that statement that is the focus of our second responsibility. Lifting others involves more than just helping someone complete tasks or achieve success—it involves helping them become the best possible version of themselves. As a first step in enabling that to happen, we contend that it is necessary to help people envision what their best possible self might be.

Sense of Self. Each person has a distinct sense of self, an internal understanding of who they are, the characteristics they possess, and the roles that are important to them as individuals. To get a glimpse of one's sense of self, the Leader of Character model

invites you to think about the ways in which you might complete the sentence "I am _____." Perhaps more importantly, consider what your answers reveal about who you are, what is important to you, and who you aspire to be.

For many of us, the first thing that comes to mind in completing the "I am _____" sentence may be the various roles each of us play in our personal and professional lives. For instance, cadets at the Air Force Academy may think of themselves as students, athletes, or friends. Permanent party members may think of themselves as faculty members, instructors, colleagues, or coaches. As each of us thinks more deeply about completing that sentence, we may start thinking of adjectives that describe us, such as patient, thoughtful, hardworking, and reflective. Each of us is likely to complete that sentence somewhat differently, but the bottom line is that the exercise forces us to reflect upon who we are. Furthermore, the descriptors we come up with provide a lens through which we see ourselves and interpret our own experience.

Possible Self. As a complement to the idea that we each have our own sense of self, Markus & Nurius (1986) proposed the idea of "possible selves," as what an individual could become at some point in the future. For instance, a cadet at the Air Force Academy may currently focus on being a student, an athlete, or a good friend. However, these same cadets could also see

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their future selves in terms of being military officers, successful leaders, pilots, logisticians, or in social roles like being parents or spouses.

The notion of a possible self is important because it can have important motivational consequences. In cases where one's possible self is different from one's current sense of self, the gap can serve as a motivational spark. For instance, research by Oyserman and colleagues (e.g., Oyserman, Bybee, & Terry, 2006; Oyserman & Destin, 2010; Oyserman & Novin, 2014) show that thinking about a positive possible self can motivate people to make that self a reality. This is clearly demonstrated in the opening vignette when Col Murphy encouraged Capt Johnson to see herself in a future leadership role that she had never even considered until he intervened.

As suggested in the opening vignette, the possible self has implications for leadership development. As Markus & Nurius (1986) point out, there are many different possible selves. However, the possible selves people are most likely to adopt are those that are most salient—the ones embodied by their role models, illustrated in the symbols around them, and those that others hold as desirable. These environmental features are all conditions that are influenced and, in some cases, controlled by leaders. For example, a cadet may arrive at the Air Force Academy without any interest in pursuing a career in aviation. After immersion in an environment that emphasizes Air Force heritage and flying-related career fields, that same cadet may explore opportunities he or she had not previously considered.

To help others envision their best possible selves, leaders are encouraged to practice three actions in their day-to-day activities. First, leaders are encouraged to be mindful of the example they set—be an exemplar. By embodying the characteristics of their own best

possible selves, leaders can serve as role models. For instance, if a leader wants to encourage others to be people of integrity, it is important they act as a person of integrity committed to consistently doing the right thing. Second, leaders are encouraged to explore possible selves with others while encouraging and supporting them in efforts to work toward those aspirations. One of this paper's authors recently interacted with a fourth-class cadet (freshman) whose sense of self appeared to be defined by not being a good student. This belief was holding him back from effective academic efforts.

The notion of a possible self is important because it can have important motivational consequences.

In this case, the faculty member demonstrated lifting others by helping the cadet see a better possible future. Effective follow through on this initial act also requires providing support and encouragement. Third, leaders can be inclusive by being mindful of how their language and symbols may be perceived by members of different groups. For instance, only showing images of white, male pilots may send a message that the career field is not a realistic possibility for someone who does not look like those images. Instead, purposefully showing inclusive images that represent a diverse range of characteristics allows people to see themselves in similar roles and may motivate them to work toward being successful in those roles.

Responsibility #3: Lift others by motivating them to work toward their best possible selves.

When others envision their best possible selves, they acquire aspirational targets to reach for. Leaders play important roles in challenging and supporting those being lifted, but it is largely up to individuals to commit to and achieve the work. This work requires

more than just a motivational spark; it requires sustained commitment to achieve the aspirational goal. Our third responsibility focuses on what leaders can do to energize the people around them to strive for those targets.

Motivation. Motivation refers to the needs or desires that energize our behavior and guide us to act in particular ways (Myers & DeWall, 2018). One simple form of motivation has to do with maintaining the balance of our physiological systems. For instance, a feeling of hunger can motivate us to find something to eat, while a feeling of thirst can motivate us to find something to drink. A somewhat more complex form of motivation has to do with goal-directed behavior—the things we do to achieve the aspirations we set for ourselves. This form of motivation is what is needed for someone to work toward the target of their possible self.

As Ambrose et al. (2010) note, motivation to engage in goal-directed behavior is driven by two major factors. First, people are more likely to work toward goals they see as valuable. As leaders at the Air Force Academy, we frequently see the importance of this factor in our work with cadets. When cadets are engaged in work they perceive as being worthwhile, they work tirelessly on it, often with amazing results. In contrast, when tasks lack perceived value, energy and enthusiasm for the task are considerably less.

Second, people will work in goal-directed ways to the extent they believe they are capable of reaching their goal. Bandura (1977, 1982) referred to this belief as self-efficacy, and noted that self-efficacy impacts whether individuals will act in goal-directed ways and how much effort they will exert in doing so. Put simply, people are willing to exert effort toward completing tasks they believe they can manage, but will generally avoid activities they believe exceed their capabilities.

This phenomenon is also easy to see in our work with cadets. Cadets who believe they can be successful at a particular task will likely dedicate time and energy to completing it. If, however, they see themselves as incapable of doing what they are asked to do, they are likely to avoid it or they will show markedly less energy in working toward that goal.

Leadership Implications. Becoming one's best possible self is difficult, and it requires a lifetime of work and commitment. One of the reasons so many fall short is likely because they lack the motivation to work toward it. Leaders can fill this void by motivating the people around them to engage in this important work. We encourage leaders to hold up the ideal of a best possible self as a worthy aspiration to work toward and to help people achieve mastery on small tasks before tackling larger challenges, giving them a sense that success is indeed possible. We also encourage leaders to model what success looks like for the people around them and acknowledge that achieving success doesn't often come easily. Finally, we encourage leaders to promote a growth mindset, both in themselves and in others, by emphasizing that one's skills are malleable, success is a product of hard work, and failure is a natural part of the developmental process (Dweck, 2006). Thinking back to our opening vignette, Col Murphy showed Capt Johnson that being a squadron commander was a role worth pursuing and inspired her to believe she could actually do it successfully.

Responsibility #4: Lift others by guiding them in their progress.

Motivation provides people with the energy needed to journey toward becoming their best possible selves, but that does not necessarily mean their developmental path will be smooth. Indeed, no developmental journey worth making is. It often filled with fits and starts, momentary setbacks, changes, and doubts

about whether the hard work is actually worth it. This provides another important challenge for leaders: guiding others to ensure they stay on track.

Guidance. Imagine making a cross-country journey where you are relying on your car's navigation system to help you get to the intended destination. A navigation system is helpful in several ways. First, it provides a broad trip overview and helps manage realistic expectations about the overall journey, and how long it may take. Second, it helps anticipate parts of the trip that require making turns and transitioning between roadways. Third, the system monitors progress and alerts you when you veer from the designated course. Finally, the system provides real-time updates (e.g., about traffic or accidents) that may force you to alter your path.

Like navigation systems, leaders play an important role in guiding those in pursuit of their best possible selves. Leaders provide realistic expectations about what the journey will entail, to include acknowledging the path is a long one and sharing how they themselves are growing as well. One of the best ways for leaders to do this is to monitor their own development and to share their own successes and failures as they pursue their best possible selves. By sharing their experiences, leaders communicate that becoming one's best possible self is a lifetime journey worth taking. Leaders help anticipate challenges, those times when doing the right thing might be particularly difficult. Leaders are attentive to times when we deviate off course or make a decision to shift courses, and they provide encouragement or corrective feedback. Leaders also offer real-time updates about changes in the professional or organizational landscape. By doing so, they ensure the people they lead stay on a productive path to their best possible selves. Thinking back to our examples, Col Murphy didn't simply tell Capt Johnson

she would be a squadron commander one day and leave it at that. He followed up with guidance and support over the course of the next ten years. In addition, SMSgt Prudich continued to guide and mentor Lt Johnson while they worked together, not only when she needed educative feedback.

A key element of leaders taking on these roles is trust. While trust is considered an emergent state, or a result of team experiences (Marks et al., 2001), we know higher levels of trust among team members is linked to higher levels of team performance (DeJong, et al., 2016). Navigation systems in our cars are effective because we choose to use them when we trust them to provide accurate, real-time information about our path. If we lose trust in the system because of untimely inputs or wrong information, we switch it off. The same can be said of leaders, as their effectiveness is likely to plummet if the people around them do not trust them. Col Murphy inspired trust between himself and Capt Johnson based on his commitment to her continual development. She trusted his recommendations for which path would get her closer to her future role as a commander. The same can be said for the relationship between SMSgt Prudich and Lt Johnson. Because he was willing to mentor and guide her even though she outranked him, they established a level of trust that continued through other developmental conversations.

Responsibility #5: Lift others through a culture of accountability.

Where the preceding four responsibilities focus on personal agency, this responsibility focuses upon organizational ownership. Organizations cannot rely on individuals to practice lifting others solely based on personal discretion. The organization must create and maintain a culture where lifting others is evident in the way work is accomplished. Patterns of assumptions and behaviors held by organizational members are

indicators of organizational culture (Schein & Schein, 2017). While leaders can set expectations, culture is ultimately a consequence of what organizational members' experience. As members circulate ideas

lifting others while expressing incompatible patterns of emotion, behavior, and thought. In light of Hogan's (2007) observation that "Who you are, is how you lead," organizations need to consider that a leader's behaviors

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and observations, they establish culture in its truest sense. Every experience provides members clues about acceptable ways to express emotion, behavior, and thought in and through work. This explains why it is insufficient for an organization to uphold lifting others as a value without considering the experiences they create for their members.

Cultivating lifting others as a normative practice depends upon creating and maintaining a culture of accountability. Accountability is a virtue that encompasses the interaction of personal values, professional responsibility, and relationships. Roberts (2021) contends there are three interdependent dimensions of accountability. According to Roberts, accountability is a personal characteristic (i.e., a quality of moral excellence), is state-like (i.e., attributed based on an assigned role or position), and requires action (i.e., interpersonal behaviors that produce emergent states such as respect, trust, truthfulness, and justice). These dimensions offer insight so organizations can establish a culture where lifting others is encouraged and expected.

Accountability: Lifting others as a personal value. Absent accountability, leaders can claim they value

are representative of the leader's values. When leaders value lifting others, they are intrinsically driven to approach tasks and the mission through high quality, developmental relationships.

Organizations can enhance performance by strengthening every employee's readiness to engage the mission in and through lifting others. Thus, we encourage organizations to assess the role of personally-held values in their current culture and to provide opportunities to challenge and support members. As such, attending to their leaders is essential to creating and maintaining an organizational culture of lifting others. While not intended to be exhaustive, important areas for organizations to start their efforts include:

- challenging and supporting leaders with respect to empathy and perspective taking (Davis, 1983),
- growth mindset (Dweck et al., 1995),
- self-concept (Selenta & Lord, Brown, 2004),
- goal orientation (VandeWalle, 1997),
- social desirability (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960),
- self-monitoring (Lennox & Wolfe, 1984),
- humility (Owens et al., 2013), and
- psychological empowerment (Seibert, Wang, & Courtwright, 2011).

Leaders who demonstrate ownership of these and similar concepts are likely to discover intrinsic motives leading to a consistent approach work through lifting others.

Accountability: Lifting others in light of one's status. Roberts' (2021) second perspective is that organizational roles come with the expectation of being

accountable to others. Society commonly places greater expectations on leaders in formal roles. This condition is particularly evident when things go wrong and people call for leaders to be held accountable. For example, after an aircraft accident, people often ask what the pilot could have done to prevent the accident. These expectations persist even when there are contributing factors beyond the pilot's control, such as mechanical failures or adverse weather conditions. We know lifting others is not just for leaders who hold formal authority and responsibility. Lifting others should also exist between peers and from members to their supervisors and leaders. Nonetheless, by virtue of their roles and status, leaders are accountable for establishing and maintaining a culture where lifting others is widely practiced as an integral part of normal work.

Accountability: *Lifting others in action.* The third perspective that Roberts (2021) holds is that accountability is practiced. The organization must account for how members lift others. Organizations have a responsibility to address how leaders, followers, and contexts are or are not conducive to lifting others. Effectively implementing lifting others requires organizational members to master and practice foundational skills. As an entry point, organizations can leverage foundational skills including self-awareness, communication, and teamwork. These skills are common to leadership competency models as skills that enhance leader and organizational performance (for examples see Bartram, 1985; Lombardo & Eichenger, 2009; Scisco et al., 2017). Our perspective is that they are also foundational to lifting others.

Organizations have to develop people and provide resources so that lifting others is experienced as a valued practice. Accurate self-awareness depends heavily on practices such as providing and accepting feedback (e.g., Steffens et al., 2018), mentoring (e.g., Kram, 1985), and coaching (e.g., Ladegard & Gjerde, 2014).

Each activity represents invaluable opportunities to improve self-awareness and to contribute to self-awareness for others. Lifting others is enhanced when every organizational member capitalizes on reflection, feedback, and assessment as tools that inform and support development.

Organizations have to bring communication into focus as a skill that is highly relevant to effectively lifting others, to include structuring and rewarding processes that enhance the interdependence of every organizational member. As addressed elsewhere in this paper, lifting others involves the open exchange of ideas, actively listening, building rapport, and clarifying expectations and goals about best possible selves. Success or misfortune with lifting others rests heavily upon organizations that encourage, practice, and refine the routine expression and exchange of ideas between organizational members.

It should be abundantly clear at this point that lifting others is a team sport. Lifting others rests upon building and maintaining shared motives and aligning these efforts with organizational goals. Lifting others requires organizations to hold day-to-day organizational performance in tension with long-term personal developmental aspirations and needs. Looking back to one of our opening vignettes, SMSgt Prudich held Lt Johnson accountable for her actions. Her actions were important to what was happening in the unit at the time and to her future effectiveness as an organizational leader.

Responsibilities as the Person Being Lifted

While this paper primarily focuses on how we lift others, it is also important to acknowledge how we can allow ourselves to be lifted by others. As the Leader of Character Framework discusses, as developing leaders of character, we have responsibilities for our own

Table 1***Summary of Leader Responsibilities and Recommended Actions***

Responsibility	Performance in Action
<i>Lift others</i> by being mindful of others.	Practice leading with empathy
<i>Lift others</i> by helping them envision their best possible selves.	Be an exemplar - Lead as a role model worthy of being emulated
	Be an encourager - Develop your coaching and mentoring skills to become better equipped to develop others
	Be inclusive - examine your own assumptions, seek to understand others' perspectives, invite collaboration, and promote a sense of belonging by sharing power and cultivating a growth mindset
<i>Lift others</i> by motivating them to work toward their best possible selves.	Draw attention to opportunities and challenges that result in development and growth
	Provide dedicated support for long-term development
	Practice influence to inspire action and commitment toward development
<i>Lift others</i> by guiding them in their progress.	Provide realistic expectations and help anticipate challenges
	Provide encouragement and corrective action, as necessary
	Offer real-time updates about changes in the professional or organizational landscape
<i>Lift others</i> by creating a culture of accountability.	Be accountable-how do organizational members' actions align with the value of <i>lifting others</i> ?
	Establish accountability-how well are leaders fulfilling the expectations that accompany their roles or status in the organization to <i>lift others</i> ?
	Practice accountability-what is needed to enhance supportive contexts and widespread skill development to normalize <i>lifting others</i> ?

personal growth. These responsibilities include owning the pursuit of our identity as a leader of character, as well as embracing our role in responding effectively during purposeful developmental experiences. Essentially, the person being lifted must “show up” in a way that enables the lifting to be effective. Doing this begins with owning our attitude and effort toward being lifted (i.e., we should be responsive to feedback with an appreciative attitude as opposed to being resistant and resentful). In addition, we must embrace the efforts of the person who is lifting us. One simple way to do this is to get into the routine of asking: “How can I best engage with the leader’s effort to lift me in order to further my growth and development?” or “What can I do to respond in a way that makes me perform better?” A great example of this behavior is being open to receiving feedback from others, and better yet, requesting such feedback. This kind of feedback includes elements that challenge us to grow while also providing support and encouragement along the developmental journey. Without these ways of responding to being lifted, we can certainly hinder the leader’s efforts to lift us. Yet, by owning our responsibilities to respond to the lifting efforts, those efforts will be more effective as we grow toward our best possible selves.

Conclusion

This paper provides readers with access to what it means to lift others in practice—a getting started guide for leaders and organizations. We provide examples of what lifting others looks like in action by suggesting key behaviors that support lifting others. The five responsibilities, while not intended as exhaustive, span individual and organizational perspectives. We also know that from the perspective of the person being lifted, it’s important to practice being lifted by others. Table 1 summarizes key responsibilities for lifting others.

Learning how to lift others is an essential part of being a Leader of Character. At the Air Force Academy we strive to be Leaders of Character who Live Honorably, Lift Others, and Elevate Performance, and this paper provides actionable behaviors cadets and other members assigned to USAFA (or any leader for that matter) can take to put the concept of lifting others into action. Knowing why we should lift others is an important first step. Taking practical steps to lift others is critical.

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FEATURE ARTICLES

Living Honorably

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The mission of the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) is “To educate, train and inspire men and women to become officers of character motivated to lead the U.S. Air Force and Space Force in service to our nation.” The present program of character development, the Leader of Character Framework, is organized along three dimensions: living honorably, lifting others, and elevating performance (CCLD, 2011). These dimensions correspond to the three core values of the U.S. Air Force: integrity first, service before self, and excellence in all we do. In order to build, teach, and assess an effective curriculum for the cultivation of leaders of character, we must explain precisely what we mean by each of these elements. In this paper, we will describe the first element: living honorably.

Unfortunately, the reality is that for many USAFA cadets and graduates, the phrase *living honorably* has a negative connotation. This is because many view USAFA’s honor system and honor code in a largely, if not wholly, negative light. They see the honor system, at best, as a legalistic system of burdensome punishments to be feared and, at worst, as a merciless and unjust system of harsh penalties for failures to live up to unreasonably high standards. This negative view of the honor system was recently highlighted for us when we learned of some USAFA graduates who, when they were touring Polaris Hall for the first time, did not want to step foot inside the Wing Honor Board Room, where cadets who have been suspected of violating the Honor Code face the judgments of their peers. Indeed, for many USAFA cadets, honor is not a goal to which they strive with heads held high, but a threat that they try to avoid by keeping their heads down.

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As we will explain, however, living honorably within a good honor community can contribute to our flourishing as human beings and to the success of our profession. We all have room for growth in virtues like honesty, integrity, wisdom, and respect. Belonging to an honor community that holds us accountable to high moral standards can help us to live out these virtues in our personal and professional lives, thereby helping us to become the best version of ourselves. Developing a moral character that is worthy of honor is one of the greatest pursuits of human life. Moreover, while honor communities that are professions, at times, will have to reprove those who violate the community's standards and even remove serious offenders from their ranks in order to maintain the trust of those they serve, both the profession and those members reprov'd can be improved and strengthened in the process.

In an effort to explain and defend the value of living honorably, in the following pages, we will sketch an account of what we take that phrase to mean. Unfortunately, the words honor, and honorably are vague and equivocal in ordinary English usage. What one person means by honorable living is often quite different from what another person means. As a result, we must do a bit of linguistic, historical, and then philosophical work before we can think together about how living honorably can serve as an appropriate goal for leaders at the Air Force Academy.

Linguistics

As we noted above, the word honor in modern English is imprecise and equivocal. In court, *Your Honor* is a title of respect for a judge. On a résumé, *honors and awards* denote impressive performance. At schools and universities, an *honor code* is a list of principles and rules outlining moral and especially academic propriety. Collected together, this assortment of uses does not readily suggest an all-purpose concept. At the same time, we will not find help in the ancient world: in Greek, the word that we translate as honor is *τιμή*, which has just as many variations as its modern English equivalent. The Latin word *honoris*, from which we get honor, yields the same diversity.

Suppose instead that we parse the expression in ordinary English. For example, living honorably could mean living in a way that is worthy of honor. In other words, people who live honorably is one who receives honor or praise in virtue of the way that they live. The advantage of this approach is that we can focus on tangible evidence in rendering our judgments. The disadvantage is that we risk confusing the way one lives with the praise that one receives for the way that one lives. Moral philosophers have long recognized the challenge of distinguishing real moral excellence from the mere appearance of moral excellence. If we focus on the appearance of moral excellence—as we do when we focus exclusively on outward signs such as

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record and rank, we risk the cultivation of leaders who value the appearance of honorable living more than the honorable living itself, who see honorable living as a mere means to an end, and who might be tempted to take shortcuts to the rewards, if the opportunity arose. This interpretation therefore seems unacceptable, especially in the context of military leadership. This distinction between the reality and appearance of moral excellence is found in the wit of the Prussian military tradition, in which soldiers were called to “be better than they seem to be” (Huntington, 1981).

Alternatively, we might parse living honorably in ordinary English as, living well, where explained in terms of the moral life, as we might find it prescribed in the best of our philosophical and religious traditions. In other words, living honorably simply means living morally or living ethically. The problem with this approach is that it fails to deliver an account that reflects the special and exclusive nature of the moral demands of military service. Members of the military think of their profession as calling them to a moral standard that is more demanding than that which applies to ordinary citizens. Such a higher standard, thought to be required, given that the public entrusts the military with defense of the state, and especially with the tools required for defense of the state: the weapons of war. With the tools and permission to employ lethal force comes a special and higher responsibility in the use of that force. Insofar as living honorably must express this higher responsibility, defining it merely as moral or ethical living will not be sufficient.

History

Leaving ordinary English usage behind, consider instead an interpretation informed by the history of honor in the armed forces, especially as told by

Samuel Huntington in *The Soldier and the State* and Kwame Appiah in *The Honor Code* (Huntington, 1959, Appiah, 2010). An advantage of this approach is that it connects our current practices with the history and tradition of military service, providing a rich set of events and figures from which to develop an account. A disadvantage is that we may not like what we find in the history of the concept. In particular, the concept of honor found its way into the Western military tradition through European aristocracy (cf. Huntington 1959: 19-59). Officers in the 1700s were typically landed noblemen or the sons of noblemen, who purchased

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their commissions and their rank advancements out of their inherited wealth. The concept of honor they brought with them from the context that the practices and virtues of the landed elite, together with the privileges of title, derived from aristocratic rank. At the same time, in the 1700s, honor was alien to the enlisted and conscripted corps, who served because—in one way or another—they had to.

While we must be wary of this auspicious beginning, this is not the end of the story. In the 1800s, the professionalization of Western military service transformed the officer corps. Meritocracy replaced aristocracy as the basis of commission and advancement. Professional and standardized military education replaced the idiosyncratic and uneven programs of gentlemanly cultivation. At the same time, the core elements of the honor culture of Western aristocracy were preserved: military service remained a noble profession, but not because the officer corps was

comprised of noblemen. The renovated culture of honor fit nicely with the emerging culture of professionalism. Professional culture, with roots in the medieval guild concept that emphasized apprenticeship, expertise, self-regulation, and public service, dovetailed nicely with an honor code that emphasized hierarchy, excellence, self-command, and noblesse oblige (i.e., the obligations to help others that come with positions of privilege). (Huntington 1959: 53-54, Snider 2015: 16-18). In other words, the transformation of an aristocratic officer corps into a professional officer corps did not require throwing off aristocratic honor culture altogether—the best and most defensible elements remained.

The concept of honor that emerges at this time, both in professional military institutions as well as in a variety of other social and political organizations, has a clear structure (Appiah, 2010: 20). At the most general level, a distinctive community, marked by shared culture that is governed by a shared code, characterizes it. This account supplies our initial definition of living honorably:

Living honorably = following a shared honor code as a member of an honor community.

Honor communities are socially distinct from society at large. Membership is exclusive, demanding, and advantageous for flourishing, as the community understands it. Honor codes require more of their honor community members than morality requires in general. At the same time, these codes are all encompassing. They:

- a) supply moral rules,
- b) define the good life for the community,
- c) name the rituals, rules, and virtues required to achieve this shared vision of the good life, and
- d) provide for systems of apprenticeship,

enculturation, and accountability among members.

While only a few of these communities have survived, it seems to us that the organizational structure of the 19th century honor community, especially as it was developed in the context of military service, remains an attractive and defensible model for contemporary military service. The appeal of this model becomes clear when compared with the variety of contractual, corporate and bureaucratic rivals that one encounters today. These alternatives, with their focuses on behavior, appearance, efficiency, and transaction, fail to attend to some of the most important dimensions of professional character in the military profession: loyalty, gallantry, discipline, humility, judgment, forbearance, and grit. The honor community with its honor code, on the other hand, considers the cultivation of character traits such as these to be of the first importance. In this way, we believe that the honor community/honor code approach is the best fit for the modern military professional as well as the best place to start an account of living honorably.

Philosophy

Tentatively then, the person who lives honorably belongs to an honor community and lives according to an honor code. But what are we to make of the Barbary pirate, the Nazi officer, and the Taliban warlord? On this account, must we say that they live in honor communities marked by honor codes? Are we required to say that they are living honorably? We think not. On the one hand, it is certainly true that these individuals are committed to distinct sets of norms and they are members of norm-governed communities. Moreover, it is true that, at least in some cases, they believe that their community norms are consistent with objective moral values. However, on the other hand, they are clearly mistaken. For example, pirates have no respect

for property ownership, Nazis are wrong on race, and the Taliban are wrong on women. At the same time, as we noted above in discussing the ordinary meaning of honorable living, we take it that in military service, leaders are to live by a higher standard. A higher standard is not a different standard; it is a standard that falls within the domain of objective moral value. This point is framed perhaps more clearly in terms of the *supererogatory*. Supererogatory actions are those that are morally commendable, but not morally required. Examples might include bystander first aid, serendipitous charity, and social deference. In the context of military service, we ask soldiers to take risks, undergo hardship, and subordinate their interests all in ways that go beyond what we take to be the moral duties of the ordinary citizens. However, when considered narrowly in the context of the service itself, these actions are expected. In this way, we give substance to the idea that military service members are held to a higher standard. With this in mind, we offer the following, more nuanced account of living honorably:

Living honorably = following a shared honor code as a member of an honor community, where this code and community reflect moral standards that include and exceed those of ordinary morality.

A Model of Honorable Living

In the remainder of this paper, we will add substance to this model. We begin with an exposition of the code and the community. We then note two important qualifications on the overall account, and conclude with a summary of what it means to live honorably in the military.

The Code

An honor community is structured by an honor code. However, notice that for an entire community to

be structured by a code, this code must be extensive and complex. To be sure: such a code might include explicit proscriptions such as we find in some academic settings today (e.g., imperatives not to cheat). A code sufficient to structure a community will also include a vision of flourishing for individual members and the community as a whole. It will include a catalog of virtues that thought to both constitute and contribute to individual and community flourishing. It will include a distinctive set of habits, practices, rituals, and standards (e.g., appearance, dress, living, and more) that set apart the honor community from society in general. It will also include curriculum, pedagogy, and doctrine: the shared vocabulary and instrumentation that provide touchstones for the education and conservation of the community.

Many elements of the code will be explicitly stated in a set of documents, depending on the extent to which the honor community is institutionally organized. There may be core documents that outline the mission, vision, and values of the community. There may be procedural documents that describe the institutional workings of the community. There may be legal documents that organize the community in the context of the state. Communities with a rich set of institutions will also have bodies of scholarship and deliberation, through which we can trace the contours and development of an honor code across generations. These communities will also have teaching resources (e.g., textbooks and pedagogy) that help define the extent of the code. Of course, honor codes are not written down in their entirety. Some elements are implicit: matters of convention, deliverances of oral tradition, and informal rituals.

Let us consider in greater detail, the honor code in operation at the United States Air Force Academy. In the first place, it would be an obvious mistake to think

that the code consisted only of the pledge on the wall: “We will not lie, steal, or cheat, nor tolerate among us anyone who does.” Certainly, these are elements of the code, but there is much more. The foundation of the code is the core values of the U.S. Air Force as a whole: integrity first, service before self, and excellence in all we do. These core values are elucidated in a series of statements and documents. At the Academy, these statements and documents include, but are not limited to, the Leader of Character Framework, the Honor Oath, the Oath of Office, the Institutional Learning Outcome white papers, and the Cadet Standards and Duties instruction. Education and training materials, together with explicit procedures for remediation and punishment, supplement these documents. Overshadowing the statements and documents specific to USAFA are those, which envelop them in a broader context: Air Force instructions, Department of Defense policies, the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), International Humanitarian Rights Law (IHL), and the United States Constitution. Moreover, beyond these explicit elements of the code, there are also implicit elements. These include the actions of historical exemplars (e.g., Lance Sijan, James Doolittle, Amelia Earhart, Frederick Gregory), unwritten rituals (e.g., inter-academy rivalry, graduation fountain plunges), and the evanescent interplay of tradition, popular culture, and cadet life.

Given the description above, one might worry that the honor code of the U.S. Air Force Academy is disorganized or haphazard. On the one hand, this impression should be tempered by the recognition that the code as a whole is grounded in a clearly defined set of core values in the context of clearly defined organizations, with clearly defined purposes. On the other hand, the discombobulation, imprecision, and open-endedness of the code is a sign that it is alive for those attempting to live according to it. Robots require

precise instructions for a well-defined environment. In contrast, human beings—and military leaders in particular—must think and act across ill-defined environments with a constant barrage of new and unexpected challenges. As a result, honor codes and their communities must be flexible and susceptible to argumentation and revision in light of our experiences. Moreover, the longer an honor community persists and flourishes; the broader and deeper its code becomes.

The Community

Honor is a relational and communal concept. An honor code comes to life inside a living community of adherents. As defined above, honorable living is essentially a concern to live up to the code that is established and sustained—we might say championed—by one’s honor community. As Peter Olsthoorn (2015) has argued, such a concern for honor can be an important moral teacher and moral motivator. When we belong to an honor community and internalize a concern for honor, the thought that some action or attitude might bring dishonor (shame) to the community, or to oneself in the eyes of the honor community, can be a powerful deterrent against performing that action. Likewise, the thought that some action or attitude would uphold the standards of honor set by the community can be a powerful motivator to engage in that action or adopt that attitude.

Morally speaking, the concern for honor is a double-edged sword. When the values and goals of an honor community—codified in its honor code—are objectively good, then the concern for honor can lead to morally good actions and even the development of virtue (Appiah 2010: 170-204). A concern for honor embedded in an honor community that upholds the value of serving the needs of others over self-preservation and self-promotion will inform and motivate self-sacrificial acts of service. When the values

and goals of an honor community are objectively bad, then the concern for honor can lead members of that group to engage in immoral actions and even to develop vicious moral character (cf. Appiah, 2010: 139-155). A concern for honor embedded in an honor community that is committed to racism or misogyny can motivate racist or misogynistic behavior and ultimately, to the development of vicious character.

If we desire to foster a virtuous honor community, therefore, our concern for honor must be tethered to objectively good moral values and goals. At the very least, any good honor code must include a commitment to respect the human dignity of all people, even those who do not belong to the honor community. This commitment to respect the dignity of all people serves as a bulwark against some of the worst kinds of moral violations—sexual assault, slavery, apartheid, genocide, ethnic cleansing, religious persecution—that have been committed in the name of honor throughout human history (cf. Appiah, 2010: 175-178).

Practical Challenges

Given the accounts developed above of honor codes and communities, there are two additional characteristics required for honor communities to persist and flourish in the long term. They must be dynamic and accountable. Think of these qualities as practical necessities for challenges that every honor community should expect to face.

The Dynamic Community

When we say that an honor community must be dynamic, we mean that it must be marked by a continuing intergenerational inquiry into its ends, as well as the means, to achieve those ends. The content of honor code is, at least in part, an aspect of the means for achieving the ends of the community. For any

community, its shared identity and shared account of the good must be the focus of a continuing argument. Membership depends on recruiting, and recruiting depends on argument. Neophytes must be persuaded that the goods in question, together with the means to achieve them, really are good and, that it is good for them to join a community with higher moral standards and the aims particular to them. On the one hand, this argument is easy. Military organizations defend the state from threats to its existence and flourishing. Some citizens will easily recognize the importance of this mission and therefore be interested in joining an organization dedicated to it. On the other hand, the threats faced by the state are always changing, and the means by which these threats might be confronted are always changing. The substantive content of the military mission, including the appropriate means for achieving it, will therefore always be a matter of continuing inquiry and argument. If that inquiry devolves into ideology or that argument gives way to dogma, a military organization, to include its membership and capabilities, will be increasingly mismatched to the threats faced by the state. These vulnerabilities increase the risk of real tragedy, as can be seen at Lexington and Concord (1775), Jutland (1916), Vietnam (1965-1974), and in many tactical encounters across the history of modern warfare.

The Accountable Community

When we say that an honor community must be accountable, we recognize the risks posed to individuals in a community characterized by loyalty, hierarchy, and shared identity. As we have seen in the Boy Scouts of America, USA Gymnastics, as well as in modern military organizations themselves, unless these vulnerable elements of the community are balanced by systems of accountability that protect against abuse, exploitation, and corruption, we are likely to see honor

communities degenerate. We are all morally flawed individuals. The benefit of belonging to an honor community is that it can help us to live according to a higher moral standard than we naturally would hold to ourselves. Left on our own, we are all susceptible to temptations to sacrifice our most deeply held values—indeed, our integrity—in order to satisfy baser desires. When we live accountably to others who share our most important moral commitments, we can borrow strength from our honor community to live according to a standard of moral excellence that we are often not able to achieve on our own (Evans, 2021).

We are all morally flawed individuals. The benefit of belonging to an honor community is that it can help us to live according to a higher moral standard than we naturally would hold to ourselves.

Although we often speak of holding people accountable in contexts where someone has violated moral standards, we must not think of accountability as a purely negative or punitive concept. While some types of failure may require discipline or expulsion from the community, many transgressions of the code may present opportunities for remediation and growth. A flourishing and virtuous honor community is not one in which everyone is perfect—such a community would not be human. Instead, a flourishing and virtuous honor community is one that pays attention to the organic and developmental nature of human beings and human community. We acquire strength and resilience or better, antifragility, through stress and challenge (Taleb, 2012). A flourishing honor community will therefore welcome stress and

challenge, meeting the failures that these produce with appropriate accountability. This accountability includes our accountability to others within the group, a kind of internal accountability, and our accountability as a group to the broader community we serve, a kind of external accountability.

According to a long ethical tradition, living virtuously is constitutive of living a flourishing human life. This long ethical tradition has recently found some preliminary empirical support from positive psychology, although there are significant challenges for empirically studying the relationship between virtue and flourishing (VanderWeele, 2021). Those challenges notwithstanding, insofar as living virtuously contributes to our own flourishing as individuals and the flourishing of our communities, being held accountable to high moral standards by others who care about our well-being, and who are willing to forgive and help us correct our failures; can help us to live the best life available to us. Living honorably and living accountably thus leads to living well.

This philosophical-psychological truth was borne out in the life of one of our former cadets, whom we will call Paul for anonymity. Paul was a talented member of one of the Air Force Academy's inter-collegiate athletic teams and he was very much looking forward to playing his sport during his senior year. But late in his junior year Paul committed an honor violation. He did not attend a large group gathering at which his attendance was required. Then, when his commander asked him whether he had attended the event, he said that he had. Despite being confident that he would not be caught in his lie, Paul's honorable desire to do the right thing prompted him to admit that he had lied and accept the consequences. Paul's admission led to a period of honor remediation and probation, which made him

ineligible to play his sport during his senior year. While he was very disappointed to miss his senior year on the team, shortly before graduating, Paul reported to us that he was very glad he had decided to admit to his lie. He recognized that he had grown in honesty and integrity through the honor process and he was proud of his moral growth. In the course of our conversation, he also expressed gratitude for the way that being held accountable to an honor code had helped him to grow in virtues that would help him to live more honorably in the future, not only in his professional career as an Air Force officer, but in his personal relationships as well.

Summary

What does it mean to live honorably as leaders in the military profession? Given the discussion above, we can say the following. Leaders living honorably belong to a virtuous honor community (the military organization) with a unique and specific good (defense of the nation), a hierarchical organization (the system of rank and advancement), and an honor code. Leaders living honorably live by this code. They follow its rules (UCMJ, Rules of Engagement, Law of Armed Conflict, IHRL), adhere to its practices (customs, courtesies, skills, drills), cultivate its virtues and the qualities of character thought to contribute to the achievement of the goods of the profession—integrity, bravery, loyalty, respect, accountability, etc.. Leaders who practice living honorably will debate and revise honor code rules and content as needed, teach it to new members of the community (e.g., military academies, Reserve Officer Training Corps, Officer Training School, etc.), and hold one another accountable for their practices under the code. Accountability sometimes takes the form of discipline for members who fall short of the standards of the code (e.g., disciplinary hearings, courts martial, and/or discharge). Other times accountability is a life giving and community building tool that helps

members correct their mistakes and grow in their flourishing. The overall result, when successful, is a sustainable professional military honor community that is worthy of the trust that citizens place in it for their defense.

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FEATURE ARTICLES

Elevating Performance In Organizations

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In 2011, the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) published *Developing Leaders of Character at the United States Air Force Academy: A Conceptual Framework*. Today, the Leader of Character Framework serves as a guide for carrying out the USAFA mission to educate, train, and inspire men and women to become officers of character motivated to lead the United States Air Force and Space Force in service to our Nation. The Leader of Character Framework consists of three main focus areas:

- Living Honorably
- Lifting Others
- Elevating Performance

This paper focuses on elevating performance, and seeks to enhance the work done in the original Leader of Character Framework document (CCLD, 2011). More specifically, this paper aims to provide greater specificity regarding what elevating performance means in the United States Air and Space Forces, how it can be measured, and how it can be achieved. Importantly, we argue that in order to best serve the needs of United States Air

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and Space Forces, elevating performance should be accomplished in a way that aligns values, processes, and incentives to produce a system of performance that reduces organizational weight and drag and thus, provides lift for organizational members and, ultimately, the organization itself. To do so, this paper is organized around the several important management theories as well as the Air Force's Major Performance Areas of accomplishing the mission, improving the unit, managing resources, and leading people as outlined in AFI 1-2, *Air Force Culture* (AFI 1-2, 2014). We incorporate both the military and academic perspectives in our exploration of this important topic.

The ability to elevate performance is critical for a leader of character because the Air Force and Space Force need individuals and organizations to perform at the highest levels in stressful, demanding situations. Our leaders need to understand how to create environments where people feel like they are contributing and making a difference. This frequently inspires commitment and encourages each individual to give their best and to work with others to ensure the organization is reaching its potential. Most importantly, leaders of character must realize that organizations are complex systems. With this understanding, they can ensure that the decisions they make take into account all the impacted areas of the organization. With a systems lens, leaders of character understand it's their responsibility to put systems in place to encourage and drive higher performance.

There are several constructs that serve as the foundation for how leaders of character elevate performance and which are taken from both the business world and the military. The first construct is flexible and adaptive leadership. Leaders of character function most effectively when they can adapt to new situations and people in order to maximize performance. Next, is moral performance and positive organizational ethics. Leaders of character need to focus on positive, proactive solutions, and not just on preventing misconduct or fixing problems when they arise. The importance of instilling an ethical culture is another area examined as a way to elevate performance. Researchers have identified several characteristics of ethical cultures that can enhance organizational performance and ensure leaders of character are functioning at high levels (Ardichvili et al, 2009). Finally, the recently adopted Major Performance Areas and Airmen leadership qualities that Air Force leaders have approved to serve as the standards for how we "measure, incentivize and reward the Airmen we need for the future" (Air Force.mil, 2 Feb 2021). These management/leadership constructs as well as the Airmen leadership qualities will be discussed to provide a framework for leaders of character that will help them be more effective in their endeavors to elevate performance.

Flexible and Adaptive Leadership

The idea of flexible and adaptive leadership, "involves changing behavior in appropriate ways as the situation changes" (Yukl & Mahsud, 2010, p. 81).

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Many popular leadership books and approaches are based on subjective judgements about aspects of leadership behavior. These resources may not provide a coherent theory to link guidelines and organizational processes that determine successful outcomes. This may leave readers with an overly simplistic view of leadership that is individualistic, one-directional, and

disciplines in this approach makes it very appropriate for a military academy.

Air and Space Force leaders must be able to change their leadership styles based on the situation in order to ensure elevated performance in their organizations.

decontextualized (DeRue, 2011; Yukl & Lepsinger, 2004). Instead, flexible and adaptive leadership embraces the complexity of the situation, and can amplify or dampen the effect of leadership behaviors on organizational performance. The approach considers efficiency, adaptation, innovation, and human relations as distinct yet interrelated determinants of performance and relies upon related areas of study such as behavioral science, organizational behavior, strategic management, systems, and change management theories (DeRue, 2011; Yukl & Gardner, 2020, Yukl & Lepsinger, 2004;). The reliance on multiple

Air and Space Force leaders must be able to change their leadership styles based on the situation in order to ensure elevated performance in their organizations. Leaders also move from one job to another on a frequent basis for deliberate, systemic force development and they must be able to adjust their leadership approach to their new surroundings if they hope to be successful. The military also needs leaders who can respond well in a crisis and continue to think clearly even when chaos abounds. Changes in course or strategy are also a hallmark of adaptive leadership and critical to the success of any military organization. Conditions are constantly changing and leaders must be prepared to react appropriately to those changes and keep the organization on track for success (Yukl & Mahsud, 2010).

The adaptive leadership literature gives several suggestions for leaders that can help them become or remain adaptive in their approach to leading their organizations. First, they need to maintain situational awareness, learn how to diagnose situations, and apply appropriate leadership behaviors based on the type of circumstances they are facing (Yukl & Lepsinger,

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2004, Yukl & Mahsud, 2010). This will become more automatic with experience, but it is something that graduates should be prepared for based on the training and education that they receive at USAFA.

Next, leaders must increase their flexibility by learning how to be comfortable using different leadership styles in different situations. This can happen by getting feedback from multiple sources, role playing, coaching, learning how to use a wide range of relevant behaviors, identifying effective behaviors for the objectives and situations, and behavior modeling as important ways for leaders to improve their flexibility (Yukl & Gardner, 2020, Yukl & Mahsud, 2010;). These are all strategies that can be used on a regular basis at USAFA, and can be very effective in creating leaders who are adaptable and able to elevate the performance of their organizations. However, it is incumbent upon the individual leader and the organization to offer challenging and diverse development opportunities, to seek accurate, relevant feedback, and to gain as much insight and experience as possible (Yukl & Gardner, 2020).

The final suggestion on how to implement adaptive leadership is to delegate responsibility to lower levels (Yukl & Mahsud, 2010). When subordinates are empowered to make decisions and do so effectively, the performance of the organization can improve. This also frees the leader up to focus on strategic issues and the direction of the organization. Leaders of character

who have the ability to delegate responsibility to talented subordinates who understand the mission of the organization can be effective in improving organizational performance.

There are other aspects of adaptive and flexible leadership, which due to space constraints, cannot be covered in this paper. However, these strategies listed above can help leaders of character to adapt their organizational systems and elevate the performance of their organizations.

Moral Performance/Positive Organizational Ethics

The concepts of positive organizational ethics and moral performance are management principles that are beneficial to leaders of character as they attempt to elevate the performance of their organizations. Positive organizational ethics takes the leader's thinking beyond mere survival and into the consideration of what it takes for individuals and the organizations to which they belong to thrive (Davis et al, 2019; Sekerka et al, 2014). Instead of focusing on problems and how to fix them, leaders look for innovative ways to implement new and more effective methods of operating. The organizations that do this most effectively tend to be characterized by, "appreciation, collaboration, virtuousness, vitality and meaningfulness, abundance and well-being [as] indicators of success" (Sekerka et al, 2104, p. 438).

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An organization's focus becomes more positive as they seek to create environments where ethical behavior is the norm as opposed to traditional organizations that attempt only to remove or punish unethical action. It is incumbent upon the leader to ensure they are promoting the moral development of all the organization's members. An organization that is focused on positive organizational ethics and encouraging members to perform morally in all their actions frequently sees increases in performance because the trust between organizational members and stakeholders is high (Sekerka et al, 2014).

Leaders of character can implement ethical codes or provide greater focus on the Air Force core values in their organization as a way of being proactive in establishing positive organizational ethics. Including employees' voices in decisions about how to handle ethical dilemmas is another way to ensure collaboration and virtuousness in organizations. Approaching ethical dilemmas as a team problem is a way to get everyone engaged in ensuring organizational ethics. Finally, a strategic focus by the leader of character on where the organization is headed ensures that the leader does not focus solely on compliance. By looking at the long-term prospects of the organization, the leader focuses their attention on how to operate appropriately in the future instead of retroactively attempting to correct prior bad behavior.

Ethical Culture

The Air Force places a high priority on its core values of integrity, service, and excellence—discussing them regularly in its accession programs, in periodic senior leader correspondence, and encouraging them in its normative behaviors. In order to increase the impact leaders of character make on their organizations, it is critical to look at the importance of installing or

maintaining an ethical culture in a unit in an effort to elevate performance. This recommendation is consistent with the management literature. Jondle, Ardichvill, & Mitchell (2014) state, “by focusing on the five characteristics of an ethical business culture, organizations have specific directions to take in building and sustaining their organizational culture based on ethical principles and metrics to measure progress” (p. 37).

Before getting into more detail, it is important to understand the definition of an ethical culture and its main characteristics. *Organizational ethics* are defined as the principles and values that drive decisions (Bowen, 2015). Trevino and Weaver (2003) have defined an *ethical culture* as one where ethical conduct is stimulated, and unethical conduct is prevented or discouraged. It is a subset of organizational culture that looks at both the formal and informal systems in an organization that can promote ethical or unethical behavior (Trevino et al, 1998).

For the leader of character, it is important to realize that an ethical culture must be more than just a compliance mechanism. While compliance with rules and regulations is important, an ethical culture should be more focused on doing the right thing, for the right reasons, and not just to stay out of trouble. This echoes the previous discussion of positive organizational ethics and moral performance. An ethical culture creates an environment where employees are expected to discern right from wrong and to go beyond that to determine the ethical decision even when all courses of action seem correct (Ardichvili et al, 2009). Organizations with ethical cultures have shared values, practices and expectations. The leaders in these organizations behave in an ethical manner on a consistent basis and encourage others to do the same (Ardichvili et al, 2009).

Ethical cultures are not only in alignment with the concepts of living honorably and lifting others (the other characteristics of a leader of character), but they have also been shown to lead, either directly or indirectly, to increased organizational performance (Hijal-Moghrabi et al, 2017; Kim & Thapa, 2018). Numerous researchers have looked at the link between ethical culture and organizational performance. Goebel & Weissenberger (2017) found an indirect relationship between ethical climate and organizational performance. Their findings were that ethical climate increases mutual trust in organizations, which then drives increases in performance. Huhtala et al. (2011; Kaptein (2010) and Trevino et al (1998)) all found that ethical culture stimulates positive behavior and well-being of employees. Riivari & Lamsa (2014) found a relationship between ethical culture and organizational innovation to include behavioral, strategic and process innovativeness. Interestingly, innovation is one of the Air Force's key Airmen Leadership Qualities that will be discussed later. Kim & Thapa (2018) discovered that ethical leadership through corporate social responsibility activities leads to higher levels of operational and commercial performance. Finally, Hijal-Moghrabi et al (2017) found that the ethical environment explains 28% of the variance in organizational performance in their study. This means that, in this study over one quarter of the difference in performance in an organization can be attributed to the ethical environment. Therefore, there is evidence that ethical culture and ethical behavior have a positive direct and indirect impact on the performance of organizations. The leader of character, who desires to elevate performance, will be well served to create a system where an ethical culture flourishes.

Characteristics

Ardichvili and colleagues conducted a quantitative study to determine the characteristics of ethical

business cultures (2009). As they interviewed 67 business executives and academics, they discerned five clusters of characteristics affiliated with ethical cultures. These five categories are mission-value driven, stakeholder balance, leadership effectiveness, long-term perspective, and process integrity (2009).

The first characteristic of an ethical culture is a strategic focus on the mission and values of the organization. This focus is imperative in order for the organization to be successful (Ardichvili et al, 2009). There needs to be complete alignment between the mission and values so everyone in the organization knows where it is headed so all members are pulling in the same direction. Research has shown that commitment to and a clear focus on, the mission by organizational members was a key foundation of an ethical organizational culture (Craft, 2018). It is important for leaders to provide a clear understanding of the mission and values of the organization so that members know how to apply their skills and abilities to the greatest effect. For leaders of character in the Air Force and Space Force, the defense of the nation needs to be the overriding focus of all members. Ensuring that all members of an organization are behaving ethically is critical to ensure the trust granted to the Armed Forces by the American people is earned and deserved.

Another characteristic of an ethical culture is stakeholder balance. Considering all of the organization's stakeholders ensures that all people and groups impacted by the leader of character's organization are heard and considered (Ardichvili et al, 2009). Among key organizational leaders, employees, and other stakeholders, organizational values can provide the opportunity for continuous communication, conversation, and interaction based on the ethical foundations and connections of the organization (Auster & Freeman, 2013). Members of

the organization are an important group of stakeholders and the leader needs to ensure they are given a voice, and are appreciated for the abilities and values they bring to the unit. In a military organization, stockholders (or those who earn profits from the organization's performance) are not present. Instead, the American people, who have their way of life defended by the military, are the main external stakeholders and their concerns must be paramount.

Leadership effectiveness is another characteristic of an ethical culture. In terms of ethical cultures, leaders are effective when they are solid role models who practice what they preach and hold others accountable for their actions (Ardichvili et al, 2009). A leader of character who lives honorably and follows through on their commitments can inspire confidence in their

and other broadening opportunities. Highly performing organizations also are found to stress the importance of continuous and developmental education and training in ethical behavior, especially in scenarios related to the normal operations of the organization (Craft, 2010). Personal development strengthens physical, mental, social, and spiritual resiliency in an effort to build well rounded Airmen and Guardians. Leaders of character need to ensure their subordinates are given every opportunity to improve and succeed in order to practice the construct of lifting others and to elevate the performance of the organization.

Being able to take a long-term perspective is another critical aspect of developing an ethical culture (Ardichvili et al, 2009). Many ethical lapses result directly from short-term thinking (i.e., Volkswagen, Enron, HealthSouth, etc.). When organizational leaders focus on short-term challenges and gains, they can easily stumble into unethical decisions that solve the immediate problem, but cause significant unintended consequences. The leader of character needs to consider the long-term impact(s) of their decisions. Choosing the harder right path is usually the most effective way to maintain one's integrity and to ensure long-term success. Once again, the mission and vision are more important than any short-term, improperly earned success. A longer-horizon perspective allows the leader to see better, what will help the organization succeed over many years. This can be a challenge in a military organization where leadership turnover is frequent. It is easy for a leader to look for short-term successes to make themselves look good without considering the unintended consequences of their actions. The leader of character will take the long-term impact(s) of their decisions into consideration even if they will not be around to see them come to fruition (Heyler et al, 2016).

Choosing the harder right path is usually the most effective way to maintain one's integrity and to ensure long-term success.

subordinates and lay the groundwork for ethical behavior throughout the organization. Another key aspect of effective leadership is being open to feedback and not shooting the messenger when ethical issues arise, but determining the facts and taking appropriate action (Heyler et al, 2016). When a system is in place that allows for open dialogue and the timely communication of negative information, the organization can improve performance.

In addition, leaders must support the professional and personal development of their subordinates. Professional development includes formal mentoring, professional military education, academic programs,

Process integrity is the final characteristic of an ethical culture and it relates very closely to the importance of understanding organizations as complex systems (Ardichvili et al, 2009). Appraisal and promotion systems need to be linked closely to the desired behaviors of organization members. For instance, it does not make sense to reward individuals solely for personal success when the organization desires effective teamwork and collaboration. Fairness and equity are also critical to an ethical culture. Members need to be able to trust that the organization will treat them equitably. Perceptions of organizational fairness can help to enhance the overall legitimacy of an organization's ethical system or framework and can be important in maintaining or increasing ethical compliance throughout the organization (Tyler et al., 2008). Finally, transparency in decision-making serves an ethical culture well. Members of the organization need to understand how and why decisions are being made in order to fully commit to what the organization is doing (Ardichvili et al, 2009).

Air Force Major Performance Areas

Performance can be defined in many ways. The Air Force provides guidance on what performance is defined. Under this guidance, performance is assessed through regulatory guidance from *AFI 1-2, Air Force Culture*, and supporting publications detailing *Major Performance Areas*, and Airmen leadership qualities Air Force leaders have approved as the standards for how we “measure, incentivize and reward the Airmen we need for the future” (Air Force.mil, 2 Feb 2021). *AFI 1-2, Air Force Culture*, establishes four areas of performance that are critical to the success of organizations.

They are:

- Executing the mission
- Leading people

- Managing resources
- Improving the unit (p. 2-4)

It is important to note that these broad performance areas apply to both individuals and organizations. The alignment of the categories in policy and assessment is driven by systems thinking. According to scholars, “Systems thinking is a conceptual framework, a body of knowledge and tools that has been developed over the past [65] years, to make the full patterns clearer, and to help us see how to change them effectively” (Senge, 2013, p. 7). In terms of the systems approach, elevating performance is considered in terms of both individual performance and organizational performance, although organizational performance is the primary focus of this paper.

To improve how to develop leaders, it is important to measure what is valued (Air Force.mil, 2 Feb 2021). However, is easier said than done. For leaders to truly elevate performance, metrics should be utilized as a departure point for dialogue between leaders and their subordinates as to whether or not organizations are performing in the desired manner. In other words, is the organization rewarding and incentivizing the values, behaviors, and performance it desires?

Executing the Mission

The Air Force has identified three Airmen leadership qualities related to executing the mission. These are job proficiency, initiative, and adaptability. Job proficiency requires leaders to demonstrate knowledge and professional skill in assigned duties and to achieve positive results and impact in support of the mission (AFI 1-2, 2014). Leaders of character must know their jobs and be good at those jobs in order to elevate performance in their organizations. In terms of initiative, leaders must be able to assess situations and take independent or directed action to complete a

task or mission that affects the organization (AFI 1-2, 2014). Leaders of character cannot be timid. They must be proactive and look for solutions to problems before they negatively affect the organization rather than waiting for problems to arise. Finally, leaders must be adaptable. They need to adjust to changing conditions to include plans, information, processes, requirements, and obstacles in accomplishing the mission (AFI 1-2, 2014). Change is one of the few constants we see in organizations, particularly the Air Force and Space Force. As such, leaders of character need to be prepared to adjust their efforts, approach, and organizational systems in order to maintain high levels of performance and strive for continuous improvement. This harkens back to the earlier discussion of flexible and adaptable leadership.

AFI 1-2, Air Force Culture, lists three areas of focus for executing the mission: primary mission execution, air expeditionary force readiness, and mission assurance. Leaders should aim to create a system of processes, norms, goals, performance measures, and a culture that naturally produces positive outcomes over the long term in these areas. The specifics regarding what the above looks like will vary from organization to organization, but could include things like regular readiness reporting, self-inspection programs, and senior leadership meetings to ensure the organization is united in its approach.

As proposed above, the metrics should begin a dialogue between organizational members to determine if the organization is producing the desired outcomes. To effectively accomplish that, measures should be both outcome measures that evaluate past efforts, and forward-looking that elevate future performance (Kaplan, Norton & Rugelsjoen, 2010). This article purposely stops short of prescribing assessments and encourages leaders of character to facilitate meaningful

dialogue on what works for the organization and, if it is being attained.

Leading People

Three Airmen leadership qualities affiliated with the major performance area of leading people. These are inclusion and teamwork, emotional intelligence, and communication. Inclusion and teamwork encompass the ideas of collaborating effectively with others to achieve an inclusive climate in pursuit of a common goal or to complete a task or mission (AFI 1-2, 2014). It is critical for organizational performance that members of the organization feel included and part of the team. It is also important to recognize the different skills and abilities that each member brings to the fight and to allow them to utilize those abilities for the good of the organization. We see close ties here to the Leader of Character Framework concept of Lifting Others.

Emotional intelligence means exercising self-awareness, managing one's own emotions effectively, demonstrating an understanding of others' emotions, and appropriately managing relationships (AFI 1-2, 2014). Human capital is our most important resource, and it is incumbent upon the leader of character to ensure that members of the organization are performing to their highest potential by ensuring due consideration to each member of the unit. Leaders of character must also ensure they are caring for the needs of the individual members of their organizations to ensure continued high levels of performance.

The final Airmen leadership quality is communication. Articulating information in a clear and timely manner, both verbally and non-verbally, through active listening and messaging, tailored to the appropriate audience, is a key to success as a leader of character (AFI 1-2, 2014). Leaders must develop a two-way vertical and lateral communication system, which is

agile enough to respond to changes in the environment in a timely manner. In order to develop understanding, intent, and trust, leaders must transmit goals, priorities, values, and expectations, while encouraging feedback.

Air Force Culture lists five areas of focus for leading people: communication, discipline, training, development, and quality of life engagement. Effective communication is critical to success in organizations and should be conducted regularly between all members of the organization. Leaders must also put systems in place to ensure discipline, training, and development in their organizations. The Air Force has a robust training and development plan that includes on the job training, formal training, and professional military education. Discipline issues in the Air and Space Forces are handled in accordance with the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). A final aspect of leading effectively is the development of a growth mindset and a desire for life-long learning (Yeager et al, 2019). Leaders of character must encourage their people to pursue these ideas and always be looking for ways to improve.

Managing Resources

Managing resources is the next major performance area. The two Airmen leadership qualities associated with this area are stewardship and accountability. A good steward of resources demonstrates responsible management of assigned resources, which may include time, equipment, people, funds, and/or facilities. Accountability means that the leader takes responsibility for the actions and behaviors of self and/or team, and demonstrates reliability and transparency (AFI 1-2, 2014).

AFI 1-2 lists six areas of focus for managing resources. These are manpower, funds, equipment, facilities and environment, guidance, and Airmen's time. Leaders

in the Air and Space Forces must devote time and effort to effectively managing resources if they want to be successful. A long-term perspective is necessary to ensure resources are managed and available when needed for mission accomplishment. Managing resources is also closely tied to the idea of process integrity mentioned earlier in this paper. Leaders must ensure solid processes are in place to acquire, manage and replace resources in their organizations. Finally, we see connections between resource management and stakeholder balance. Taxpayers are critical stakeholders and they provide the funding for resources necessary to organizational success. Leaders of character must be good stewards of resources in order to meet stakeholder requirements.

Improving the Unit

The final two Airmen leadership qualities fall under the final major performance area of improving the unit. These are decision-making and innovation. The good decision maker makes well-informed, effective and timely decisions that weigh constraints, risks, and benefits. Innovation allows the leader to think creatively about different ways to solve problems, implement improvements, and demonstrate calculated risk-taking (AFI 1-2, 2014). As noted earlier, connections have been shown between ethical culture and innovation (Riivari & Lamsa, 2014). This is another indicator of the importance of building or maintaining an ethical culture in Air Force and Space Force organizations. As we have mentioned, leaders of character are encouraged to build/maintain ethical culture in their organizations.

AFI 1-2, Air Force Culture, lists four areas of focus for improving the unit: strategic alignment, process operations, the Commander's Inspection Program, and data-driven decisions. Continuous improvement is a critical item for the leader of character to instill.

Ensuring alignment within the unit, having a dynamic self-inspection program, and relying on data to inform decisions are all ways that a leader can ensure their organization is on the path to improvement. It is critical to create a system that allows for these initiatives and encourages organization members to focus on implementing them effectively.

By focusing their efforts on the major performance areas and Airmen leadership qualities, as well as taking the time to understand and learn about the management principles described here, the leader of character will be well on their way to elevating the performance of their organization. In this paper, we have looked at the management principles of flexible/adaptive leadership, moral performance/positive organizational ethics, and ethical culture as ideas that can be utilized by a leader of character to elevate the performance of their organization. These concepts in conjunction with the Air Force major performance areas of executing the mission, leading people, managing resources, and improving the unit can be used as a starting point for performance improvement in organizations. Leaders of character are encouraged to learn about these principles and to use them to their benefit. There are numerous other ways that the leader of character can elevate the performance of their organization. While we cannot provide an exhaustive list of all these ideas, we have tried to highlight a few that we see as critically important as examples for your use. It is important to remember that the leader of character needs to be a life-long learner who is always searching for new and innovative ways to elevate the performance of their organization.

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FEATURE ARTICLES

Ethics and Respect for Human Dignity: Understanding and Assessing the USAFA Ethics Outcome

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In its most general usage, the term *ethics* refers to standards or principles of right and wrong action, good and bad character. As an academic discipline, ethics, or moral philosophy, is the branch of philosophy that is concerned with understanding, systematizing, and justifying ethical concepts and moral claims. From ancient times, moral philosophers have believed that the purpose of studying ethics is not merely to arrive at a theoretical understanding of right and wrong action, or good and bad character, but rather to discover wisdom about how to live a morally good life and grow in virtuous moral character. As the Greek philosopher Aristotle explained in his seminal book of virtue ethics, *Nicomachean Ethics* (1999), “The purpose of the present study is not, as it is in other inquiries, the attainment of theoretical knowledge; we are not conducting this inquiry in order to know what virtue is, but in order to become good” (II.2, p. 35). Taking a cue from Aristotle and other ancient sages, when he was an undergraduate at Morehouse College, Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote an article on “The Purpose of Education” (1947) for his campus newspaper in which he warned his fellow students and his teachers, “We must remember that intelligence is not enough. Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education.”

Author Note

The authors would like to thank Dr. Steve Jones for contributing the description and explanation of the perspective-taking assignments discussed in this paper.

In keeping with Aristotle's and King's vision of the purpose of education, especially education in ethics, one of the U.S. Air Force Academy's (USAFA) nine institutional outcomes is Ethics and Respect for Human Dignity (referred to hereafter as "the Ethics Outcome"). In service of the Air Force Academy's mission to "educate, train and inspire men and women to become officers of character motivated to lead the United States Air Force and Space Force in service to our Nation," we are committed to helping our cadets learn and grow in four key areas of ethics:

- moral knowledge,
- respect for human dignity,
- moral decision making, and
- habits of moral excellence (or, virtues).

The Ethics Outcome white paper explains:

When deciding how to act, Air Force leaders of character comprehend moral knowledge and ethical alternatives, respect the dignity of all affected persons, use ethical judgment in moral decision making as leaders to select the best alternative, and act consistently with that judgment so as to develop habits of moral excellence. (United States Air Force Academy, n.d.)

As compared with the other Academy outcomes to include Scientific Reasoning, Critical Thinking, and National Security, the Ethics Outcome is perhaps the most controversial and misunderstood of USAFA's

institutional outcomes. For, while there is wide agreement today about the value of scientific reasoning, critical thinking, national security, and our other outcomes, 21st century American society is marked by deep ambivalence, confusion, and even suspicion about the nature and value of ethics. In the following pages, we will briefly address some of the sources of these cultural attitudes toward ethics, along with the challenges they pose for ethics education today, and we will explain some of USAFA's efforts to overcome these challenges as we seek to educate, train, and inspire our cadets in the four areas of ethics enumerated above.

Moral Knowledge

The U.S. Declaration of Independence professes that, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." Unfortunately, many people in our society today—including most undergraduates—do not hold these truths to be self-evident, at least not with any confidence. Given the widespread acceptance of moral skepticism in 20th century Western societies, many today are uncomfortable claiming to possess any moral knowledge at all, even moral knowledge as basic and fundamental as that all people share equal human dignity and human rights. Indeed, moral knowledge sounds like an oxymoron to many people today (Pelser, 2019). Perhaps this should not surprise us since our students are taught from a young age to believe that knowledge belongs in the realm of objective facts and empirical science, while morality belongs in the realm

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of subjective opinions, values, and feelings (McBrayer, 2015). Despite having been challenged by rigorous philosophical arguments, such as those presented by Princeton University philosophy professor Sarah McGrath in her recent book *Moral Knowledge* (2020), the distinction between the realm of knowledge and the realm of morality has become such an established tenet of cultural orthodoxy that it is widely assumed to be obvious without question and without argument.

Given the widespread acceptance of moral skepticism in 20th century Western societies, many today are uncomfortable claiming to possess any moral knowledge at all, even moral knowledge as basic and fundamental as that all people share equal human dignity and human rights.

In his posthumously published book, *The Disappearance of Moral Knowledge* (2018), University of Southern California philosophy professor Dallas Willard laments the disappearance from Western society of moral knowledge as a publicly available good. Willard (2018) acknowledges that many individuals still possess moral knowledge today in the sense that

they are “able to represent [morality] as it is on an adequate basis of thought or experience” (p. 19). Yet, he argues that moral knowledge “does not...present itself as a publically accessible resource for living and living together” (p. xxx). He elaborates, it is now true that knowledge of moral distinctions and phenomena is *not* made available as a public resource; and most of those who supervise the course of events in our institutions of knowledge—principally those of ‘higher education’—think that such knowledge should not, morally *ought* not, be made available through them. (p. xxxi)

This cultural suspicion of moral knowledge—and of any college professors who would dare to teach it—obviously poses a challenge for the project of educating for ethics and respect for human dignity at the Air Force Academy. The Academy’s core course, Philosophy 310 – Ethics, confronts this challenge. In the Ethics course, cadets are taught to think carefully and critically about the arguments for and against adopting radical moral skepticism (which denies the possibility of moral knowledge) and its conceptual cousin moral relativism (the view that there is no objective moral truth and that all moral truth is relative to one’s culture). It is, of course, important to protect the vulnerable against the kind of abuses that historically have been committed in the name of moral absolutism. But in an effort to prevent such abuses, it would be a mistake to reject the possibility of knowing basic moral facts. Indeed, one moral fact that we can

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know is that injustice in the name of moral absolutism is wrong.

This core course also introduces cadets to efforts in the history of Western philosophy to provide a comprehensive theoretical foundation and justification for ethics—namely, Virtue/Eudaimonistic Theory, Natural Law Theory, Social Contract Theory, Deontology, and Utilitarianism. The cadets also learn about the foundational principles of Just War Theory, along with the principles and virtues of military professionalism.

Cadets are assessed on their abilities to defend moral knowledge against challenges, demonstrate knowledge of ethical theories and concepts, and apply the principles of Just War Theory judiciously to historical and contemporary ethical cases. Assessments take the form of participation in classroom discussions, writing assignments, and a comprehensive final exam. Ethics instructors also assess cadets on their commitment to the principles and virtues of military professionalism—including the Air Force Core Values of Integrity, Service, and Excellence—through a variety of discussions and essays. There are obvious limitations on how effectively a cadet’s moral judgment and moral character can be assessed through classroom discussions and essays, but the Academy is confident that the assessment practices in use adequately, albeit imperfectly, capture cadets’ proficiency and ethical maturity in moral knowledge and moral reasoning.

Respect for Human Dignity

The second category of proficiencies for USAFA’s Ethics Outcome is respect for human dignity. Article 1 of the U.N.’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948) states that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act toward one another in a spirit of brotherhood.” In

keeping with this international moral commitment, the U.S. military has made fostering respect for human dignity a point of emphasis.

As Adam Pelser (2021) has argued elsewhere, “human dignity is the basic, inherent value that all human beings possess in equal measure, in virtue of being human” (p. 284). The philosopher Immanuel Kant (1785/1997) helpfully distinguishes dignity from another kind of value—price. He explains, “What has a price can be replaced by something else as its *equivalent*; what on the other hand is raised above all price and therefore admits of no equivalent has a dignity” (p. 42). According to this view, every human being has dignity and is, therefore, literally priceless.

Human dignity is a kind of moral worth insofar as the dignity of human persons entitles them to a certain basic level of respect from others.¹ Of course, some people deserve greater respect than others by virtue of their superior position, abilities, accomplishments, virtuous character, etc., but all human beings deserve equal respect for their dignity. In the military, respect for rank and for other institutional structures and symbols is important, but it is not the same as respect for human dignity. All members of the military deserve respect for their human dignity, regardless of their rank. And officers of good moral character will respect the human dignity of all persons, including our enemies in war. Respect for human dignity involves both a felt appreciation for the basic, equal worth of others and a commitment to treat them accordingly. The commitment to act toward others in a way that befits their dignity is what Stephen Darwall (1977) calls recognition respect. He explains, “to have recognition respect for persons is to give proper weight [in deliberation about how to act] to the fact that they are persons” (p. 39).

¹ Material in this and the following paragraph (including the bulleted list) is used and modified from Pelser (2021) with permission of Henrik Syse, the editor of *Journal of Military Ethics*.

A crucial part of growing in respect for human dignity is cultivating the ability to recognize, prevent, and, where prevention fails, to act appropriately in response to such treatment. To that end, USAFA exposes cadets to past violations of human dignity; especially those committed by members of the military profession, and emphasizes discussion on why such treatment of human beings is wrong, how we can prevent it, and how we ought to respond to it when it occurs. Types of degrading, dehumanizing, and humiliating treatment that we must learn to recognize include, but are not limited to:

- speaking about or treating human beings (including our enemies) as though they are non-human animals;
- denying human beings their basic right to autonomy over their lives or bodies (e.g., in rape, murder, slavery, human trafficking, or unjust imprisonment);
- treating some persons as less valuable than others based their nationality, race, gender, sexual identity, religion, socio-economic background, physical or intellectual abilities, etc.;
- making jokes or using derogatory language (slurs) that belittle others, often having to do with race, gender, sexual identity, religion, socio-economic background, physical or intellectual abilities, etc.

An important moral-psychological skill that contributes to respect for human dignity is the ability to take on the perspective of people who are different from ourselves. In a core course entitled, Behavioral Science 110 – Introduction to Behavioral Science, cadets learn and are assessed on taking on perspective applied to human dignity. A central premise of that course is that many problems—to include those tackled by behavioral scientists—are best understood by considering multiple perspectives. This idea is reinforced in a series of lessons near the end of the course in which cadets learn to engage in productive dialogue with people who disagree with them. In one exercise, cadets state their positions

on a number of potentially controversial topics (e.g., “Confederate statues should be removed from public places” or “Local school boards should have the right to ban particular books from school libraries if they find the content of those books distasteful.”). Then, they work with a classmate to identify a topic on which they and their classmate disagree and have a conversation about that topic. The task for each person is to listen closely enough that they each are able to write a clear, detailed statement of their partner’s perspective on the topic. In addition, the two people are also required to write a joint statement on that topic that both of them would be willing to agree to. As an example, when two cadets disagreed about whether removal of confederate statues from public places, they agreed that, while the confederacy’s commitment to slavery was wrong, it is important to acknowledge part of the nation’s history, and that more conversations about the impact of that part of our nation’s history should occur.

Cadets and instructors alike have reported that they have found this kind of assignment to be very valuable in helping cadets learn perspective-taking skills. As part of a written reflection following this exercise, one cadet wrote: “This conversation was different from other disagreements I’ve had in the past because I was actually listening to my partner and not just ignoring his perspective while plotting in my mind what I was going to say next.” This cadet went on to say “It would be beneficial for me to engage in more of these types of conversations throughout my time at USAFA and beyond because it would allow me to get to know the perspectives of those who work with me and not judge people. For example, as a future officer, I will be able to see the bigger picture by understanding people’s perspectives and thus use that to make better decisions and help in making me become a better leader.” Other courses such as an Advanced Sociocultural Option course, Philosophy 401 – Comparative Religion, also offers cadets the opportunity to expand and assess their understanding of and respect for diverse religious perspectives.

Beyond the classroom, cadets' abilities to take on the perspectives of others, and to recognize and respond appropriately to violations of human dignity are reinforced by a variety of non-classroom learning experiences. Examples of these perspective-shaping opportunities include recent discussions of George Takei's reflections on the prejudicial mistreatment of Asian Americans during WWII in *They Called Us Enemy*, which was this year's featured book for the "One Book One USAFA" initiative. Growth in the skills and attitudes constitutive of respect for human dignity are encouraged through events sponsored by the Center for Character and Leadership Development (CCLD) such as the National Character and Leadership Symposium (NCLS), and through training sessions such as those focused on Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR). In SAPR training sessions, for example, cadets and permanent party are encouraged to consider multiple different ways to act appropriately in response to sexually degrading jokes and other forms of sexual harassment and assault. As discussed in these sessions, appropriate responses to such violations of human dignity include, but are not limited to direct confrontation, private discussion at a later time, reporting to a superior, changing the subject/distraction, refusing to laugh, and protesting in other non-confrontational ways.

Moral Decision Making

In addition to moral knowledge and respect for human dignity, the Ethics Outcome also involves proficiency in moral decision-making. Moral decision-making is a deliberative enterprise, even more so when the issues are complex, and when faced by a group instead of an individual. Many philosophers, behavioral scientists, and leadership theorists propose decision procedures for individuals and groups to use in moral judgment.²

² For a discussion of the way that a procedure for moral decision-making can be applied in difficult military cases, see Jensen (2013).

Common features of these procedures include awareness, reasoning, deciding, and action (ARDA). Cadet proficiency in understanding and applying the ARDA procedure for moral decision-making is taught and assessed through various programs and tools, and includes the Cadet Wing's *Cross-Curriculum Plan for training in Core Values, Character and Leadership* (U.S. Air Force Academy, n.d.), and the Academy's Honor Code. Throughout their four years at the Air Force Academy, cadets discuss the steps of the ARDA procedure and apply them in action in training scenarios, in an effort to grow in the following skills of awareness, reasoning, deciding, and action.

Moral decision-making is a deliberative enterprise, even more so when the issues are complex, and when faced by a group instead of an individual.

Awareness. Many scholars believe that moral decision-making begins when an agent recognizes or becomes aware of the morally relevant facts and principles that must be brought to bear under a given set of circumstances. This means that agents must be familiar with the relevant facts and principles and be capable of identifying their relevance in the circumstances in question. In easy cases, the agent discerns a clear moral problem with a clear, single solution. For example, an agent sees another person suffering and has the ability to help in the moment. In difficult cases, there are many possible challenges. Scholars and practitioners sometimes refer to these difficult cases in terms of a theater or space marked by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA).

Reasoning. Once you have identified the facts and principles that are relevant to moral decision making, you must deliberate, either by yourself or with others,

in order to determine what options are available and what facts and principles support these various options. Principles will include those derived from moral theory, professional commitments, and life experience.

Facts will include those received from behavioral and social science as well as those received through investigation of the circumstances, together with individual experience. In the absence of standard operating procedures for deliberation, we rely on the practice of the relevant moral and intellectual virtues such as charity, forthrightness, inquisitiveness, patience, prudence, wisdom, industry, and respect for the views of others—especially for those who disagree with us. To be clear, deliberation in accord with these virtues does not guarantee a particular outcome, but it will provide for an inclusive and defensible process.

Deciding. Decision makers, in the final instance, need principles of execution. Once decision makers have ranked their choices according to their deliberative procedures, they need a way to make a final decision. Sometimes this is easy—options are comparable, commensurable, and clearly ranked with a single choice at the top. Other times, options cannot be compared or are not commensurable, leaving the overall ranking of choices unclear. In groups, decision procedures include various forms of voting and delegation. An important aspect of group formation is the development of group decision-making procedures, especially for difficult cases.

Action. Acting in accord with sound moral judgment, and therefore in accord with a clear conscience, should be easy. In many cases, it is. But as far back as Aristotle, scholars have been concerned about *akrasia* or what some today call the decision-action gap, the condition of knowing what we ought to do and yet not doing it. Two prominent, interconnected approaches to solving this problem are (1) the intentional cultivation of habits of excellence in action (i.e., the moral virtues),

and (2) the individual and institutional use of exercises or disciplines designed to indirectly reinforce habits of excellence in action. The cultivation of moral and intellectual virtues is thus among our chief moral tasks and is the final category of proficiencies of the Ethics Outcome.

Habits of Moral Excellence

As codified in the Ethics Outcome white paper (United States Air Force Academy, n.d.), all cadets must learn to “Develop trust and commitment by promoting Air Force core values (integrity first, service before self, excellence in all we do) through goals, words, and actions.” To promote the Air Force core values, cadets must first understand the core values. Lt. Gen. Jay Silveria (2018) aptly explained these values in a previous issue of this journal:

Integrity First means that all individuals will act with a soundness of character. We will be honest, truthful, and authentic in what we do and in our interactions with others, both inside and outside of the military...

Service Before Self indicates that military service can require sacrifice. We serve something larger than ourselves and we do this freely...This means that there may be times where we need to suspend our own personal desires in order to answer the call to which we committed...

Excellence in all We Do is not just a mantra, it is how we approach our profession. It becomes the standard by which we can expect others to perform. It implies that we are always willing to better our best. (pp. 8–9)

With respect to integrity, we might add that in our context, integrity implies a virtue of constancy—the disposition to think and act consistently with the good and the right, especially in the face of personal and

organizational obstacles. In other words, authenticity and sincerity are not enough; our intentions and actions must also be properly aligned with the good. With respect to service before self, we might clarify that military professionals do not merely put service first, but in fact identify with the goods of the nation and the institution, seeing them as their own goods, and orienting their lives toward their achievement. In other words, military service is not merely a job that a citizen performs, it is rather a profession with which a citizen identifies. Finally, with respect to excellence, we might clarify that our aim is not perfection—an unattainable end, the dogged pursuit of which fosters unrealistic expectations and swallows time and resources. Instead, we aim at continual improvement, taking every opportunity to improve our institutions, and ourselves never content with minimum or acceptable performance.

More generally, the core values reflect an officer's aim to cultivate those excellences or virtues that are native to the profession. A list entailed by the core values might include truthfulness, forthrightness, constancy, loyalty, humility, dutifulness, industry, thrift, and intrepidity. Officers promote the core values and their associated virtues when they intentionally develop and model them in their own lives, through practices and disciplines known to contribute to their cultivation and when, having made progress themselves, they act as friends and mentors to other officers and enlisted personnel who are intentionally working to develop them as well.

Officers who demonstrate a commitment to developing and exemplifying the Air Force core values, along with the virtues of character they entail, earn the trust and commitment of their units, superiors, and the society they serve. Trustworthy officers intentionally and systematically practice those habits that contribute to the stability of good character and the internalization of the goods of the military

profession. However, individual virtue does not fulfill the ethical responsibilities of officership. U.S. Air Force officers must also cultivate and sustain ethical teams and organizations, which are also marked by ethical systems, procedures, and cultural ethos.

Colonel Don Snider (2015) explains that professionals must be granted quite a bit of autonomy in order to put their expert knowledge to work in the performance of their professional duties. But professionals must earn trust from their society in order to be granted the autonomy that their professional leadership requires. Snider (2015) explains that:

...professions earn and maintain the trust of their clients through their effective and ethical application of their expertise on behalf of the society they serve. Thus *it is the society served* that will determine whether the profession has earned the high status of a noble occupation and the autonomy that goes along with it. ... Professions that fail to meet expectations for effectiveness and ethical performance risk losing the trust of their clients and their ... status as a profession (think of accountancy after the Enron scandals, and the Navy after the Tailhook scandal). (p. 17)

As Snider observes, the trustworthy officer's performance will be both ethical and effective. In other words, leadership that inspires trust and commitment requires both virtuous character and professional competence. Character and competence are not independent features of good leadership. Virtuous character entails developing and maintaining the expert knowledge and skills required for professional competence. An aeronautical engineer with integrity, for example, will work to maintain knowledge of the best practices for designing and building safe and reliable aircraft. The interdependence of character and competence, ethics, and effectiveness, are underscored by the three components of USAFA's Leader of

Character Framework—Living Honorably, Lifting Others, and Elevating Performance (U.S. Air Force Academy, 2011).³

Commitment to the core values and growth in the virtues characteristic of leaders of character are encouraged through the Honor System, the Cadet Wing's Cross-Curriculum Plan previously discussed, and the mentorship that happens formally and informally across each cadet's four-year experience. Such mentorship and character growth happens in all areas of cadet life including airfield training, intercollegiate and intramural athletics, Cadet Wing training, the Center for Character and Leadership Development programs, USAFA clubs, academic advising, and the Student Success Center.

As intimated above, however, moral growth at the character level is very difficult (perhaps impossible) to assess through discreet learning experiences. Rather, evaluations of moral character growth must be holistic and longitudinal. The best forms of assessment of whether cadets are growing in habits of moral excellence, therefore, are the evaluations and recommendations of the leaders and mentors who know them best. Along those lines, we were recently pleased to learn from the results of the 2020-2021 Mission Measures surveys (formerly known as the USAFA Graduate Surveys) that Air Force supervisors ranked the USAFA graduates under their command very highly (on average, 8.5–9 out of 10) in comparison with their peer officers in the Air Force along every dimension of the Ethics Outcome. These kinds of average ratings of course do not mean that every officer commissioned from the Air Force Academy is morally superior to their peers from other commissioning sources, but they serve as an encouraging indication that USAFA's efforts to cultivate habits of moral excellence in our cadets are bearing fruit.

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³ These three components of the Leader of Character Framework are discussed in detail in other articles in this issue.

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FEATURE ARTICLES

Still Lying to Ourselves: A Retrospective Look at Dishonesty in the Army Profession

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Steve Gerras, U.S. Army War College

In 2015, the U.S. Army War College quietly posted a monograph entitled *Lying to Ourselves: Dishonesty in the Army Profession* to its public website (Wong & Gerras, 2015). The reaction to the study, inside and outside the Army, was loud and immediate—and for good reason. In the study, we posited that in the routine performance of their duties as leaders and commanders, most U.S. Army officers lie. We placed the blame for this finding on the Army's penchant to deluge individuals and units with training and compliance requirements despite the obvious unfeasibility of executing all of them. Deception was encouraged and sanctioned by the Army institution as subordinates were forced to prioritize which requirements would be done to standard and which would only be reported as done to standard.

We went on to point out that mistruths had become so commonplace that there was seldom any ethical angst, deep soul-searching, or righteous outrage when routine dishonesty was encountered. Decisions to lie were not viewed as ethical choices because of the effects of *ethical fading*—when the “moral colors of an ethical decision fade

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into bleached hues that are void of moral implications” (Tenbrunsel & Messick, 2004, p. 224; see also Bazerman & Tenbrunsel, 2011, p. 30-31). Ethical fading allows Army officers to convince themselves that considerations of right or wrong are not applicable to decisions that in any other circumstances would be ethical dilemmas. This is not so much because officers lack a moral foundation or adequate ethics training, but because psychological processes and influencing factors subtly neutralize the “ethics” from an ethical dilemma. Morally wrong behavior is transformed into socially acceptable conduct by dimming the glare and guilt of the ethical spotlight. The result is that untruthfulness is surprisingly common in the U.S. Army—and by implication, the larger U.S. military—even though members of the profession are loath to admit it.

We wrote *Lying to Ourselves* with a purpose captured in the study’s final sentences (Wong & Gerras, 2015):

The Army urgently needs to address the corrupting influence of dishonesty in the Army profession. This monograph is but one small step towards initiating that conversation and perhaps stimulating a modicum of action. (p.33)

In the following pages, we examine if the study accomplished or at least made progress in its intended goal. Since release of the study, the Army appears to

have gone through two general phases of reaction and is now in a third phase of organizational response.

Phase I: Denying the Obvious

The morning after the monograph appeared online, the *Washington Post* featured an article entitled, “Lying in the Army is Common, Army War College Study Says” (Lamothe, 2015). CNN followed with a headline proclaiming, “Study: U.S. Army Officers Lie Routinely” (Diamond, 2015). Both articles focused on the shocking notion that many Army officers were lying and neither focused much attention on the underlying ethical fading encouraged by the Army institution and described in the study. Dozens of other media outlets followed suit. The *Army Times* published a more comprehensive article, but interestingly accompanied the piece with a profile picture of an officer with a prominent Pinocchio-like nose (Lilley, 2015).

Although advance copies of the monograph had been sent to the Chief of Staff of the Army, as well as the heads of the Army legislative liaison and public affairs offices, the media attention appeared to have caught many in the senior Army leadership off guard. For example, one email sent to us by a senior Army decision maker asked, “Just how twisted is the media take on your research?” Without the benefit of reading the study, senior Army leaders appeared to be perceiving the study as a sensational and spurious attack on the

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Army profession. Their reaction centered more on minimizing the damage done to the Army's reputation than taking the time to address the validity of the issues raised in the study.

In hindsight, this should have been expected. Three factors appeared to be affecting the senior leader, and thus, the institutional Army initial reaction to the study. First, senior officers were largely reacting to not-so-flattering media coverage, not the study itself. Senior leaders tend to have tightly orchestrated schedules and lack the discretionary time to analytically examine a 34-page monograph. Thus, familiarity with the study was restricted to the narrow interpretation offered by the media. This became more obvious as conversations with many senior officers reflected awareness of the existence of the study, but relatively little understanding of the content.

A second factor was the institutional role of Army senior leaders. In a time of declining budgets and increased apprehension over public support of the military in general—and the Army in particular—senior leaders were very sensitive to potential threats to the Army's image and narrative. Damage control, rather than searching for solutions, was the initial top priority. Although the intent of the study was to better the profession by examining its detrimental organizational culture, many senior leaders apparently felt a more pressing responsibility to steward the profession by rebutting any perceived attacks.

Finally, a third factor influencing the initial reaction of senior officers to the study may have been based on their limited recent personal contact with much of the phenomena described in the monograph. While the study described a culture of crushing requirements and oppressive compliance, many senior officers had risen above that level of life long ago as they progressed

through their careers. For example, captains and other junior officers across the Army could relate to the overabundance of compliance documentation that, over the years, had been added to a soldier's simple act of requesting leave. Such accompanying documentation had grown to include a Travel Risk Planning System (TRiPS) assessment—an online questionnaire asking questions such as “Will you check the weather before departure?” Unfortunately, nearly all soldiers viewed TRiPS as a bureaucratic waste of time rather than an accurate appraisal. As one captain noted:

The focus for pretty much damn near every soldier is, “Hey, I just need to get this done so I can get my leave form in and get it approved.” So what do you do? You know what answers the survey wants. You click those answers. And it's sad, but it's the way it works. (Wong & Gerras, 2015, p. 10)

Senior officers desiring to take leave, on the other hand, were rarely required to submit little more than a one-page leave request, and often turned to their staffs to handle all administrative requirements.

The unfamiliarity of senior officers with the study's findings, their tendency to defend the Army's reputation, and their lack of awareness of the inundation of requirements placed on the force led one two-star division commander to wave the monograph before an auditorium full of officers and ask, “Does anyone buy this [crap]?” After being answered by silence, he continued, “I didn't think so. Now let's get on with more important topics.”

While the early reaction for many senior officers was one of denial, more junior officers—usually lieutenant colonel and below—seemed to have a different initial reaction. Junior officers appeared to have read the

monograph in large numbers and were quite familiar with the content of the study. One reason for junior officers taking the time to read the monograph may have been that they have more discretionary time than senior officers. But another factor was the familiarity of junior officers with social and online media. While there are few official Army outlets to conduct interactive discussions and debates on the profession, there are many active and dynamic online forums where current Army topics are considered and examined. Online venues such as *War on the Rocks*, *Task and Purpose*, and *Doctrine Man* were quick to feature the study and led to the tens of thousands of downloads of the monograph.

It was not unusual for all the officers in a battalion to download the study, read its assertions, and then conduct a professional development session discussing their perspectives and reactions. Interestingly, the most common initial reaction of the junior officer cohort was not one of denial or anger, but rather relief—and often amusement—that the debilitating culture of dishonesty was finally revealed. To many junior officers toiling in the Army’s formations, the study exposed what they considered to be an open secret. Because they lived and worked in the culture described in the monograph, they marveled not at the study’s arguments, but rather that it had taken so long for anyone to point out the obvious. For example, one commenter in *Doctrine Man* succinctly stated, “In other news, water is wet.”

The first phase in the reaction of the Army to *Lying to Ourselves* revealed a split between the senior and junior levels of the Army. At the lower levels, the study was met with surprise that it took a study to point out what should have been evident to all—that a culture of dishonesty plagues the Army. At the senior levels, the study was met largely with surprise and defensiveness

at an apparent assault on the profession. As weeks passed, a second phase began as senior leaders took the time to read—or at least be briefed on—the findings of the monograph.

Phase II: The Army Takes Notice

The second phase emerged with the monograph gaining attention as it became an easy-to-navigate reading for a discussion on the military profession. At the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, the Superintendent encouraged the Corps of Cadets to debate the study’s issues in the classroom, in informal discussions with mentors, and among themselves. The commander of United States European Command, a four-star Air Force general, instructed officers in his command to read the study and discuss the implications for the command, and for their respective branches of the military. Meanwhile, across the Army, hundreds of units were conducting professional development sessions with the study as the main topic. From Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) cadets to colonels at the U.S. Army War College, *Lying to Ourselves* became an integral part of the readings for classes in ethics and leadership.

Despite discussion and debate across the force, many officers in the Army wanted more than just talking. For example, a presentation on *Lying to Ourselves* to the senior leaders of the Judge Advocate General (JAG) Corps resulted in this comment from one colonel:

Would have REALLY liked to have followed [the Lying to Ourselves presentation] with a block of discussion about what it means for our Corps and what we need to be doing about it. One of the biggest problems with our Army was presented to the senior leaders of the Corps—considered the conscience of the Army—and then we thanked

[the study authors] and continued on our way without addressing the elephant in the room—What can WE do to change a culture of self-deceit? (Anonymous, n.d.)

The growing frustration that the time for action was overdue was reflected in an email sent in by an officer observing the situation from his unit:

Is my perception correct that the Army appreciated your work, but has done little to nothing to actually address the problem? What have you learned since publication—would you strengthen or temper the original piece? (Anonymous, n.d.)

At the higher levels, senior leaders and their staffs eventually began to confront the actual contents of the study. One of the early signals of this shift came from then Secretary of the Army John McHugh who was asked for his perspective on the study. “Are we asking our soldiers to do too much in insufficient time? I do think it’s a legitimate question,” Secretary McHugh responded. “I suspect some smart, appropriate housecleaning on our regulatory requirements for training would serve a useful purpose.” Concerning a possible reduction of training requirements, McHugh later added, “I believe, from what I know about the issue right now, that there’s some gains to be made in that area” (Thompson, 2015).

The wheels of Army bureaucracy turn slowly, so it took another three years and a change in administrations before the Department of the Army took significant action. In 2018, Secretary of the Army Mark Esper began issuing memorandums modifying or eliminating training requirements across the Army. Eventually, sixteen memos were signed leading to the elimination of over forty-five Department of the Army level training and administrative requirements (Office

of the Secretary of the Army, October 2018). The first requirement listed for elimination was the TRiPS assessment required for soldiers requesting leave. A joint memo sent by the Chief of Staff of the Army and the Secretary of the Army introduced the effort to reduce requirements placed on the force:

Over time, the Army has accumulated a long list of “mandatory training” tasks, each individually put in place by well-intentioned leaders to protect the force. At this point, however, the cumulative weight of all these requirements is distracting units from training to deploy, fight, and win our Nation’s wars. . . To address this, the Army staff is reviewing all mandatory training to determine which ones to keep, eliminate, or consolidate. (Office of the Secretary of the Army, personal communication, September 2018)

With *Lying to Ourselves* being discussed across the Army and policy changes being implemented at the highest levels, it appeared we had succeeded in our original goal of initiating conversation and stimulating action to address the culture of dishonesty in the Army. Interestingly, while our research focus was directed at the U.S. Army, other branches of the U.S. military, foreign militaries, and civilian professions began contacting us to extrapolate our findings into their organizations. Using the U.S. Army as a case study, we presented our research to diverse audiences including professional fire fighters, midshipmen at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, cadets at the U.S. Air Force Academy, and family practice physicians.

Phase III: Mired in a Culture of Dishonesty

Lying to Ourselves spurred a critically needed dialog across the profession and senior Army leaders followed up with demonstrable policy changes. Despite those

accomplishments, a corrosive culture of dishonesty remains stubbornly steadfast in today's Army. Several factors account for this bleak assessment. First, senior leaders continue to be reluctant to address rampant dishonesty head-on. While policy changes directed by the Secretary and Chief of Staff of the Army were well-intentioned, the rationale given for eliminating requirements was not to address the culture of dishonesty, but rather to improve unit readiness. Redirecting the conversation to the genteel topic of unit readiness steers clear of the disturbing implications of widespread deceit. Until the senior levels of the Army join in the dialog concerning dishonesty, the culture will remain firmly entrenched in the Army.

Second, in the monograph we attributed the culture of dishonesty to the avalanche of requirements placed on units and individuals. In hindsight, we were only partially correct. We should have looked deeper to examine why the Army creates so many administrative, training, and compliance requirements in the first place. The Army is quick to generate requirements because it is an organization engaged in high-stakes endeavors that expects perfection—or at least continuous progress—in everything from unit readiness, to making sure soldiers on leave travel safely, to winning wars that any informed observer would classify as quagmires.

We neglected to argue in the monograph that the Army's predilection for perfection is problematic in a profession that is inherently human and in a world that is far from unblemished (Lindsay, 2021). While aspiring for perfection is admirable, individuals, units, and armies are imperfect. An expectation of constant flawlessness in all aspects of performance is fulfilled only by deception from the ranks below, and denial or delusion from the ranks above. Until the Army learns

to tolerate less-than-perfect reporting, dishonesty will continue to be the default solution for individuals and units trapped by unrealistic expectations.

Finally, in the monograph, we purposefully avoided advocating self-advancement as a primary motivation for lying. Our logic was that more leaders would acknowledge the culture of dishonesty if we sidestepped the notion that many officers lie for self-serving reasons. In retrospect, we were too quick to provide an easy escape from the introspection we desired from each Army leader. Instead of encouraging culture change by urging individuals to examine their own motives, decisions, and actions, we overemphasized organizational and policy solutions. We should have pointed out that while Army policies and regulations create an onerous environment, the decision to lie is facilitated by an individual's aspirations to succeed in the Army. Competition between peers will always create underlying pressure to tell the system what it wants to hear.

Competition between peers will always create underlying pressure to tell the system what it wants to hear.

There are two unfortunate possible implications of the current state of the Army culture. First, if the Army fails to address its never-ending pursuit of perfection, requirements will continue to be generated and passed down at all levels of the Army. Leaders across the Army will become more disillusioned and cynical as they are forced to decide which requirements will be executed and which will have to be "pencil whipped." The second possible implication is worse. As time goes on with no meaningful reprieve from the onslaught of requirements, leaders in units throughout the Army

will soothe their frustrations and cognitive dissonance by once again dimming the ethical spotlight and allowing concerns of integrity and honesty to gently fade away. With ethical fading fully restored, the Army will be able to hypocritically trumpet the nobleness of the profession while remaining mired in a culture that encourages duplicity and deceit. That implication is regrettably the exact opposite of the intended purpose of *Lying to Ourselves*.

♦ ♦ ♦

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FEATURE ARTICLES

Personal Reflections on the Tactical Meeting the Ethical

Margaret Klein, U.S. Naval War College

Timothy Demy, U.S. Naval War College

How are ethics manifested in a squadron environment? In the tactical environment of aviation, there are many programs built on a foundation of ethical theory and lessons learned. Such programs and lessons are the result of more than a century of civilian and military aviation operations in war and peace. Hard-learned lessons have resulted in programs designed to make every flight a successful flight.

Philosophers and scholars, probably more familiar with the ill-fated flight of Icarus in Greek mythology than with the daily operations of an aviation squadron, have described moral decision-making for centuries. In understanding ethics as a branch of philosophy, there is recognition that ethical values and actions permeate the lives of every individual—personally and professionally. The application of the philosophical inquiries and scholarship is left to leaders who bring ethical decision-making to life when they model virtuous behavior.

In my¹ first squadron, I encountered one of the most basic programs found across military aviation—the issuing and control of tools used to repair military aircraft. Tool control is foundational to military aviation and everyone who works to maintain or fly aircraft uses the program. It was one of the earliest practical examples of integrating ethical judgment and principles of the profession of arms. We use ethical judgment to decide to report anything that might harm the crew maintaining or flying the aircraft, even down to a lost pen that might be lodged in the aircraft flight controls.

The following thoughts are some of the key tensions and questions of ethical leadership that we think might be present in every squadron or tactical unit. In the example of tool control, what makes it work? Loyalty, fear, and obedience are some of the things I thought about when I first encountered the program. I found it important for leaders to understand their people so I could understand what motivated them to adhere to norms and standards.

¹ All first-person pronoun references are Klein's.

This seemed like an academic exercise until one of my sailors violated the program; then I had to decide what kind of punishment should be applied when someone chose to violate the rules. Yet, as we know, leadership is not only about “them.” It is also about “me.” As a member of the profession of arms, I have internalized my responsibility to hold myself and my organization accountable for all of our actions. Has everyone in my squadron developed to the point where they understand that the trust of the American people rests at least partially on the trust that we will hold ourselves accountable? Ethics in the toolroom is as important as ethics in the wardroom.

The ethical decisions one makes daily at the tactical level affect self, subordinates, seniors, and the command. Such decisions and the decision-making process become more complex as a leader rises in rank and assumes increased responsibility. Ethical decision-making is a fundamental aspect of good leadership at every level.

Ethics should not be relegated to the abstract or hypothetical. It is an integral part of leadership and

interaction with those we lead. Ethical decision-making is done by every person in the command. A leader’s ability to shape decision-making abilities in subordinates requires knowledge of the members of the command as people and as professionals. If we know our people, we can be empathetic because we have context for what else is impacting their performance at work. If we are empathetic, we can apply corrective action when needed that will serve to change the behavior going forward. Empathy has also helped us treat others with respect, while still acknowledging that they made an error in judgment. The corrective action is assigned to the individual who violated the rules, and it also reverberates across the organization as fellow squadron members make sense of how rules are enforced. The squadron leader has the opportunity to discuss the case with the rest of the squadron, a step that we overlooked more than we should have done.

The toolroom is not the only workspace in the squadron where ethical decisions are made. For example, let’s get out of the realm of aircraft maintenance and look at how an aircrewman gets certified for their role in the aircraft. In my squadron experience, the most

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proficient and knowledgeable junior officer certified others as “qualified” once they passed oral and written exams and an inflight checkride. As I look back on who evaluated my fellow officers, I realize that proficiency and knowledge were two obvious skills, but that things like judgment and integrity were also needed if check rides were going to be administered fairly. If we didn’t choose someone with those characteristics, how did we know that the system was applied evenly across the squadron of over 100 officers? We didn’t.

A final piece of this process of ethical leadership is to understand how we treat people who are not able to measure up to our flying standards. At the personal level, it is important that we separate a person’s worth from their ability to meet our standards. In the highly competitive culture of military aviation, how often do we associate performance in the air with worth as a human being? How might you separate the two or should you?

Every branch of the military has a specific set of core values that are the foundational attitudes and actions expected of every person in the organization. For the Navy, they are “honor, courage, and commitment” and for the Air Force, they are “integrity first, service before self, and excellence in all we do.” Various expressed but overlapping in essence, the core values of the military branches are a 21st-century manifestation of virtue ethics. The thought of Aristotle in the toolroom might seem anachronous, but it isn’t.

Habits of moral excellence are not achieved quickly or as a once-for-all action. They are instilled, nurtured, and practiced throughout one’s life. As with so many things we experience and practice daily in the world of aviation, moral excellence is a repetitive action that

strengthens the ethical skills of the individual. We must encourage and expect ethical proficiency just as we expect tactical proficiency—and we as leaders must consistently exhibit it and be exemplars of it.

We began this reflection with an illustration of tool control and its importance in aircraft maintenance. In closing, we ask you to consider another procedure common to every squadron and flight—the FOD (Foreign Object Damage) walkdown in which squadron members comb the flightline for debris. It

In the highly competitive culture of military aviation, how often do we associate performance in the air with worth as a human being? How might you separate the two or should you?

too, is a process critical to aviation, in that a very small piece of debris can destroy a very large aircraft and crew. Small and seemingly insignificant things can be catastrophic. In reality, there is no insignificant FOD. Similarly, we should lead and act with a mindset saying that there are no small ethical decisions—there are only ethical decisions. Every ethical decision a leader makes is important. The decision is important for the officer and for the people she or he leads—and just as there are no insignificant ethical decisions, neither are there any insignificant people in the squadron. Every individual, whether enlisted, officer, civilian, or contractor has inherent dignity and worth. For the leader, that means every decision and interpersonal interaction involves the character of the leader, and the character of the leader should be a personal and professional reflection of moral excellence. The standards that we require of ourselves and others, regardless of rank,

title, or position are no lesser or greater today than it was centuries ago. What we expect in the toolroom, the flight line, the wardroom, or any other place in a squadron is no different than what Aristotle sought in the academy or the agora of ancient Greece. The actions of our hands come from the attitudes and values of our heads and hearts. Values have consequences. What do you think?

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FEATURE ARTICLES

Reflection: Elevating Respect at a Senior Military College - A Case Study

David Keller, Texas A&M University

“Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.”

Maya Angelou ¹

Military Service Academies and Senior Military Colleges (SMC) share similar challenges—particularly when attempting to inculcate our core values in students across a four-year series of developmental experiences. Critical constructs such as honor, duty, selflessness, excellence, and courage must be taught, discussed, and practiced in order for students to serve with integrity after graduation. As Director of the Hollingsworth Center for Ethical Leadership for the Corps of Cadets at Texas A&M University, my purpose for writing this article is to share how the Texas A&M Corps of Cadets has intentionally worked over the past three years to advance the core value of respect within our student cadets and staff. I will discuss our success, struggles, and current challenges.

¹ <https://twitter.com/drmayaangelou/status/1028663286512930817?lang=en>

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Having served previously on staff at a Military Service Academy (United States Air Force Academy) and currently on staff at a Senior Military College (Texas A&M University), I hope to offer a unique perspective on the particular challenges faced by each of these types of institutions:

- Our desired outcomes are similar, but not identical.
- Our developmental processes are similar, but different.
- Our contexts are similar, but palpably distinct.

In terms of similarities, both Military Service Academies and SMCs attract highly intelligent, motivated, service-oriented young people. Structure, discipline, bearing, and duty are demanded. Fitness is emphasized, celebrated, and assessed. Challenging academic coursework is the norm. Character development is uncompromisingly emphasized. Consequently, all graduates are expected to step into the world with a distinct institutional branding that follows them for the rest of their lives.

That said, both Military Service Academies and SMCs have profound vulnerabilities when it comes creating and maintaining a culture of respect with our student populations. Cadets at both types of institutions:

- (a) have disproportionate ratios of male and female cadets when compared to the broader national population (i.e., significantly more males than females);
- (b) have a profound power differential between cadets resulting from the cadet rank structure within their distinct four-class development systems;
- (c) are required to live in close proximity to one another much of the year within their respective cadet units (e.g., squadrons, companies, outfits,

etc.). As with any familial unit, the stressors that often accompany this extensive close contact can quickly turn toxic if members are not equipped with adequate coping skills;

- (d) are expected to consistently perform within high-stakes, high-stress environments; and
- (e) have substantial subcultures that can create unique ingroup/outgroup dynamics and potential biases.

Beyond these similarities, there are also very tangible differences between Military Service Academies and SMCs. One of the most significant of these is the career paths taken by graduates. For example, at Military Service Academies, every student attends with the full intention and foreknowledge of serving in the military upon graduation. Although their career fields and specific jobs may vary widely, every single attendee knows they will serve on active duty for at least the minimum time of their initial service commitment.

This is not the case at the SMCs. While all SMCs have a substantial commissioning population, we also have a percentage of students who will not enter the military upon graduation. For example, at Texas A&M, the Corps of Cadets commissions more officers annually than any other school in America outside of the Military Service Academies. That said, approximately 60 percent of the cadets in the Corps will not enter the military upon graduation. Instead, they will take the knowledge, discipline, and values gained from their Corps experience and step into potentially hundreds of civilian career fields. Furthermore, the Corps of Cadets is merely one student organization within the broader University, comprising only about four percent of the total Texas A&M undergraduate student population.

This reality poses a real challenge for our Corps, especially when attempting to advance the value of respect. For example, at a Military Service Academy, academic conversations about respect can be tailored

directly to the military context—classroom examples and case studies often come exclusively from military examples. Furthermore, if an especially egregious violation of respect were to occur, senior leaders at a Military Service Academy can address 100 percent of the students quickly and directly (readers may recall recent salient incidents at the Air Force Academy when the Superintendent addressed all cadets from the Staff Tower of the dining hall after an unfortunate event). Conversely, at Texas A&M, our senior leaders do not have this opportunity since our students have academic and University responsibilities that reach far beyond their Corps affiliation.

All of this serves as a backdrop for the remainder of this article. In the following paragraphs, I will explain our efforts at Texas A&M over the past three years to advance the core value of respect within both our students and staff. In order to do this, we will go back to the quote that began this essay from the brilliant poet and philosopher Maya Angelou – “Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.”

“Do the best you can ...”

The Texas A&M Corps of Cadets has a long and proud history of living out its mission statement to develop well-educated leaders of character prepared for the global leadership challenges of the future. Character, values, and integrity have always been a vital part of the Corps since the start of the University in 1876. We have historically brought in high-character students who allowed their Corps experiences to mold and shape them into citizens of impact for our state and nation. Through the years, Texas A&M Corps has produced astronauts, corporate CEOs, military general officers, and a state governor. Seven former cadets have received the Medal of Honor. Two Aggie generals have served as Commandant of the Air Force Academy (Patrick

K. Gamble (1993-1994) and Gregory J. Lengyel (2012-2014). General Stephen Wilson (A&M Class of 1981) recently retired as the Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force.

Unfortunately, over the past few years, we discovered that we were making a mistake that many organizations make: we assumed character development was happening, but we were not as intentional in the training, application, or assessment of our efforts. As a result, we discovered that we were becoming increasingly vulnerable to the phenomenon of ethical drift, where our lack of a unified focus on character development was becoming evident in a series of

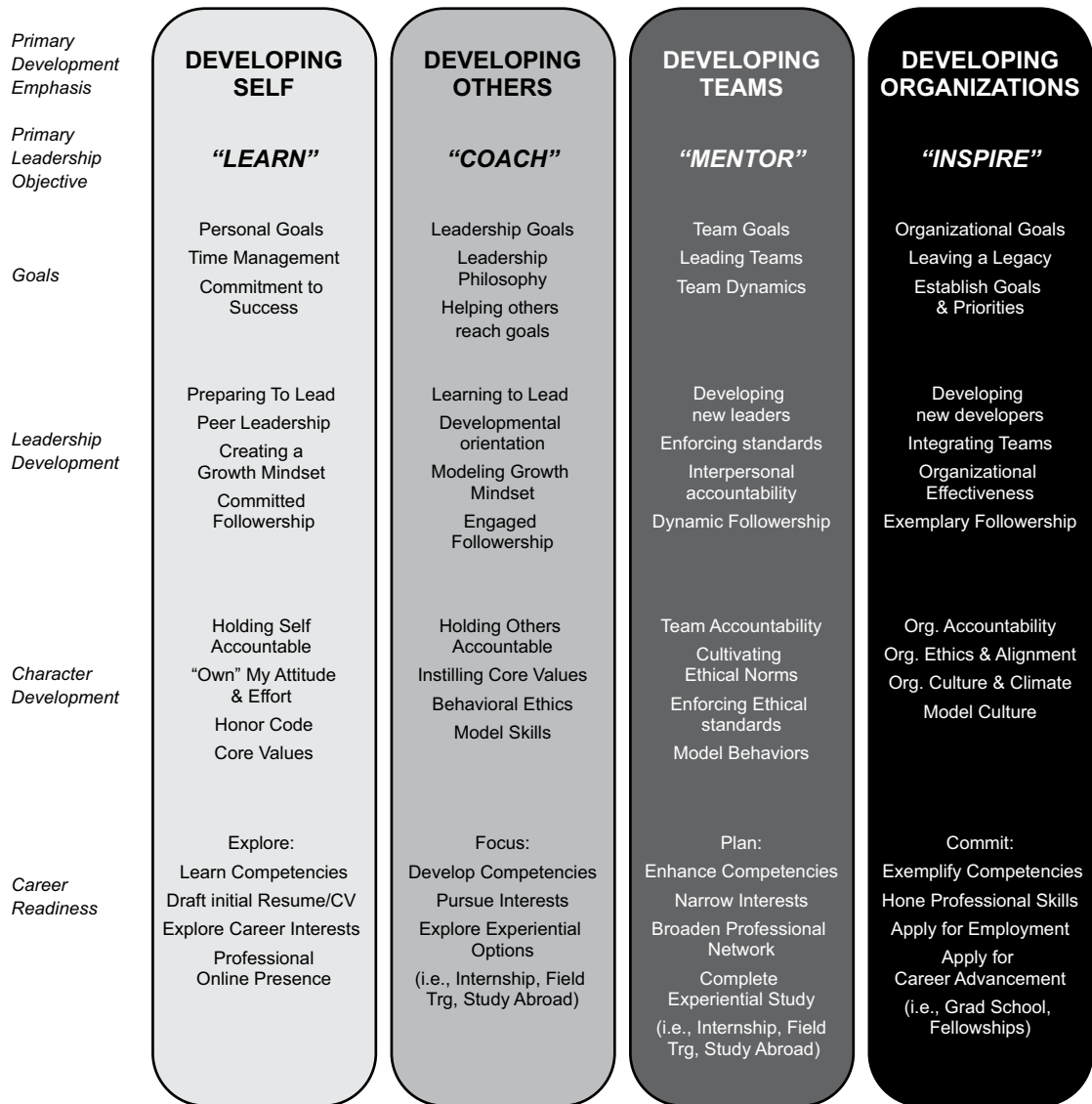
These efforts to “do the best you can” ultimately fell short of what we knew we could – and should – have been doing. We needed increased intentionality and alignment.

incidents where cadets had missed the mark—at times egregiously—in terms of living out their character (Sternberg, 2012). We discovered that we had given the responsibility of teaching and developing respect to the student leaders within each of the 45 cadet outfits (similar to Air Force Academy squadrons). In short, the 45 cadet outfits were largely operating independently without true organizational alignment around a common unified purpose.

These efforts to “do the best you can” ultimately fell short of what we knew we could – and should – have been doing. We needed increased intentionality and alignment. We needed to stop assuming character development was occurring consistently across all 45 outfits, and take deliberate steps to ensure that it was occurring.

Figure 1

Corps Leadership Development Model (CLDM).



"Until you know better..."

One of the first things we did to improve our organizational alignment was the creation and development of a Corps Leadership Development Model (CLDM). This model was developed during the 2018-2019 academic year, in partnership with

the Hollingsworth Center, the ROTC detachments, graduate stakeholders, outside experts, and focus groups of dedicated cadet leaders.

The CLDM outlined a four-year progression of growth for all cadets around a framework of four stages: developing self, developing others, developing

teams, and developing organizations. These four headings largely corresponded with the freshmen, sophomore, junior, and senior years, respectively, with each stage building upon the lessons learned from all previous stages. Further, within each stage, we outlined the leadership, character, and career readiness goals/outcomes for each phase of development.

The creation of the CLDM was a major starting point to begin taking a hard introspective look at the delta between where we were as an organization, and where the model inspired us to go. As a direct result of the internal conversations borne out of this process, it was determined that the value of respect was glaringly missing from the stated list of the Corps of Cadets core values. While respect may have been assumed, it was never overtly stated. Perhaps not coincidentally, many of the cadet discipline problems at that time seemed to center around issues regarding disrespect. Cadet leadership took steps immediately to add respect to the existing list of core values in 2019.

Adding respect to the list was a good initial step, but we knew it was insufficient to stop there. Memorizing a list of core values is obviously not the same as taking deliberate steps toward teaching, discussing, and behaviorally defining the term for our cadets. The aforementioned discipline cases coincided with several high-profile national events that piqued the conscious of American society. As a result, we decided to collect testimonies of respect—and disrespect—from targeted focus groups of cadets. Comments from these focus groups were quite sobering and indicated that, while we often looked good on the surface to outside observers, there were multiple indicators that we had significant work to do within some subcultures within the Corps.

We conducted additional anonymous culture/climate assessments and discovered similar patterns beyond just our focus groups. Trust is a byproduct of psychological safety, and we increasingly realized that

some of our students did not feel comfortable coming forward due to fear of emotional retaliation from other students. While this is an increasing phenomenon with today's students throughout the world, it was still disappointing to know that it was happening to our population as well.

"Then when you know better, do better."

As we were confronted with data showing areas for needed improvement, we began working together across the Corps to begin to address these areas practically and deliberately. Despite the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, we remained determined to take immediate steps to begin addressing these issues.

Corps Conversations for Staff

One of the first steps we took was to create small-group huddles within our permanent staff to discuss important—and often controversial—topics around race, gender, empathy, and political correctness. We created cross-functional small groups and required all members of the Commandant's staff to participate in monthly small-group discussions (initially via virtual platforms due to COVID-19 protocols). We chose to begin with the staff because (a) we knew it was important to lead by example, (b) we needed to be clear on these concepts before attempting to discuss them with our students, and (c) it would be naïve to assume we might not have respect gaps within our own staff.

Corps Conversations for Students

We created multiple opportunities for current cadets to hear from multiple panels of current and recently graduated cadets around topics related to respect, inclusion, and marginalization of team members. Current students listened as panelists shared their experiences—both good and bad. Cadets were then challenged to step out and make substantive changes to the internal cultures of their respective outfits and special units.

Figure 2

12 Career Readiness Competencies

<h2>Corps 12</h2> <h3>Career Readiness Competencies</h3>	<h3>Career Readiness</h3> <p>The attainment and demonstration of requisite competencies that broadly prepare you to successfully transition into the workplace.</p>
 <h4>PROFESSIONALISM</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal accountability & effective work habits • Consistently meet or exceed goals and expectations • Act with integrity and accountability to self, others, and the organization • Learns from his/hers mistakes 	 <h4>ETHICAL LEADERSHIP</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivate and inspire others by building mutual trust • Plan, initiate, manage, complete, and evaluate projects • Leverage strengths of self and others to achieve common goals • Use interpersonal skills to coach and develop others • Organize, prioritize, and delegate work
 <h4>COMMUNICATION</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively in written and oral forms to persons inside and outside of the organization • Can write/edit memos, letters, and complex technical reports clearly and effectively • Employ active listening, persuasion, and influencing skills 	 <h4>CRITICAL THINKING</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise sound reasoning to analyze issues • Make decisions and overcome problems • Gather and analyze information from a diverse set of sources and individuals to fully understand a problem • Demonstrate originality and inventiveness
 <h4>CAREER & SELF DEVELOPMENT</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify & articulate skills, strengths, knowledge, and experiences relevant to the position • Identify areas necessary for professional growth • Navigate and explore job options • Understand how to advocate for opportunities in the workplace 	 <h4>TEAMWORK</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimize mission accomplishment within a team structure • Listen carefully to others, taking time to understand and ask appropriate questions without interrupting • Build collaborative relationships with colleagues and customers representing diverse viewpoints • Negotiate and manage conflict
 <h4>TECHNOLOGY</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage existing digital technologies ethically and efficiently to solve problems, complete tasks, and accomplish goals • Demonstrate effective adaptability to new and emerging technologies • Navigate change and be open to learning new technologies 	 <h4>RESPECT & INCLUSION</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate openness, inclusiveness, sensitivity • Respect and learn from diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, sexual orientations, and religions • Solicit and use feedback from multiple cultural perspectives • Actively contribute to inclusive and equitable practices that influence individual, organizational, and societal progress
 <h4>ADAPTABILITY</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize and adjust to unforeseen circumstances • Maintain flexibility in complex situations • Modify plans to accomplish predetermined goals • Overcome obstacles 	 <h4>RESILIENCY</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recover from setbacks or failure • Mentally and emotionally cope with crisis • Protect oneself from the potential negative effects of stressors • Grit and determination to elevate above circumstances
 <h4>PHYSICAL & MENTAL WELLNESS</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make choices toward a healthy and fulfilling life • Self care, stress reduction and the development of inner strength • Maintain optimal body structures and functions through healthy food intake, physical activity and exercise, sleep health, and proper hydration 	 <h4>FINANCIAL LITERACY</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand and properly apply financial management skills • Make informed and effective decisions with financial resources • Create and maintain personal and organizational budgets • Protect economic value with appropriate financial risk management

Intentional Leadership Conference

The Hollingsworth Center for Ethical Leadership hosts an annual multi-day Intentional Leadership Conference (ILC) each year for cadets. In 2021, the theme was modified to be about respect in multiple settings (i.e., respect in the workplace, respect in relationships, respect in teams, etc.). In 2022, the ILC theme is moral courage, and participants will discuss multiple dimensions of how to courageously take action in life, to include confronting inappropriate behaviors and attitudes within organizations.

Revision of our Career Readiness Competencies to Include “Respect and Inclusion”

The Corps of Cadets has 12 Career Readiness competencies that we emphasize for both commissioning and non-commissioning cadets (e.g., critical thinking, teamwork, professionalism, communication, etc.; Figure 2). One of those competencies was previously entitled *Global and Intercultural Fluency*. During our focus groups, we discovered that most cadets thought of that competency in terms of being courteous when traveling outside the United States. Consequently, in 2021, we modified that competency to be *Respect and Inclusion* in order to better train cadets that respect for other cultures does not have to be exclusively overseas, but, rather, it is often most powerfully displayed by the respectful appreciation of others within one’s own organizational unit.

Creation of a Rising Commanders Course

Student cadet commanders are a force multiplier when it comes to organizational culture. We determined that our efforts to train and guide these new student leaders was largely ineffective regarding organizational culture and climate. All new student cadet commanders will now be required to take an academic commanders course as part of their weekly studies. Part of the curriculum for that course is the creation, maintenance, and cultivation of a respectful organizational culture and climate. Assignments will include assessment

of individual outfits and creation of action plans to address emerging issues.

Increased Emphasis on Mental Health Services

One of the things our team discovered is that our students had unique challenges regarding mental and emotional health. As such, we sought help from national experts and the counseling services on our own campus. We trained all staff on warning signs and created new cadet positions to help listen, identify, and refer hurting students to appropriate helping agencies.

Create Sustainable Processes to Assess and Evaluate Efforts

Assessing constructs such as respect or character, more broadly, is challenging. We have found that it works best when using multiple data collection techniques like using qualitative and quantitative methods. We then search for recurring themes or trends, rather than basing decisions on anecdotes – regardless of how salient a single anecdote might be. Through quantitative climate surveys, cadet qualitative focus groups, former cadet panels, staff focus groups, and other methods, we were able to determine our initial steps and most urgent areas of immediate focus. Over time, the intent is to become more organizationally consistent with these efforts to be able to explore changes over time, conduct both formative and summative evaluations of our programs, and identify emerging issues much faster. One of the first steps in this process is that the Hollingsworth Center for Ethical Leadership will be hiring an Associate Director for Assessment in Integration to begin work this coming fall semester.

Conclusion

Throughout the past several years, it has become increasingly clear that institutions of higher learning across America are quite often challenged to meet the fresh societal demands of developing young leaders with a high capacity for respect for human dignity. Military Service Academies and SMCs are not immune to these challenges. While we share some unique advantages in

this fight, we also share some sobering vulnerabilities that can often make this effort quite treacherous.

The purpose of this essay has been to illuminate one organization's ongoing journey to deliberately improve efforts in this critical area. It has involved taking a hard look internally, asking tough questions of our stakeholders, and ourselves, and taking deliberate steps to move forward collectively as an organizationally aligned team. One of our important next steps will be to improve the evaluation and assessment of our efforts.

We do not claim to be the paragon of perfection when it comes to these topics. However, I hope I have conveyed our sincere commitment to intentionally improve and grow. The Corps of Cadets is the oldest and most recognized student organization at Texas A&M. We take very seriously our charge to lead our university regarding our character, values, and leadership. To that noble purpose, we are committed to identifying issues and holding ourselves accountable for the creation of a better—and more respectful—Corps in the future.

To paraphrase Dr. Angelou...

We were doing the best we could, but our data showed we needed to do better.

Now that we know better, we must continue to take bold steps to do better!

♦ ♦ ♦

Reference

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FEATURE ARTICLES

Identifying the Competencies of Air Force Ethical Leadership

Laura Parson, North Dakota State University

Ariel Steele, Auburn University

Ken Tatum, Air University

Megan Allison, Air University

Jessica Weise, Auburn University

In a previous article, *Leadership and Ethics across the Continuum of Learning: The Ethical Leadership Framework* (Tatum et al., 2019), the authors introduced the Ethical Leadership Framework (ELF). The ELF is a conceptual model for how Air University, under its 5-year Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), which is a required component of the SACSCOC reaccreditation process for Air University), is pursuing a more deliberate effort to focus on the nexus of strategic and ethical decision-making competencies across its key leadership development programs. The ELF is premised on the notions that 1) ethics and ethical frameworks need to be wholly incorporated into leader and leadership development, rather than being treated as specialty subjects, and 2) development occurs across individual, team, and organizational levels. Additionally, to ensure development opportunities and prepare Airmen and Guardians for the Department of the Air Force's complex global mission sets and the dynamic strategic

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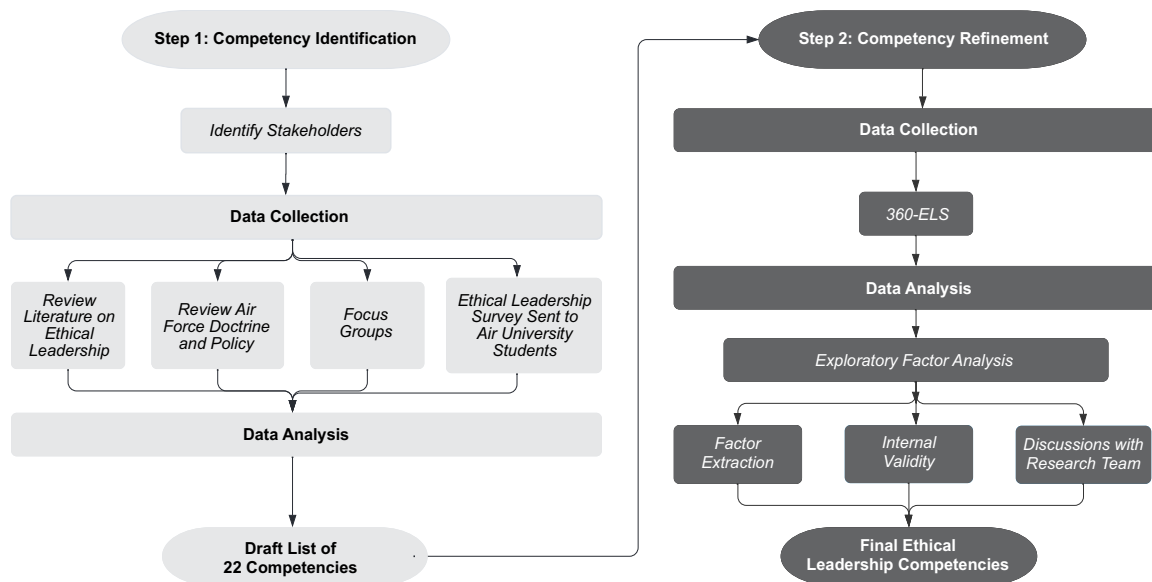
environment, the framework focuses on three strategic capacities as foundational strategic leader behaviors: absorptive, adaptive, and decision-making. *Absorptive capacity* is an “individual’s ability to learn through directed and self-directed learning and to apply the knowledge to specific contexts” (Boal & Hooijberg, 2000; Tatum et al., 2019, p. 44). *Adaptive capacity* is an “individual’s ability to change or adapt in moments of incongruence, complexity, and changing environments” (Tatum et al., 2019, p. 45; Boal & Hooijberg, 2000; Boal & Whitehead, 1992; Hooijberg, Hunt, & Dodge, 1997). Finally, *decision-making capacity* is the “ability to understand individual and organizational actors, individual and organizational relationships, and how to make decisions at the appropriate time while creating and maintaining relationships” (Tatum et al., 2019, p. 45; Gardner, 1985; 1993; Sternberg, 1985; Zaccaro et al., 1991).

As part of the QEP’s Year 1 efforts, the authors conducted a study to identify and define the core competencies that characterized an ethical Air Force leader. Data collection and analysis followed a mixed-methods approach. The method was an adaptation of the competency-based curriculum design process (Koszalka et al., 2013) developed by Laura Parson. The Decolonizing Approach to Competency-based Curriculum Design (DA-CBE) (see Parson & Weise, 2020; Parson & Miller, in development) is a method of curriculum design that expands the sources of data that inform curriculum development through a competency-design process (see Figure 1).

A competency-based (CBE) curriculum design process begins by identifying the desired knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSAs) one should develop by the conclusion of the course, workshop, or program to be considered competent in the desired profession, field, or skill. By seeking the input from a wide variety of stakeholders including students, faculty, future supervisors, and community leaders, the DA-CBE seeks a broader understanding of the spectrum of desired outcomes of a curriculum to ensure the curriculum meets the needs of all stakeholders. In addition to the data collected from key stakeholders, the DA-CBE method collects and analyzes a rich resource of textual documents to inform competency development. Those include scholarly research on the current state of the field, research and reports on desired attributes of graduates from the course or program, evaluation standards for professionals in that field, and reports on the ethics and values of the field. Those documents, paired with data from the interviews and focus groups with stakeholders, are the dataset from which competencies are identified and developed for Step 1 of the process. In the present study, Step 1 resulted in a draft list of Air Force ethical leader competencies.

Step 2 of the competency development process begins after competencies are identified, and key stakeholders validate identified competencies through triangulation with the literature and review. Specifically, after competencies were developed, we explored and refined the list of competencies through a quantitative assessment that combined three validated measures

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Figure 1*Decolonizing Approach to Competency-Based Curriculum Design (DA-CBE; Parson & Weise, 2020)*

This method was used to identify and refine the core competencies of an ethical leader in the Air Force. Step 1 involves identifying competencies through stakeholder informants and qualitative analysis. Step 2 involves the refinement of the competencies identified in Step 1 through a quantitative survey (360-ELS) that measures leadership in the Air Force context.

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of ethical leadership (360-ELS). We developed this measure to refine the list of the competencies of an ethical leader and to create a baseline measure that would allow us to assess ethical leader development after implementing ethical leadership-focused curriculum. In this manuscript, we report on the competency development process, the quantitative survey analysis, and present the list of ethical leadership competencies that resulted from the two steps of the competency identification process. We begin by describing the process and results of Step 1, the qualitative portion of data collection and analysis. Second, we describe Step 2, where we refined the list of competencies. Finally, we present the list of competencies that resulted from Steps 1 and 2 and discuss next steps.

Step 1: Competency Identification

The goal of Step 1 was to identify initial competencies of an ethical leader in the Air Force. The research questions that guided Step 1 sought to understand the views of desired skills and attributes from multiple perspectives. Specifically, we sought to identify the following:

1. What are the competencies of an ethical leader in the Air Force context?
2. What does the research say about ethical leadership?
3. What do Air University faculty and staff say about ethical leadership in the Air Force?
4. What does Air Force doctrine and policy say

about ethical leadership in the Air Force?

5. What do Air University students say about ethical leadership in the Air Force?

We began Step 1 with the identification of key stakeholders. Key stakeholders are those who can speak to a course or program's desired skills and attributes (Koszalka et al., 2013; Parson & Weise, 2020). In this study, the key stakeholders were Air University faculty and leadership (referred to as the working group) and Air University students. Once key stakeholders were identified, we began the data collection process.

Data Collection

The data collected that informed competency identification included scholarly literature, Air Force doctrine including evaluation and promotion documents, focus groups with members representing all key AU leadership programs, and a survey distributed to Air University students. First, we conducted a literature search on ethical leadership inside and outside of military. The literature search expanded across disciplines and included identifying leadership and ethical leadership competencies across fields. Second, we collected data through three focus groups with members from across AU programs that asked Air University faculty and staff to define leadership, ethics, and challenges to teaching ethical leadership. Those focus groups were recorded and transcribed. Third, we identified relevant Air Force doctrine and policy, including promotion documents, core

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doctrine, and leadership training handbooks. Finally, we conducted an Ethical Leadership Survey sent to Air University students that asked them to respond to the following questions qualitatively: How do you define ethics? How do you define ethical leadership? What are challenges to teaching ethical leadership? What changes need to be made to ethical leadership to make it more successful? We received over 7,500 responses to the ethical leadership survey. Although we did not collect data on the number of students the survey was distributed to, estimated enrollment at Air University is around 54,000.

Data Analysis

After data collection was completed, we began the process of translating the collected data into competencies following the DA-CBE model (Parson, 2021; Parson & Weise, 2020; Parson & Miller, in development). That process began by qualitatively coding the survey responses into significant statements (excluding leadership and ethical leadership competencies). Statements were defined as one significant core concept, either a challenge of ethical leadership or a characteristic/anti-characteristic of an ethical leader. Second, we organized significant statements into four categories: current state, professional standards, ethics and values, and vision of the future. These four categories are identified in the International Board of Standards for Training, Performance, and Instruction (IBSTPI) generic competency design model (Koszalka et al.,

2013). Next, we coded each significant statement into a competency. A competency is defined as knowledge, skill, or attitude (KSA; Koszalka et al., 2013). We used existing competencies when available, beginning with the draft AETC Foundational Competency List (FCL) and, when a KSA was not represented in the FCL, using leadership competencies from professional organizations outside of the Air Force context (Parson, 2021; Parson & Miller, in press). Finally, if leadership competencies could not be identified in existing literature, we created new competencies. This resulted in a draft list of 22 competencies and refined further in Step 2.

Next, we presented the draft competencies to the AU QEP Standing Working Group for validation and review. While we refined the definitions from feedback gathered during that meeting, no significant changes to the competencies resulted from those reviews, but we did flag seven competencies for future refinement or elimination due to some conflation or overlap between definitions. We identified these seven competencies because of difficulty, at times, differentiating which competency a significant statement should be categorized as during the coding process. The competencies we identified as having overlapping definitions and were thus difficult to differentiate between were: (a) Decision Making, Critical Thinking, and Strategic Thinking; (b) Self-Control and Resilience; and (c) Influence and Change Management.

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Step 2: Competency Refinement

After the draft competencies were identified, we sought to refine the list of competencies through a quantitative assessment that combined three measures of ethical leadership. We developed this measure both to refine the list of the competencies of an ethical leader as identified in Step 1 and to create a baseline measure so we could comprehensively assess ethical leader development after implementing ethical leadership-focused curriculum. Specifically, we combined three validated measures of ethical leadership: the Moral Metacognition Scale (MMS) (McMahon & Good, 2016), the Organizational Ethical Culture Measure (OECM) (Huhtala et al., 2018), and the Ethical Leadership Questionnaire (ELQ; Yukl et al., 2013).

The research questions for Step 2 that guided our data collection and analysis asked:

1. What ethical leadership competencies were represented in the ethical leadership measures?
2. How does a baseline assessment using traditional ethical leadership surveys inform understanding of ethical leadership competencies?
 - a. Did we miss any competencies included in traditional measures of ethical leadership?
 - b. Which competencies identified in Step 1 were not represented in the existing ethical measures?

We sought to answer these research questions by developing a comprehensive survey measuring ethical leadership with the Air Force context (referred to as a 360 Ethical Leadership Survey; 360-ELS) that combined existing measures and tailored those measures for the Air Force context. We combined validated scales to design the 360-ELS in order to create a measure that included ethical leadership

scales developed independent of our research team. We did not create questions to measure the draft list of competencies, because we wanted the 360-ELS to serve as one way we could validate and refine that list of competencies. After implementing the survey, we used exploratory factor analysis to identify which factors loaded on the new scale and compared those to the draft list of competencies identified in Step 1. At the conclusion of that process, we refined our draft list of ethical leadership competencies to create the final list of ethical leadership competencies (see Table 3).

Participants/Sample

At the time the survey was distributed to Air University students, the estimated total number of enrolled students was 54,000. However, because of the nature of Air University and the way that “student” is defined (e.g., anyone enrolled in ROTC, civilian development courses, distance learning eSchool courses), the actual number of who could be an active student and, therefore, received the email invitation to complete the survey is unknown. Our best estimate given previous survey distribution rates is that around 8,500 students saw the email invitation to complete the survey. From that sample, 1,935 Airmen responded to the survey (see Table 1). The description of the demographic categorization of Airmen was as follows: non-supervisory Airmen included officer, enlisted, and civilian Airmen who have not served (currently or formerly) in a designated supervisory position. These generally included officer ranks O-1 through O-3, enlisted ranks E1 through E4, and all government service (GS) non-supervisory positions. Supervisory Airmen (non-senior level) included officer, enlisted and civilian Airmen who are currently serving or have served in formal supervisory positions below the Group/Wing level, or staff equivalent. This generally included ranks O-3 through O-5, E-5 through E-8, and GS

Table 1***360-ELS Survey Participant Demographics***

	N
Non-supervisory Airmen	725
Supervisory Airmen	925
Senior Leader Airmen	117
Cadet/Officer Candidate	437
Enlisted	474
Officer	586
Civilian	225
AU Faculty	112

supervisory positions, GS-14 and below. Senior Leader Airmen included officer, enlisted, and civilian Airmen who were serving or had served in leadership positions at the Group/Wing level and above or staff equivalent. This generally included ranks O-6 through O-10, E-9, and GS-15, AD-24, and Senior Executive Service (SES) civilians. Additionally, Airmen demographics included Cadet/Officer Candidates, Enlisted, Officers, Civilians, and Air University Faculty.

Survey Instrument and Measures

Our goal in developing the 360-ELS was to create an assessment that measured each leadership domain, individual, team, and organization to create a 360-degree view of ethical leadership within the context of the Air Force (Tatum et al., 2020). Because no one measure available to us assessed all three domains, we combined three validated measures of ethical leadership, the ELQ, the MMS, and the OECM to create a new measure of ethical leadership. First, the ELQ was adapted from Yukl et al. (2013); the 360-ELS had two versions of the ELQ that were rank dependent. For Airmen in non-

supervisory roles, the ELQ measured their perceptions of the ethical leadership of their leaders/supervisors. For Supervisory Airmen, Senior Leadership Airmen, and Air University Faculty, the ELQ measured the perceptions of their ethical leadership of themselves and their supervisees. The MMS was adapted from McMahon and Good (2016) and was used to measure Airmen's individual ethical competence and self-knowledge of an ethical leader. For senior leaders, it was also used to assess their competency as strategic-ethical leaders. The Organizational Ethical Culture Measure (OECM) was adapted from Huhtala et al. (2018) and was used to assess Airmen's understanding of the organizational domain of ethical leadership. The OECM prompted Airmen to assess the current state of strategic-ethical leadership development and measure the success of the leadership development framework outlined in the QEP. For senior leaders, the OECM provided an assessment of AU Faculty expertise in leadership development and competence. There were 103 dependent variables and two independent variables in the 360-ELS. Each measure used a 6-point

Likert scale (MMS; 1 = very strongly disagree, 6 = very strongly agree; ELQ and OECM; 1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree).

After combining the three measures, we adapted the measures for the Air Force context, which required, in part, naming the Air Force specifically—replacing references to “organization” or “institution”, and by using Air Force leadership hierarchies. Next, we created three versions of the survey according to the leadership level of those who would be taking the survey so that questions were appropriate for the respondent’s institutional vantage point. Version A was for those with limited or no supervisory responsibilities; it sought to assess both the individual’s perceptions of their own ethical leadership development and to understand their assessment of the ethical leadership of their supervisor and of the Air Force as an organization. Version B was for what would be considered mid-level management. These Air Force leaders had supervisory experience but were not at the top levels of leadership. Questions in Version B sought to assess the leader’s perceptions of their own ethical development as an individual, as a leader, and to assess the overall ethics of the Air Force as an organization. Finally, Version C was delivered to the most senior leaders and sought to assess their own assessment of themselves as an ethical leader, their efficacy in directing the Air Force as an ethical organization, and their assessment of the Air Force as an ethical organization. Respondents answered demographic questions at the beginning of the survey to determine which version of the survey they would complete.

Our goal in the 360-ELS was to provide a 360-degree view of the state of ethical leadership in the Air Force, and we sought to provide that perspective with three versions designed to generate perspectives from the specific vantage point of the respondent. Because

the goal of the ELS-360 was to be a comprehensive, 360-degree view of the ethical leadership within an institution, we conducted our analyses across versions to create a comprehensive picture of the individual, group, and organizational aspects of ethical leadership within the Air Force context¹. The decision to analyze across versions was reinforced through our factor analysis process: Factor loadings (Table 2) were very high, leading to distinct factors with very few items loading onto two factors.

Data Analysis. Data was analyzed using SPSS. The purpose of the analysis was to validate the 360-ELS as a measure of ethical leadership within the Air Force context by examining which competencies were assessed with the 360-ELS, and to provide a baseline measurement from which we could assess ethical leadership development of Airmen in the U.S. Air Force and Air University.

Exploratory Factor Analysis. We used exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to determine if similar factors loaded on the same construct (Costello & Osborne, 2005). The purpose of EFA is to reduce the data into factors that explain the majority of the data. To determine if the data were appropriate for factor analysis, we calculated the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) and Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity (Watkins, 2018). The KMO was high at 0.954 and the Bartlett’s test was significant ($p < .001$), so the data were appropriate for factor analysis.

1 For example, while word differences across versions were small (e.g., “I am” versus “My supervisor is”), those differences changed the nature of some questions from an external measure of a dimension of a supervisor’s ethical leadership development to a measure of one’s perceptions of their own ethical leadership development in that dimension. This provided two views of leadership development in that dimension. This approach also informed the main goal of the study reported on this manuscript, to create and validate the competencies of an ethical leadership, by collecting data on the individual, group, and/or organizational components of ethical leadership competencies.

Factor Extraction. Factor extraction methods involved using maximum likelihood estimates and oblique rotation. Maximum likelihood estimates were highly used in the literature (Fabrigar, et al., 1999; McMahon & Good, 2016) and were appropriate because “it allows for the computation of a wide range of indexes of the goodness of fit of the model and permits statistical significance testing of factor loadings and correlations among factors and the computation of confidence intervals” (Fabrigar et al., 1999, pp. 277). Oblique rotation was used instead of orthogonal rotation because oblique rotation methods assume the factors are correlated. Since behaviors usually do not function independently of each other, oblique rotation was the best choice for factor analysis in this study (Costello & Osborne, 2005). Therefore, in SPSS, we used the Promax rotation.

We used multiple methods to determine the number of factors. First, we used eigenvalues greater than 1 to determine factor loadings. Any factors with an eigenvalue greater than 1 was retained. We also visually assessed a scree plot to determine the approximate number of factors to retain in the factor analysis and confirmed that the scree plot and eigenvalues matched. To visually assess a scree plot, we looked for a break in the curve and then determined the number of factors before the break. The factor analysis determined 16 factors loaded on the data of the 360-ELS.

Because we used maximum likelihood with oblique rotation as the factor extraction method, we assessed the factor plots to determine the best fit to the data and which factors to retain (Costello & Osborne, 2005). After rotation, we selected the tables with the cleanest factor structure, which meant there were item loadings above 0.40, no or few item cross loadings, and no factors with fewer than three items (Costello

& Osborne, 2005). Given these criteria and an oblique factor rotation method, the pattern matrix was the best fit to the data. Next, we assessed the item loadings on each factor. Any loadings .40 or greater indicated a strong loading on that factor and were retained for further analysis.

Internal Reliability of Items. To determine the reliability of the scales we used in the 360-ELS, we calculated Cronbach’s alpha for each factor (16 Cronbach’s alphas) (see Table 2). Cronbach’s alpha is a reliability measure that determines the validity of the scale used to measure each construct. Overall, Cronbach’s alpha was high for each factor.

Factor Assessment. Next, we matched factors and factor loadings to the response codes and questionnaire items to qualitatively determine which competencies were assessed by the 360-ELS. Authors Parson and Steele compared survey items for each factor group, and discussed the underlying nature of each set of survey items that loaded onto a factor to give the corresponding factor a name. We compared survey questions that loaded onto each factor with the competency definitions to assign a competency to each factor. After evaluating survey questions, we labeled each factor as one of the 22 draft competencies identified in Step 1. Labeling factors during the factor analysis process is inherently subjective and subject to bias. Therefore, to seek validity, additional members of the research team explored the survey questions and assigned competencies independently to validate if the competency labels were appropriate. Still, it is possible a different group of individuals not involved in Step 1 would have labeled factors differently.

Draft Competency List Refinement. Our refinement of the list of competencies was informed by the 360-

Table 2

*Factor Loadings of 360-ELS by Competency (Items from Version A)***Equitable $\alpha = .945$**

Item	Question	Factor Loading
Discuss_4	In my immediate working environment, there is adequate opportunity to correct unethical conduct.	.928
Discuss_3	In my immediate working environment, there is ample opportunity for discussing moral dilemmas.	.896
Discuss_1	In my immediate working environment, there is adequate opportunity to discuss unethical conduct.	.866
Discuss_2	In my immediate working environment, reports of unethical conduct are taken seriously.	.860
Support_4	In my immediate working environment, everyone treats one another with respect	.818
Sanction_1	In my immediate working environment, ethical conduct is valued highly	.792
Sanction_3	In my immediate working environment, employees will be disciplined if they behave unethically	.727
Support_2	In my immediate working environment, a mutual relationship of trust prevails between Airmen and Senior Leadership	.717
Transparency_3	In my immediate working environment, adequate checks are carried out to detect violations and unethical conduct.	.694
Sanction_2	In my immediate working environment, ethical conduct is rewarded.	.616
Sanction_4	If I reported unethical conduct to management, I believe those involved would be disciplined fairly, regardless of their position.	.576

Accountability $\alpha = .972$

Item	Question	Factor Loading
Boss_4	Is honest and can be trusted to tell the truth.	.951
Boss_3	Sets an example of ethical behavior in his/her decisions and actions.	.900
Boss_5	Keeps his/her actions consistent with his/her stated values ("walks the talk")	.887
Boss_10	Regards honesty and integrity as important personal values.	.883
Boss_8	Insists on doing what is fair and ethical even when it is not easy	.832
Boss_12	Opposes the use of unethical practices to increase performance.	.799
Boss_1	Shows a strong concern for ethical and moral values.	.793
Boss_7	Can be trusted to carry out promises and commitments	.790
Boss_2	Communicates clear ethical standards for members.	.777
Boss_11	Sets an example of dedication and self-sacrifice for the organization	.750
Boss_9	Acknowledges mistakes and takes responsibility for them	.736
Boss_13	Is fair and objective when evaluating member performance and providing rewards	.734
Boss_6	Is fair and unbiased when assigning tasks to members	.689
Boss_15	Holds members accountable for using ethical practices in their work	.675

Table 2

Continued

Decision-Making $\alpha = .948$

Item	Question	Factor Loading
Meta_14	I do a good job considering the important factors needed to make an ethical decision.	.839
Meta_11	I stop and review the elements of an ethical dilemma when I remain unclear.	.821
Meta_15	During the ethical decision-making process, I periodically check to make sure the ethical guideline I am using is effective in making an ethical decision	.821
Meta_7	I know when I need to consider the ethical aspects in a dilemma	.794
Meta_20	Before engaging in the ethical decision process, I determine the appropriateness of the ethical guideline I normally use to solve ethical dilemmas.	.792
Meta_8	After engaging in the ethical decision-making process, I ask myself if I successfully followed an ethical guideline	.786
Meta_17	I find myself pausing regularly to confirm that I am considering all aspects of an ethical dilemma.	.780
Meta_18	I try to make sense of an ethical dilemma by breaking down the main elements I need to consider.	.753
Meta_5	I know which factors are important to consider when making an ethical decision.	.733
Meta_4	I am good at making ethical decisions	.701
Meta_10	I know my strengths and weaknesses when it comes to making an ethical decision.	.680
Meta_1	I ask myself what is important before engaging in the ethical decision-making process.	.677
Meta_6	I consider several possible courses of action before making an ethical decision.	.670
Meta_3	I try to apply ethical guidelines that I found helpful when faced with ethical dilemmas in the past.	.632
Meta_16	I know what is ethical and unethical.	.605
Meta_12	I spend time reflecting on my decision after I have made it.	.603

Communication $\alpha = .933$

Item	Question	Factor Loading
Guidance_3	Clarifies integrity guidelines	.937
Guidance_1	Clearly explains integrity related codes of conduct.	.920
Guidance_2	Explains what is expected from subordinates in terms of behaving with integrity	.838
Guidance_6	Stimulates the discussion of integrity issues among subordinates	.679
Guidance_5	Clarifies the likely consequences of possible unethical behavior by myself and my colleagues	.679
Role_4	Clarifies priorities	.576
Guidance_7	Compliments subordinates who behave according to the integrity guidelines	.553

Service Mindset $\alpha = .936$

Item	Question	Factor Loading
Fair_4	Pursues his/her own success at the expense of others*	.950
Fair_3	Holds me responsible for things that are not my fault*	.944
Fair_5	Is focused mainly on reaching his/her own goals.*	.871
Fair_6	Manipulates subordinates*	.846

**Reverse coded items*

Table 2

*Continued***Empathy $\alpha = .954$**

Item	Question	Factor Loading
People_2	Takes time for personal contact.	.830
People_3	Pays attention to my personal needs.	.823
People_1	Is interested in how I feel and how I am doing	.817
People_6	Sympathizes with me when I have problems	.773
People_7	Cares about his/her subordinates	.724
People_5	Is genuinely concerned about my personal development	.722
People_4	Takes time to talk about work-related emotions	.719

Information Seeking $\alpha = .911$

Item	Question	Factor Loading
Meta_19	I am a better ethical decision maker when faced with an ethical dilemma that is about a topic I care about.	.952
Meta_13	I am a better decision maker when faced with an ethical dilemma that is important to me.	.905
Meta_9	I am a better ethical decision maker when faced with an ethical dilemma that is interesting to me.	.823
Meta_2	I am a better ethical decision maker when faced with an ethical dilemma that directly impacts me.	.665

Integrity $\alpha = .953$

Item	Question	Factor Loading
CoS_4	My supervisor is honest and reliable	.901
CoS_3	My supervisor does as s/he says.	.872
CoS_1	My supervisor sets a good example in terms of ethical behavior	.855
CoS_2	My supervisor communicates the importance of ethics and integrity clearly and convincingly	.726

Resilience $\alpha = .972$

Item	Question	Factor Loading
Integrity_2	Can be trusted to do the things he/she says	.856
Integrity_3	Can be relied on to honor his/her commitments	.828
Integrity_1	Keeps his/her promises	.811
Integrity_4	Always keeps his/her words.	.790

Develops People $\alpha = .780$

Item	Question	Factor Loading
Power_3	Seeks advice from subordinates concerning organizational strategy	.742
Power_4	Will reconsider decisions on the basis of recommendations by those who report to him/her	.714
Power_1	Allows subordinates to influence critical decisions	.580
Power_5	Delegates challenging responsibilities to subordinates	.502
Power_6	Permits me to play a key role in setting my own performance goals	.473

Table 2

Continued

Change Management $\alpha = .935$

Item	Question	Factor Loading
CoM_2	Senior Leadership sets a good example in terms of ethical behavior	.838
CoM_1	The conduct of Senior Leadership reflects a shared set of norms and values	.763
CoM_3	Senior Leadership communicates the importance of ethics and integrity clearly and convincingly	.692
CoM_4	Senior Leadership would never authorize unethical or illegal conduct to meet business goals.	.646

Precision $\alpha = .873$

Item	Question	Factor Loading
Org_3	The Air Force makes it sufficiently clear to me how I should deal with external persons and organizations responsibly.	.835
Org_2	The Air Force makes it sufficiently clear to me how I should deal with confidential information responsibly	.775
Org_1	The Air Force makes it sufficiently clear to me how I should conduct myself appropriately toward others within the organization.	.746
Org_4	In my immediate working environment, it is sufficiently clear how we are expected to conduct ourselves in a responsible way	.507

Organizational Leadership $\alpha = .838$

Item	Question	Factor Loading
Transparency_2	If my leader does something which is not permitted, someone in the Air Force will find out about it.	.679
Transparency_4	Senior Leadership is aware of the type of incidents and unethical conduct that occur in my immediate working environment	.402
Transparency_1	If a member of my unit does something which is not permitted, leadership will find out about it.	.535

Teamwork $\alpha = .821$

Item	Question	Factor Loading
Support_3	In my immediate working environment, everyone takes the existing norms and standards seriously	.551
Support_1	In my immediate working environment, everyone has the best interests of the Air Force at heart	.518

Resource Management $\alpha = .937$

Item	Question	Factor Loading
Role_1	Indicates what the performance expectations of each group member are.	.546
Role_2	Explains what is expected of each group member.	.603
Role_3	Explains what is expected of me and my colleagues	.468
Role_5	Clarifies who is responsible for what	.428

Table 2

*Continued***Fosters Innovation $\alpha = .937$**

Item	Question	Factor Loading
Fair_2	Holds me responsible for work that I have no control over*	.529
Fair_1	Holds me accountable for problems over which I have no control*	.527

*Reverse coded items

ELS validation process². Specifically, after assigning competencies to the factors identified in Step 1, we examined the seven competencies we determined were not measured in the 360-ELS. First, we revisited the competencies flagged in Step 1 as possibly being one competency to identify if, and how, those competencies could be collapsed into one category instead of being artificially divided into two. Informed by the survey questions and factor loadings, we combined the following competencies, because we determined they were either components of one broad competency or because they were sub-components of another competency. Specifically, Decision Making, Critical Thinking, and Strategic Thinking were collapsed into one competency called Decision Making. Resilience and Self-Control were collapsed into one competency called Resilience. Change Management and Influence were collapsed into one competency called Change Management. That led to a revised list of 18 competencies. Sixteen of the 18 competencies were assessed in the 360-ELS (See Table 2 for the final list of ethical leadership competencies with the related items). The two remaining competencies were determined to be separate competencies that were not assessed in

the 360-ELS but will be included in future iterations of the 360-ELS. Those competencies were Results Focused and Initiative. After discussion with the entire research team and presentation of the competencies to the working group, it was determined that the 18 competencies reflected the KSAs of an ethical leader (See Table 3 for the final list of ethical leadership competencies with descriptions).

Discussion

The qualitative and quantitative approaches to competencies' identification and validation allowed us to construct a list of 18 competencies of an ethical leader in the Air Force. We acknowledge there is an art to the selection of competencies and the way the data was interpreted. The coding of Step 1 data was subjective, and we sought, when possible, to use existing competencies, such as those in the then-draft AETC Foundational Competency List. Similarly, we acknowledge the potential for bias in the labeling of the factors in the 360-ELS survey. Our goal, through both coding and labeling processes, was to extend past literature using similar nomenclature, and to ensure our competencies related to, and in conversation, with existing Air Force doctrine and language on the topic of leadership competencies. Still, we sought to validate each choice through discussion with the QEP Standing Working Group as well as ongoing conversations as a research team. Finally, we validated competency

2 We combined validated scales to design the 360-ELS in order to create a measure that included ethical leadership scales developed independent of our research team. As a result, however, not all competencies were measured by the 360-ELS, because we intentionally did not create questions to measure each competency. Subsequent iterations of the 360-ELS will have questions that comprehensively measure each of the competencies (once finalized).

Table 3

List of Final Competencies

Competency	Definition
Decision Making	Makes well-informed, effective and timely decisions. Identifies problems, evaluates alternative perspectives/solutions, makes timely and effective recommendations, and identifies multiple possible courses of action. Considers all possible outcomes and make the best decision considering all factors: mission, people, ethics, and outcomes. Decision making includes critical thinking: analytical, strategic, and creative thinking.
Accountability	Someone who takes responsibility for outcomes, sets an example for subordinates. Leading according to one's internal ethical compass.
Information Seeking	Self-development, pursuing and demonstrating self-knowledge and self-awareness, lifelong learning and skill development, establishes an information gathering habit.
Integrity	Acts in accordance with internal moral compass, loyal, honest, trustworthy, keeps promises, and is humble; behaves ethically even when no one is looking.
Equitable	A leader who is just, fair, treats all Airmen equally regardless of identity, religion, gender, and sexual orientation, and creates inclusive environments.
Empathy	Seeks to understand varied experiences of others through emotional perspective-taking to make decisions grounded in care and respect.
Precision	Strives to be their best, respects duty and authority, follows rules, and holds others to rules.
Develops People	Teaches and develops subordinates, trusts subordinates to do their work, takes care of subordinates and their families, and helps subordinates learn to be ethical.
Service Mindset	A leader who demonstrates a service mindset makes and focuses efforts to serve others and meet their needs; a service mindset but the needs of subordinates, the nation, and the Air Force before personal desires.
Resilience	Mentally, physically, spiritually, and emotionally ready for Air Force responsibilities through self-care practices including stress management techniques to prevent burnout. Regulates their emotions and acts to calm others in very stressful situations. Self-control is an essential aspect of resilience and also evidence of resilience.
Change Management	Demonstrates an ability to adapt, help others adapt, and is able to implement change with the goal of ensuring unit goals are properly aligned to the desired end state. Motivates others and ensures that others buy into the organization's mission, goals, climate, tone, and policy. Influence is an aspect of Change Management.
Teamwork	Encourages and empowers peers and subordinates, demonstrates followership, acts to promote a friendly climate, and practices conflict management.

Table 3

Continued

Competency	Definition
Results Focused	Mission-focused and commits resources and time to achieve mission success. A leader who is results focused sets challenging goals and takes action to achieve those goals.
Organizational Leadership	Sets an ethical climate and works to effect positive organizational change through the development and maintenance of systems, structures, policies, practices, procedures, and, if necessary, doctrine.
Communication	Clearly and effectively articulates intent in written and spoken formats, through effective presentations, and is able to promotes ideas and issues before a wide range of audiences.
Resource Management	Focuses sustainability, managing subordinate workload and appropriate delegation to maximize readiness, lethality, and improve organizational performance.
Fosters Innovation	Builds a culture of behaviors and business practices that encourages, champions, and rewards creativity and informed risk taking; rapidly adapts to new conditions and technologies.
Initiative	Anticipates and prepares for a specific opportunity that may not be obvious to others, does more than is required or expected, acts quickly and decisively in a crisis, and finds and creates new opportunities.

definitions with the literature and existing definitions of each knowledge, skill, or attitude in existing Air Force doctrine.

Similarly, while there were some competencies that had limited frequency in the Step 1 dataset, such as Fosters Innovation and Resource Management, we felt the literature and the Working Group built a case for their importance in ways that superseded a smaller quantitative result. In those ways, we acknowledge we made decisions about competencies that reflected not just the quantitative numbers but the emphasis of the qualitative research that was the foundation of this research. This is one of the strengths of mixed-methods research, and we want to be explicit about where and how qualitative data informed our decision making.

Similarly, while Equitable and Empathy were not largely referenced in the other three datasets, they were such a strong theme in the Ethical Leadership Survey, that we felt the need for those competencies was strong. This, too, is the value of building competencies from multiple datasets; had we not included the voices of Air University students, which ranges in rank from entry-level to senior leaders because of the nature of Air University, we might not have understood the need for those competencies in our Ethical Leader competency selection. Finally, some competencies were not comprehensively measured in the 360-ELS (e.g., only one aspect of the competency was measured), so future iterations of the survey will include additional survey items that seek to measure that competency more comprehensively. For example, questions that

assessed one's ability to be consistent and reliable, especially during difficult situations, were labeled as Resilience. In future iterations of the survey, questions will be added to measure the aspects of resilience that measure self-care practices to prevent burnout and the aspect of positive self-control. The competencies that need additional items added include Resilience, Empathy, Teamwork, Organizational Leadership, and Fosters Innovation.

The next step in this process is to take the analysis from the 360-ELS and explore how respondents scored on the baseline assessment. From those results, we will identify which competencies to focus on for target curriculum development to help develop those competencies for Air University students as well as for current and future Air Force leaders.

♦ ♦ ♦

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FEATURE ARTICLES

Leader and Character Development Through Ethics Education

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Abstract

Developing leaders of character to sustain a just and honorable standard of military ethics into the future unites the armed forces, reinforces crucial bonds with allies and partner nations, and keeps the faith of a nation's people. As military members across joint and multinational forces work to strengthen military ethics in the profession of arms, they face many challenges inherent to the complex nature of military ethics. This article identifies underlying psychological, cognitive, and sociological factors making ethical challenges in the military difficult to recognize and overcome. This analysis offers evidence-based solutions to confront these leadership and character development issues through purposeful military ethics education across the forces. To address these concerns, this article distinguishes the scope of military ethics and its role in the joint force. Next, it exposes challenges affecting ethical military conduct. Finally, it provides a practical examination, supported by theoretical literature, to propose applicable approaches for developing and maintaining military ethics. Ultimately, to better function as a unified profession of arms, the joint force may benefit from a more balanced approach to inculcate military ethics, reinforce support and accountability, increase applied understanding of virtues and values, and navigate situational factors in the joint and multinational environment.

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Introduction

For many organizations and academic institutions, forging a path to the future has meant placing an emphasis on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM; Department of Education, 2022). While this is an important approach to developing cutting-edge innovations, the tumultuous social, political, and global issues continuing to emerge expose broader, more complex challenges requiring additional areas of expertise as well. In the next decade, leaders will face revolutionary and sweeping change efforts for multifaceted problems, such as overcoming social injustice and inequity, biased misinformation, violent extremism, political and international divisiveness, environmental policies surrounding climate change, and recovering from a global pandemic affecting the lives of billions of people around the world. Consequently, developing leaders of character for this uncertain and complex future must also emphasize social and behavioral sciences with a keen emphasis on ethics education.

As the United States navigates critical challenges at home and abroad, the need for strong ethics as a central tenet of leadership development will undoubtedly continue to manifest. One area where this is most evident is the future of military operations in an increasingly joint and multinational environment. While the military is traditionally called upon to defend the nation and its interests as a lethal force and deterrent against global threats, its role continues to expand to support a range of operations. Military members will continue to engage in worldwide efforts into the future as peacekeepers, negotiators, advisors, strategic planners, policymakers, nation builders, governmental liaisons, international representatives, and more. The trust placed in a military force by its nation and its ability to effectively wield power justly (Reiley & Jacobs, 2016), influence hearts and minds

benevolently (Lieber & Reiley, 2016; 2019), and maintain its status and respect in the eyes of the world (Reiley et al., 2018), may rely on honor, integrity, and ethics more than any other profession. This article emphasizes the role of ethics education in developing future military leaders, outlines potential challenges, and provides practical recommendations to overcome them in a globally integrated force.

The Future of Military Ethics Education in the Profession of Arms

Military ethics education stands firmly at the crossroads of developing leadership and character in the profession of arms. Sustaining a just and honorable standard of military ethics unites the armed forces, reinforces crucial bonds with allies and partner nations, and keeps the faith of a nation's people. Indeed, military ethics is the joint force's most essential uniform, but cases of misconduct have left it stained (e.g., Department of Defense, 2021). While most members of the armed forces dedicate themselves to serving their country honorably and living ethically, destructive incidents of compromised ethics undermine the vital trust placed in the military by the nation—and damage its integrity in the eyes of the world. Ethical transgressions among a force's highest positions may even threaten internal trust (Vanden Brook, 2015), which is a unifying element of the profession of arms, and essential to the chain of command and the future of integrated operations. The United States' former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), General Martin Dempsey, recognized this threat a decade ago and called for a renewed commitment to the profession of arms built on trust and leadership—one defined by ethics, standards of excellence, code of conduct, and professional values to sustain the joint force's dedication to the rule of law (Dempsey, 2012; 2014). The 24th U.S. Secretary of Defense, Secretary Charles "Chuck" Hagel reinforced this sentiment by appointing a senior general officer

to serve as ethics czar and stem the tide of growing ethical issues (Garamone, 2014). However, ethical transgressions are merely visible symptoms. To combat these transgressions, the military must equip itself to better understand and defend against their root causes.

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. recently instituted an executive order emphasizing a broad plan designed to restore and maintain public trust in the U.S. government through policies aimed at ethics (Exec. Order No. 13989, 2021). Now, more than ever, the U.S. military must also reinforce its commitment to professional ethics, and work to address underlying concerns, as it faces growing tests both at home and abroad in an increasingly expansive, multinational environment.

Military operations exist within a broad constellation of national powers, which rely on governmental and nongovernmental organizations, partner and ally nations, indigenous cultures, and regional stakeholders. The joint force's ability to integrate effectively with partner-nation militaries is essential to global operations and, at their core, these partnerships rest on military ethics. Commanders, and certainly all members of the profession of arms, will face many real-world challenges inherent to the complex nature of military ethics: How does one define a common professional ethic in a multicultural force? What causes individuals to behave unethically in a profession so reliant on standards of conduct? What practical approaches develop and sustain military ethics effectively?

To address these issues, one must first distinguish the scope of military ethics and its role in the joint force. Next, one must expose challenges affecting ethical military conduct. Finally, a practical examination must draw from the theoretical literature to propose applicable approaches for developing and sustaining military ethics into the future. Ultimately, to better function as a unified profession of arms, the joint force may benefit from supplementing its traditional

Ultimately, to better function as a unified profession of arms, the joint force may benefit from supplementing its traditional methods with a more balanced and inclusive approach to inculcate military ethics, reinforce support and accountability, increase applied understanding of virtues and values, and overcome the undue influence of situational factors in a joint and multinational environment.

methods with a more balanced and inclusive approach to inculcate military ethics, reinforce support and accountability, increase applied understanding of virtues and values, and overcome the undue influence of situational factors in a joint and multinational environment.

The Scope of Military Ethics

In an effort to focus the broad and diverse subject of military ethics, Cook and Syse (2010) offered:

Military ethics is a species of the genus “professional ethics.” [I]t exists to be of service to professionals who are not themselves specialists in ethics but who have to carry out the tasks entrusted to the profession as honorably and correctly as possible. It is analogous to medical ethics or legal ethics in the sense that its core function is to assist those professions to think through the moral challenges and dilemmas inherent in their professional activity and, by helping members of the profession better understand the ethical demands upon them, to enable and motivate them to act appropriately in the discharge of their professional obligations. (pp. 120-121)

While ethics draws from the lessons of history and theoretical discussions of moral philosophy and theology, Cook and Syse (2010) argued, military ethics must have a more practical focus centered on the applied profession of arms. Soeters (2000) also noted, “Uniformed organizations are peculiar. They represent specific occupational cultures that are relatively isolated from society. The very landscape of the primary mission for which militaries exist sets them apart from other public or private institutions within a society” (p. 465). The application of military ethics requires joint and multinational forces to frame their guiding ethical standards thoughtfully, recognize unique challenges, and develop a uniformed approach to upholding these standards.

Standards Guiding Military Ethics

While it may be difficult to define universal standards of ethics, the profession of arms often carries the burden of making ethical decisions uniformly and acting in the best way possible—or at least avoiding lesser alternatives. To evaluate these alternatives, Myers

(1997) proposed three general aspects of an ethical decision one should consider: a) the individual making the decision, b) the action taken, and c) the resulting outcome. Aligning three prominent, normative ethical approaches with these aspects in a military context may inform a common standard of military ethics. For example, Rhodes (2009) suggested teleology or *virtue ethics*, which emphasizes the role of one’s character, may provide a lens for evaluating the individual making the decision; *deontology*, which judges ethics based on duty and adherence to values and rules, may provide insight for evaluating the act; and *consequentialism*, which weighs the “rightness” or “wrongness” of one’s conduct by its results, may be helpful for assessing outcomes (pp.19-20). Military members need not be theoretical ethicists to understand and apply standards based on these elements. These considerations contribute to a shared conceptualization of military ethics and seek to achieve outcomes aligned with core virtues and values. These guiding approaches assist decision-making and fill gaps between more formal requirements in military ethics.

Formal Requirements in Military Ethics

Laws, policies, and agreements unique to the profession of arms provide standards of conduct surrounding military ethics. A military exists to serve the needs of its nation. Governments and citizens provide support to the military and expect members to comply with regulations designed to regulate the force. Formal standards identify unique ethical requirements individuals must follow in the profession of arms, regardless of personal beliefs. Adherence to formal requirements, such as the Manual for Courts-Martial, the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), and the Joint Ethics Regulation, maintains the public’s trust and the nation’s credibility. Formal international rules, such as the Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC),

Status of Forces Agreements, and The Hague and Geneva Conventions, which include over 170 nations, also affirm shared values, outline responsibilities, and formalize ethical standards for international forces—distinct from non-military citizens.

Military Ethics in the Joint and Multinational Forces

Ethical behavior serves a very practical purpose in a military force. Based on social learning theory, individuals learn and interpret appropriate organizational behaviors by observing the behaviors of others (Bandura, 1986). For example, Mayer et al. (2012) found, “When a leader models desired ethical behavior and uses rewards and punishments to help ensure appropriate behavior on the part of subordinates, [workers] are less likely to engage in unethical behavior and less likely to have relationship conflict with coworkers” (p. 166). Moreover, military followers who believe their leaders are ethical are more willing to accept the influence of these leaders, and more likely to perform duties beyond their formal job requirements to support the organization (Reiley & Jacobs, 2016). Prior research also links ethical leadership (Brown et al., 2005) to improved task performance across different cultural contexts (Piccolo et al., 2012; Walumbwa et al., 2011)—a critical consideration for joint and multinational operations, which future leaders must continue to navigate and foster.

Joint operations involve two or more agencies, military services, or departments operating under a single commander (Joint Publication 3-0, 2017). When facing ethical problems, the joint force will expect individuals across these diverse groups to arrive at similar conclusions. Nevertheless, these organizations and other coordinating entities have different subcultures, which affect ethical decision-making. The joint force relies on each organization’s

interpretation of virtues, enforcement of values, and systematic processes to operate effectively and ethically.

Similarly, multinational forces (i.e., two or more nations, structured as a coalition or alliance) will continue to be challenged with language barriers, cultural differences, social distinctions, competing national interests, and several other future obstacles, which rely on unifying military ethics to form solutions (Joint Publication 3-16, 2013; Febbraro et al., 2005). Joint and multinational forces test their decision-making through international training events (e.g., Theater Security Cooperation and Security Force Assistance exercises) and tackle real-world challenges during operations around the globe. These efforts incorporate international military forces to perform the vital joint functions of command and control (C2), information, intelligence, fires, movement and maneuver, protection, and sustainment (Joint Publication 3-0, 2017).

Military ethics must guide joint and multinational forces across these shared functions. For example, ethics distinguishes the line between enhanced interrogation techniques and torture during intelligence gathering. Employing fires concerns military ethics when selecting and engaging targets. Protection functions rely on military ethics when determining priorities, responsibilities, and boundaries. Information functions not only integrate all other joint functions, they are expected to operate beyond reproach as they seek to change or maintain perceptions, attitudes, and other elements driving behaviors and are also relied upon to support human and automated decision-making (Joint Publication 3-0, 2017). While the importance of these functions is clear, their execution in a joint and multinational environment can often be uncertain. Forces must navigate distinctive national interests, methods, histories, and traditions. These factors

influence national strategies and objectives, cultural norms, the enforcement of rules and regulations, and even organizational structures. This may cause inconsistencies in operations related to personnel policies, service programs, doctrine, functions, and effectiveness. Forces that strive to create a common understanding of military ethics will enhance and nurture a deeper awareness of international cultures and norms—and may more effectively overcome their unique challenges.

Joint and multinational forces rely on military ethics to enhance coordination, collaboration, communication, and trust. Working from a common framework for military ethics helps guide joint commanders and multinational personnel through ethical dilemmas not covered or supported through formal legal mechanisms. Military ethics also serves as a steady hand in difficult circumstances, such as those requiring military members to prioritize the protection of civilians—who might also be enemies—over the members' personal safety, or in situations mandating strict standards of conduct, even when enemies disregard or exploit those standards. Overall, the profession of arms must understand and apply the virtues and values of military ethics within the context of joint and multinational operations because they form a basis for common actions across the joint functions essential for the success of any future mission.

Challenges Affecting Ethical Military Conduct

Military ethics is certainly an expansive issue with practical importance to the joint and multinational environment. Transgressions within the armed forces demand an examination of fundamental challenges in ethical military conduct. Chief among these challenges are those related to virtues, situational factors, and values.

Virtues

Virtue ethics emphasizes one's moral character as the central focus for determining behavior (Wright et al., 2020). General Dempsey's vision of military ethics in the profession of arms rested, in part, on promoting virtues—specifically duty, honor, courage, integrity, and selfless service—as the guiding force for military professionals (Dempsey, 2012). Western military academies have adopted this virtue-based, Aristotelian approach, since they view its principles as beneficial to the military profession (Robinson et al., 2008). The fog of war creates a chaotic, time-compressed environment ill-suited for philosophical contemplation. The military believes a virtue-based approach creates desirable, conditioned responses aligned with the force's core beliefs (de Vries, 2020). This approach aims to reinforce who the military member is, versus what they should do, in order to guide future ethical decisions.

A potential limitation of this virtue-based military ethics approach is the difficulty of identifying and governing a definitive list of virtues necessary for all the roles and responsibilities military members might face. Although efforts have been made to outline a set of virtues for the joint force (Dempsey, 2012), each service has its own unique list as well. For example, the U.S. Army calls for seven virtues: loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage (ADP 6-22, 2019). By contrast, the U.S. Air Force emphasizes three: integrity, excellence, and service before self (AFI 1-1, 2012). Adding to this complexity, multinational forces differ from country to country and between their forces. For example, the British Army espouses selfless commitment, courage, discipline, integrity, loyalty, and respect for others (British Army Code 63813, 2018), whereas Canadian forces focus on duty, loyalty, integrity, and courage (Department of National Defence, 2009). While noting common virtues provides an important

ethical foundation for joint and multinational forces, inconsistent interpretations of virtues—or the relative importance of each virtue—may also lead to ethical conflicts and enforcement challenges, especially among forces with more drastically differing cultures.

Another fundamental limitation of the virtue-based approach is it assumes all ethical failures are attributable to core character flaws (Grassey, 2005). In practice, ethical failures may not be so straightforward. Wong and Gerras (2015) observed a virtue-based focus is detrimental because it allows members of the military profession to “sit in judgment of a few bad apples, while firmly believing that they themselves would never lie, cheat, or steal” (p. 2). These biased and dismissive reactions expose a deeper intricacy. Moreover, like many components of ethics, one’s virtue is not truly revealed until it is tested. Consider cases where military members struggle to de-conflict loyalty to individual services versus loyalty to the joint force, or those who must temper the extremes of bravery to avoid recklessness. Promoting virtues does not encompass all the considerations necessary for practical ethical decision-making. Robinson (2007) argued, “Teaching soldiers that they must be brave, loyal, and so forth, does not tell them what to do when there are conflicts between the requirements of various virtues” (p. 31). He further warned characterizing ethical failures in terms of flawed virtues “may prevent leaders from taking a critical look at the institutions they lead and thereby ensure that morally corrupting rules, structures, and systems remain” (Robinson, 2007, p. 31).

Even bastions of military leadership and character development like the United States’ military academies have experienced recent, large-scale cheating scandals (Losey, 2021; Mongilio, 2020; Zaveri & Philipps, 2020). While these lapses in ethical decision-making offer hard learning opportunities and highlight the

need for continuous improvement in military ethics education throughout the joint force (Cohen, 2021), the involvement of hundreds of cadets and midshipmen across these institutions provides evidence these offenses cannot simply be pinned to the flawed virtue of a few bad apples.

Situational Factors

This leads to a second challenge for ethical military conduct: situational factors. When evaluating ethical military conduct, individuals tend to underestimate the role situational factors play in determining behavior (Miller, 2017). In practice, person-based characteristics (e.g., virtues and values) do not drive conduct independently; instead, a combination of person- and situation-based factors is more likely to influence an individual’s actual ethical behavior (Mastroianni, 2011). For example, Wong and Gerras’ (2015) study of ethical transgressions in the U.S. Army highlighted situational challenges pervasive across the joint force. They described how an incessant flood of requirements forced members and units to choose which requirements will be done to standard, versus those that “will just be reported as done to standard.” (Wong & Gerras, 2015, p. 2). Consequently, individuals have adapted to these situational pressures through *ethical fading* (i.e., effusive desensitization that fails to recognize the moral components of an ethical decision) and *rationalizing* in order to convince themselves that their honor and integrity are intact despite compromises in their ethics (Wong & Gerras, 2015).

Adding to this effect, individuals differ in their personal perceptions of control in a situation. Some individuals attribute outcomes primarily to their own actions, while others see their behavior as less consequential, and attribute outcomes to factors beyond their locus of control (Galvin et al., 2018).

Thus, situational factors may change the way military members approach and respond to ethical challenges since some situations may make it more difficult for certain individuals to perceive their personal control over outcomes—or even the pertinence of ethics to the decision. These situational constraints can

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become so commonplace, widespread unethical work-arounds, which individuals may fail to recognize are unethical, may cause military members to believe these circumventive practices are the only way to succeed. The military's rigidly structured organizational hierarchy may also be a situational factor that socializes members to uphold the organization's preferred methods—and even influence members to choose these methods over more ethical alternatives (Smith & Carroll, 1984). The joint and multinational environment adds additional situational challenges related to socialization processes, environmental influences, and organizational hierarchies, which members must overcome to meet unrelenting requirements. As a result, these situational factors play a prominent, yet underappreciated, role in ethical military conduct.

Values

A third challenge affecting ethical conduct in joint and multinational forces relates to the role of shared values. While the academic study of values in organizations has

waned in recent years, these elements help shed light on several ethical and practical aspects of human behavior (Kraatz et al., 2020). General Dempsey's (2012; 2014) call to action emphasized that the joint force must live by the values embodied in the U.S. Constitution. This perspective balances professional ethical guidance

based on virtues (i.e., desirable, person-based characteristics, such as integrity) with values-based ideals (i.e., cherished principles, such as freedom and liberty). As discussed previously, formal standards (e.g., UCMJ) capture some of the joint force's values-based component of military ethics. Similarly, multinational forces articulate shared values in Technical Agreements, Status of Forces Agreements, and Status of Mission Agreements, as well as willingly supporting national and international laws (Joint Publication

3-16, 2019). These become the practical tools and formal criteria regulating joint and multinational forces' efforts to operate uniformly and ethically as military professionals.

However, these standards are not without their limitations. For example, international humanitarian laws (which apply to both state and non-state actors), along with LOAC and The Geneva Conventions, are designed to limit military actions and guide decisions during armed conflict by protecting persons who are not, or are no longer, participating in hostilities. Although these laws and agreements are a more formal expression of common values, they are sometimes vague and not binding to all nations or groups. These standards do not provide a universal norm for those who interpret them differently, or those who do not support or agree to them. Furthermore, these formal mechanisms may unintentionally restrict military forces from conducting operations aligned with the nation's intended values. For example, Canadian

General Roméo Dallaire (2004) described a practical limitation of these laws and agreements in his recount of military ethical challenges in Rwanda. While deployed as the head of a small, multinational peacekeeping force, Dallaire served as a United Nations (UN) mediator between two ex-belligerents. In January 1994, Dallaire sent warnings to UN-Rwanda Headquarters of plans to exterminate over 4,000 Tutsis inside the city of Kigali. He found several weapon caches indicative of an impending genocide and local tribal leaders corroborated intelligence indicating extremists' intent to build an armed militia. Dallaire sent several requests for permission to seize these weapon caches; however, under the UN Charter, UN-Rwanda Headquarters could not give him permission to shift to offensive operations and therefore denied his requests. Dallaire and his team, restricted by the UN Charter, did not seize the weapons and roughly, two months later Hutu militias armed with these weapons began systematically killing Tutsis across Rwanda. By the time the genocide ended, more than 800,000 were dead (Dallaire, 2004). The values articulated in existing formal policies were in conflict with Dallaire's localized intelligence and situation. This incongruence demonstrates a critical limitation of these formal values-based mechanisms in the role of ethical military decision-making.

Inculcating Military Ethics

The military has a long history of utilizing top-down approaches to train its forces and communicate standards—including military ethics. The top-down approach allows commanders to control, pro forma, an organization's approach to military ethics centrally, promoting clear and coherent unity of effort (Robinson et al., 2008). This approach relies on senior leaders to establish the organization's ethical principles and exemplify desired behavior to foster ethical conduct at lower levels (Mayer et al., 2009). In spite of its ostensive importance and advantages—on

its own—this approach may prove tenuous, since any perceived malfeasance among these senior leaders can compromise important ethical foundations across the force. Overreliance on top-down approaches makes organizations too bureaucratic, inflexible, and slow to change (Bolman & Deal, 2017). These characteristics traditionally plague the military's efforts to institute meaningful reforms.

The top-down approach may also present toxic barriers to military ethics training. Junior military members may construe a pure, top-down approach as yet another tedious training requirement imposed on them by senior leaders, which some personnel may complete with minimal care or effort (Robinson, 2007). These perceptions limit junior members' personal investment and ownership of the process, which often leads to cynicism and resentment rather than long-term organizational change. Given these limitations, infusing a more integrative and bottom-up approach may help address unforeseen ethical challenges.

A bottom-up approach promotes wider ownership of ethical development by delegating the leading role to members at lower levels of the chain of command (Robinson, 2007). This approach may facilitate more open and relevant discussions, and allow for subtle differences (e.g., service differentiations and mission challenges) among individual units. A bottom-up approach relies on a more organic, decentralized philosophy to leverage perspectives from members at lower levels and create changes in day-to-day organizational behavior (Alvesson & Svingsson, 2015). This may also reveal ethical challenges more commonly found at operational or front-line tactical levels, which a higher, strategic-oriented view may not fully recognize or address. While a bottom-up approach does offer advantages, it is also not without its limitations. For example, inconsistent developmental

approaches may lead to an incoherent ethical identity across the joint force.

Based on the advantages and disadvantages of both top-down and bottom-up approaches, the joint force may benefit from a more balanced tactic, which combines these methods to develop military ethics. These two approaches may not be incompatible. For example, organizations “may have a centrally operated program that outlines the principles and provides training for the trainers, while the actual management is conducted at the lower levels” (Robinson, 2007, p. 27). This combined approach may effectively support future changes necessary to cultivate military ethics, since it promotes a participative and collaborative process driven by organizational stakeholders at every level.

A combined, balanced approach should allow the joint force to establish a clearer top-down interpretation of ethical military principles, but still permit individual units to be the stewards of ethical development—tailoring programs to address their idiosyncratic challenges from the bottom-up. Similar combined approaches have targeted safety and security programs in the U.S. military by delivering a unified top-down emphasis on these issues while relying on military members at every level to share the ownership of these challenges (AFI 91-202, 2021). A combined approach may also support the integration of multinational forces through a focused effort to share and understand ethical perspectives internationally, which may educate the profession of arms more uniformly. The empowering elements of this approach allow members to create broader social norms and integrate cultural elements within, and across, joint and multinational forces to support future operations.

Recommendations for Military Ethics Education

Traditionally, the U.S. military’s primary approach for instilling ethics takes place during basic training or accession programs. Military personnel are also commonly required to perform annual computer-based training or attend mass briefings on issues related to ethics. When military units experience a conspicuous ethical infraction, leaders often enforce additional mandatory briefings or remedial training to emphasize the ethical issue. However, on their own, these ineffective approaches do little to explore and instill the complex facets of military ethics (de Graaf, 2017; Mulhearn et al., 2017). To be clear, this is not a call to add even more training requirements across the forces. Instead, military forces must refine their current approach and maximize the value of time already dedicated to this effort. Military ethics education must cultivate the wisdom necessary for military members to understand the applications and potential limitations of the force’s virtues, and reinforce profession-of-arms-based values, which guide ethical military decision-making across a spectrum of situations. This requires a more well-rounded educational approach than relying on focused training interventions alone. Training merely instructs individuals on procedures they must follow for known situations, but an education better prepares them for new and unknown challenges. Ethical military decision-making relies on both of these elements to be successful.

First, the military should supplement senior leaders’ identification, uniformed-interpretation, and accountable-demonstration of virtues and values with a more balanced, bottom-up approach to engage junior members, emphasize these ethical elements, and highlight ambiguities. For example, a standardized, modeled process to military education drives

individuals to take ethical dilemmas through a series of questions to find the appropriate ethical answer (Jensen, 2013). One method is to develop instructors who are able to frame and evaluate Myers' (1997) three general aspects of ethical decisions (i.e., the individual making the decision, the action taken, and the resulting outcome). These instructors could then educate the force more effectively by facilitating discussions, examining relatable case studies of both positive and negative applications of military ethics, promoting informed awareness of standards, and focusing on unit-specific challenges. This is not only an effective approach to developing military ethics (van Baarle et al., 2017), but it also offers opportunities to align bottom-up perspectives, intentions, and behaviors with top-down values and virtues. This effort is more than training the military force on what is ethical and what is not; it aims to educate the force on how to identify and approach complex ethical decisions in an unpredictable future.

Second, the military must provide avenues to assess, revise, or remove systemic practices clouding ethical military conduct. For example, policies and procedures incentivizing dishonesty, ethical fading, or rationalizing, such as unrelenting reporting requirements and administrative demands prevalent both in garrison and combat environments; political influences across and surrounding the service branches; and gatekeepers along the chain of command who exert pressure through exclusionary in-groups (Crosbie & Kleykamp, 2018; Wong & Gerras, 2015). Senior leaders should promote and support revisionary efforts openly by providing members opportunities and resources to identify limitations or develop alternatives (Argote et al., 2020). Concurrently, military members at all levels must guard against social frictions and any

potential repercussions associated with whistleblowing or challenging the status quo (Dungan et al., 2019). In addition to individual efforts, formal teams comprised of members from all levels of the organization should explore, evaluate, and recommend alternatives to their leaders on a regular basis—not just in response to ethical indiscretions. In any case, leaders must stress the need for change, while addressing members' ethical concerns deliberately, and instituting recommendations actively, as a formal function of the military organization (Kotter, 2012).

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Third, military branches—and the joint force—should extend and inform their approach through multinational forces to solidify standards of virtues and values, and address broader situational factors and challenges. To better prepare for future operations, U.S. and partner forces should actively exchange military members at multiple levels of their forces for the deliberate purpose of sharing and understanding the challenges—and successes—of military ethics efforts from other international perspectives. For example, professional military education programs provide an important context for the exchange of ideas and insights among U.S. and international military personnel; ethics education and discussions at all

levels must be a critical emphasis for these experiences. Future multinational exercises should also evaluate and support approaches specifically fostering a more uniformed interpretation of military ethics. These military-ethics-focused activities may overcome international challenges and the ambiguity associated with military ethics, leading to more successful joint and multinational operations.

Fourth, military ethics education should capitalize on existing programs in the joint environment. For example, the CJCS's Combatant Commanders Exercise Engagement and Training Transformation (CE2T2) program supports the development of Joint Training Plans (JTPs). JTPs include all Geographic Combatant Commands and strive to enhance joint integration and synchronization. The joint force could leverage the role of JTPs more broadly to emphasize military ethics education aimed at strategic, operational, and tactical decisions across the joint functions. The CE2T2 program reaches the worldwide force, and could shift the consideration of military ethics to a more central role in the joint and multinational environment.

Fifth and finally, conventional, joint, and multinational forces must extend this learning beyond the classroom and incorporate military ethics education into how forces view and assess daily decisions and operations. This includes making military ethics a more prominent consideration in routine decisions, as well as deliberate planning and risk assessments. For example, this might include specifically evaluating ethical considerations during go/no-go milestone decisions, or reinforcing ethical decision-making approaches as part of broader quality assurance functions. Developing the forces' understanding of ethical approaches, virtues, values, situational factors, and their associated challenges supports efforts to reinforce ownership and

accountability for military ethics across the profession of arms.

Conclusion

Ethical decisions are complex and multifaceted. This discussion contributes to the force's understanding and future practice of military ethics by exploring some of the practical, ethical challenges experienced in the joint and multinational environment. While ethical challenges may test the U.S. military, it remains a dedicated exemplar for military ethics and one of the United States' most trusted and well-regarded institutions (Gallup, 2021). This article's discussion and application-focused conceptualization of military ethics theory may still serve to support the development of future leaders, and strengthen the joint force's uniformed ethical identity, its ability to serve the nation and international partners honorably, and its influence in the world.

Military ethics education must cultivate the wisdom necessary for future members to understand the applications—and potential limitations—of the force's virtues, and reinforce profession-of-arms-based values, which guide ethical military decision-making across a spectrum of situations. This ethics education must go beyond the demonstration and enforcement of virtues and values by senior military leaders. It must leverage bottom-up developmental efforts to support the practical evaluation and, when necessary, revision of systemic challenges to safeguard ethical military conduct at all levels of joint and multinational forces. This combined commitment to military ethics in the profession of arms by joint and multinational forces can enhance future leader and character development and help to sustain the long-term success of military operations around the world.

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FEATURE ARTICLES

Honesty and Character in Contention: Author Meets Cadet Critics

C1C Caden Wilson, United States Air Force Academy

C1C Marc Brunner, United States Air Force Academy

C3C Madelyn Letendre, United States Air Force Academy

Christian Miller¹, Wake Forrest University

Edited by Mark Jensen

The U.S. Air Force Academy's National Character and Leadership Symposium (NCLS) staff invited Dr. Christian Miller, the A.C. Reid Professor of Philosophy at Wake Forest University and a well-known expert on moral philosophy, moral psychology, and character development to participate in a unique opportunity at the 2022 NCLS. In addition to delivering a traditional presentation, he was invited to participate in an "author meets critics" session, where the critics would be cadets competitively selected as part of a contest conducted in the fall prior to the Symposium. Dr. Miller eagerly agreed. Cadets Marc Brunner, Madelyn Letendre, and Caden Wilson were selected to participate by an interdisciplinary panel of experts. The session was held on February 24th, 2022. Each cadet was given ten minutes to present their critical remarks, followed by a twenty minute response by Dr. Miller. The following article captures this event.

Virtue Labeling's Potential: Cadet Caden Wilson

Last semester a classmate asked if I would consider applying for a leadership position in my squadron at the Air Force Academy. She told me she thought I had great leadership skills, and that I would be wonderful for the position. I was surprised, feeling I had displayed little leadership potential, let alone leadership skills. Yet her comment

¹ Work on this paper was supported by a grant from the John Templeton Foundation. The opinions expressed here are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the foundation.

changed my perspective. Her labeling generated self-belief that I would be great for that position, and I began to reorient my actions to prove her right. This circumstance exemplifies what many psychologists call virtue labeling. The premise behind virtue labeling is that by verbally communicating a label, people are more likely to act in a way that aligns with their given label. Christian Miller discusses virtue labeling in his book, *The Character Gap: How Good Are We?* (2014). But for the purposes of developing character or virtue, Miller expresses serious concerns about this technique. I will briefly address each of Miller's concerns in turn, arguing that Miller sells virtue labeling short. Furthermore, I will argue that virtue labeling has tremendous potential to inspire virtuous actions that may eventually bring about virtuous transformation.

Long-Term Change

Miller's first concern is the lack of scientific evidence that virtue labeling leads to long-term change. However, as Miller acknowledges, studies regarding short-term change seem promising. Studies involving labeling 5th graders "tidy", labeling consumers "ecologically conscious", and labeling students "cooperative" all successfully demonstrate a short-term positive relationship between labeling and the demonstration of that label (Miller 2014, pp. 174, Upton 2017, pp. 374). But does virtue labeling remain effective long-term?

If virtue labeling is effective over a short period, there is reason to believe that repeated virtue labeling could be effective over a longer period. A teacher who repeatedly praises her students for good work seems much more likely to inspire her students to do good work than a teacher who doesn't. A dad who tells his daughter every day that she is destined for great things seems more likely to inspire his daughter to do great things than a dad that doesn't. While the effect of one specific labeling may fade as time passes, repeated virtue labeling and encouragement seems to present tremendous potential to be effective over a greater length of time.

Motives

Throughout *The Character Gap*, Miller emphasizes that character isn't just doing the right thing, it's doing the right thing for the right reason. Thus if virtue labeling leads only to behavior modification, a change of character cannot be necessarily assumed. Miller's worry then is that virtue labeling leads only to behavior modification, and not the cleansing of motives which is required for the formation of character. While this concern is legitimate, I believe there is tremendous potential for pure motives to spring from good actions. I know this from experiences in my own life. When I first started participating in community service while in high school, my motivation had little to do with helping others and everything to do with accumulating hours to remain a member of the National Honor

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Society. But as I continued serving, my attitudes changed. I began thinking less about hours logged, and more about how I could better serve my community.

A similar thing happened after my classmate asked me to apply for a leadership position. My initial response was a self-interested motivation to prove her positive remarks true. But as I continued through the application process, time in self-reflection enabled me to shift my focus away from boosting my ego and onto how I might become a better servant to others in my squadron. Certainly, these are isolated examples. Pure motives don't always spring from good actions. Yet the potential for this to occur is worth acknowledging as a potential good that can come from virtue labeling.

Dishonesty and Manipulation

Finally, I must address Miller's concern about dishonesty and deception. Miller asks, "Isn't there something downright disturbing about labeling people with virtue terms when you know that they don't have any of those virtues" (2014 pp. 178)? Yes. This would be disturbing. But virtue labeling doesn't have to be this way.

Suppose someone is a chronic liar. How might the virtue of honesty be developed in them? Simply labeling them as 'honest' might not be effective since they probably already know they are not, thus leading them to rebel against a label they perceive as insincere. Instead of blanket labeling them as honest, the best means of virtue labeling may be to watch for instances where they do display some level of honesty. When that virtue is displayed, even if in only a small instance, call it out. Celebrate it. Highlight the instance where they did the right thing, and celebrate this good in them. By highlighting the good in someone, you demonstrate

that you care, that you're paying attention, and that their good actions matter to you. Through all of this, careful and intentional virtue labeling may give them the boost they need to truly develop this virtue as part of their character.

Conclusion

Virtue labeling is not perfect, and it may not always work. As previously mentioned, studies suggest that it is influential in the short term, but more research is necessary to determine its efficacy in the long run.

Virtue labeling isn't perfect, and Miller has legitimate concerns about it. Yet if used wisely, it could be a great tool to encourage real virtuous change.

Furthermore, virtue labeling must only be used carefully and sincerely to mitigate dishonesty and deception. However, the upside of virtue labeling is enormous. If done right, virtue labeling has the potential to inspire positive results. In my case, my classmates' positive labeling of me instilled a confidence to go after, and eventually get, the leadership position. While her words did not make me more virtuous, the process of putting myself out there and going through the application process certainly prompted serious self-reflection that I believe forced me to grow in character and leadership. Virtue labeling isn't perfect, and Miller has legitimate concerns about it. Yet if used wisely, it could be a great tool to encourage real virtuous change.

Miller's Virtue of Honesty and Classical Utilitarianism: Cadet Mark Brunner

In *Honesty: The Philosophy and Psychology of a Neglected Virtue*, Dr. Christian Miller explores what constitutes the virtue of honesty (2021). He proffers a definition of honesty which he claims carries merit because of

its ability to be used in various moral theories (2021, pp. 144). However, looking to John Stuart Mill's utilitarianism as a cardinal example of outcome-based ethics, Miller's definition fails to properly address the relationship between the principle of utility and virtues, such as honesty. Miller must forgo the assertion that his definition's derivatives can be adapted to various ethical theories; to be useful, his definition must instead assume a narrower focus of applicability.

In his book, Miller believes he can create a definition of honesty, or some "suitably altered version," which can be applied to outcome-based and motive-based ethical theories (2021, pp. 145). For outcome-based approaches, he claims that the only requirement for a definition of honesty is that it must consistently provide good outcomes and that honest behavior will always bring about such outcomes. Thus, a definition of honesty only requires consistency, without other stipulations, such as motivational factors (2021, pp. 146). Accordingly, Miller's definition for the virtue of honesty for outcome-based ethics is: "Being disposed, centrally and reliably, to not intentionally distort the facts as the agent sees them" (Miller, 2021, pp. 146). However, in his general definition for honesty, he includes a condition for practical wisdom, and he spent a whole chapter illustrating the importance for a definition of honesty to have the capability to handle situations where such wisdom is needed (2021, pp. 123). But, he does not provide a provision for this in his outcome based definition.

Dr. Miller's assertion that his definition of honesty can be widely applied to different ethical theories is called into question when scrutinized in the context of Mill's classical utilitarianism. Mill's utilitarianism is in agreement with Miller in that honesty is a means to the end of good outcomes. But Mill is also oppositional to Miller's assumption that honesty can be unilaterally

attached to such an end (Mill, 1998, pp. 71); virtue's usefulness only extends as far as it can promote the greatest happiness principle—the idea "that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote the general happiness" (Mill, 1998, pp. 55). In addition, Mill posits that, concerning virtue, individuals have "no original desire of it, or motive to it, save its conduciveness to pleasure" (Mill, 1998, pp. 84).

From Mill's writing, several conclusions can be drawn. First, although an act's moral value is indifferent to its motivations, this does not mean virtue, as a means to an end, is the same. Instead, there is a motivational aspect to virtue: "its conduciveness to pleasure" (Mill 1998, pp. 84). Having the virtue of honesty involves the desire and motivation to be truthful for the promotion of the greatest general happiness. Yet Miller's position does not warrant such a condition; instead, he appears to conflate the moral value of an action with the morality of a virtue. An action disregards all motivations that caused it, but a virtue, in utilitarianism, must account for the desires and motivations of an agent. This position makes logical sense: it would be irrational if moral actions are behaviors tending to promote the greatest happiness, and being virtuous—having the disposition to behave morally—did not entail having the disposition to promote the greatest happiness. The result of this conclusion is that there must be an added condition in his definition which includes the desire to achieve good outcomes. However, people are often affected by numerous, conflicting desires. Therefore, the desire for utility must be both present and preeminent.

Mill asserts that a proper definition of honesty must account for the desires and motivations of an agent, yet it may appear that motivation to act honestly in the interest of promoting pleasure does not necessarily follow from a desire to do so, meaning the

aforementioned stipulation for the desire for utility is incomplete. Often, desires do not translate into motivations for actions; one may desire to not repay a promised sum of money but not have the motivation to do so. However, motivation does not arise from naught but rather is the result of a desire. When the desire to maximize utility is dominant, motivation—the “child of desire”—will naturally follow (Mill, 1998, pp. 86). In this way, a preeminent desire to maximize utility will inevitably create motivation to do so. Thus, the virtue of honesty is not only incomplete without a desire for utility, its very existence is predicated upon such a desire. The motivation condition, by way of a requirement for desire, is a fundamental aspect between virtue and outcome based ethical theories such as utilitarianism.

The second conclusion emerging from Mill’s writing is that to claim a certain action can be axiomatically wrong is contrary to outcome-based ethics. While Miller argues that the most utility will always arise as a result of honest behavior and therefore the virtue of honesty only needs to be consistent, utilitarianism postulates that general rules tending to maximize happiness, such as honesty, are exactly that, general rules (Mill, 1998, pp. 69). The accommodation for exceptional behavior under certain circumstances is a key aspect to outcome-based ethics; being honest is only right as far as it tends to promote the greatest happiness (Mill, 1998, pp. 69). To create a definition for the virtue of honesty applicable to outcome-based ethics, a stipulation allowing for exceptions must be present.

The addition of motivation and exception conditions to a definition of honesty for consequentialist ethics provides amelioration to Miller’s neglect to address the functions associated with practical wisdom in his outcome-based definition. First, consider the ability of

utilitarianism to handle conflicts between competing moral virtues, a key aspect of practical wisdom (Miller, 2021, pp. 123). Because utility is the chief goal of moral actions, the greatest happiness principle can be invoked to adjudicate between incompatible duties (Miller, 2021). If another dishonest action would provide more utility, there would be only a responsibility to conduct the utility-maximizing action. To assist in the arbitration of which action is “the best means to virtuous ends” and to answer what a “virtuous end” is, two more questions answered by practical wisdom (Miller, 2021, pp. 123), the greatest happiness principle again provides an answer. As discussed *supra*, the greatest happiness principle is the virtuous end—the ultimate goal toward which all virtue works to advance. Because of the outcome-based nature of ethical action in utilitarianism, there is no “best” way to maximize utility provided it is, in fact, maximized (Mill, 1998, pp. 65). Finally, utilitarianism can align the motivation of virtue with objective reasons; the aforementioned motivation condition creates an unchanging standard: the maximization of utility. Ultimately, the exception and motivation conditions can adequately resolve the absence of functions associated with practical wisdom in Miller’s definition.

Miller believes his definition of honesty has merit because of its applicability to various ethical systems. However, upon comparing his application of honesty to outcome-based ethics with the tenets of classical utilitarianism, his definition falls short. As it stands, it fails to address virtue being a means to good outcomes and the resulting necessary motivational condition, does not include a condition permitting exceptions, and neglects the functional needs of practical wisdom. While Miller acknowledges that his definition is only a starting point, the scope of his application is too broad; the relationship between virtue and ethical theories is too widely varied to create a single definition that can

be readily adapted for motive-based or outcome-based ethics. As an alternative, a revised definition of honesty for outcome-based ethics, which includes the necessary conditions, could be:

Being disposed, centrally and with the primary desire to maximize good outcomes, to not intentionally distort the facts as the agent sees them, provided doing so will maximize good outcomes.

How the Honor Code fits into Virtuous Honesty: A Reflection on Miller's "Motivation and the Virtue of Honesty": Cadet Madelyn Letendre

"We will not lie, steal, or cheat, nor tolerate among us anyone who does."(USAFA, n.d.)

With a foundation in the virtue of honesty, the Honor Code at the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) stated above is the cornerstone of military and academic life. It binds all members of the cadet wing to a single moral code. In Miller's paper, *Motivation and the Virtue of Honesty* (2020), he argues that honesty as a virtue is not simply the principle of being truthful to avoid punishment. Rather, it requires an internalized motivation to be honest for virtuous reasons. This conclusion raises a number of concerns for the Honor Code, the USAFA honor system, and cadet wing character as a whole.

To explore why Miller's definition of honesty could pose a challenge to the current honor process at USAFA, I will briefly outline how he arrives at his definition. Miller begins with the premise that honesty is a demonstration of one's underlying psychology. The appearance of honesty, however, is not enough to be deemed an honest person. A person's motivations must align with an intrinsic, moral honesty. While a

wide breadth of acceptable motivations exist, Miller claims that if someone is virtuously honest, they must be motivated by virtue, not punishment. Thus, Miller arrives on a definition of honesty: "a character trait concerned with reliably not intentionally distorting the facts as the agent sees them, and primarily for good or virtuous motivating reasons of one or more kinds (...) of sufficient motivating strength, along with the absence of significant conflicting motivation to distort the facts as the agent sees them" (Miller, 2020, p. 359).

According to Miller's definition of virtuous honesty, USAFA's honor system creates a set of incentives for honesty, shifting cadet motivation for honesty from virtuous to external. If the cadet wing is truly virtuous and possesses the virtue of honesty, the concept of honor probation² would be irrelevant. The Honor Code and honor system, however, remain key institutions in USAFA culture. In contrast to Miller, I argue that while the Honor Code provides an external, unifying motive for honesty. It does not nullify the quality of honesty at USAFA and, in fact, helps to cultivate a shared heritage of honesty and integrity. While USAFA character education can be improved upon using Miller's definition of virtuous honesty, the existence of an honor code and external incentives does not degrade the moral quality of honesty at USAFA.

Miller's definition of honesty has repercussions for USAFA and the Honor Code. The honor process at USAFA creates an external set of standards and repercussions for lying, stealing, and cheating, thus encouraging extrinsic motives for honest behavior. It can be argued that cadets are intrinsically motivated toward the virtue of honesty, and the honor system

² In the U.S. Air Force Academy Honor System, cadets found guilty of an Honor Code violation face one of two consequences: disenrollment or honor probation. Cadets who receive honor probation embark on a remediation program that includes loss of privileges, mentoring, reflection, and journaling. Cadets who successfully complete this program are restored to good standing.

is simply a safekeeping for honor. Although this may apply to some cadets, stories about the strictness of honor probation infiltrate cadet life, creating an underlying external motivation to adhere to honesty. While some cadets may be purely motivated by internal sanctions, the Honor Code makes it infeasible to avoid institution-imposed motivations for honesty. If cadet honesty is reliant on mainly external motivations over virtuous reasons, Miller's definition of honesty would conclude that the cadet wing lacks the virtue of honesty. Following Miller's definition, the Honor Code could provide a framework for discouraging dishonesty, but may simply result in acts of honesty rather than the virtue of honesty, creating a complicated moral environment. In the Honor Code, the phrase "nor tolerate among us anyone who does" requires the existence of external sanctions. This toleration clause is an important part of USAFA culture, as it reinforces the standard of integrity. Without external inhibitors, the toleration clause would be ineffective, as the clause stems from group accountability. In a military setting, standards such as not lying, stealing, or cheating, are a necessity. By developing a standard for behavior, cadets, and members of the military as a whole, are bound to a common culture. At USAFA, this culture of honesty is self-reinforcing. Since the standard of integrity is universal and is one of the three Air Force Core Values, every cadet knows the consequences of dishonesty. When a cadet goes through the honor process, they discuss their mistakes, other cadets learn from the experience and are discouraged from the negative external consequences of cheating, and the virtue of honesty is reinforced. If the virtue of honesty were merely internal and individual, cadets would lack the community and accountability that stems from the external sanctions of the Honor Code. Given the nature

of the military profession, it is impossible to completely rescind external inhibitors to cheating. A common standard of behavior is important to ensure the mission is accomplished and cadets adhere to universal character expectations; thus, punishments and incentives must be in place. This is not to say that honesty shouldn't be motivated by moral reasons. Rather, honesty, when encouraged by moral institutional standards that are ingrained in the Honor Code, is virtuous. Thus, I propose an amendment to Miller's definition: virtuous honesty can be motivated "primarily for good, virtuous, or *institutionally dedicated* motivating reasons."

If cadet honesty is reliant on mainly external motivations over virtuous reasons, Miller's definition of honesty would conclude that the cadet wing lacks the virtue of honesty.

Still, there are ways character development at USAFA can improve to more closely resemble Miller's definition of honesty. A more effective character development program would emphasize the innate goodness of virtuous honesty, using leadership development time to teach virtue principles. Rather than the current focus on the external repercussions of dishonesty, honor lessons would teach honor from a philosophical and psychological perspective. As noted by Miller, most people want to think of themselves as honest. With this understanding and a study of the external factors that incentivize cheating, cadets and faculty can develop a more complete understanding of honesty as a virtue. Character development with a focus on the innate virtue of honesty can be preventative, alleviating the dependence on external sanctions. If virtue-based honesty pervades throughout the general consciousness

of the cadet wing, honest actions become second-nature, therefore reducing the decision making process to arrive at an honest action. With a basis of honor education in virtue, the honor process can move away from a punishment-based model to more holistic and positive character development. This shift will benefit character education, as it initiates genuine conviction in virtuous honesty, which endures beyond the threat of punishment. Moving toward virtue-based honor education would align USAFA's definition of honesty with the definition Miller provides, vastly improving the honor process and cadets' commitment to virtue-based honesty.

While these improvements can be made to better align honor education with Miller's definition of honesty, military life is inherently distinct from civilian life, and therefore, the working definition of virtuous honesty will be different. The Honor Code is a necessary and enduring aspect of Academy life, but it introduces external standards. These external sanctions bind all cadets to a professional and moral standard, yet they do not degrade the moral quality of honesty at USAFA. Rather, Miller's definition of virtuous honesty is too narrow in the military context, and must be extended to consider honesty with institutional motives as virtuous honesty.

Replies to Cadets Wilson, Brunner, and Letendre: Christian B. Miller

I am very grateful to Caden, Marc, and Madelyn for engaging with my work in such a thoughtful and careful way. They make a number of very good points that I wish I had thought about before my claims were already in print. In what follows, I say a few things briefly about each of their commentaries.

Cadet Wilson and Virtue Labeling

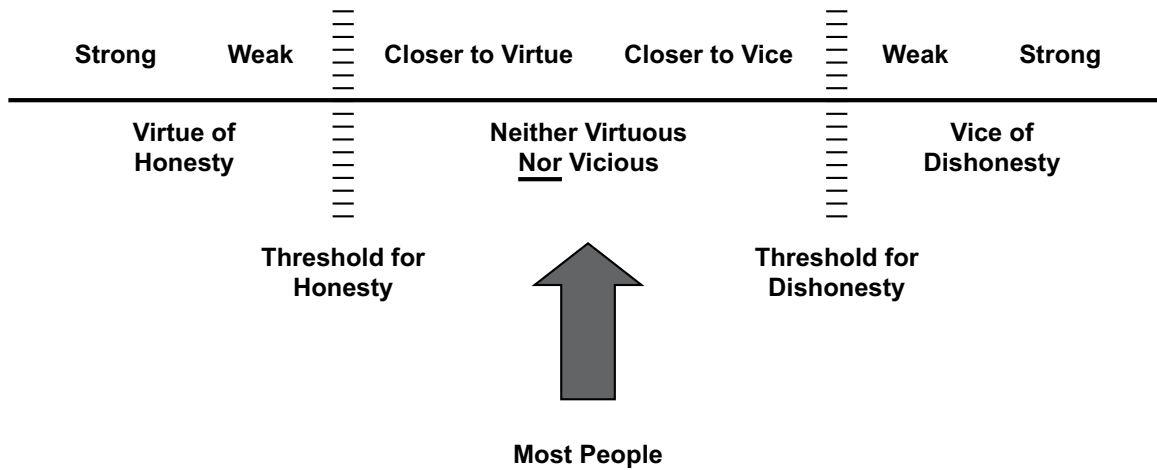
In my book, *The Character Gap: How Good Are We?*

(2017), I discuss six different strategies for trying to improve our character and become better people. One of these strategies is virtue labeling, or the idea that we should label people with virtue terms like 'honest' or 'kind' in the hope that they will come to internalize the label as something that they are expected to live up to, and so over time actually behave more honest or kind. Caden rightly notes that I had three main reservations in the book about this approach. The first one was just an expression of ignorance, since we do not have empirical studies which track the impact of labels over time. As I wrote, "We also do not know whether a virtue label encourages more virtuous behavior only in the short run, or whether the effect persists" (2017, pp. 178).

In reply, Caden acknowledges the lack of empirical support, but makes the following prediction: "virtue labeling, if done repeatedly and sincerely, should not lose significant effectiveness over time." To this I say – good point. When I wrote the book, I was thinking more about cases of one-time virtue labeling. But sustained virtue labeling is a different story. We have to wait and see what the studies will end up showing, but I share Caden's hunch here.

My second concern with the virtue labeling strategy was about whether it would be effective as a way to develop actual virtues, and not just promote better behavior. How, after all, does virtue labeling work? I said it is likely because the labeled, "want to live up to the label they have been given...that is hardly a virtuous kind of motive. It is self-interested, with the focus on making a good impression or not disappointing someone, which is not where it needs to be for virtue" (2017, pp. 178-179). Here Caden makes two main points. First, while the motives might not start out as virtuous, they might develop that way later on. And second, "Behavior modification is not the goal. Virtue

Figure 1

Most People are Intermediate between Honesty and Dishonesty

formation is. However, if we fall short of this goal and only reach behavior modification, this still might be a net positive.”

To these I say – good points again! After all, there is no reason to deny that one’s motivation can change over time after being immersed in a pattern of action. What might start out as wanting to live up to social expectations, can evolve into an appreciation of the goodness or value of a way of life. This is analogous in certain ways to how Pascal thought about his Wager.³ Someone convinced of Pascal’s argument might start out believing in God (or at least trying to believe) for the sake of potential rewards in the afterlife, but Pascal

thought that immersion in a religious way of life could open up better grounds for believing in and following God than just pure self-interest. Moreover about Caden’s second point, I’ll take improved behavior any day, even if it is just for social expectation reasons, over worse behavior.

Finally, the most serious concern I raised in my book was about the ethics of using virtue labels. For instance, I asked the question, “Isn’t there something downright disturbing about labeling people with virtue terms when you know that they don’t have any of those virtues?” (2017, pp. 179). Caden is not convinced that there would be anything disturbing going on. As he writes, “virtue labeling does not require the person to completely possess the virtue. They just need to possess some degree of the virtue. And since most of us possess some degree of nearly every virtue, I do not believe we should be overly concerned with the dishonesty of virtue labeling.”

3 French thinker Blaise Pascal (d. 1662) argued that religious agnostics should consider the following matrix of possibilities: if they reject God but God exists, they face eternal damnation. If they accept God and God exists, they gain eternal (infinite) rewards. If they reject God and God does not exist, they gain temporal rewards. If they accept God and God does not exist, they face temporal restrictions. Given these four possibilities, they are better off “wagering” on God. For a technical discussion, see the entry on Pascal’s Wager in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/pascal-wager/#ArguGeneExpePascWage>).

Now I think this is a good reply, if we grant the key premise that most of us are virtuous to some extent. But here is where I am going to put up some resistance. In two earlier books, *Moral Character: An Empirical Theory* (2013) and *Character and Moral Psychology* (2014), I looked in great detail at empirical studies in psychology pertaining to helping, harming, lying, and cheating. While this is certainly not every area of morality, at least for these central domains I drew the conclusion that the results of the relevant studies do not fit with what we should expect to find if most of us were virtuous people. Instead, I concluded that most of us have a mixed character, which is intermediate between virtue and vice. Figure 1 illustrates this idea using the virtue of honesty as an example.

Whether you end up agreeing with my picture of mixed character or not, the key claim is that most of us fall short of being virtuous to any extent at all. Hence if we are supposed to label most people as virtuous, then our labels are erroneous descriptively.

If this empirical picture of lack of virtue is correct, and we come to accept it, then my reservations about the ethics of using virtue labels remain. In particular, there seem to be two ways that dishonesty might become manifest. First, you are intentionally distorting the facts and so being dishonest (2021) in telling someone that she is honest when you know that she is not. Even if you don't have an idea one-way or the other about her honesty, it would be dishonest to still label her as an honest person in order to try to get her to internalize the label. In addition, you need to keep your practice of using erroneous labels a secret in the long run, and so continue to deceive and/or mislead the target and other third parties so as to maintain their false views. Hence, I still can't get on board with the virtue labeling strategy just yet.

Cadet Brunner on Honesty and Utilitarianism

Marc focuses on my work on honesty, which was developed in greatest detail in my book, *Honesty: The Philosophy and Psychology of a Neglected Virtue* (2021). Over the course of the book, I develop an increasingly complex account of this virtue, which ends up becoming this mouthful:

Honesty is the virtue of being disposed, centrally and reliably, and as dictated by the capacities associated with practical wisdom, to not intentionally distort the facts as the agent sees them, and primarily for good or virtuous motivating reasons of one or more kinds K1 through KN of sufficient motivating strength and modal robustness and scope to encompass all human beings, along with the absence of significant non-virtuous motivation to distort the facts as the agent sees them (2021, pp. 132).

Fortunately for our purposes we can neglect most of this. The key bits are that an honest person does not intentionally distort or misrepresent the facts as she takes them to be, and she is motivated in a virtuous way.

Marc is quite right that I don't want my approach to be off-limits to any reasonable ethical theory. In other words, I hope that advocates of Kantian ethics, virtue ethics, divine command theory, and other approaches could adopt it. But Marc thinks that my approach is in tension with utilitarianism, particularly of the kind developed by John Stuart Mill. He holds this for two main reasons. First, Marc claims that I have left utilitarian motives off the list of good or virtuous motivating reasons. As he writes, "Having the virtue of honesty, to a utilitarian, involves the desire and motivation to be truthful for the promotion of the greatest general happiness. Yet Miller's position does not warrant such a condition...there must be an added

condition in his definition which includes the desire to achieve good outcomes.”

To be honest (which seems appropriate), I have to admit that I didn’t give much thought to utilitarianism when I was developing my account, in part because I have deep reservations about the theory. Fortunately, though, I can still accommodate the approach into my view. In chapter four of the book, I develop a pluralist theory of honest motivation. I note that many different kinds of motives could count as virtuously honest including loving motives, friendship motives, dutiful motives, and justice motives. So if Mill’s view is reasonable, then we can simply add utility maximization to the list of virtuous motives. What I am mainly concerned to exclude from honest motivation are self-interested motives like telling the truth to avoid punishment or to get rewards in the afterlife. But a motive to maximize overall utility is a far cry from a self-interested motivation.

Marc’s other concern with my view is that it appears to make dishonest behavior wrong without exception. But as Marc notes, “The second conclusion emerging from Mill’s writing on virtue is that to claim a certain action can be axiomatically wrong is fundamentally contrary to outcome-based ethics.” My response is - I agree! On my view, intentionally distorting the facts is always going to be dishonest. But intentionally distorting the facts is not always going to be wrong. Whether an action is wrong or not is going to depend on what the wrong-making features of the act are, such as relevant rules, relevant virtues, or – for the utilitarian – what maximizes utility overall. In some cases these factors can outweigh the contribution provided by dishonesty to the wrongness of a given action. To take the classic example here, lying to the Nazi in order to protect a Jewish family is still a failure of honesty. But almost everyone thinks that it is all-

things-considered morally permissible, and may even be morally obligatory.

So, I think that my account of honesty gets things exactly right. In cases like the Nazi one, there is still an act of dishonesty involved. But it doesn’t follow that the act is thereby automatically wrong. I think Marc can welcome this result.

Cadet Letendre on Honesty and Honor Codes

Finally, Madelyn takes my work on honesty and connects it to the role of honor codes, with a specific focus on the USAFA Honor Code. I have to say that overall, I think we are mostly in agreement, and I basically just want to affirm what she said. Let me focus first on two points of potential disagreement.

Madelyn is worried about whether my approach to thinking about the virtue of honesty is at odds with how the Air Force Academy is implementing its Honor Code. In particular, the Honor Code emphasizes punishment for Honor Code violations, and punishment avoidance is not virtuous motivation. I agree. Not cheating only to avoid getting caught and punished, is not going to foster the virtue of honesty, at least in the short run. But taking our lesson from the discussion of virtue labeling above, three points are worth emphasizing. First, if enforcing the Honor Code helps to bring about lower rates of cheating, then it is worth it, even if the motivation is not great. Again, I’ll usually take better behavior with self-interested motivation, over worse behavior with self-interested motivation.

Second, as Caden pointed out, motives can change over time. So even if punishment avoidance starts out being the motive for most students to not cheat, hopefully over time their motivation can change into something more virtuous. And finally, there can, and

often are, multiple motives behind our actions. Hence students can be partially motivated to not cheat both because they don't want to be punished and because they think it is the right thing to do. Hopefully, over time the second motive grows in strength, which will also lead in the direction of the virtue of honesty.

Madelyn is also worried about my approach to thinking about honesty for a different reason. She writes that I “invalidate a Kantian, duty-based, approach to honesty. Miller claims that duty cannot be the ultimate motivation for honesty as it could be misaligned to egoistic motivations. This raises concerns over honor-code-based honesty. If cadets are honest simply because it aligns with their duty or the honor code, this could devolve into egoistic motives, such as avoiding punishment.”

Fortunately, it turns out that there is nothing for her to worry about here. For as we saw in the previous section, I am a pluralist about honest motivation. And one of the motives I am just fine with is Kantian, duty-based motivation, along with several other kinds. I also am convinced that dutiful motivation is distinct from self-interested motivation, and does not have to devolve into the latter. It potentially could devolve, but can also remain separate as well.

Let me end by affirming two important points that Madelyn makes:

- 1) “It is simultaneously possible to cultivate morally-motivated virtues, such as honesty, while maintaining the external sanctions from the Honor Code.” and,
- 2) “If virtue-based honesty pervades throughout the general consciousness of the cadet wing, honest actions become second-nature...”

These claims seem to me to be exactly right, and capture worthy goals that all of us in education should strive toward.

♦ ♦ ♦

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FEATURE ARTICLES

General Benjamin O. Davis, Jr. Biography, Part 1

Charles Dusch

Every Airman today owes a debt of gratitude to General Benjamin O. Davis, Jr.. Before the Air Force became a separate service and before the Air Force Academy established what were to become the Air Force Core Values—Integrity First, Service Before Self, Excellence in All We Do—Gen Davis was living them, often in the face of great adversity. As a combat Airman, Gen Davis was respected for his leadership and courage under fire, his exacting standards and discipline, his tenacity and commitment, and his ability to innovate and find a way forward. Gen Davis broke barriers and built bridges that established him as one of our great American leaders.

He was born on December 18, 1912 in Washington, D.C., the son of Benjamin O. Davis, Sr. and Elnora Dickerson Davis. His father, a renowned military officer, became the first Black General Officer in the United States Army. Sadly, young B.O. Davis' mother died from complications in childbirth in 1916 when the young man was only four years old. His father later remarried Sadie Overton, a professor of English at Wilberforce University, who was very influential in the young man's development (Davis, 1991).

The elder Davis was a strong role model for his son. Once in 1924, while he was assigned as the Professor of Military Science at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, the infamous Ku Klux Klan staged a parade through Tuskegee Institute one night to challenge the construction of a veteran's hospital that would employ Black doctors and nurses. Leading his family onto the porch, he stood silently in his white dress uniform while his family sat quietly under the porch light in silent protest as the Klansman marched by with their torches and hoods. Young B.O. Davis, Jr. learned an important lesson in courage and resilience from his father that night (Davis, 1991).

Author Note

The following article is the first half of a two-part extended biographical essay. The essay will soon appear as an Air University Press publication, and we acknowledge their kind permission in allowing us to publish the work here. Of note, the author originally prepared this piece in preparation for the naming ceremony of the USAF Academy Airfield, home to the 306th Flying Training Group and now named the General Benjamin O. Davis Airfield.

The next year, young Davis attended a barnstorming exhibition at Bolling Field in Washington, D.C. (now Bolling Air Force Base) where an exhibition pilot offered him an opportunity to ride in his airplane with him. Davis jumped at the chance and so enjoyed the flight that he vowed to become an Airman one day and pilot an airplane himself (Gropman, 1990).

His father's military duties took the family to Ohio, and the younger Davis attended Central High School in Cleveland, graduating in 1929. He enrolled in Western Reserve University from 1929-1930, and later entered the University of Chicago from 1930-1932. All the while, he dreamed of being a military pilot and decided to contact Oscar De Priest, the only African American Member of Congress at that time. De Priest sponsored the young man for an appointment to the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York (Davis, 1991).

Shortly after arriving at the U.S. Military Academy, Cadet Davis was isolated by his own classmates and effectively "silenced" during his four years there. Although he described the silent treatment as something reserved for cadets who had "violated the honor code but refused to resign," Davis endured four years of this treatment because of his race. His classmates only spoke to him on official business. He lived alone, ate alone, and sat on the bus to football games alone (Davis, 1991, p. 27). Although this treatment was not sanctioned by the Honor Committee, neither did it do

anything to stop it. He faced hostile and often relentless challenges and obstacles during his time as a cadet (Gropman, 1990).

Such treatment only served to stoke Davis' grit and determination to graduate. He committed himself to proving to everyone at West Point the measure of the man with whom they were dealing. He graduated 35th out of 276 in the Class of 1936. When retired General of the Armies John J. Pershing presented him with the gold bars of an Army second lieutenant, his classmates broke their silence and applauded.

"The courage, tenacity, and intelligence with which [Davis] conquered a problem incomparably more difficult than plebe year won for him the sincere admiration of his classmates, and his single-minded determination to continue in his chosen career cannot fail to inspire respect wherever fortune may lead him." (Howitzer, 1936)

After graduation, 2Lt Davis married the love of his life, Agatha Scott, whom he had courted while attending the U.S. Military Academy (Davis, 1991). Cadets like Davis who graduated with a high standing in their class normally had their choice of assignments, and 2Lt Davis expected that he, too, would at last achieve his dream of becoming an Airman. He applied for flight training in the Air Corps but was denied. The segregated Army did not have an African American squadron or training

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facility. Further, a racist 1925 study by the Army War College that governed the thinking of many Army leaders opined that Blacks were a “mentally inferior subspecies of the human race [sic],” whose brains were smaller and weighed 10 ounces less than whites, making them unsuitable for the highly technical branches of the Army like aviation. This hidebound study would continue to be used to justify racist segregation by the military well into World War II (Gropman, 1990, p. 49-51; Davis, 1991; Moye, 2010).

As a result, 2Lt Davis was assigned to the segregated all-Black 24th Infantry Regiment at Fort Benning, Georgia, where he attended the U.S. Army Infantry School but could not enter the all-white officers’ club. His next assignment was to serve as a military tactics course instructor at Tuskegee Institute, and he was promoted to First Lieutenant in 1939 (Davis, 1991). That year, strong political pressure from both black and white political leaders urged Congress and the President to alter Air Corps policies and establish a flying program for African Americans. The Civilian Pilot Training Act established a reserve civilian pilot training program across the nation, including six Black colleges of which Tuskegee Institute was one. In addition, the Roosevelt Administration ordered the War Department to create an African American Air Corps unit (Davis, 1991; Moye, 2010).

Promoted once again, now Captain Davis was assigned to begin training in the first class of 13 African American Airmen at Tuskegee Army Air Field (TAAF), Class 42-C. As the senior officer and with his West Point education, Capt Davis was the obvious choice to lead his class, and he and his father were the only two Black officers in the Army! Life for the new student pilots was extremely challenging at first in the segregationist South. Tents with dirt floors served as their living quarters and the student mess hall was a

wooden building with a dirt floor, all of which turned into a sea of mud whenever it rained. White service members dined in a finished mess hall with tablecloths and uniformed African American waitresses. Even after buildings were finished, segregation remained the rule at Tuskegee Army Airfield (Bucholtz, 2007). Davis described the early base as, “a prison camp” (1991, pp. 75-82).

This did not dampen the spirits of Class 42-C, who commenced their flight training with enthusiasm and determination. Lt Col Noel Parrish, then the base Director of Training, immediately recognized Capt Davis’ exemplary leadership skills. Parrish had a breadth of flight training experience in the pre-war Army, and noted that as a group Military Academy graduates had “a surprisingly high elimination rate” from pilot training compared to their non-West Point counterparts. In a later interview, Parrish stated that the attributes they learned that made them superb infantry officers were a hindrance to their learning to fly (Moye, 2010, pp. 59-60). Airmanship required a certain mental agility to think, execute, and lead spatially in the third dimension, conceptually thinking fluidly and far ahead of the aircraft—then accomplishing the required maneuvers.

In this regard, Davis was no exception to his West Point peers and he was not a natural pilot. Parrish, who later became the stellar commander of Tuskegee Army Airfield who de-segregated facilities and helped transform a program Army brass deemed an “experiment” into an “experience” for its personnel, took a personal interest in Davis’ success, applying his vast instructional experience to teach the young officer what it is to be an Airman. The transformation was efficacious and Capt Davis became the first black officer to solo in an Air Corps aircraft. He steadily advanced through the courses of instruction that included the

PT-17 Stearman, the Vultee BT-13, and finally the T-6 Texan. He and four of his remaining classmates of Class 42-C graduated on 7 March 1942 (Bucholtz, 2007; Moye, 2010).

These men were the nucleus of pilots of what would eventually become the 99th Fighter Squadron, whose ground crews were training in non-segregated classes at Chanute Field, Illinois. However, the squadron required a complement of 33 pilots, nearly twice that number of administrative, support, and medical officers, and nearly 500 ground support enlisted personnel. Until the full complement of pilots and support personnel was achieved, it would be months before the squadron could be fully manned and ready for combat. As more classes of pilots arrived at TAAF and graduated, the base received some frontline, though war-weary, combat aircraft—P-39 Airacobras and P-40 Warhawks. Now Lt Col Davis and his pilots were building their flight time in the types of warplanes they would fly in combat overseas (Davis, 1991; Moye, 2010).

Lt Col Davis used this training time to mold his Airmen into a fighting squadron with a clear sense of mission and purpose. As Davis later said, “...everyone in the 99th understood...their performance would create the future environment for Blacks.” They were fighting a two-front war—a war against Nazi racism overseas and a war against racism at home—the so-called “Double V for Victory” (Gropman, 1990, p. 76). At last, on April 1, 1943, the squadron received its overseas orders. After a long train ride to Camp Shanks, New York, the squadron embarked on the troop ship *Mariposa* on April 15, 1943, zig-zagging across the Atlantic Ocean for over a week to avoid Nazi U-boats. The *Mariposa* docked in Casablanca, Morocco on April 24, and the squadron moved to a former *Luftwaffe* air base at Oued N’Ja. There,

they received 27 brand new Curtis P-40L Warhawks powered by the famous British Merlin engine. Lt Col Davis immediately began a training regimen. Twelfth Air Force leadership voiced concern to Washington that all new P-40 units lacked critical combat training when they arrived overseas, and Maj Gen John Cannon set up a northwest Africa training command to address the shortfalls. Also, Davis himself expressed concern that although he and his flight commanders had the rank and authority as squadron leaders, they lacked the flight hours and Airmanship experience of their peers in other P-40 squadrons (Davis, 1991; Hasdorff, 1975).

Col Philip Cochran, an experienced P-40 combat commander who took over training the new units, recommended to Cannon that Davis and his flight leaders be temporarily integrated into an experienced unit and paired with their counterparts in that squadron to gain that experience, but his reasonable suggestion of integration was denied. Instead, Cochran was dispatched to Oued N’Ja, along with two experienced Warhawk pilots, to begin training in the combat zone. Cochran enjoyed his time with the fun-loving 99th FS, finding that Lt Col Davis set exacting standards and his Airmen responded in kind; the pilots flew beautiful and precise formation, which gave them a firm foundation for learning how to dive bomb and strafe in the P-40. Cochran praised the group their natural abilities at dive bombing. Cochran also taught the 99th FS aerial tactics and how to best engage Axis fighters. With its four 50-caliber machine guns and rugged design, the Warhawk had firepower and was well suited for the grueling desert climate. It could out-turn most Axis fighters and in the hands of a skilled pilot, the P-40 was a lethal machine (Broadnax, 2007; Bucholtz, 2007; Davis, 1991; Hasdorff, 1975). However, its greatest strength was when pilots flew as a team. Time and again, from China to New Guinea to North Africa, P-40 pilots learned that when they

fought together, they emerged from battle victorious. The African American pilots of the 99th FS embraced this Airmanship concept of teamwork wholeheartedly, and Lt Col Davis employed it to the utmost (Bergerud, 2001).

Soon, the 99th was ready for combat and moved to a new base on Cape Bon, Tunisia, where they began flying dive bombing and strafing missions against the Axis fortress island of Pantelleria, which had to be reduced before the Allies could invade Sicily. For this operation, the 99th FS was attached to the 33rd Fighter Group under Col William Momyer, who gave his new charges minimal guidance or assistance. Momyer made his contempt for the 99th FS known from the outset. When Lt Col Davis and his operations officer, Maj George “Spanky” Roberts reported to the 33rd FG headquarters, Momyer failed to return their salutes. He deliberately changed briefing times to insure the pilots of the 99th arrived late. Once again, Lt Col Davis was forced to overcome unnecessary obstacles in order to prove the mettle of his squadron. His secret was to display an upbeat commitment to the mission at hand—an enthusiasm that was contagious (Bucholtz, 2007; Davis, 1991; Francis, 2008; Gropman, 1990).

The 99th flew its first combat mission on the morning of June 2, 1943, dive-bombing the heavily defend installations as enemy anti-aircraft fire surrounded them. For seven straight days, the 99th FS attacked the Axis fortress without spotting a hostile fighter. On June 9, they put Cochran’s training to the test when a patrol of six P-40s from the 99th was escorting a flight of A-20 Havoc attack bombers over Pantelleria. Suddenly, four Nazi fighters dived on them from above and the rear, but they had failed to achieve surprise. The vigilant African American Airmen spotted the oncoming attack and turned to meet it head on. In the ensuing, inconclusive engagement, the Warhawk pilots

damaged at least one Nazi fighter and left it smoking while only receiving minimal damage themselves. Most importantly, they had protected the bombers with which they were entrusted, though another squadron escorted the bombers home (Bucholtz, 2007; Dryden, 1997).

Lt Col Davis was somewhat concerned with how his squadron reacted on these early bomber escort missions. Like most squadrons, the pilots of the 99th were eager for a “kill” and hastily broke ranks to engage the enemy, leaving the bombers momentarily exposed. Davis instilled tighter flight discipline, directing that only elements or flights would be dispatched to meet the attack, while the bulk of the squadron maintained “top cover” over the bombers. In this way, Lt Col Davis defeated any decoy attacks and frustrated the enemy’s plans. Additionally, the engaging fighters typically dropped their external auxiliary fuel tanks in order to be more maneuverable for the ensuing battle, which meant they also now had less fuel to continue the escort after the engagement. Davis directed that since those fighters had to return to base after the battle anyway, they should pair up with damaged bombers—“wounded birds”—so that the bombers had safe escort home (Gropman, 1990). His Airmanship skills were growing.

Momyer, however, reported this enthusiasm and eagerness as “panicky” and “undisciplined” in his official communiques to the XII Fighter Command Headquarters. Momyer cited this battle as an example of the lack of discipline for leaving the bombers to engage the enemy, concluding, “it is my opinion that they are not of the fighting caliber of any squadron in the group.” Lt Col Davis was not told of the allegations in theater (Broadnax, 2007, p. 129; Bucholtz, 2007; Davis, 1991; Gropman, 1990; Moye, 2010).

Meanwhile, Davis continued to lead the 99th FS on missions against Pantelleria Island, averaging two missions daily. While some missions targeted enemy gun sites, other missions flew bomber escort for B-25 and A-20 aircraft. On 11 June 1943, their efforts bore fruit: Pantelleria surrendered to become the first territory ever captured by the use of air power alone.

Now the Allies prepared for the campaign against Sicily. While escorting B-25 bombers attacking Castelvetro Airfield in southwestern Sicily, a formation of the 99th FS came under attack from above. In the ensuing battle, 1st Lt Charles “Seabuster” Hall became the first Tuskegee Airman credited with an aerial victory when he shot down a Nazi FW-190. Lt W. I. Lawson claimed a probable. However, both 1st Lt Sherman White and 2nd Lt James McCullin became the first Tuskegee Airmen lost in combat. They were most likely shot down in the diving attack by the Axis fighters. Designed as a ground attack aircraft, the P-40 lacked the high altitude capability needed by escort aircraft and the pilots of the 99th FS remained vulnerable to attacks from on high (Bucholtz, 2007; Davis, 1991; Haulman-Combat Deaths, n.d.).

For the next several months, Davis’ Airmen continued providing excellent air support—flying bomber escort, providing “top cover” for the landing of Allied troops in Sicily, and flying dive bombing and strafing missions. In September 1943, Lt Col Davis was recalled stateside to take command of the all-Black 332nd Fighter Group, consisting of the 100th, 301st, and 302nd Fighter Squadrons. However, Momyer’s inflammatory letter had gotten traction. Endorsed along his chain of command all the way to the Chief of Staff, Gen Henry H. Arnold, he recommended that the Tuskegee Airmen either be disbanded or relegated to benign coastal patrol missions. Further, *Time*

magazine ran an article entitled “Experiment Proved?” that released excerpts from the report, including classified information (Bucholtz, 2007; Davis, 1991; Moye, 2010).

Davis was incensed, but he was on the threshold of one of his greatest triumphs. Called to testify before the War Department’s Advisory Committee on Negro Troop Policies (the McCloy Committee), Davis remained poised and composed during his testimony. He was accustomed to maintaining his cool in the face of overt racism. Using data and fact, Davis was able to show that the 99th FS compared favorably with other P-40 squadrons, and that one of the main issues of Momyer’s argument, that the 99th had not achieved many aerial victories, was irrelevant since its main mission was to support troops on the ground—a mission the squadron had done superbly. Davis also highlighted the fact that the 99th was undermanned compared to white P-40 squadrons, since the sole pipeline-training source of TAAF was inadequate to supply replacement pilots as well as build the 332nd FG and the newly formed 477th Bombardment Group. This was a poignant jab at segregation’s detrimental impact on the war effort (Davis, 1991; Gropman, 1990; Moye, 2010). It was also a compelling argument, and Lt Col Benjamin O. Davis, Jr. carried the day.

Meanwhile, the 99th FS in Italy began to thrive when they were attached to the 79th FG under Col Earl Bates, Jr., who treated his new squadron like the rest of his command. They were equals integrated into his battle formations—Black pilots even led white pilots into battle and vice-versa. While supporting the landings of Allied troops at Anzio beachhead on January 27, the 99th FS intercepted a formation of 15 FW-190s that were attacking Allied ships. The 99th FS destroyed 10 enemy aircraft and the next

day, when Nazi aircraft threatened American ground forces at Anzio, the 99th destroyed three more enemy aircraft—totaling 13 victories in two days! At last, the Tuskegee Airmen stood vindicated against their detractors. Davis' former command became one of the premier dive-bombing squadrons in the theater and earned the respect of their peers. The pilots of the 99th enjoyed their time as members of the 79th FG and were saddened when they were reassigned—to the African American 332nd Fighter Group (Aviation History, 1999; Bucholtz, 2007).

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FEATURE ARTICLES

Reflections on the COVID-19 Crisis

Greig Glover, MD

For over 2,000 years, medical professionals have trained in the tradition of the Hippocratic Oath. That oath, espoused by Hippocrates around 400 BC, was the first recognized code of ethics for medical professionals. It implored physicians to treat patients with compassion and dignity, to practice to the best of their ability, and to be collegial.

I am a medical doctor who practices in the Minneapolis/St. Paul metro area. I have been caring for patients for over 30 years. Never did I suspect that the Hippocratic Oath, which I swore to uphold, and the medical code of ethics ingrained during medical school would become a central focus in my care. Neither did I realize that leadership principles first taught at the U.S. Air Force Academy, and reinforced on active duty, would be called upon to help me lead during the COVID-19 crisis.

Background

During the early winter of 2020 reports of the COVID-19 virus became prevalent in the media. News stories in January and early February circulated on television and social media describing a new virus that was causing respiratory difficulties. Most of my colleagues and I were not concerned as we had seen Avian Flu, and other influenza-type viruses emanate from Southeast Asia and ultimately be contained. After seeing video and reading accounts of hospitals in Italy being overwhelmed, it became apparent that it was only a matter of time before we would be facing the same challenge.

As COVID-19 began to spread in the United States, medical leaders in our community decided to take an old hospital that was destined to close and designate it as a “COVID-only” hospital. Patient rooms were

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urgently fitted with negative pressure airflow, ventilators, medical supplies, and personal protective equipment (PPE) to treat patients with the COVID-19 infection.

The most difficult part of setting up this specialized hospital was staffing. Even among medical professionals, there was fear, worry, and anxiety about acquiring the COVID-19 virus. Requests were made of all physicians with hospital experience to staff the hospital, yet few volunteered. After discussions with my wife and conversations with close colleagues, I felt it was important for me to volunteer to take care of this special group of patients.

The First Day

The first day at the COVID hospital was eye opening. Everybody was from different hospitals and clinics. Doctors, nurses, respiratory therapists, pharmacists, and physical therapists were all put together with little direction or guidance. Physicians were immediately placed in a leadership position to guide care and provide direction. This was especially difficult with the requirement to wear personal protective equipment. Normal conversations and interactions were difficult. People were hesitant to be close to each other in spite of taking extensive precautions.

From a medical standpoint, treating patients was mostly guesswork. Information on the new COVID-19 virus was scant. I had read all of the literature available about treating this new disease but little was known about how it worked. Some patients would come into the hospital with a cough, fever, and shortness of breath, and rapidly deteriorate while other patients did remarkably well and left the hospital after only a few days of treatment. My colleagues and I talked freely about each patient we had and what we were seeing. What worked and what didn't work. Information about treatment flowed freely in the physician lounge, as well as medical blogs, websites, and journals. We were in new territory and everybody was nervous.

Because of the fear of "catching COVID", many physicians decided to avoid physically seeing patients. Physicians and staff were encouraged to interview patients by phone, in their room or use an iPad for visual assessment of the patient in order to avoid the risk of catching COVID-19 and under the guise of conserving PPE although we always had more than we needed. It soon became apparent that this form of assessment was inadequate. When caring for patients with respiratory distress, it is vitally important to listen to their lungs, listen to them talk, watch their breathing, look at their skin for signs of hypoxia, and listen to them speak to gauge their level of anxiety. None of this was possible with electronic conversations. I soon abandoned this technique and donned the required protective garments and entered the patient room. After entering, I would shake the patient's hand, sit on the bed, speak loudly (through the N95 mask), look them directly in the eyes, and listen to their heart and lungs. It was immediately clear that many of the patients were terrified. They had, what they thought, was a fatal disease, they were separated from loved ones, and they had no physical contact with people. A simple gentle touch of the arm, or placing a hand on their shoulder sometimes elicited tears in their eyes.

That evening, while reflecting on my first shift, I was reminded that people need other people. Human interaction, touch, and eye contact are part of the medical healing process. Relationships matter. I found that one of the best ways to affirm a person's worth and dignity is to have a relationship with them and acknowledge them. I am convinced that even when I had nothing to offer my patients in terms of medications, the simple act of acknowledgement and caring was helpful.

In retrospect, a major factor in the lethality of COVID-19 is the fear and anxiety it produces. Some data have suggested that various forms of antidepressants have a positive effect on the outcome of people infected with COVID-19, in spite of the lack of

a plausible mechanism. Some doctors have posited that the anti-anxiety affects are helpful. I agree.

Another benefit of seeing patients face-to-face, albeit through a protective mask and face shield, was trust. Patients and family members with COVID-19 had many questions and wanted to know the truth about their illness and prognosis. Many life and death decisions had to be made. Decisions such as whether or not to take experimental medications and treatments, or to consent to CPR and resuscitation if they stopped breathing. Patients who were deteriorating quickly were asked if they wished to be placed on a ventilator. In normal times, these decisions are made after thorough conversations with a patient's private physician and family members. None of that was available to these rapidly deteriorating patients and trust was essential to help them reach a decision.

As a retired Air Force pilot, I thought back to my initial training in Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape (SERE) and techniques used by the enemy to break the spirit of prisoners. Of all techniques available, isolation was one of the most reprehensible. And so it was with these patients. The act of isolating them provoked anxiety, fear, delirium, and depression. This was especially true with elderly patients who were the most vulnerable.

Leading the Team

During the first weeks of the crisis, leadership was easy. Community members, hospital administrators, and medical professionals focused on, and were motivated to keep people from dying. People changed work patterns, worked extra shifts, and gave up their normal routines. Some physicians chose to live in a hotel room instead of going home to be with their spouse in order to protect them from the possible exposure to the COVID-19 virus. Schoolchildren colored pictures exclaiming appreciation to "medical heroes". Restaurants donated food to the hospital cafeteria to feed weary hospital workers. I remember how appreciative we were when

a pallet of Girl Scout cookies showed up at the hospital loading dock. It was a time of urgency and everyone pulled together.

It was easy to lead when the crisis was fresh but as time progressed, COVID became routine. As physicians, we figured out which medications were effective and which techniques were helpful — who knew the simple act of having the patient lie prone on their stomach would help keep them from being placed on a ventilator? The novelty of COVID-19 wore off as time and treatments progressed. As more patients became ill, hospital staff became tired.

A common phrase in medicine is *compassion fatigue*. It typically occurs after repeatedly working long hours in a stressful environment. Making life and death decisions about who gets treatment, who gets a ventilator, or who gets medication becomes routine and faceless. Suddenly Mrs. Johnson, the fragile 85-year old retired school teacher with a husband, three children, and seven grandchildren becomes "...the patient in room 416". Taking time to talk to close family members on the phone becomes a burden. Family members who ask too many questions become, "...a problem".

Like all people in society, dealing with the effects of COVID-19 was not isolated to time on the job. Healthcare professionals also had to deal with the personal effects of COVID on their family and friends. Family members faced job loss or were forced to work from home. Female workers of childbearing age were concerned about the effect the virus would have on a pregnancy. Nurses were hit disproportionately hard. Because the majority of the nurse population is female, they more frequently faced the need to care for children who suddenly were told to stay home from school.

The biggest cause of emotional fatigue was the sheer number of people who died, and who continue to die. Older physicians who served in the military,

who lived through the period of untreated human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) or who cared for patients with H1N1 influenza were familiar with high mortality rates and were better able to deal with loss. Less experienced physicians had more of a struggle. Burnout among hospital workers has become common, and dealing with their needs is something the medical system was not prepared for. In this respect, the military is much further advanced. During Vietnam, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and the effects of combat were better recognized and discussed. As war in the Middle East took its toll, the Veterans Administration (VA) and other organizations stepped up to give dignity, respect, and treatment to warriors who suffered from PTSD. Unfortunately, the medical world does not have such an organized approach. Workers who struggle rarely have a place to turn. Mental health issues continue to plague medical professionals. Many professionals have retired or changed jobs. Leaders who recognize and respect the needs of these professionals are desperately needed.

The Importance of Hope

Through the summer of 2020, the hope of a vaccine emerged. Operation WARP SPEED was beginning to make progress and drug manufacturers talked of a possible vaccine by the end of the year. Philanthropists, politicians, and drug manufacturers worked together and updates about the development progress were uplifting. It was amazing to see how people in the medical community responded to the news. Finally, medical professionals could see a day when people would stop dying of COVID-19 and things would return to normal. It was something to hang on to. The hope of vaccines gave the medical community a much needed boost of morale.

Vaccine Vexations

When vaccines became available, everyone in healthcare was elated. Most physicians, including myself, immediately stepped up to be vaccinated. It soon became apparent, however, that there were people in the medical community who had cogent and well thought-out reservations. Some were concerned about the new Messenger RNA (mRNA)¹ technology. Was it safe? Some remembered the Swine Flu vaccine and the increased side effect of Guillian-Barre Syndrome. It soon became a divisive issue among medical professionals.

Older physicians who served in the military, who lived through the period of untreated human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) or who cared for patients with H1N1 influenza were familiar with high mortality rates and were better able to deal with loss.

After healthcare workers were vaccinated and the general public became eligible for vaccination, the real challenges began. In the clinic, every office visit was dominated by questions about the vaccine. “Should I get it?” “Is it safe?” “How long will it last?” This was another place where trust proved vital. Patients wanted an informed answer and giving that answer took time and effort. It was easy to simply parrot the latest Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines

¹ Messenger RNA (mRNA), which is used in a majority of COVID-19 vaccines, is a nucleic acid sequence that enters the patient's cells and instructs cellular machinery to produce a unique protein called a Spike Protein. This protein is similar to the protein found on a COVID-19 virus. This causes the patient's immune system to produce antibodies and activate disease fighting cells to destroy the virus. Shortly after the Spike Protein is made the body breaks down the mRNA piece and removes it.

and recommendations but patients wanted more. “What do YOU think, doctor?” they would say. The responsibility to review the data with a critical, objective, non-partisan mind was immense.

The biggest challenge with these conversations was to be non-judgmental. There were some patients who fully embraced the vaccine but many did not. There were a small number of patients who simply did not want to allow the government to dictate their medical care. This was a conversation best left to the political

more efficient at influencing and caring for people by investing in one-on-one conversations than by sending an email.

Second, hope is important. One of the most important things a leader can do in times of crisis is to foster a sense of true hope. When the vaccines were in development, it gave people a sense of pride in our country and confidence that what they were working for would have a happy ending. Without hope, people become demoralized and lose direction.

...hope is important. One of the most important things a leader can do in times of crisis is to foster a sense of true hope.

and legal system. Most hesitant patients, however, were truly worried. Is it safe? Will it work? Will I have long-term side effects? What if I get pregnant? What if I have already had COVID-19? If I start the immunization process, when will it end? These were all rational questions and it took time and patience to discuss individual concerns. Sometimes I had answers, but frequently I had to be comfortable saying, “I don’t know”. In the end I was obligated to respect the patient’s decision without judgment. Sadly, many of my colleagues were, and continue to be, judgmental, much to their shame.

Lessons Learned

Looking back, there are several lessons that can apply to any leader involved in caring or influencing people. The first is that physical presence matters. Building trust requires physical presence. You need to be with someone to fully be in touch with his/her feelings, emotions, fears, and needs. E-mails, text messages, and phone calls may be helpful, but people need other people. While it took more time, I was much

Lastly, it is important to remember that winning the battle is easy, but winning the war is hard. Leading an organization in times of crisis is stressful but straight-forward. The objectives are clear, strategy falls into place, and people are motivated. When it becomes a protracted war, things change. People get fatigued. They begin to question strategy. They lose sight of the reason for fighting. It is important for leaders to recognize that this is a natural part of a protracted crisis.

As the current COVID-19 crisis drags on, I find myself reminding more than leading. Reminding colleagues why they are here has become more important than preaching CDC mandates and research articles. As a leader, it is essential to emphasize small, short-term wins. For example, in our COVID hospital, whenever a patient was discharged and able to walk out of the hospital one of the unit clerks would play the song “Here Comes The Sun” by the Beatles (1969) over the PA system. It was but one small reminder that our actions were making a difference. Continually highlighting short-term wins has been important in keeping medical professionals motivated and inspired.

I have also encouraged people to take time off to rest and recharge. Sometimes being away from the work environment for several weeks can do wonders to

people's resiliency. For dedicated professionals who see the continuing need to care for sick people it can be hard to convince them to disengage. Occasionally medical professionals, like all people, may need counseling and therapy, and making this available and removing that stigma is crucial.

The current COVID-19 pandemic continues to resolve as treatments, vaccines, and public immunity improves. Yet, diseases will continue to evolve, technology will change, and medical treatments will come and go. What will not change is the need to care for people. Leading people, no matter the context, still requires focus on basic leadership fundamentals: building trust, frequent and personal communication, and inspiring hope and caring for colleagues who are fighting the battle. By doing so, leaders will be more successful while at the same time, honor human dignity.

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BOOK REVIEW

A Review of "Rotten: Why Corporate Misconduct Continues and What to Do About It"

Marc J. Epstein and Kirk O. Hanson, Los Altos, California:
Lanark Press (2021)

Review By: Rich Wright

If we think about a piece of rotten fruit in a bowl, we might think of excising what is bad or tossing it altogether. We might ask ourselves questions about the fruit as an entity or wonder if it came from a rotten orchard. Regardless, we know that something rotten – if not handled appropriately and in a timely manner – can spread and spoil the rest.

In *Rotten*, Professors Marc Epstein and Kirk Hanson explore why corporate misconduct is a part of our lives and investigate ways to mitigate the ongoing problems. Ethical behavior, leadership failures, and character issues emerge, and the authors submit that corporate misconduct is a real challenge in today's global business climate and government agencies. I think much of what is covered in their research can be applied to developing as a leader of character.

The three key areas of interest for unethical behaviors are as follows: the bad apple (an individual), the bad barrel (company culture), and the bad orchard (competitive environment). "Despite decades of attempts to rein in misconduct, the problem continues to fester. There is no industry or national economy that appears to be exempt" (Preface, 2021). If we look at the Air Force as a subculture of our national experience, we can find similarities between the case studies and examples in the book and our Air Force Academy's long blue line.

Rotten recaps some of the infamous scandals from corporate history – Volkswagen emissions cheating, Takata airbags, Enron, and several others. The Air Force has experienced its own scandals. The B-52 flight of 2007, the Lackland AFB assault scandal of 2009 and other examples hit closer to home. Epstein and Hanson contend that "...misconduct originates in three primary areas: individual values and behavior; corporations where cultures are ethically weak and perverse incentives are strong; and competitive environments that make it difficult, if not

impossible, for corporations and their employees to do the right thing.” (p. 27).

The first key area focuses on the bad apple or individual. “The slippery slope is real. Many bad apples started small and then cascaded into larger and larger misconduct.” (p. 52). Conversely, Epstein and Hanson found, “Individuals who think naturally and deeply about the impact of their behavior on others and about the fairness of policies are likely to be on the positive end of the integrity distribution.” (p. 53). Individuals who demonstrate ethical courage and possess clear examples of doing what is right tend to continue behaving in a way that resists the temptations and pressures to do something wrong.

In looking at the second key area, the bad barrel or company culture, the authors explore several key issues such as a toxic culture. “A toxic culture can also accumulate from many small incidents and behaviors.” (p. 69). Here, we see the importance of consistent behaviors impacting a culture. “Cultures are long-lasting. Bad policies and practices and ‘ways of doing things’ can become so ingrained that it is difficult to root them out.” (p. 71). The daily practice of doing the “little things” right may seem small and insignificant, but these things add up over time to something impactful.

The third key area, the bad orchard or competitive environment, hones in on the fiercely competitive global economy. The need for companies to increase market share, profits or efficiencies invite unethical behaviors and misconduct especially when a “win at all costs” mentality exists. Everyone from line workers to senior level managers may feel overwhelming pressure to succeed or else risk losing out on a promotion opportunity, important assignment or some other type of stratification moment in their careers. Are the systems we employ encouraging this type of behavior or at least inviting the temptation?

One of the reasons corporations fail to prevent misconduct lies in relying too heavily on simple compliance as a means to an end. “Far too many companies, implementing some form of the twelve practices...has become a matter of compliance, of efforts to check the boxes, but not genuine commitment to becoming a good barrel.” (p. 90). A robust ethics training program aimed at preventing bad barrels is insufficient. We must explore what principles mean in practice and focus on how individuals implement their commitments.

Epstein and Hanson offer several problem-solving areas to combat the bad apple, barrel, and orchard: (a) better laws and regulations to prevent misconduct; (b) stronger moral education; (c) more help for companies dealing with bad orchards; (d) greater public and media scrutiny of business behavior; and (e) clearer standards for how companies should handle issues.

Rotten highlights the need for senior leaders and employees at all levels to engage in presenting viable solutions to the bad apple, barrel, and orchard. We all have a stake in preventing misconduct and the authors highlight the role of character in combating the creation of bad apples. “We believe we can significantly reduce the frequency or corporate misconduct if business leaders take their responsibilities to manage the ethical purpose, character, and goals of the firm seriously.” (p. 173). Coming back to the Air Force Academy, this is in line with the Leader of Character Framework – Living Honorably, Lifting Others and Elevating Performance.

I would like us to consider how we, as leaders and leader developers, view our roles and purposes in living out the Leader of Character Framework each and every day. What types of attitudes and behaviors are we modeling? How does “practicing habits of thoughts and actions” show up in our lives? What are we doing to challenge, support, and inspire those around us to be a good apple?

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BOOK REVIEW

A Review of "Grit – The Power of Passion and Perseverance"

Angela Duckworth, New York: Scribner (2016)

Review by: Justin Stoddard

Adversity is everywhere and challenging obstacles lurk around every corner. Among other global challenges, COVID-19 caught the world by surprise, and we are doing our best to recover. In *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance*, Dr. Angela Duckworth presents corporate examples, anecdotes from professional athletes, and her own research demonstrating the power grit has to improve performance. This book reads as both an in-depth exploration into the science behind gritty behavior and a how-to manual providing instruction on building grit both from the inside out, and from the outside in. Among the key concepts discussed by Duckworth, three stood out as particularly pertinent to leader developers. First, in the developmental formula of excellence, effort counts twice as much as, and has greater value than mere talent. Second, is a discussion of learned helplessness versus learned optimism that lies at the root of achievement and overcoming adversity. Third, is the importance of extracurricular activities in developing gritty habits. Each of these are instructive in exploring grit and the role of adversity in character and leadership development at the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA).

In the first section exploring the meaning of grit, Duckworth explains that, particularly in sports, achievement is often attributed to natural talent instead of the hours of sustained and “gritty” effort athletes endure to perfect their craft. While talent may explain why an individual engages in a particular activity in the first place, only by combining that talent with deliberate practice can talents develop into skills. This is the first time that effort enters the equation. After these initial skills are developed, effort is required again to refine and transform mere skills into the truly competitive abilities that lead to Olympic-level performance and achievement. In this way, effort counts twice, first in the development of skills and further in the achievement of excellence.

For USAFA cadets, effort plays a critical role as they develop as leaders of character. The rigors of academics combined with the challenges of athletics and discipline of military competence create a uniquely demanding environment. Talent and effort may have helped them develop the skills and achieve goals worthy of acceptance into USAFA. However, only with their continued effort, deliberate practice, and commitment to excellence can they realize the achievement of graduation and a career as officers in the United States Air Force and Space Force.

In the second section, discussing growing grit from the inside out, Duckworth explains the concept of *learned optimism*. Duckworth describes a seminal 1964 experiment conducted by researchers Dr. Marty Seligman and Dr. Steve Maier in which dogs were subject to a series of tests where they received electric shocks. After an initial test was given where some dogs were able to control the shocks, a second test revealed that only one-third of the dogs continually tried to maneuver out of the painful situation while two-thirds of the dogs gave in to the pain, repeatedly enduring the shocks. This led them to compare *learned helplessness*, wherein people who come to believe they cannot control their suffering simply learn to endure it, to *learned optimism*, wherein people continue to push toward relief, resiliently seeking solutions regardless of the adversity. Duckworth provides several examples demonstrating that optimistic people are healthier, stay in school longer, are more satisfied with their marriages, and are higher performers in a variety of industries. Optimists espouse growth mindsets, see failures as opportunities to learn, are grittier when things go wrong, and are more successful and more satisfied with their lives in general.

While some cadets might compare their experience at USAFA to receiving constant shocks, most USAFA graduates understand the purpose of the adversity they faced and recognize the growth they have sustained during their four-year leadership development experience. Internalizing the Air Force core values of Integrity First, Service Before Self, and Excellence in All We Do and the corresponding Leader of Character tenets of Living Honorably, Lifting Others, and Elevating Performance requires constant attention, deliberate practice, and commitment to achieve. Optimism enables individuals to suffer setbacks and failures and grow from them instead of adopting the pessimistic attitude leading to stagnation and the mental inability to grow.

In the third section discussing growing grit from the outside in, Duckworth discusses the value of extracurricular activities in addition to regular work to provide opportunities for individuals to engage in challenging experiences and follow through on their commitments. Research demonstrated that those who developed the ability to follow through on their commitments, despite the challenges and obstacles they faced, experienced greater success in both personal and professional life pursuits. Evidence also suggests that people who learn to do hard things, become better at doing other hard things as they develop gritty habits of overcoming challenges and achieving goals.

The Academy's Leader of Character Framework guides efforts in the development of cadets as leaders prepared to serve the Air Force. This developmental process happens through a process of assessing their strengths and weaknesses, finding ways to challenge them to discover and grow, and then supporting them in their development. For cadets, numerous military, athletic, academic, and club activities serve as the battlefield wherein this development occurs. For others, it may extend into their homes, at work, in their communities, schools, churches, and other areas that provide engagement opportunities and experiences. In an age where "social distancing" has become the norm, we need social engagement more than ever, and that provides the classroom for our own growth and development.

I highly recommend this book to anyone who is seeking to increase their ability to overcome adversity and thrive despite the global challenges that surround us. Learning to be at peace in the eye of the storm is something that requires perspective, patience, and insight. Duckworth's use of evidence-based research, personal stories and anecdotes, and professional examples throughout a variety of industries clearly demonstrates how grit elevates performance and

achieves excellence regardless of context. This is a message that cadets at USAFA, and people throughout the world need more than ever before. Everyone can develop grit and learn to face the adversity that can lead to our own personal growth should we choose to walk that path.

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BOOK REVIEW

A Review of "Wellbeing at Work: How to Build Resilient and Thriving Teams"

Jim Clifton and Jim Harter, New York: Gallup Press (2021)

Review By: Jacqueline Hooper

How are you doing, right now? Are you net thriving, net struggling, or net suffering? What is a net thriving life, anyway? Can individuals, work teams, and organizations achieve a net thriving life during times of business uncertainty and a global pandemic? Gallup's CEO, Jim Clifton, and Gallup's Chief Scientist, Jim Harter, say it's more than possible. Some organizations in the United States and in other parts of the world are thriving today, amidst a myriad of challenges that have left other organizations suffering or out of business entirely. *Wellbeing at Work: How to Build Resilient and Thriving Teams* is an updated version of *Wellbeing: The Five Essential Elements* (2010), the latter written by Tom Rath and Jim Harter. *Wellbeing at Work* is part business case/data summary and part toolkit that is replete with practical ways to assess, intervene, and enhance wellbeing.

As someone whose career has included roles in wellness, leadership development, healthcare, and peak performance settings, I agreed with the majority of what I read in this book. Three key takeaways, though, that most captured my attention were the following conclusions from Clifton and Harter:

The first takeaway, is that a hybrid work environment that includes regular feedback – more than once a week – is correlated with higher wellbeing than experienced in other work arrangements (i.e., completely in-person or completely remote work). Trust in one's manager and a desired level of autonomy in accomplishing work fosters wellbeing, engagement, and productivity.

A second takeaway was that *interesting work* is the differentiator between burnout and flow – the latter term coined by the late Dr. Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi as *optimal experiencing* (2008). *Wellbeing at Work* cites research data from interviews with "oldsters" who lived to be 95 years of age or older and reported high satisfaction with their lives, overall. Common denominators were that these individuals worked a median average of 60 hours a week, had a median retirement age of 80 for men and 70 for women, with 93% of men and 85% of women reporting

they got a “great deal of satisfaction” from work. Not insignificantly, a majority of these “oldsters” also reported a “great deal of fun” at work. Of note, these individuals were interviewed during the late 1950s, when processed foods, automation of tasks, and opportunities to work exclusively indoors (i.e., knowledge worker positions) were far less abundant as compared to today.

A final takeaway was that overall wellbeing is the most influenced by the Career Wellbeing element. While all five elements (Career, Social, Financial, Physical, and Community Wellbeing) matter, Career Wellbeing is the catalyst component, from which positive or negative influences to all other wellbeing elements cascade.

At the United States Air Force Academy, we teach the Leader of Character framework, support others in implementing this framework, and aspire to live the Leader of Character framework in our day-to-day lives. Much of *Wellbeing at Work* aligns with the “Lift Others” pillar, one of three pillars in the framework and is directed at what managers—not, per se, executive leadership—can do to enhance wellbeing and *lift* those they lead. Enhanced wellbeing, in turn, positively influences engagement, productivity, and performance. The impact a manager has on an individual and a team is pervasive and palpable. *Wellbeing at Work* cites research conducted with German and American workers, which found that people with a bad manager had even worse wellbeing than those who are currently in need of or are seeking employment (De Neve, Krekel, & Ward, 2018). To reiterate, overall wellbeing is greatly influenced by career wellbeing and engagement at work—the latter term referring to evidence of collaboration, opportunities for personal growth, support, and caring in the work place. While the percentage of American employees who are engaged at work rose slightly to 36% in 2021 (Harter, 2021), that still leaves the majority of employees as not

engaged, and who are actively looking for other employment or open to other employment opportunities. For engaged employees, however, it takes at least a 20% raise from a potential employer to make them consider leaving their current employer. Money, it turns out, is insufficient to sustain long-term engagement.

What are some simple, but often overlooked, practices managers can implement to improve wellbeing? In addition to acknowledging the significant challenges to our mental and emotional health this “new normal” of work has brought, managers can model and encourage wellbeing practices. Examples of this can include the following practices:

- getting up and taking breaks,
- spending time outdoors when possible,
- taking advantage of policies that allow employees to engage in physical training (PT) Physical Training while still on duty,
- celebrating wellbeing milestones and other accomplishments,
- including employee-selected goals when having development conversations with employees – not only at review time, and
- acknowledging the unique and inherent strengths that each employee has. Regarding this final point, also allow employees to use their strengths in accomplishing their job duties.

Wellbeing at Work makes all of the above not just doable, but fairly easy. The book comes with a one-time use link to the Clifton Strengths Assessment (which yields a rank ordering of a person’s 34 unique strengths); the 12 items (Q12) that Gallup concludes can measure one’s overall satisfaction and current engagement levels at work; and, a Manager Resource Guide mapped to the Five Elements of Wellbeing. Oh – and if you want to know if you are currently net thriving, net

struggling, or not suffering, you can take a simple Gallup Net Thriving survey, find out what step on the Cantril Life Evaluation ladder you placed yourself, and identify practices that you want to commit to in order to improve your wellbeing, resilience, and performance.

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PROFILE IN LEADERSHIP

Moral Courage: Jimmy Doolittle, Eighth Air Force Memorandum 75-1, and Bombing Berlin

John Abbatiello

Known for leading the daring Tokyo Raid of April 18, 1942, General James H. “Jimmy” Doolittle is one of America’s best-known Airmen from the World War II era. But as Benjamin Bishop points out in *Jimmy Doolittle: The Commander Behind the Legend*, “the academic community has largely overlooked Doolittle’s performance as a wartime commanding general,” specifically his leadership of the U.S. Army Air Force’s Eighth Air Force from January 1944 until the end of the war (Bishop, 2015, p. 2). Indeed, during his years commanding “The Mighty Eighth,” Doolittle demonstrated superb organizational leadership skills of the Army Air Force’s most powerful air task force in World War II. At its peak strength, the Eighth Air Force comprised 40 heavy bomber groups, 15 fighter groups, over 200,000 personnel, and thousands of aircraft.

Doolittle’s background as a test pilot, doctorate-wielding aeronautical engineer, record-setting aviator, reservist, and corporate executive during the interwar years were essential to his development. A close personal friendship with General Henry A. “Hap” Arnold certainly did not hurt either—and was key to Doolittle’s involvement with the Tokyo Raid and promotion over several more senior Airmen, resulting in command of large air organizations in 1942 and 1943. However, as Donald Miller writes in *Masters of the Air*, “everything in his makeup and personal history—his courage, his flying experience, his managerial background, his compassion for his crews, his technical knowledge of aircraft and foul weather flying, and a sobering prewar trip to Germany to study the *Luftwaffe*—equipped him for his new responsibilities” as the Eighth Air Force Commanding General (Miller, 2006, p. 247). Despite his lack of pre-war military leadership experience, he was indeed the right leader for the right organization at the right time.

It is easy to think of Doolittle in a very positive light. He was a charismatic leader, brilliant decision-maker, and technical and doctrinal innovator. All of his many biographies make his leadership skills and his impeccable character very clear. It is no surprise that members of the Air Force Academy’s Class of 2000 named Doolittle as their

Class Exemplar, the program's first individual to be so honored.¹ If it is true that reflecting on moral exemplars from the past is important to our own development as leaders of character (Zagzebski, 2017; Lamb, Brant, and Brooks, 2021), then knowing something about Doolittle is a must. And one leadership trait is especially worthy of further investigation—Doolittle's moral courage in dealing with both subordinates and superiors while leading Eighth Air Force. The Air Force Academy defines moral courage as “the ability to act and do the right thing even in the face of adversity” (Warrior Ethos, 2020). In an operational context, moral courage could involve having the fortitude to make decisions dealing with life or death that will likely face opposition from subordinates, that is, decisions that commanders know will be unpopular with the troops.

The next section of this article will highlight how Doolittle initiated a revision to the Eighth Air Force's crew rotation policy for sound operational reasons, despite strong resentment from crews flying extremely dangerous missions. Moral courage is also needed when disagreeing with superiors over operational policy. The final section will explain how Doolittle tried to reason with his boss, Lieutenant General Carl “Tooey” Spaatz, and directives from senior Allied leaders over targeting methods he believed were unethical. These two cases highlight for us the importance of moral courage as a leadership trait and Doolittle's example of how to effectively employ it in an operational context. These cases also emphasize the need for leaders of character to respect others and to behave ethically.

Eighth Air Force Memorandum 75-1

After his repatriation following the Tokyo Raid, Lieutenant Colonel Doolittle received the Medal of

Honor, and was promoted to Brigadier General. Arnold offered him to then-Lieutenant General Dwight “Ike” Eisenhower as a candidate to command air units participating in Operation Torch, the November 1942 Anglo-American invasion of Northwest Africa. Eisenhower reluctantly accepted. Ike was not particularly comfortable with Doolittle's lack of senior command experience, but respected General Arnold's offer, nevertheless.

As commander of Twelfth Air Force and later Fifteenth Air Force in the Northwest African and Mediterranean theaters, Doolittle gained experience leading large air organizations. He soon earned the reputation of being a superb air commander, gaining the respect of subordinates, Allies, and superiors for leading aggressively and effectively employing his

These cases also emphasize the need for leaders of character to respect others and to behave ethically.

forces. He was known for seeking out new ideas from subordinates and Allies alike. In December 1943 Arnold and Spaatz, with Eisenhower's concurrence, decided to shake up the air command structure in Europe and the Mediterranean. They moved Lieutenant General Ira Eaker from command of the Eighth Air Force in England to overall command of Allied air forces in the Mediterranean and moved Doolittle to command Eighth Air Force. Eighth Air Force comprised strategic bombers and their fighter escorts executing the main American effort in the Combined Bomber Offensive, the operation designed to crush German economic production and civilian morale through American and British long-range bombing. At the same time, Spaatz assumed the role of Commanding General of U.S. Strategic Air Forces in Europe, overseeing the efforts of Doolittle's Eighth Air Force and the strategic bombers of Italy-based Fifteenth Air Force.

¹ Each USAF Academy class since the Class of 2000 has selected an exemplar, and several World War 2 senior leaders have made the list, including Carl Spaatz (2006), “Hap” Arnold (2012), and Curtis LeMay (2013). The Exemplar Program was largely funded by Lt Gen (Ret) Marcus Anderson, USAFA Class of 1961.

Doolittle arrived at Eighth Air Force in early January 1944, at the same time larger numbers of American bombers, long-range escort fighters, and trained aircrews were arriving in Britain to bolster Eighth Air Force's combat power. Arnold and the Combined Chiefs of Staff ordered Spaatz and Doolittle to focus on the destruction of the *Luftwaffe* in preparation for D-Day, only six months away. What followed was a costly air war of attrition between massive formations of bombers and escorting fighters and defending German fighters and anti-aircraft artillery.

During the month of February 1944, which included a surge in operations called "Big Week" between February 20 and 25, Eighth Air Force lost 299 bombers but could make up its losses with replacements arriving in England from America. Doolittle's new fighter escort tactics—of allowing American fighter escorts to pursue German interceptors back to their airfields and to use a relay system of escorting fighter groups—severely mauled the *Luftwaffe's* fighter squadrons. In February, the *Luftwaffe* units defending Germany lost one-third of their single-engine fighters accompanied by a loss of 18% of their pilots (Davis, 2006). As winter turned to spring, Doolittle's bombers continued to target aircraft production plants, airfields, and oil production facilities to hinder Germany's ability to sustain their air defense.

But throughout this attritional campaign Doolittle and his subordinate commanders continued to worry about aircrew morale. An Army Air Force policy had been put in place in the fall of 1943 that allowed bomber crews to rotate back the continental United States after 25 missions (Wells, 1995). As a senior commander in the Mediterranean, Doolittle had supported this policy to sustain aircrew morale and to provide experienced aircrew members to serve as instructors supporting the massive expansion of the Army Air Forces worldwide (Historical Studies Branch, 1968). The policy gave crew members hope that they could survive their service in Europe, where

bomber loss rates were almost prohibitive. For example, Eighth Air Force's pre-Doolittle attack on Schweinfurt in October 1943 resulted in 60 bombers lost from a force of 229 that reached the target (Davis, 2006).

By early 1944, the 25-mission rotation policy no longer made sense. Though bomber losses were still high in absolute terms, loss rates were rapidly decreasing as a percentage of larger attacking formations. Raids of a thousand bombers and almost as many fighters soon became the norm. Experienced crews were being sent home just as their operational effectiveness was reaching its peak and just as their statistical chances of survival were increasing exponentially. In a letter dated 11 February, Arnold wrote to his field commanders directing them to rescind rotation policies that were based on "arbitrary" numbers of missions (Doolittle, 1991; Revised Eighth Air Force Memorandum 75-1, 1944).

Given this urging from Arnold, Doolittle revised the Eighth Air Force rotation policy, effective March 15, 1944, to state that combat crew members would be "eligible" for rotation after 30 missions but would only be allowed home when operational conditions permitted (Revised Eighth Air Force Memorandum 75-1, 1944). After all, Doolittle had requirements to fill non-combat staff positions in his headquarters and those of his subordinate air divisions, wings, groups, and squadrons. After consulting with his staff, Doolittle concluded that a longer combat tour was warranted for the following reasons:

1. Missions of the previous month had been much less costly through air casualties than the 15 percent anticipated.
2. The loss of combat personnel due to completion of 25 sortie tours was too great to carry out the missions planned and man the aircraft now available.
3. The chance of survival was increased considerably.

4. The Flight Surgeon could find little evidence of operational fatigue to justify retention of the former policy.
5. The replacements were not received at the rate anticipated and needed.” (Headquarters Eighth Air Force Narrative History for March 1944, 1944, p. 47)

Doolittle’s approach to fielding this new change—known as Revised Eighth Air Force Memorandum 75-1—was noteworthy. As he later reflected, he knew his decision would be “greeted with a great lack of enthusiasm” from his bomber crews (Doolittle, 1991, p. 360) and he would have to make his case with the troops. Perhaps his moral courage in making this decision was bolstered by the facts and figures he hoped his men would appreciate. Thus, he armed his commanders with statistics showing rapidly declining casualty rates over time in order to assist them with explaining the new policy (Commanders Meeting Minutes, 2 March 1944). During a meeting with his senior commanders, he emphasized the need to watch closely for declining morale and to openly communicate with the aircrews across the Eighth Air Force: “Remember that we are dealing with intelligent men. They should have explained to them what we are doing and why we are doing it” (Commanders Meeting Minutes, 22 March 1944; Bishop, 2015, p. 88). This approach demonstrates Doolittle’s intimate knowledge of the people he was responsible for leading.

Doolittle and Spaatz often visited units at their airfields to check on the morale of the crews. On one occasion when visiting a bomber unit that had suffered particularly horrific losses, a not-so-sober pilot approached the generals and said, “I know why you’re here. You think our morale is shot because we’ve been taking it on the nose. Well, I can tell you our morale is all right. There’s only one thing that hurts our morale—that’s when generals come around to see what’s the matter with it” (Doolittle, 1991, p. 363; Wells, 1995, p. 143). Excellent feedback indeed.

Target Berlin

Eighth Air Force missions continued to pound enemy industrial production with raids deep into Germany. After D-Day, Eisenhower often tasked Spaatz and Doolittle with supporting ground units with heavy bomber missions, such as during the breakout from Normandy near St. Lo and in support of other operations such as Operation Market-Garden and the counter-offensive following the Battle of the Bulge. By spring 1945, *Luftwaffe* fighters seldom challenged Doolittle’s bomber formations, though new German jet fighters continued to pose a serious threat. Spaatz continued to direct Eighth Air Force to attack remaining German industrial production as well as transportation targets such as railways. Many key junctions of rail lines as well as marshalling yards naturally appeared in towns and cities across Germany. The continuation of the Combined Bomber Offensive would soon challenge Doolittle with an ethical issue demanding that he demonstrate moral courage with his immediate commander.

As a result of the Malta Conference in late January 1945, Spaatz directed Doolittle to bomb Berlin. Senior American and British leaders had determined that heavy bombing raids against cities in eastern Germany would hinder German efforts to move troops and supplies attempting to fend off the Red Army’s advance from the east. Such raids would not only assist Soviet forces but would also show the German people that resistance was futile.

The Eighth Air Force had attacked Berlin several times since its first assault on factories in the vicinity of the German capital on March 4, 1944. Spaatz’s orders of late January 1944 were of a different nature, however. New targeting priorities for U.S. Strategic Air Forces in Europe would be synthetic oil plants, followed by the cities of Berlin, Leipzig, and Dresden (Davis, 1993). As part of the upcoming Berlin attack, Doolittle received orders to attack political targets, such as the Air Ministry building and Gestapo Headquarters, in

the middle of the city. Spaatz hoped that a heavy attack on Berlin's city center might finally break the morale of the German people.

On January 30th, Doolittle wrote to Spaatz objecting to sending his crews into harm's way for targets that were not "strictly military" (Davis, 1993, p. 549). He also questioned targeting civilian morale in a country where years of bombing had not broken the German people. The American bombing doctrine of World War II had been to attack German economic or transportation targets that had direct military impacts. Collateral damage to civilians had been considered an unfortunate result, but the U.S. Army Air Forces had

Spaatz replied to Doolittle's message simply by restating the targeting priorities, practically ignoring his chief subordinate's reservations. Poor weather conditions postponed the attack until 3 February. On that day, 932 B-17s attacked their railway targets as well as government buildings in the center of Berlin. Doolittle later said in his memoir that "the object was to interrupt troop movements and, concurrently, lower German morale" (Doolittle, 1991, p. 402) with no other comment on the mission. Eighth Air Force mission analysis later showed that this attack resulted in heavy damage to most targets and was "undoubtedly one of the outstanding operations conducted by this air force" (Davis, 2006, p. 499). Unfortunately, some

bomber groups had dropped their bombs on nearby residential areas, resulting in almost 5,000 Berliners killed and injured and over 120,000 left homeless. Doolittle's prediction was correct: Berliners proved resilient, at least for several more months, German morale seemed to remain steady, civilian casualties were heavy, and the German propaganda machine branded the attack as terror bombing.

Doolittle's Eighth Air Force experience highlights the need for senior commanders to summon moral courage when necessary, toward subordinates and superiors alike.

done their best to avoid directly attacking German civilians. Doolittle argued that such an attack on the city center of Berlin would essentially mean that the Eighth Air Force would use the Royal Air Force doctrine of area bombing, which would result in massive civilian casualties and potential accusations of terror tactics. As Richard Davis quotes, Doolittle appealed to Spaatz's humanity, asserting that "We will, in what may be one of our last and best remembered operations regardless of its effectiveness, violate the basic American principle of precision bombing of targets of strictly military significance for which our tactics were designed and our crews trained and indoctrinated" (Davis, 1993, p. 550). Doolittle obviously had to summon his moral courage to a great degree to challenge his immediate superior, who he greatly respected and admired and who many years later said he "loved" (Doolittle Interview, 1971).

This disagreement between Spaatz and Doolittle seemed to have a negligible impact on their relationship. Spaatz did, however, give up on targeting German morale. The infamous attacks on Dresden during February 13-15, 1945, was an example of Doolittle's bombers continuing to target specific transportation and industrial nodes despite the RAF's continued use of night area bombing techniques. In the remaining weeks of the war, strategic bombers continued to focus on oil and transportation facilities and by early April "were running out of targets" (Doolittle, 1991, p. 404). On April 16, 1945, Spaatz directed his strategic forces to terminate the Combined Bomber Offensive and focus on tactical support to ground forces (Craven & Cate, 1951). The Germans signed unconditional surrender documents on May 7.

After the cessation of hostilities in Europe, Doolittle proceeded to the Pacific to prepare the way for the Eighth Air Force's redeployment against Japanese strategic targets. Under Doolittle's continuing leadership, crews of the Eighth Air Force would train in the B-29 bomber and operate out of bases on Okinawa. Doolittle arrived there on July 17, 1945. As the existing Twentieth Air Force continued to conduct strategic raids against Japan, Doolittle began receiving his newly trained crews and aircraft for Eighth Air Force, not scheduled to be at full strength until early 1946.

Although the atomic attacks of August 6th and 9th, 1945 devastated the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, respectively, the Japanese did not immediately surrender. Hap Arnold subsequently directed Spaatz, who by now had assumed command of strategic air forces in the Pacific theater, to conduct a 1,000-plane conventional B-29 raid against Japan. Spaatz extended an invitation to Doolittle to have his only Eighth Air Force units in theater (two groups of B-29s) participate, warning him that if he did not launch missions soon then the war would be over before the Eighth could be in combat against the Japanese. Doolittle declined. The Japanese surrendered two days later (Doolittle, 1991).

Doolittle's Eighth Air Force experience highlights the need for senior commanders to summon moral courage when necessary, toward subordinates and superiors alike. It is difficult to determine which is more challenging, and that judgment would depend on organizational culture and relationships with superiors, respectively. It seems that in all of his command positions, Doolittle worked very hard to create an atmosphere of open communication while working hard to build trust with those above him and with those below him in the chain of command. He is truly an exemplar not only for senior leaders, but for all of us to emulate.

Thoughts for Consideration

- In your experience has it been more difficult to display moral courage in disagreements with superiors or with subordinates? Why?
- What leadership techniques mentioned above do you admire and plan to emulate? Why?

♦ ♦ ♦

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