

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

[About ELJO](#)

[Case Studies](#)

[Comments](#)

[Submit a Case](#)

[Stockdale
Center](#)

[USNA Class of
1964](#)





Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

About This E-Book

This annual publication of leadership and ethics case studies is culled from experiences of men and women in the Navy and Marine Corps. This incarnation is the latest iteration of an idea originated by the [USNA class of 1964](#) and Professor Karel Montor. The book presents case studies that highlight ethical and leadership challenges typically encountered in the service, to better prepare USNA graduates. The present edition integrates that original inspiration into the information age and the greater fleet.

Previous editions have been traditional hardbound books distributed to Naval Academy graduating classes. This is the first edition to go “live” as a PDF document. This format allows more flexibility with materials to facilitate discussion. New to the edition is a [facilitator’s guide](#) designed to use with the [cases](#). It features the Stockdale Center ethical decision-making model. One case from each section includes material tailored around the model’s concepts. Additionally, the electronic format allows for access anywhere around the globe, greatly assisting our Navy and Marine Corps personnel wherever they are stationed. Cases are reviewed and refreshed from year to year. Every reader of this electronic edition can play a part in keeping the publication timely and relevant by submitting [feedback](#) and for future editions. You can do this by clicking on the appropriate link located on the front page. [In the future the class of ‘64 will offer prizes for best cases.](#) Please check back here, at the front page link, and at the Stockdale Center website, for updates on this contest.

How do you navigate this volume? One way is to browse as you would on a website. Each page contains navigation buttons. Text is also hyperlinked, allowing you to jump from section to section, case to case, or to individual pages within cases. Each case has a “considerations” section tailored to its unique features, including questions for discussion, a follow-on “what happened” page for the curious, and a “lessons learned” section of takeaways for that case. There are links to all of these. Another way to navigate is to simply read from cover to cover as you would a book.

Home



Message from
VADM Stockdale

Facilitator
Guide

Submit a
Case

Feedback and
Comments

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies

Leadership

Responsibility

Loyalty

Truth Telling

Home



[Message from
VADM Stockdale](#)

[Facilitator
Guide](#)

[Submit a
Case](#)

[Feedback and
Comments](#)

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

[The Exercise](#)

[The Air Show](#)

[Equal Treatment](#)

[Ecstasy](#)

Case Studies in Leadership

[Case Home](#)

[Home](#)



Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Leadership *The Exercise*



You are a squadron CO embarked on a carrier. You've received orders to conduct night sea-air operations as a part of a task group exercise. Today, the day of the exercise, you vividly replay the last words of the admiral's preparation brief in your mind. "I cannot stress enough the importance of this exercise going well. It will demonstrate the task group's accomplishments and capability." He had personally driven this home to each participant. To you, he said "Mr. Frank, let's get it done right, in a timely fashion. We need to show what the squadron is capable of."

No more than 10 minutes before launch, you learn several things. The copilot *in the lead aircraft* did not attend the operation brief the night before. That reminds you that the lead pilot, a friend of yours, and that copilot have not flown together, nor, as is now apparent, had they time to brief each other planeside. Along with the other pilots, they now await your orders. As you consider these facts and watch the busy flight deck, the admiral calls: "Commander Frank, ensure that all parts of the operation for which your squadron are responsible start on time. This is vital." You can tell by the tone of his voice he is intent on a successful and timely exercise.

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Leadership *The Exercise*



Executing the mission on time as ordered would reflect well on your squadron, and on you personally. Accomplishing the mission is basic to military professionalism. Further, you assume that the crews would have briefed one another. They have done so in the past. You know the lead pilot. He is very competent. None of your squadron has been involved in mishaps. Surely, the risk of accidents in this operation are minimal. You have long acquaintance with these pilots. You are not pulling this judgment out of thin air. “After all,” you find yourself rationalizing, “the only way to be sure of *never* having mishaps is to keep aircraft on the deck.”

On the other hand, human lives and aircraft are important, and as squadron CO, you are charged with preserving both if possible. Lives and aircraft should never be put at unnecessary risk. “This mission is *not* a warzone operation,” you think. “It is only an exercise.” One of the reasons for training exercises is to minimize uncertainty and mishaps. Surely, the admiral knows this. You worry though: “What did that brief and the personal message convey?” You realize, with a rising sense of apprehension, that you can either go ahead as ordered or delay operations and ensure proper procedures are followed. You *cannot* do both.

Case Study
“The Exercise”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Leadership
The Exercise – Moral Awareness



Sometimes it is said that “alarm bells went off.” This is a case that could be described that way. What does it feel like when this happens?

What is your responsibility regarding all pre-operation briefing and safety requirements? How does this square with your obligation to obey lawful orders?

What are the possible risks involved if you order the exercise as planned?

What impact would your decision to suspend operations have on the strike group?

What personal risks do you run if you halt the exercise?

How does the scale and temporal proximity of the operation affect your ability to sort out what is important from what is not?

[Leadership](#)

[Case Home](#)

[Home](#)

Case Study
“The Exercise”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Leadership
The Exercise – Moral Judgment



Would it be appropriate for you to communicate your discoveries to the admiral before you do anything else?

If you make the decision to launch and no mishaps occur, will you be a morally blameless leader?

What reasons are there for trusting in your pilots' abilities?

What reasons are there for delaying the flight operations?

Shouldn't the Navy allow commanders to make judgment calls when the possibility of mishap is small, instead of always requiring them to follow standard procedures, rules, and regulations?

Is it permissible to commence such air operations under similar circumstances during actual combat in a war zone?

Leadership

Case Home

Home

Case Study
“The Exercise”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Leadership
The Exercise – Moral Intention



What is the path of least resistance? How might you rationalize taking that path?

How will the pilots likely react when they find out you have cancelled the flight operation?

What do you imagine will be the admiral’s reaction?

What impact will your actions have on future relations with your superiors and those under your command? What are the career repercussions?

Have you had an experience when you discovered regulations and SOPs were not followed, knew you should do something to assure they were followed, but did not do so? What stopped you from acting?

Leadership

Case Home

Home

Case Study
“The Exercise”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Leadership
The Exercise – What Happened?



The CO chose to launch the planes on schedule. There was a mishap, resulting in an aircraft and crew chief lost at sea.

Upon investigation, the accident appeared to be the result of the crew’s confusion about what to do and how. That confusion may have been eliminated, or greatly mitigated, by appropriate preflight briefings.

Leadership

Case Home

Home

Case Study
“The Exercise”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Leadership
The Exercise – Lessons Learned



Each of the actors made a choice that contributed to the mishap. The copilot chose not to attend the operations brief and chose not to inform his chain of command. The operations officer and lead pilot either did not notice the copilot’s absence, or they chose not to report it. Both the pilot and copilot failed to conduct the required planeside brief, and they did not report the omission.

The squadron commander, knowing this, nonetheless chose to launch the flight operations as scheduled. One way to interpret the decision is that he chose to please the admiral, by following his orders to the letter. By doing so, he chose not to follow proper safety procedures.

Following safety procedures is not merely box checking. There are important moral reasons for these procedures. All military flight operations, especially night carrier operations, are inherently dangerous. Procedures are designed to preserve lives and hardware, while enabling completion of missions.

Leadership

Case Home

Home

Case Study
“The Exercise”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Leadership
The Exercise – Lessons Learned



Pressure to accomplish a mission can be enormous, but must be measured militarily and ethically against the solemn responsibility of all officers, especially commanders, for the safety and lives of their troops. Rules and procedures are guides developed from previous mishaps. Not following them is as much an ethical failure as not showing up for deployment.

In any military organization, the commanding officer is ultimately responsible, though subordinates have varying degrees of responsibility, depending upon their assignments. Subordinates not fully prepared are ethical failures and disloyal to superiors, whose objectives they should be trying to meet. It is important that all levels of the chain of command realize that their mistakes affect not only themselves, but missions, superiors, peers, and subordinates.

Leadership

Case Home

Home

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Leadership *Equal Treatment*



Following consecutive sea tours, Lieutenant Harrison reported for duty at a small naval base. Harrison enjoyed sea duty, but was looking forward to the challenges of his new job as administrative officer to the CO. After a month, he began noticing things that made him uncomfortable. He was concerned about a trend he saw. The women in the command were treated in ways that sometimes bordered on disrespect and harassment and other times seemed to cross that line. He was contemplating this in his quarters, unable to sleep.

At mess, he sometimes overheard off-color conversations disrespectful of women. His male peers discussed past conquests and offered physical critiques of female lieutenants and sailors in the command. More than once, women were in the hall, close enough to overhear. He couldn't be sure that they had, but he was embarrassed, as a man and officer, by the behavior. While accustomed to these kind of remarks, Harrison was still uneasy. He also saw a male counterpart play an inappropriate prank on two female lieutenants, switching out their underclothes in the laundry. Most worrisome of all, the CO had recently closed the only female lavatory in the building. Harrison couldn't sleep because he knew he had to do something. But what?

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Leadership *Equal Treatment*



Harrison never heard any of the women in the command complain, even though this behavior had apparently been going on for some time. “Maybe I’m too sensitive,” he thought. “Enlisted women may not have complained for fear of retribution, but surely the female lieutenants would have said something by now. Who knows? They might even resent me for being paternalistic if I made a report.” He switched on the lamp beside his bed now, giving up on sleep. He knew that the male lieutenants would resent snitching, but he believed that personnel should be treated equally at all times. He thought that these jokes traveled a one-way street and crossed that fuzzy line into harassment too often. He remembered the laundry episode.

One thing really worried him. If he took the matter to his CO, the CO might think Harrison was impugning his character and command competence. How much trouble would that cause? He was trying to fit in and establish rapport. A report to the CO would certainly put all that at risk. “Do I have another option?” he wondered. “I could take the issue up directly with the men in question.” While avoiding exposure to the CO, he realized that too would risk rapport. Harrison sighed, turned the lamp off again, and tried to sleep.

Case Study
“Equal Treatment”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Leadership *Equal Treatment – Considerations &* *Questions*



How can you tell if you are being oversensitive or if your moral antennae have been activated for good reason? Does your gender affect your moral sensitivity in cases like this?

Should Lt. Harrison risk his career and fitness report by confronting the CO with his concerns, or should he personally talk to the male lieutenants?

If Harrison decides to talk to his male peers, what will they think of him? How about the female lieutenants’ opinions? Enlisted opinion?

What reasons are there for taking the matter to the CO?

What reasons are there for Harrison to “go along to get along?”

What impact will Harrison’s actions have on his future relations with his CO, his peers, and those under his leadership?

Is it presumptuous to ask the CO why he closed the female lavatory?

Leadership

Case Home

Home

Case Study
“Equal Treatment”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Leadership
Equal Treatment – What Happened?



Harrison tactfully approached the CO and voiced his concerns about the treatment women in the command were receiving. Harrison also raised the issue that some of the incidents could be seen as grounds for harassment charges against the CO.

His discreet approach brought all parties together, and as a result, grievances were aired. The discussion led to the male lieutenants treating both female officers and other women in the command more appropriately. The CO also reopened the female lavatory.

Leadership

Case Home

Home

Case Study
“Equal Treatment”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Leadership
Equal Treatment – Lessons Learned



Officers have responsibilities not only to their commanding officers and shipmates, but also a more general responsibility to the service. All personnel should receive fair and equal treatment. Harrison considered handling things at the lower level by taking his concerns to the lieutenants, but realized that doing so would not likely improve the overall command climate, symbolized most strikingly by the closed lavatory. Talking directly to the male lieutenants might create resentment and increase the alienation felt by the female personnel.

Harrison realized he had to take the concern to the CO, because, like it or not, the CO sets the command climate. Perhaps more importantly, as the CO's administrative officer, he had an obligation to ensure the CO was fully informed of all events on the base. To choose to take the matter into his own hands is also to choose to keep the CO in the dark about a potentially important matter. Also, assuming the CO tacitly approved the behavior, the discreet approach was a way to allow him the opportunity to change his ways without undermining his authority on the base.

Leadership

Case Home

Home

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Leadership *Air Show*



The day before an air show, the lead pilot briefs his copilot. They are to execute a short-field runway landing as a key part of the show. These are risky but impressive crowd pleasers. Although these landings increase the risk of mishaps, they are allowed within certain parameters. The copilot assumes that the landing will be within those accepted parameters. He sits with the lead pilot, drinking coffee. His partner is a well known, experienced pilot. He is also a NATOPS evaluator, someone who is well aware, perhaps more aware than the copilot, of the risks involved in such landings. The copilot feels fortunate to have such a leader.

The pilot gives a detailed brief, including information about the steepness of the approach. The copilot flushes a bit when he hears the steep angle at which approach will be made. He listens to the rest of the brief and sits back. The pilot asks him if he understands and if he has any questions. The copilot sips his coffee to buy some time. He wonders if the pilot wants to do this to impress other pilots with this short a landing. What should the copilot do?

Case Study
“Air Show”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Leadership

Air Show – Considerations & Questions



The copilot’s physiological reaction indicates to him that something is morally amiss. Can you think of times when you have had similar reactions to things others have planned?

Should the copilot keep quiet? Shouldn’t he defer to the pilot’s expertise and leadership? Is there any reason to doubt the pilot is “current” and qualified?

Despite the risk, wouldn’t a successful air show reflect positively on the service and the pilots?

Even if the risk of mishap is slight, there are lives at stake. Whose?

How could the pilot’s plan account for these risks? Is the pilot creating unnecessary risks, or do his skills counterbalance them?

As a leader, should he be concerned with placing the copilot in a morally uncomfortable position?

Leadership

Case Home

Home

Case Study
“Air Show”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Leadership
Air Show – Considerations & Questions



What should the copilot do if he voices his concerns and the pilot does not change his mind?

What sorts of self-regarding motivations does the copilot have for each option he has?

What other-regarding motivations does he have for each option?

What reasons are there for the copilot to “go along to get along?”

What impact will the copilot’s actions have on his future relations with this pilot and other peers?

Is it permissible for the copilot to say nothing now and approach the squadron CO with his concerns before the show? Is it advisable to do so?

Leadership

Case Home

Home

Case Study
“Air Show”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Leadership
Air Show – What Happened?



Though the copilot did have serious reservations about the approach, he did not voice them when given the opportunity. The day of the air show, the pilot made an extremely steep approach to the runway. The aircraft crashed and was destroyed. Fortunately, no one was injured.

The after-accident investigation revealed that the pilot had been experiencing burn out and was not current in annual flight time, number of approaches, landings, and aircraft qualification requirements. As to how he retained qualifications without being current, the selection of evaluators is based on individual performance, demonstration of integrity, and acceptance of responsibility, including maintenance of proficiency. The evaluator in this case took advantage of these features of the system. There was lack of oversight as well. Senior evaluators are expected to make sure no one flies who is deficient. In addition, both the operations and training officers failed to check records to ensure that only “current” pilots were allowed to fly. This collection of ethical lapses contributed to the accident.

[Leadership](#)

[Case Home](#)

[Home](#)

Case Study
“Air Show”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Leadership
Air Show – Lessons Learned



Despite the collection of ethical lapses, the accident could have been avoided if the copilot had spoken to the pilot about his concerns. Officers have an ethical duty to give honest appraisals to seniors and tell them when they believe a mistake is going to be made. While the copilot would not be lying by choosing to remain silent, he would be committing an error of omission. While knowingly writing or saying something false is wrong, withholding comment about the approach – fearing perhaps that the pilot might be offended or hurt – is also wrong and exhibits a lack of moral courage.

It is not easy to speak up to a fellow officer when he is wrong, but loyalty sometimes demands it. The service expects it.

Leadership

Case Home

Home

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Leadership

Ecstasy



Ensign Pacy is ready for an evening of dancing and entertainment. It has been a hard week, and he and his buddies have been looking forward to this day for some time. Pacy is riding along with two other ensigns, Franz and Sanders, in Ensign Dover's car. Pacy, rifling through his wallet, realizes he doesn't have cash for the club's cover charge. Not wanting to hit up his friends for money, he asks Dover to pull over at an ATM. Dover readily agrees and stops at the next convenience store. Pacy races to the machine, withdraws cash, and returns. He's relieved to have the cash, in case he needs to buy a drink for a lady. As he opens the door to the back seat, he sees two of his traveling companions scooping up small capsules and placing them in a zip-lock bag. Dover, still at the wheel, throws a glance over his shoulder, and asks, "Got 'em all?" The others indicate they do. "Good! Now let's each take our proper dosage," Dover intones as if he were a doctor. The others chuckle and take a pill. Sanders offers one to Pacy, who is taken aback. He is so surprised that he feels frozen in place. He looks at the small capsule on Sanders's extended hand. "It's like an egg in a nest," he thinks and wonders where that came from. Time slows to a crawl.

Case Study
“Ecstasy”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Leadership

Ecstasy – Considerations & Questions



Should Pacy take the pill or refuse? Should he go to the club or return to base? Should he try to set an example? If so, by doing what?

Pacy realizes, as he gets over the shock, that he has some decisions to make. His friends are doing something illegal. As an officer, he is bound to report them. Would it be morally right to do so? Doesn't loyalty require something else?

Should Pacy leave Dover, Franz, and Sanders to their own devices? Or should he go to the club, babysit, and make sure they make it back to base safely?

What would the response be if he turned in his friends? He ponders the atmosphere in the wardroom. What would that be like?

Leadership

Case Home

Home

Case Study
“Ecstasy”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Leadership
Ecstasy – Considerations & Questions



Should a junior officer always turn in fellow officers who commit illegal acts?

When it comes to friends in the wardroom, should one adopt the “what happens in Vegas stays in Vegas” attitude?

In what sorts of circumstances do you think you would know both that you should take steps that will end an officer’s career, and that you would nevertheless refrain? Can you morally justify that sort of inaction?

Can Pacy meet his obligations to the service while sparing his friends the legal ramifications of their acts?

What impact will Pacy’s report have on the wardroom? Should he consider this when he is deciding what to do?

Leadership

Case Home

Home

Case Study
“Ecstasy”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Leadership
Ecstasy – What Happened?



Pacy told the others he had decided not to go out that evening after all. He spent a sleepless night pondering his next move. The next day, Pacy consulted Lieutenant Graden, a more senior junior officer, about the incident. Graden reported it up the chain of command. The problem was taken out of Pacy’s hands, and an investigation resulted.

The careers of all three ecstasy-using junior officers were over. They received Other Than Honorable discharges. For months afterward, the wardroom was in an uproar. Some officers felt Pacy had betrayed his friends’ trust. Others were outraged that officers had used illegal drugs. Pacy faced no legal ramifications. He was saddened by the loss of his friends. He also lost pride in his unit. By their actions, a significant number of officers showed they did not approve of what Pacy had done.

Leadership

Case Home

Home

Case Study
“Ecstasy”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Leadership *Ecstasy – Lessons Learned*



Doing the right thing will not always be easy or pleasant. But our country expects its officer corps to always do the right thing. Reasonable officers may disagree over an appropriate course of action, but in swearing allegiance to the Constitution, they make a vow to uphold the laws of the nation. They swear this above self and friends.

True friends will not break laws and expect companions to overlook their actions. Friends would have never put Pacy in the position of having to make this difficult, wrenching decision. They betrayed him. The three tried to take advantage of Pacy, assuming he would go along or say nothing. They showed by their actions that they believed he was not a true officer. They expected him to see their drug use as no threat to others in the service. But drug use is not victimless and causes deaths in the military.

Professionalism binds officers together. Without it, officers merely hold down jobs. Illegal actions by a commissioned officer at any level are intolerable. Citizens trust in the efficiency and morality of the military and its obedience to existing laws and regulations. Violations of that trust are both hypocritical and unprofessional.

[Leadership](#)

[Case Home](#)

[Home](#)



[Message from
VADM Stockdale](#)

[Facilitator
Guide](#)

[Submit a
Case](#)

[Feedback and
Comments](#)

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer



[Need to Know](#)

[Drinking Contest](#)

[Drug Test](#)

[Transportation](#)

Case Studies in Responsibility

[Case Home](#)

[Home](#)

Facilitator Guide

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Responsibility *Need to Know*



Lieutenant (junior grade) Schultz is making the social rounds at an evening party in the Officer's Club. He wants to interact with his peers and be on good terms with the senior officers on base. Relatively new to the command, he has formed good working relationships. Events like parties allow him to cement relations on a more personal and friendly basis. As he is making his rounds, he spies a fellow junior grade lieutenant in conversation with the personnel officer of the unit, Lieutenant McCullough, and several other lieutenants of varying grades. Deeply involved in the conversation, they appear to be enjoying themselves. Schultz moves toward the group, waiting for the others to notice him. As he listens, he realizes that Lieutenant McCullough is regaling them with private information about a person in the command. Schultz is convinced that information like this should be shared only on a need-to-know basis, certainly not at a party for laughs. Just as he starts to move away, the group greets him with the usual pleasantries and quips. He reciprocates and joins the conversation which, fortunately, quickly veers to a topic of no controversy.

Responsibility

Case Home

Home

Facilitator Guide

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Responsibility *Need to Know*



Schultz feels conflicting impulses. Part of him wants to confront McCullough, but another part doesn't want to stir the pot or ruin the party's atmosphere. In the end, he says nothing and continues his rounds. Schultz feels a nagging guilt for not having spoken up. He is distracted all night, despite his best efforts to leave the incident behind and enjoy himself.

He leaves the party wondering if he should do something the next day or just forget what he heard. He spends the night thinking about all his options and examining the possible consequences they carry with them. By morning, he has made a decision.

What is it?

Responsibility

Case Home

Home

Case Study
“Need to Know”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Responsibility *Need to Know – Considerations &* *Questions: Moral Awareness*



Have you been in situations similar to Schultz’s? Did you experience a similar distraction, and did this make it more or less difficult for you to gauge your responsibilities appropriately?

Who do you think Schultz thinks of first as he realizes what is going on? Whose welfare first pops into his mind? Who or what else is affected? Which of these is more important? For what is he most responsible?

What effect does the fact that he is surrounded by peers (some of whom are senior) have upon his ability to judge the severity of McCullough’s moral lapse?

How does the passage of time affect the importance he attaches to each person or factor as he mulls his options?

How do you believe Schultz feels about McCullough and the other lieutenants?

Responsibility

Case Home

Home

Case Study
“Need to Know”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Responsibility *Need to Know – Considerations &* *Questions: Moral Judgment*



All things considered, should Schultz report the incident up the chain, personally confront McCullough, or let it go, chalking it up as a one-time slip?

Assuming that someone else present probably will report McCullough, is Schultz morally responsible if he leaves well enough alone?

Who or what stands to receive the greatest harm if Schultz does not report up the chain of command? If he does report?

While he is required by oath to report up the chain, is it morally right, considering the effect on McCullough?

What impact will a report have on Schultz’s relations with other officers? Should he consider this when he is deciding what to do? What sort of weight is this factor likely to have? What weight *should* it have?

Responsibility

Case Home

Home

Case Study
“Need to Know”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Responsibility
Need to Know – Considerations &
Questions: Moral Intention



Schultz has some powerful inhibitions about reporting the incident up the chain of command. What are they?

Have you encountered situations where a person has publically violated another’s confidentiality or trust with information, and you chose not to call him/her on it or report it? Why did you do so?

Have you encountered situations like this and chosen to confront the person or report? Why and how did you do so?

Is there any way for Schultz to protect his own career prospects or popularity while at the same time carrying out his responsibility to report McCullough up the chain?

Would Schultz be more or less prone to report up the chain if McCullough was an enlisted man, perhaps a petty officer?

Responsibility

Case Home

Home

Case Study
“Need to Know”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Responsibility
Need to Know – What Happened?



Lt. Schultz knew McCullough was out of line. He decided that doing nothing would amount to condoning the behavior. He was aware that morale, cohesion, and performance could all be greatly affected if people knew that personal information was leaking out at parties. He decided he had to report the incident to the CO but felt very uncomfortable when he did.

The CO investigated privately. When he discovered the accusation was true, he relieved McCullough and made appropriate career-ending remarks in his fitness report.

While the CO praised Schultz for his actions, in the immediate aftermath, Schultz himself didn't feel good about them. In time, however, he came to accept that he had done the right thing, even though it was a painful experience for him and ended another man's career.

Responsibility

Case Home

Home

Case Study
“Need to Know”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Responsibility
Need to Know – Lessons Learned



The concept “need to know” applies to all information that officers hold. What you need to know can only be divulged to others who also have a need to know, based on their positions or job requirements. This includes security information. You cannot share such information with others merely because they have clearance. They must have a genuine need for the information to help perform their duties.

In our work, we all learn things of personal nature about others. Trust implies that what we learn, if it has no bearing on the person’s job, should not be shared with others. The exceptions are unusual circumstances such as criminal behavior or self-destructive behavior. Also, if we believe what we have learned will affect the person’s performance, we have a military obligation to relay that information up the chain of command, so senior officers can determine appropriate action. As officers, most assignments and service lives are positive. There will be times, however, when the hard right decision is the only choice to make, versus the easy wrong decision of doing nothing. If you want to be a professional military officer, you must act like one, assuming all the responsibilities expected of a commissioned officer.

[Responsibility](#)

[Case Home](#)

[Home](#)

Facilitator Guide

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Responsibility *Drug Test*



Petty Officer Edwards just made a painful confession to me. I am his division officer aboard a nuclear submarine. Per normal procedure, a random unit sweep urinalysis was run this week. Two days after specimens were taken, Edwards, an E-5 nuclear tech and good solid performer, said he had to tell me something. He was very agitated. I had him sit down, gave him some water, and told him to take a breath. “Any time you’re ready, Edwards, tell me what you have. Don’t rush.” He took a couple of deep breaths and confided about some serious family problems and how much stress they had created. He admitted to doing something “really stupid” recently. He had tried cocaine for what he assured me was his first and only time when he was last on shore leave. He was very regretful, and on the verge of tears more than once as he unloaded what was obviously a heavy burden of guilt. Now, as it happened, I had already received and reviewed the results of the urinalysis. Edwards came out clean. He registered negative for all known recreational drugs, including cocaine. I dismissed Edwards and promised to inform him of my decision. I find myself almost wishing he hadn’t brought this up. He’s honest, I have to give him that. But what should I do?

Responsibility

Case Home

Home

Case Study
“Drug Test”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Responsibility *Drug Test – Considerations and* *Questions*



How might my admiration for Edwards’s honesty color my moral perception here as to my primary responsibility? In what direction might it lead my decision?

Should sympathy play a role in my decision in this case, or do I need to do my sworn duty?

Who or what stands to benefit if I pass on all the information I have? Who or what will be harmed? What sorts of harms and benefits are entailed?

How will the service be benefitted if Edwards is retained? What risks lay that way?

What risks does the service bear if Edwards is not retained? What benefits lay that way?

Would I feel any differently if Edwards was a fellow officer?

I believe Edwards is honest, with no intention of doing drugs again. Shouldn’t I then act as if this whole affair didn’t happen?

Responsibility

Case Home

Home

Case Study
“Drug Test”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Responsibility
Drug Test – What Happened?



**The division officer counseled Edwards, but did not report the incident.
Edwards has performed well since, without any reported drug problems.**

Responsibility

Case Home

Home

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Responsibility *Drug Test – Lessons Learned*



Some kind of action was required. Since there was no physical evidence of drug use, and the Petty Officer had volunteered the information before being advised of his rights, perhaps counseling was appropriate, along with documentation and removal from the Personal Reliability Program.

However, the division officer should have reported Edwards for further investigation. It might have determined he was lying. It might have determined this wasn't his first time using cocaine. Even a one-time user has shown a worrisome vulnerability and is perhaps a disaster waiting to happen. If the division officer had reported Edwards, he could have also made it a point to testify on his behalf. Edwards was a good performer, and the division officer recognized we all make mistakes.

However, Navy policy is zero tolerance for drug use. This is a rule, and officers swear to support all Navy rules. By not doing so in this case, the division officer in effect put his crew at unnecessary risk, because Edwards had demonstrated weakness under stress. No matter what kind of sailor he was or how scared he was at the time, his behavior cannot in good conscience be tolerated.

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Responsibility *Drinking Contest*



Lieutenant (JG) Amundsen has so far enjoyed some hard-won liberty. He and two fellow junior officers, Martinez and Landry, attended their first NFL game in years. Sitting in September sun for three hours took its toll, however. The three did not want to pay exorbitant prices for drinks at the stadium, so they waited. By the end of the game, they were parched. They found a bar near the stadium with an interesting name: Commodore Wayne's Mess. They went in for a round of ice-cold beers before heading back to base. As their eyes adjusted from the bright sunshine to the dim light inside, they crossed to a vacant table. The sports bar was nearly full. Martinez was the first to notice that five tables in their area, near a big screen television, were engaged in a drinking game involving a nationally televised football game. "What are the rules?" he wondered. He nudged Amundsen, who was nearest one of the tables, "Hey, Scott, ask 'em what gives." The answer came from a loud and large man in a jersey one or two sizes too small: "It's a shot contest, man. Whenever the Lions go three and out, you gotta take a shot!" Amundsen, Martinez, and Landry surmised that the Lions had gone three and out quite a few times, and it was only nearing the end of the first half.

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Responsibility *Drinking Contest*



“Man, you think maybe you should invoke the mercy rule and quit now?” Amundsen asked the man. “Naw!” he answered. “We can handle it, big fellah. Thanks for the concern though.” He patted Scott on the head.

Amundsen let it go and turned back to his table. “Boy, I’d hate to be the proprietor of this fine establishment,” he quipped. “Imagine these guys on the road.” Landry nodded. As if on cue, Martinez nudged Amundsen in the ribs a little too enthusiastically, “Hey, check out who’s behind the bar!” Looking, Scott understood the enthusiasm of the jab and the bar’s moniker. Behind the bar were three senior officers from the base, including Commander Wayne Hermann. The boisterous neighboring table ordered another round of shots. Amundsen watched the waitress go to the bar. Hermann filled the order, she delivered, and the “contestants” readied themselves for the second half of the Lions game.

Amundsen, Landry, and Martinez felt decidedly uncomfortable now. They decided to finish their beers and leave. Just as they stood to go, Hermann spotted them. He waved and approached, greeting them heartily.

Case Study
“Drinking Contest”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Responsibility *Drinking Contest – Considerations &* *Questions*



Do Amundsen, Landry, and Martinez have any good reason for discomfort?

Just what should they assume, from the evidence they have, about the role of the three senior officers at “Commodore Wayne’s Mess”?

What, if anything, should the three say to Hermann? Is it more appropriate to avoid a confrontation and report up the chain?

What might happen if they say nothing? What might happen if they point out a drinking game is going on?

Should these junior officers consider their careers when deciding what to do?

Would they feel more inclined to say something or report up the chain if Hermann and the others were enlisted men?

Should the juniors assume that these seniors have clearance to operate a business off base? If so, is it really the juniors’ responsibility to point out the drinking game?

Responsibility

Case Home

Home

Case Study
“Drinking Contest”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Responsibility

Drinking Contest – What Happened?



The three decided to say nothing, but the chain of command found out about the bar anyway. The officers hadn't asked permission from their command to operate the bar during their off-duty hours. They were censured for this. They were also admonished for poor judgment in allowing the drinking contest.

Responsibility

Case Home

Home

Case Study
“Drinking Contest”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Responsibility *Drinking Contest – Lessons Learned*



It is the law in many states that if a customer becomes legally intoxicated, torts or crimes committed by that person may be traceable to the operator of the establishment that served the liquor that caused the person’s blood alcohol level to rise above the legal limit. Operators of bars can be held liable for any damages resulting from the actions of the inebriated customer. To address this concern, establishments often have breath alcohol analyzers available so customers can monitor their alcohol ingestion.

Alcohol problems are a great concern to the military, as they are to the civilian world. As an officer you are, in addition to your specialty, a public affairs officer representing your branch of the service. The civilian community judges the entire military by your appearance and conduct. Acceptance of a commission is at least a tacit acceptance of this position as a role model. You have a responsibility to obey the laws of the state and nation. You have a responsibility to see that others in the service do so as well, even those senior to you.

It is important to note that off-duty work should only be done after consulting the base JAG officer and getting your commanding officer’s approval.

[Responsibility](#)

[Case Home](#)

[Home](#)

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Responsibility Transportation



Commander Jay is a senior officer on my base. He stands out because he is very concerned with the welfare of his juniors and has strong friendly relations with our surrounding town. Morale is extremely high. Juniors enthusiastically take on duties primarily to satisfy Jay. Also, townsfolk show extraordinary hospitality for visiting families. One of the base's dear friends, Norm Belknap, has entertained Jay and junior officers at his home on many occasions – Christmas parties, Fourth of July cookouts, etc.

I am Lieutenant Marcus Jones. I've been on base for over a year now. As Jay's right-hand man, I take care of day-to-day tasks. Jay is an extraordinarily kind human being. My personal experience with him has taught me a lot about the role of genuine care in leadership. His leadership style may not be common, but it is very effective and inspiring.

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Responsibility *Transportation*



Today Mr. Belknap came into the office and presented me with a problem. He has an arthritic hip and lives alone. He needed to move some furniture. He asked for able bodies and a truck, apologizing while doing so. Jay would not hear of an apology.

Jay asked me to check on the status of trucks for the next day. I found there would be more than enough trucks to cover any contingency.

An hour later, three ensigns came to Jay. They had been singled out for praise earlier in the week. Commander Jay promised them some liberty for a job well done. “All you have to do is give me a time, and it’s yours,” he had promised.

The ensigns wanted to spend a night out, but needed a vehicle. After they left, he asked me to check van availability for the next evening. He then disappeared into his office and came out a few minutes later. “I’ve got the perfect solution, Marcus. I’ll ask the ensigns to use a truck, help Norm out, and then they can have a van that night.”

I know that we are talking government property here, but should I make an issue of all this?

Case Study
“Transportation”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Responsibility *Transportation – Considerations &* *Questions*



Is there any harm in lending out trucks and personnel to friendly civilians?

Would the ensigns take on any risk by using the van?

Can the ensigns say ‘no,’ since the request came from a commander?

Could there be repercussions for Marcus if he questions the plan?

How might the town respond if Norm reports he couldn’t get help?

What are regulations concerning use of motor pool vehicles?

Why is the military so cautious about accepting gifts and services from civilian sources? Is there too much caution? Why or why not?

Is there some other way to satisfy Mr. Belknap’s and the ensigns’ requests?

What weighs the most here: the importance of morale and positive civilian military relations, or the responsibility to avoid even the appearance of impropriety?

[Responsibility](#)

[Case Home](#)

[Home](#)

Case Study
“Transportation”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Responsibility
Transportation – What Happened?



Commander Jay asked the juniors to help with the move. They were happy to do so because they felt he had treated them well. They took the truck to make the move and later used a van for their night out.

Unfortunately, someone at the motor pool placed a hotline complaint, feeling it was inappropriate for officers to use a van for their own entertainment.

There was an investigation. The final finding was that it was illegal for the juniors and the senior to use government property in this way. Commander Jay received a letter of reprimand and was fined. The junior officers received letters of caution.

[Responsibility](#)

[Case Home](#)

[Home](#)

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Responsibility *Transportation – Lessons Learned*



In this case, Commander Jay made three mistakes: (1) he should not have arranged government transportation for a civilian, (2) he should not have arranged the van for the junior officers’ personal use, and (3) he should not have asked the juniors to help the civilian. His request may have seemed more like a demand, due to his position. Additionally, his actions help to weaken or strengthen the values of the juniors, and their faith and confidence in the system, its regulations, and their seniors.

The juniors were responsible for misuse of a government van. They, and Jay, can reasonably be expected to know that government property cannot be used for private purposes.

Civilians approach the armed forces for help in everything from flood relief to collecting for Toys for Tots. Rules and regulations in this area are ever-changing. Before taking part in a non-traditional operation, check with your base legal officer. If you are still not sure something is authorized, ask permission from higher headquarters. Avoid even the appearance of wrongdoing.



[Message from
VADM Stockdale](#)

[Facilitator
Guide](#)

[Submit a
Case](#)

[Feedback and
Comments](#)

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

[Rifle Company](#)

[A Friend](#)

[The Hearing](#)

[Candidates](#)

Case Studies in Loyalty

[Case Home](#)

[Home](#)



Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Loyalty Rifle Company



Newly promoted Marine First Lieutenant Riley had orders to deploy aboard ship with Alpha company, an infantry unit, along with a small group of officers who had been training together for six months. Being the new man, the other officers watched him closely at first.

Over time, Riley formed the opinion that the company XO, First Lieutenant Belloc, lacked confidence in his own leadership abilities and tended to compensate for this by doing too much to assure he was liked by peers and subordinates. As a way to cope with the common gripes and complaints of Marines, something he seemed unprepared for, he sometimes badmouthed the CO. Riley wasn't sure if the XO knew what effect this had.

The first platoon commander in Alpha company was Second Lieutenant Jordan. He was a picture-perfect Marine. Athletic and imposing, he had an impressive presence and bearing. He made a good first impression, but as Riley and others realized, his fundamental professional knowledge was weak at best. One thing he did have was a knack for finding weaknesses in others that he could exploit.

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Loyalty Rifle Company



He discovered the XO's weakness and latched on to it. By manipulating Belloc, he was able to get several things that suited him.

Jordan was also a braggart. He regularly regaled the team with tales of what he called "college pranks." Some of these acts were criminal. Riley began to detest Jordan and could tell that other officers felt a similar repugnance. Yet another group were Jordan's eager audience. A third group simply did not want to take sides, nor did they want to hear anything that would force them to take action. They steered clear of Jordan. Riley could see that the entire group of junior officers had become fractured and cliquish. He wondered if the CO knew. He wondered if he should personally take steps to make sure he did.

His agitation only increased. One evening, Jordan confided to a group that he sorted through the CO's personal files and belongings when he stood duty in the garrison. Saying he needed to see what the CO was "up to," he bragged that he'd found the notebook the CO used to track subordinate performance. He claimed to know what each officer's fitness reports would contain.

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Loyalty Rifle Company



This was too much for one of the other officers, Second Lieutenant Dupree, who voiced his disapproval. Jordan unfurled his considerable frame and laid into Dupree, insulting him and repeatedly jabbing a finger into his chest. No one else spoke up. Riley was appalled, unsure of the best action to take. He decided to wait a while longer while he sorted things out. No one reported the incident to the XO/CO.

Jordan then tried to wreck Dupree's reputation and credibility by making snide remarks at what he believed were opportune times. Sometimes Dupree was present, others he was not.

Riley watched what was happening to Dupree. Some officers came to Dupree's defense, while others began avoiding him. Riley continued to agonize, cursing himself for inaction.

If you were Riley, what would you do?

Case Study
“Rifle Company”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Loyalty *Rifle Company – Considerations &* *Questions*



What emotions is Riley grappling with?

At what point is Riley no longer the new officer?

At what point do you think Riley should have taken action regarding Jordan?

What reasons do you think Riley had for delaying action?

What effects does Jordan’s personality have upon unit cohesion?

When does a “loose cannon” go over the line in his behavior?

Where should you draw the line in deciding when to abandon camaraderie for the greater loyalty to the unit? How would you make that decision?

Should Riley attempt to resolve this with other junior officers before taking the matter up the chain?

Loyalty

Case Home

Home

Case Study
“Rifle Company”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Loyalty *Rifle Company – What Happened?*



First Lieutenant Riley became convinced Jordan was endangering unit integrity, morale, and functioning. With that in mind, Riley went to the CO. The CO was shocked by Riley’s story and called in his officers for personal interviews.

Battle lines were drawn between officers that supported Jordan, those that attempted to distance themselves, and those that corroborated Riley’s accusations.

The CO then called all the officers into the stateroom. Accusations were made, some officers nearly came to blows, and one even wept, realizing the severity and ramifications of this behavior.

Riley’s delay carried painful consequences. Some officers chose not to be in the same room with others for the rest of the deployment. Fearing Jordan’s retribution, other officers locked up their belongings. The news spread to Marines and Naval personnel on other ships. The CO suffered as a result of the publicity. Officers requested transfers to finish out their deployments. Suspicion permeated the group. Jordan was eventually discharged from active duty.

Loyalty

Case Home

Home

Case Study
“Rifle Company”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Loyalty

Rifle Company – Lessons Learned



Perhaps one reason Riley was reluctant to say anything about Jordan is this: When you criticize anyone, you risk having your own faults aired. The lesson here is that officers must police their own ranks. Simply because one is not perfect does not mean one does not have a duty, and a right, to police peers and subordinates. One person’s small lapses or imperfections do not equal another’s criminal behavior. Duty demands you risk embarrassment to prevent or forestall criminality or bad behavior. Riley might have considered leading a coalition of officers from the two groups who found Jordan’s behavior unacceptable, and approaching Jordan with their demands.

Young officers often have an unwritten code of mutual protection, by which they “stick together.” In the Marine Corps, it’s called the “Lieutenants’ Protective Association” (LPA). It is a way for young, inexperienced officers to work together to help fellow officers. It adds to morale, esprit de corps, and camaraderie. This kind of code should never be used to hide or condone poor judgment, performance, or behavior. Such action makes all parties as guilty as the actual offender. People may cover for friends out of loyalty. But no friendship or loyalty outweighs a person’s behavior that endangers the unit.

Loyalty

Case Home

Home

Facilitator Guide

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Loyalty *A Friend*



The rule affectionately known as “bottle to brief” requires that any pilot flying must not drink within 14 hours prior and must spend 2 of those hours in pre-launch briefings. The rule is common knowledge, and there is no reasonable way a pilot can claim he’s never heard of it.

Lt. Bob Hagen, a helo pilot, was vividly reminded of that rule when he entered the wardroom one morning. He saw his close friend Lt. Brian Gobelevski, an F-18 pilot on their carrier. “Gobbler! What’s up?” Gobelevski put down his coffee, “Haagen Dazs! Good to see you survived the party, with all that drinking you did.” This was a ritualistic piece of banter between the two. Neither in fact drank much at all. On their wildest nights, “Gobbler” and “Haagen Dazs” might pitch back two beers. Usually they would drink one.

The night before, there had been a party for the ship’s XO, who was transferring to shore duty within the week. The party was restrained, and Hagen had arrived somewhat late. He thought back on the evening. “Gobbler, you eat too much for a pilot. When exactly did you loosen your grip on the barbeque? Did anyone else get any?” Brian had made sure he was next to the food table most of the evening.

Loyalty

Case Home

Home

Facilitator Guide

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Loyalty *A Friend*



Hagen spent most of the party circulating and had not really kept close tabs on Gobelevski. Hagen wanted to mingle, so he had. However, it seemed that Gobbler had wanted to eat. Drink beer and eat. Especially eat. Gobbler had earned his nickname only partially because of alliteration.

The party dispersed around 2100, and Haagen went to his room for sleep. When he woke, he had morning rounds to make, finished them, and was now looking at 1100 for some strong coffee before conducting a meeting in 10 minutes. Another routine day on a Navy ship. Hagen liked routine. He retrieved a stout coffee and sat. “So, what’s on the agenda today for you Brian?” “My day’s half done already, Dazs. I’ve been up since 0400.” “Yikes. What for?” “Flight exercise this morning.” “A flight exercise?” “Yup.” Hagen put his coffee on the table. “*After* the party?” he asked. “Uh huh.” “Man, Brian...” Brian looked bemused “What?” He downed the rest of his coffee, “Look Gobs. I have to go...got the morning division meeting to run. I’ll catch you later, OK?” “Yup.”

Loyalty

Case Home

Home

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Loyalty *A Friend*



Hagen did run the meeting, but was mentally detached from it. His mind was racing. He felt alternating anger and helplessness. He knew Gobbler was aware of “bottle to brief.” He also knew that Gobbler ate a tremendous amount. Even if he drank his usual maximum of two beers, he would have felt little or no effect. He sure didn’t show any signs of being intoxicated when Bob had looked his way, nor when the party broke up. Wasn’t the rule really created to prevent *abusive* drinking? Doesn’t alcohol metabolize in a couple of hours anyway? Hagen knew he was legally obligated to report Gobs. He knew that “bottle to brief” was the child of hard experience and lost lives. He knew he had to think of others on board beside Gobbler and himself. Other squadron mates had been at the party. Shouldn’t they have known who was flying? If there was an exercise, why have the party the previous night? Wasn’t that the CO’s problem?

These thoughts raced through his head, along with his options. He figured he could ignore the whole thing, report Gobelevsky, or take care of it personally, counseling without reporting. He was torn but knew he would want a friend to cover for him if the shoe was on the other foot.

Case Study
“A Friend”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Loyalty

A Friend – Considerations & Questions 

Which option should Bob take and why? What does loyalty demand?

What is required of Bob according to regulations?

What risks are run if Bob does not report Brian?

Suppose it isn't legally required to report. Do you think Bob should report anyway?

What does Brian's choice tell you about his character?

What is your opinion of Bob if he reports Brian? If he does not?

How might Bob and Brian's shipmates and peers view Bob if he reports?

How do you think Bob *will* decide? How do you think he *should* decide?

Loyalty

Case Home

Home

Case Study
“A Friend”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Loyalty
A Friend – What Happened?



Lieutenant Hagen decided upon the ‘compromise position’ and counseled his friend. He believed his friend had made a simple and isolated error in judgment by drinking a beer. In Hagen’s estimation, one mistake was not enough of a transgression to end a career. He rationalized not turning Brian in by assuring himself that the pilot had learned his lesson and would not repeat the mistake.

Loyalty

Case Home

Home

Case Study
“A Friend”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Loyalty *A Friend – Lessons Learned*



In this case, a serious breach of rules occurred. A severe moral burden is on the pilot who witnessed the event. His duty to his friend is trumped by the duty he took with his military oath. He swore to uphold the rules, rules that are designed to ensure safety and well-being of pilots and crew. Ending someone’s career is extremely difficult, but attending that person’s or another’s funeral because one failed to stop an illegal and dangerous activity would be worse. An officer is honor-bound to uphold a standard that applies regardless of time, place, or persons involved.

Friendship clearly is a great human good, yet loyalty to friends at the expense of loyalty to the Constitution, the code of military conduct, and the safety of others is not in keeping with the standards of a military officer.

Officers cannot break rules at their own discretion. If an officer breaks or ignores a rule, that officer sets precedent for others to follow their consciences as well, leading to a disruption of good order. Military rules and regulations are designed for effective operation of an organization that must act precisely, swiftly, and competently. While the rules are strict, they do allow for some flexibility. One can counsel minor infractions, but they still must be reported.

Loyalty

Case Home

Home

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Loyalty *The Hearing*



Things had finally come to a head. For months, the XO and the CO had clashed. The situation had moved beyond their inability to see eye to eye. As far as Lieutenant Saunders could tell, Lieutenant Commander Hobson was a conscientious XO, never undertaking things lightly. In fact, as he stood there in her quarters, he seemed visibly distressed at what he, no doubt, felt compelled to do. Saunders had heard Hobson was asking various officers and senior enlisted to make statements for an Article 38 grievance hearing concerning the CO. The CO himself, Captain Elder, had announced the fact the night before in a hastily convened meeting of his other officers. He had pointedly asked for loyalty. Alternating between vulnerability and veiled threat, he ended the meeting by reminding everyone that he would eventually find out who testified against him.

Even though he was going to great lengths to make the requests privately, so none felt unduly vulnerable, the fact that Hobson was making the rounds today did leak out. The Captain did not ask any officers if they had been approached. Business went on as usual. It was now evening. Saunders had been in her quarters, watching Indiana Jones on her laptop, hoping she wouldn't be tapped, when the knock came.

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Loyalty *The Hearing*



“The charge concerns Captain Elder’s treatment of an enlisted man,” Hobson told Saunders, “and we need your testimony as to the general command climate and attitude of the CO.” Saunders thought that Elder was by far the worst CO she had served under. His negative, unfriendly, and condescending treatment of unit members was well known and the cause of low morale. Yet, she had to admit he did accomplish missions, so there was no issue of competence.

“I know I don’t have to testify Lieutenant Commander...,” she paused collecting her thoughts. “That’s true, I don’t want to pressure you,” Hobson interjected. “Lieutenant Commander, I’m just going to have to think about this, OK?” She paused again and gathered herself, “I request that you give me the night.” “Certainly. You have the night. Look, if you don’t want to testify, there is no need to let me know. I’ll take a no-contact as a ‘no,’ pure and simple. I understand your position, being a JO and only here for six months.” He moved to the door. “I do appreciate your hearing me out and considering it though, Lieutenant Saunders. I appreciate that very much.” “Thank you sir.” She took Hobson’s hand, gave it a firm shake, and he excused himself.

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Loyalty *The Hearing*



Saunders closed the door and stood leaning against the cold metal. She now knew how it must feel to be crossing that fragile and precarious suspension bridge in the Indiana Jones movie. Anxiety about her career welled up, and then guilt for thinking of herself first. Surely there were other people taking risks, other careers on the line, even the CO's. She crossed to the bed in her quarters and plopped angrily down.

“How can the XO be *so sure* he needs to do this?” she mumbled to herself.

She clicked the mouse pad and continued to watch “Indie” for what must have been the tenth time in her life, caught in the middle of that suspension bridge. She knew the ending of the story. Too bad she couldn't say the same for herself.

“How can *I* be so sure Hobson *doesn't* need to do this?” she found herself answering.

She continued to watch the movie.

Case Study
“The Hearing”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Loyalty *The Hearing - Considerations &* *Questions: Moral Awareness*



Have you been asked to testify against a superior? What were the feelings you had, and what were the main reasons for those feelings?

Is the lieutenant commander being disloyal? Why or why not?

What reasons might Saunders have for feeling guilty?

Is Saunders justified in her spell of anger toward Hobson? Is she angry at the CO? Should she be?

What obligations does Saunders have according to the UCMJ? According to her commissioning oath?

What are possible ship-wide consequences of choosing not to testify?

What might happen aboard ship if Saunders does testify?

Would Saunders be able to make a good decision if she didn't have time to think it over? Was Hobson correct in giving her time?

Loyalty

Case Home

Home

Case Study
“The Hearing”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Loyalty
The Hearing-Considerations &
Questions: Moral Judgment



What are Saunders’ options here?

If Saunders chooses to testify, what does this entail for the XO? If she refuses, how might this affect him?

What are some possible long-term consequences for the Navy if the CO retains his position due to insufficient testimony?

What effects, if any, will Saunders’ choice have on unit morale?

What command climate is created if people do honestly testify?

What command climate is created if people do not testify?

Loyalty

Case Home

Home

Case Study
“The Hearing”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Loyalty *The Hearing - Considerations &* *Questions: Moral Intention*



If Saunders initially chooses to testify that night, what forces might cause her to fail to follow through and call Hobson the next morning?

What do you think Saunders believes her fellow junior grade officers would do in her shoes?

What are some possible positive reactions Saunders may receive from those who learn she has testified? Are these enough to outweigh the possible negative reactions she would receive from the CO?

How does the possibility of being labeled disloyal color her intention to act?

How does the possibility of being labeled courageous color her intention to act?

Which option is more likely to create an unfavorable work environment?

Loyalty

Case Home

Home

Case Study
“The Hearing”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Loyalty
The Hearing - What Happened?



Lieutenant Saunders did indeed choose to testify. After review of the preliminary statements, it was determined there was adequate grounds for an investigation of the XO’s allegations. The CO was eventually relieved of command. Saunders was transferred within a few months to another unit. She received a commendatory fitness report and was promoted to Lieutenant Commander.

Loyalty

Case Home

Home

Case Study
“The Hearing”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Loyalty

The Hearing – Lessons Learned



Saunders faced a classic dilemma: whether to be loyal to the CO for the greater good of the unit, or testify. Based on her best efforts at an honest appraisal of the situation, she decided to support the XO. She recognized the XO was following the morally correct course of action on the unit’s behalf, and doing so at risk of his career.

She decided that failing to support his efforts would be tantamount to endorsing the CO’s behavior. She would be taking an easy and irresponsible approach on a important leadership issue. It would set a bad precedent for her own future choices and a bad example for peers. She wanted to take the honorable course, because she did not want to be plagued by second thoughts in the future when similar circumstances arose.

If she supported the XO’s allegations and received an unjust fitness report as a result, she knew she had redress. Saunders could petition the Board of Correction of Naval Records to have the inaccurate report removed. She knew though, that this would be an uphill battle.

Loyalty

Case Home

Home

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Loyalty Candidates



“One complaint is capable of causing so much trouble. One Marine charges the battalion of intentionally passing him up for a select program because of his race, and the might of the division inspector is brought to bear. What you have seen and lived through these last months, ladies and gentleman, is what we have to look forward to if we don’t take steps to deal with it.”

The speaker was our battalion commander. Lieutenant Colonel Houston had called us together for a meeting about upcoming candidate selections. Last year around this same time, we had made selections for various programs, and the accusation Colonel Houston mentioned came shortly after selections were announced. As a result, a months-long investigation followed. It had just ended, but we would not hear findings until later. The process was harrowing for us all. We had all been extensively interviewed and devoted considerable time to supplying the documents demanded by the inspector.

“Proving a negative,” one chimed. Someone else added, “Star chamber,” while another contributed: “Guilty until proven innocent.”

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Loyalty Candidates



“I have faith that we will come out unscathed. But we do have the issue of our upcoming selections to consider. You have the applicants list. Off the record, folks, should we give special consideration to minority applicants? We don’t need a repeat of all this.”

“With all due respect, sir, that *might* cover our butts, but it undermines the whole purpose of program selection. From day one, we are told the Marine Corps is a meritocracy. If you have ability, you’ll rise. And now you’re telling us to cast that aside? Marines can’t do that...sir.” Major Sommers was usually quiet at meetings. Being the XO, other officers assumed he preferred to give the CO candid opinions privately. The fact that he was first to speak, and so bluntly, struck the others. His thoughts echoed their own.

Houston prized honest discussion in the group. It tended to improve the final product, be it an operation, procedure, or disciplinary actions. He particularly valued Sergeant Major Wilkinson’s opinion. He had relied on Wilkinson when he came to the command two years ago. His read of enlisted personnel was uncanny. He now turned to the Sergeant Major. “Wilkinson. Your take.”

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Loyalty Candidates



“Colonel,” he said, “I have to concur. I didn’t advance, and would not have accepted advancement, on the basis of a quota system. That’s no way to run a battalion, that’s no way to run the Marines. We are in a life or death business. We can’t sacrifice lives for political correctness.” Wilkinson was black. He didn’t have to state this. “Diversity is a fine thing, but we have to put the best people in the programs. If they are all blue, they are all blue.”

“Band of Blues Brothers.” someone quipped. There was laughter.

Colonel Houston now asked me for my opinion. “Lieutenant Sandler?”

“Sir. I might be the best suited for some hazardous duty, but because I’m female, it might be tempting, or it might appeal to some unacknowledged sense of chivalry, to give someone else that training. I’m not saying it’s a conscious thing in this day and age. We aren’t back in the seventies. But say there is training in forward support – *not combat, but support*. Won’t you be more tempted to send the man, not the woman? I mean, at some level, the thought is there. So, I’m not so sure that we shouldn’t be giving extra consideration to some people.”

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Loyalty Candidates



“I cannot agree,” the XO interjected. “This whole notion of ‘extra consideration,’ what does it mean?”

I answered, “I’m not saying we should pick a less qualified person over – ”

“But if the biases are unconscious, as you say, how are we supposed to compensate, if not by...? I mean, if they are unconscious, then maybe they are always coloring our perceptions. We think we are being entirely objective and judging on individual merit alone. But since there are these insidious unconscious biases or motivations, we must consciously compensate in ways that end up downplaying the qualifications of some and overplaying those of others. End result, we increase the likelihood of selecting less qualified people, not those with merit.”

“And that is precisely what the Colonel is flirting with,” Sergeant Major Wilkinson added. There was an exhausted silence. It seemed arguments on both sides had been aired that needed examination. Lieutenant Colonel Houston thanked us for our candor and ended the meeting. He told us he would announce his decision later in the day. He liked to ruminate alone before making such decisions.

Case Study
“Candidates”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Loyalty Candidates – Considerations & Questions



Is the lieutenant colonel’s practice of holding open debate a good thing for command climate or morale?

Are there unconscious biases in judging others for things like fitness reports? If so, how should we deal with them so that fairness is served?

What long-term repercussions would giving special consideration have upon an organization’s ability to do its best job or accomplish its mission?

What societal pressures are on the military to promote minorities?

What exactly does the phrase “equal opportunity” mean in a military context?

Suppose that the press had been covering this battalion's investigation process. What do you think the CO would decide, and why?

All things considered, what should the CO decide in this case?

Loyalty

Case Home

Home

Case Study
“Candidates”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Loyalty
Candidates – What Happened?



During a follow-up meeting, all of the subordinates agreed that the CO had to screen for the best applicants and requested he do so. The CO reconsidered his initial response to the affair and decided to screen for the best qualified applicants. He felt that making a sincere effort at selecting the best Marines would be the best way to allow the organization to do its job successfully, ultimately allowing the command to achieve its mission.

Loyalty

Case Home

Home

Case Study
“Candidates”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Loyalty Candidates – Lessons Learned



The CO could have simply made his decision without holding the meeting. In that case, the subordinates could have simply defied him. But that would have destroyed the team concept of the battalion. The CO was aware of this and aware of the professionalism of his officers and senior enlisted. He was not reluctant to have a frank discussion of this sensitive issue, considering it vital to his decision making and his battalion’s morale.

There are many assignments for qualified personnel, but in those instances when the best person is required, that person should be chosen regardless of gender or ethnic background.

All commanders have a responsibility to conduct training so that all personnel have an equal opportunity to become outstanding performers, and thus make themselves truly eligible for selection to every program for which they have interest. It is also appropriate for every commander to continually review equal opportunity goals, to ensure that equal training is provided to all, and that superior performance is equally recognized, regardless of individual gender or ethnic status.

Loyalty

Case Home

Home



[Message from
VADM Stockdale](#)

[Facilitator
Guide](#)

[Submit a
Case](#)

[Feedback and
Comments](#)

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

[Zero the Truth](#)

[Lost Documents](#)

[Munitions](#)

[The Contusion](#)

Case Studies in Truth Telling

[Case Home](#)

[Home](#)

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Truth *Zero the Truth*



“This is boring. I wish we could see what this baby can do.” Lt. Gage was in the pilot’s seat, fidgeting. Next to him, Lt. Tallarico (jg) was double-checking radio beacons for the area. All was normal. “Can’t say that I disagree, sir. It’s nice to be flying for a change instead of desk jockeying. But we’ve done what we need to do. What else is there?” He continued to check his navigation and communications equipment. It was a sunny clear day, and the ocean was electric blue. “I love Pensacola,” he added. The two were on a training flight, taking the aircraft through various maneuvers to maintain proficiency. Gage was Tallarico’s fitness report evaluation senior. They were flying a twin-jet CT-39E, Sabreliner. A nice utility plane, used for training and rapid transport of personnel and small cargo. With a maximum airspeed of 550 m.p.h., it offered some temptation to thrill ride. But Naval Aviation Training Procedures Standardization (NATOPS) regulations state the airframe can withstand only a certain level of Gs. Because of this, these regulations prohibit aerobatic maneuvers, and inverted flight, so the aircraft will not become overstressed. Both pilots were aware of this.

“Well, we can’t do a *full* loop, but maybe a modified loop? I heard some factory pilots did it in a civilian model.” Tallarico looked at Gage. He was serious.

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Truth *Zero the Truth*



“That would be safe, *I suppose*,” Tallarico replied,

“Let’s cut off most of the first half of the loop, make sure we don’t invert over the top for more than a few seconds. I think that wouldn’t stress this thing too much,” Gage said, patting the yoke. He settled himself in the seat and gripped the yoke strongly. “Good enough for me. Here we go.”

He climbed for awhile, leveled out, increased speed, rolled to invert, and immediately pointed the nose down, beginning the half loop. As they descended and accelerated, he planned to pull out of the loop to upright horizontal flight at around 1200 feet. But they accelerated faster than he had expected. The ocean was coming up on them fast.

“You’d better pull up.” Tallarico advised, trying not to sound afraid. He eyed the altimeter, then the airspeed indicator. It was near the maximum limit on speed.

“It wouldn’t hurt if we both pulled,” Gage answered. With that, Tallarico grabbed his yoke, and they both pulled as hard as they could to bring the aircraft out of the dive. The engines were incredibly loud. They just managed to recover the aircraft as it rapidly shot out from the bottom of the loop. “Whew! That was too close.” Gage said.

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Truth *Zero the Truth*



Checking the cockpit accelerator indicator, Gage realized the speed had significantly overstressed the aircraft. Both knew the dangers associated with prohibited maneuvers. Lives could be lost and planes damaged or destroyed. Both were in an adrenaline-induced cold sweat. They were glad to be alive, but afraid to go back to base.

“You know...we report this, and our geese are cooked.” Tallarico said.

“Yeah. Well, we can reset this accelerator to zero and act like this didn’t happen.” Gage said, gesturing to the meter.

Tallarico thought about it. “What were we thinking?” He swallowed and nodded, “All right. We don’t have a choice. Hit it.”

Gage pushed the zero reset, and they returned to base silently. Gage did not tell Maintenance Control. Several days went by. Tallarico felt guilt, anxiety, and despondence. Guilt for not reporting the incident himself, anxiety when he heard that the aircraft had been used, without incident, for several passenger flights, and despondence when he considered the consequences of reporting as he knew they both should have done. Loyalty? Career? Truth? Should he report?

Case Study
“Zero the Truth”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Truth

Zero the Truth – Considerations & Questions: Moral Awareness



Tallarico is feeling several emotions now. Which of these is associated with his concern for himself? Which with his concern for others? Which with his oath?

Who is at risk if the incident goes unreported?

What is Gage’s responsibility as a fitness report senior?

What safety responsibilities do pilots have to their units?

What obligations does Tallarico have, according to NATOPS? What is his duty to the command?

Given that factory pilots did similar maneuvers, isn’t the regulation out of step with reality?

Should Tallarico be so anxious for those who used the aircraft after the incident? After all, it seems to be undamaged at this point. No incidents have occurred.

Truth

Case Home

Home

Case Study
“Zero the Truth”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Truth

*Zero the Truth – Considerations &
Questions: Moral Judgment*



What are Tallarico’s options here?

If Tallarico chooses to report now, what does this entail for Gage? If he fails to report now, how might this affect Gage’s future behavior?

Which option is more likely to create an unfavorable work environment?

What are some possible long-term consequences for the Navy if Gage remains as a trainer? If he does not?

What climate is created if people learn that regulations have been ignored?

What role, if any, should Tallarico’s concern for his career play in his decision?

Truth

Case Home

Home

Case Study
“Zero the Truth”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Truth

*Zero the Truth – Considerations &
Questions: Moral Intention*



What might cause Tallarico to not tell the truth?

Who might have positive reactions toward Tallarico if he reports? Who would react negatively? Which of these projected reactions exerts more influence upon him?

How does the possibility of being labeled as disloyal influence him?

How might the fact that Tallarico has already delayed reporting suppress his intention to report?

How might the delay lend more urgency to the promptings of conscience in this case?

How might the seemingly innocuous outcome of the events influence his intention to report?

Truth

Case Home

Home

Case Study
“Zero the Truth”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Truth

Zero the Truth – What Happened?



Lieutenant Tallarico disliked the idea of turning in a fellow pilot, yet finally did act according to the dictates of his conscience. He reported the overstress, and the reason for it, to Maintenance Control and other senior officers. A Field Naval Aviator Evaluation board was convened for both pilots. As a result of the hearing, both Tallarico and Gage were severely disciplined.

Truth

Case Home

Home

Case Study
“Zero the Truth”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Truth

Zero the Truth – Lessons Learned



It is easier to sit back and objectively analyze other people’s dilemmas. It’s easy to wonder why they couldn’t bring themselves to do what is obviously correct. Things are very different though when we ourselves are in such situations. When we are, we need to be aware of how our self-interest can color judgment.

In our professional lives, we all endure pressure. Situations are usually much less dramatic than those that put personal lives and careers on the line. This incident was that dramatic. Tallarico made the wrong decision in delaying his report. He made up for it by making the smart but hard decision to report the violation in which he was personally involved. He resolved his inner turmoil and surmounted peer pressure when he saw risk of lives lost and damage to government property. Regardless of his initial decision, this incident taught him to be a better leader, willing to make tough decisions that don’t compromise his professional ethics. He realized concern for the safety of others has a higher priority than allegiance to friends or self.

The incident could have been avoided if the pilots had shown respect for the regulations and trusted the maneuvers had been prohibited for good reason.

Truth

Case Home

Home

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Truth *Lost Documents*



“Shane, I *know* the material was destroyed. I was there.”

Lieutenants Lance Walker and Melissa Shane, close friends, were discussing some missing classified materials. Lieutenant Walker couldn't account for the documents. Standard procedure was that classified documents slated for destruction were delivered. A record was created upon destruction, signed by witnesses. A receipt, if needed later, would be produced once the record was presented. Walker now needed that receipt.

“Problem is, I need the receipt, and in order to get that receipt, I need the destruction record. Well, guess what? I lost it. I'm stuck.”

“Why else would you be unable to find the material?” Shane asked. “I'm sure the docs are history. Too bad you don't have that destruction record.”

“If I write up a copy, could you sign it?” Walker asked. “Problem solved.”

“I would if I'd been there. But I wasn't. I have to be an actual witness.”

“You'd be a witness if I say so. Right? Who would know the difference? Sure would get me out of a pickle if you helped me out here.”

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Truth *Lost Documents*



“Walker, love you, man, but I can’t do that.”

Walker deflated a bit. Shane was right, of course, but the document needed two witness signatures. While Walker believed he had been there (he’d followed this procedure many times before), Shane hadn’t. It was a risk for him to ask this and certainly a risk for her to go along. She knew it, and Walker knew it.

“I know it’s asking a lot, Melissa, and I don’t even want to ask. Can you at least think about it? I don’t have a lot of time. Think about it over lunch?”

“All right. I’ll think about it because it’s you, Lance. Don’t say I never did you a favor.”

“Even if you say ‘no,’ Shane. Even if you say ‘no.’” Walker was just thankful she was even considering it.

Over lunch, Lieutenant Shane took some time to think. There seemed to be no other explanation for the missing documents. What harm was there if they wrote up a second report? No harm, no foul. Right?

Case Study
“Lost Documents”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Truth

*Lost Documents – Considerations &
Questions*



What feelings about Walker do you suppose Shane has right now? Are there any emotional conflicts? Why?

What harm is there in creating a second destruction record?

Are there any other possible explanations for the missing documents?

What options does Shane have?

Should Shane report Walker or just warn him privately?

If Shane refuses, what options does Walker have?

What is your opinion of Walker?

If Walker is unable to convince Shane, and he tells the truth, does that mean he has not committed a crime?

Truth

Case Home

Home

Case Study
“Lost Documents”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Truth

Lost Documents – What Happened?



Lieutenant Shane had no doubt that her friend Lieutenant Walker was trustworthy and probably right in assuming the materials had been destroyed, but she refused to sign. Walker asked other friends and received the same answer. They all felt he was asking them to compromise their integrity. Finally, with no other options, Walker decided that he would have to tell the truth: he had simply lost track of the materials and had no records to corroborate his assumption that they had been destroyed.

The material was eventually found. It had indeed been delivered for destruction, contained in a larger pile of material. Apparently, while the pile was being destroyed, the papers in question fell off the table, out of sight behind some equipment. No one noticed this, and it was assumed later that the papers had been destroyed along with the others in the pile. Because they had not been destroyed, however, no record of their destruction had been generated.

Truth

Case Home

Home

Case Study
“Lost Documents”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Truth

Lost Documents – Lessons Learned



Reproducing a destruction record is illegal and morally problematic because signatures verify that the classified material was destroyed by the individuals present as witnesses at the time of destruction.

Although it is possible that Walker’s intentions were harmless because he was convinced the material had been destroyed, he was nevertheless trying to compromise someone else’s integrity by asking them to falsify destruction records for the sake of continuity of paperwork.

The regulations surrounding the destruction of classified materials were designed to prevent situations like this. The result of Walker following the proper procedure was the discovery of the documents and their destruction, thus removing the possibility that they could fall into the hands of those who would use them for bad purposes. This case illustrates the wisdom of these regulations.

Truth

Case Home

Home

Facilitator Guide

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Truth Munitions

“Major, as a military officer, you’re simply not in a position to know all the facts. You’re acting on a principle that doesn’t apply in this case.”

During the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war, the United States applies pressure to the Iranian regime in hopes it will collapse. In an alliance of convenience, the United States decides to aid the Baathist regime of Iraq by providing aircraft munitions. Although the total American contribution would amount to no more than one percent of Iraq’s arsenal, a touchy question remained about which munitions the United States should supply. The concern was that such munitions would eventually be used against American and allied troops. These munitions would make a potential future adversary’s aircraft capabilities equal to that of U.S. aircraft. And no one had any illusions about Saddam Hussein’s mercurial nature.

In a report, Major Conrad had advised against providing a classified munitions package to Iraq because he believed it posed such a threat. The CIA, intent on helping Iraq, pressured Conrad to change his recommendation. He refused. The agency went over his head. He was now face to face with his boss, who apparently held the same view as the agency.

Truth

Case Home

Home

Facilitator Guide

Considerations & Questions

What Happened?

Lessons Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Truth Munitions

“Conrad, as your superior, I am ordering you to modify that recommendation”

Conrad again refused, “I stand by my belief that delivery of that munitions package to Iraq, with the aircraft they possess, would create too great a risk to U.S. forces. I cannot in good conscience do as you order.”

He had a point. In sheer numbers of combat aircraft, the Iraqi Air Force was the largest in the Middle East. More than 500 combat aircraft made up 2 bomber squadrons, 11 fighter-ground attack squadrons, 5 interceptor squadrons, and one counterinsurgency squadron. The Army Air Corps had as many as 10 operational helicopter squadrons. The air force had MiG-25s, MiG-21s, various Mirage interceptors, and surface-to-air missiles.

Conrad tried to present a determined and confident front as he refused, yet it did bother him that he was perhaps being disloyal to his boss. After all, his boss, the CIA, and others had the full panoply of information. Perhaps they were better informed about the Middle East situation and knew things that he did not.

Truth

Case Home

Home

Facilitator Guide

Considerations & Questions

What Happened?

Lessons Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Truth Munitions

He also realized that his intransigence put him at risk personally. His career could be on the line. The pressure from his boss and the agency was palpable.

“Major?” The boss eyed him. An unwavering stare that seemed to pinion him.

“Sir,” his voice involuntarily wavered as he spoke. “With respect, I ...”

He again stopped. His emotions and thoughts were a welter he was trying to control.

Finally with considerable effort, he met the boss’s eyes and spoke.

What did Conrad do?

OPERATION DESERT STORM
24–28 February 1991

- ← Allied Advance, Phase 1
- ← Allied Advance, Phase 2
- ← Allied Advance, Phase 3
- ← Allied Advance, Phase 4

Truth

Case Home

Home

Case Study
“Munitions”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Truth

Munitions – Considerations & Questions 

Why did Conrad suspect his boss was asking him to do something improper?

When you believe you are “in over your head,” what does it feel like? What emotional reactions typically occur?

Who would be at risk if the munitions package is delivered?

What were Conrad’s options?

Was Conrad insubordinate for refusing to change his recommendation? Why or why not?

Could Conrad have done anything to persuade his boss to change his mind?

Was Conrad’s boss out of line in ordering him to alter his report?

Truth

Case Home

Home

Case Study
“Munitions”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Truth *Munitions – What Happened?*



Conrad continued to stand by his refusal. The boss eventually rewrote the recommendation himself. Under his own name, he sent it up the chain of command for approval. He did not discipline Conrad.

The Office of the Secretary of Defense reviewed the boss’s recommendation and sent back a letter of disapproval, stating the munitions package would not be sent to Iraq. The office’s justification was essentially that of Conrad’s. The sale of classified technology to Iraq was prevented. In the Gulf War, Desert Storm forces did not have to face an enemy that fought them with their own sophisticated technology.

Truth

Case Home

Home

Case Study
“Munitions”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Truth *Munitions – Lessons Learned*



This case is complex for many reasons. On one hand, officers will regularly find they are directed to carry out orders in circumstances they do not fully understand. They are expected to do this. On the other hand, because they are highly trained, educated, and trusted to make autonomous decisions, officers are expected to have competency to recognize an illegal or unethical order and act when necessary. Unfortunately, the line between these two sorts of situations is not always readily apparent.

When in doubt about a situation, an officer must immediately seek clarification. If he/she believes a superior is proposing something improper, he/she must make a conscientious effort to “prove” that the superior is in fact acting appropriately. In so doing, the officer must seek the truth of the matter, considering all facts. If, after trying to prove that the superior is acting appropriately, the officer discovers the superior is wrong, then he or she should immediately discuss the matter with the superior, seeking resolution.

To complicate things, officers will face decisions that may require more knowledge and experience than they have.

Truth

Case Home

Home

Case Study
“Munitions”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Truth
Munitions – Lessons Learned



When this occurs, the officer can discuss the matter not only with the senior, but also with the base judge advocate, the chaplain, and possibly peers that the officer trusts. Difficult decisions should always be discussed with others to increase the breadth and scope of one’s perspective.

It is important to note that Major Conrad’s boss did not punish him. In delaying approval, Conrad had helped to save his superior from a lot of trouble. The CIA could not have helped either Conrad’s boss with that trouble or the pilots who flew against the Iraqi Air Force in Operation Desert Storm.

Truth

Case Home

Home

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Truth *The Contusion*



“Flyboy, let’s go to ‘The Joe.’”

Newly minted Ensign Mac Parker was enjoying a swing through his ‘old haunts’ before he reported for flight training in Pensacola. He had 30 days of leave and was visiting friends and family in Detroit. He and his best friend, Bob Crozier, were in their favorite bar, the Hockey Town Café, escaping the July heat. ‘The Joe’ is the Detroit Red Wings’ home arena, within easy walking distance, but Mac didn’t think it would be open.

“It’s the off-season, Crazy,” Mac said, using Bob’s nickname from high school. “The place will be closed.”

“Nope. Wrong again, Ensign. You’ve been away too long. Wings win Stanley Cup, Joe sells memorabilia. Right?”

“Right.” It would be nice to pick up some shirts and car flags to take to Florida, he thought. “Let’s finish up the brew and make the trek!”

The boys had been catching up. Mac had told stories of the Naval Academy. Crozier had recounted strange tales of life at the University of Michigan.

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Truth *The Contusion*



Both had graduated in May and were excited about the future. Crozier was starting a job with the INS Detroit office. They hadn't kept track of the time today – there was no need. It was a relief to have no schedule to keep. Without being aware of it, they'd drunk a lot of beer while sitting in the bar.

“Let's down 'em and go,” Crozier ordered. Mac grabbed his schooner. They quickly guzzled the 18-ounce beers and got up to leave. Opening the door, a rush of intense heat greeted them. The transition from the air-conditioned bar to the street was dramatic. The bright July sun hurt their eyes. As they negotiated the steps to the sidewalk bordering Woodward Avenue, Ensign Parker's foot slipped off the bottom step. He fell, the back of his head striking the top step. He lost consciousness. He came to after what seemed only a moment, but he surmised it had been longer.

He was now prone in a hospital bed with his family and Crazy hovering above him. A television could be heard in the room, and the light from the window bugged him.

“Can you shut those blinds?” he heard himself ask. Someone did.

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Truth *The Contusion*



“What happened?” His neck ached, but oddly his head did not.

“You slipped and hit your head on the concrete. You’ve been out an hour and a half. Your folks got here about 30 minutes ago.”

“Hi, honey. Are you O.K.?” It was Mom. Good to hear her voice.

“Yeah. I suppose. Man, I’m hungry.”

They paged a nurse, who brought some food: chicken pot pie. Mac ate, but it was beyond bland. “Hospital food. This is really tasteless. I can’t even smell it.”

His parents and Crozier looked nervously at each other. They could smell the food. It was pungent.

The attending neurologist later informed Ensign Parker that he had lost his sense of taste and smell. It was most likely a temporary effect of the jarring. Nothing to worry about.

Indeed, he did recover completely. Later, his personal physician cleared him. His eyes and physical state were perfect. The doctor had no concerns.

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Truth *The Contusion*



Three weeks later, Mac was in Pensacola. He felt ready to start flying. All he had left to do was fill out a routine questionnaire. As he read through the Naval Air physical qualifications, he blanched. The form was about head injuries. He learned that head injuries were not necessarily disqualifying. A loss of consciousness of less than 15 minutes did not disqualify. A loss of consciousness of more than 2 hours permanently disqualified. But he saw, with a rush of relief, that a period of unconsciousness of more than 15 minutes but *less than 2 hours* carried with it only a 2-year disqualification.

He thought back on conversations he had with friends and family. They all told him it would be O.K. to keep the injury to himself if he really felt fine. After all, if there was anything wrong, the EEG would reveal it anyway. He worried that Navy Air had been getting much more competitive lately, with slots disappearing as the Navy downsized. He thought his chances of an Air career would be slim if he reported the injury. Practically speaking, the Navy would only know about the injury if he offered the information. He felt fine; there were no scars. He agonized over the questionnaire. On one hand, *telling* was the honest thing to do. On the other hand, the reg seemed *unfair*. Should he imperil his dream?

Case Study
“The Contusion”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Truth

*The Contusion – Considerations &
Questions*



Parker was obviously anxious about his own career prospects. What other things might he be anxious about?

What personal risks would Parker be taking on if he kept his injury secret?

Who else is at risk if Parker keeps his secret?

What are Parker’s options? What does the Navy expect him to do? What is his duty as a commissioned officer?

What do you think of Parker’s family and friends?

All of Ensign Parker’s family and friends reassured Mac that he didn’t need to report the injury. Do you think this will ultimately influence him to omit the incident from the questionnaire?

Truth

Case Home

Home

Case Study
“The Contusion”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Truth

The Contusion – What Happened?



The ensign disclosed the head injury on the questionnaire. The matter was submitted to a medical board for a decision. The officer waited two agonizing years for a final determination.

The board was impressed by the ensign’s truthfulness, in light of the Naval Air cutbacks. Considering his integrity, and the fact that he remained symptom-free and passed two EEGs, the medical board decided that he should be allowed to enter the flight pipeline.

This ensign not only successfully completed flight school, but graduated number one in his class.

Truth

Case Home

Home

Case Study
“The Contusion”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Truth

The Contusion – Lessons Learned



The medical board’s decision was influenced by lessons learned over a long time. They considered the possibility that the officer might have medical problems if allowed to fly under high G-force conditions, which increase the chance of blackouts. This was not an easy decision. They had to consider the officer, anyone flying with him, others on the ground, and anyone in the same airspace.

If the ensign hadn’t told the truth, he would have always worried about blacking out or being discovered, and having his career ruined. He realized the officer corps has no place for people who abuse our nation’s trust and confidence.

It is important to note that if he had been denied and forced into a nonflying career, the strength of character that led him to speak up would have certainly enhanced that career and his life. Officers must understand that their job is to serve the nation first. Ship, shipmate, and self are subordinate in importance, in that order. Pilots risk not only their own lives. We expect them to ground themselves when not fit to fly. This is an extension of the ethical principle that requires an officer to come forward with the truth when anything happens that would break regulations, violate law, or harm people.

Truth

Case Home

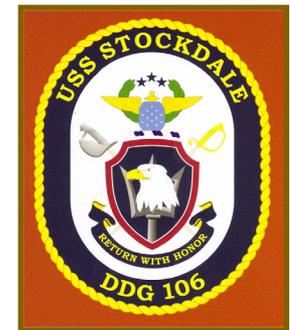
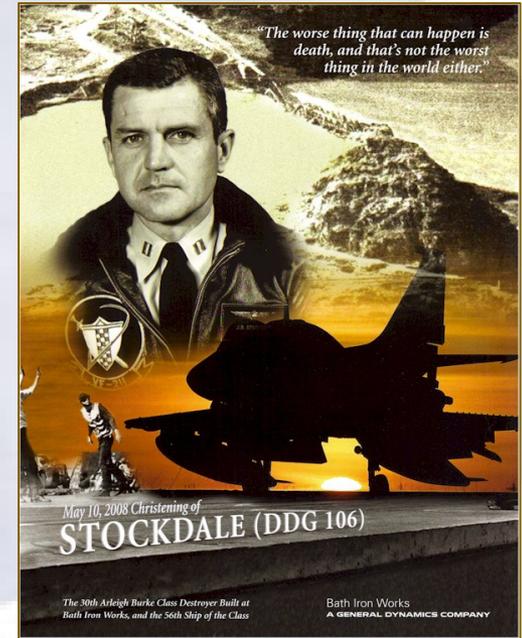
Home

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Message From Vice Admiral James B. Stockdale

Editor's note: Admiral Stockdale's foreword was written in 1994 for the first edition of this volume. In fact, he spoke at the very first presentation of the book to the class of 1994. The foreword has been retained unchanged for this and subsequent editions. We hope we always will live up to his vision for the volume.

[Biographical Note: Vice Admiral James Bond Stockdale passed away on July 5, 2005. On May 10, 2008, the Navy's newest Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer (DDG-106) was christened by his wife, Sybil. VADM Stockdale was born in Abingdon, Illinois, in 1923. After graduating from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1946, Stockdale served on active duty in the regular Navy for 37 years, mostly as a fighter pilot aboard carriers. Shot down on his third combat tour over North Vietnam, he was the senior Naval prisoner of war in Hanoi for seven and a half years. He was tortured 15 times, held in solitary confinement for over 4 years, and in leg irons for 2 years. Stockdale was serving as president of the [Naval War College](#) in 1979 when physical disability forced him to retire from military service. He was the only three-star officer in U.S. naval history to wear both aviator's wings and the Medal of Honor. His 26 other decorations include 2 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 3 Distinguished Service Medals, 4 Silver Stars, and 2 Purple Hearts. When Admiral Stockdale retired, the secretary of the Navy established the Vice Admiral James Stockdale Award for Inspirational Leadership, which is presented annually to the commanding officers, one in the [Atlantic Fleet](#), and one in the [Pacific Fleet](#).



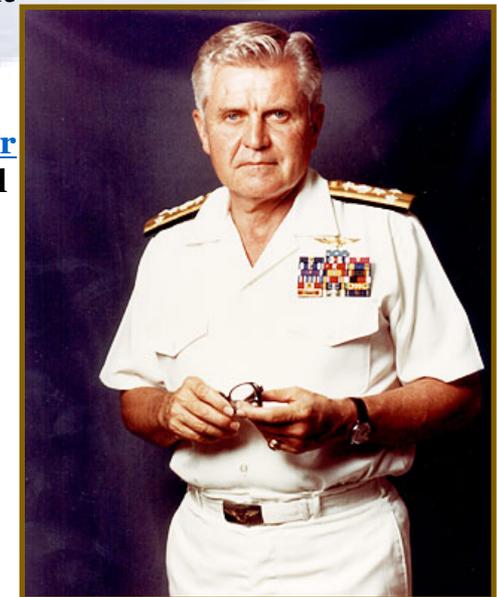
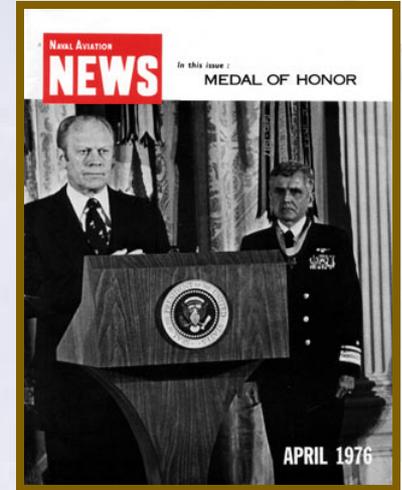
Home

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

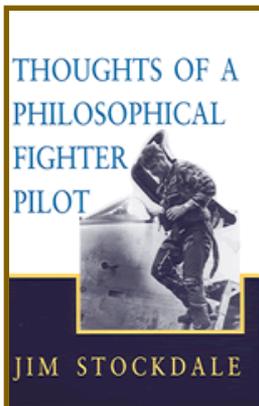
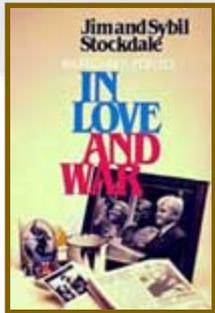
Message From Vice Admiral James B. Stockdale

As a civilian, Stockdale served as president of the Citadel for a year, as lecturer in philosophy at Stanford University, and as senior research fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford. His writing focuses on how men and women can rise in dignity to prevail in the face of adversity. Aside from numerous articles, he co-wrote with his wife the book [*In Love and War*](#), (Naval Institute Press, 1990). In 1987, NBC aired a drama based upon the book. Admiral Stockdale has also written two books of essays: [*A Vietnam Experience: Ten Years of Reflection*](#) (Hoover Press, 1984) and [*Thoughts of a Philosophical Fighter Pilot*](#) (Hoover Press 1995). Both collections won the [George Washington Award from the Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge](#).

In 1989, Monmouth College in his native Illinois named its student union after Stockdale. The following year, during a ceremony at the University of Chicago, he became a [Laureate of the Abraham Lincoln Academy](#). He is an honorary fellow in the Society of Experimental Test Pilots. In 1993, he was inducted into the [Carrier Aviation Hall of Fame](#). In 1995, he was enshrined in the U.S. Naval Aviation [Hall of Honor at the National Museum of Aviation](#) in Pensacola Florida. In 2001, the U.S. Naval Academy honored him with its Distinguished Graduate Award. In 2007, the U. S. Naval Academy renamed the Center for the Study of Professional Military Ethics the [Vice Admiral James B. Stockdale Center for Ethical Leadership](#). Stockdale holds 11 honorary degrees.]



Home



Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Message From Vice Admiral James B. Stockdale



This book contains actual leadership dilemmas faced in modern times by junior officers of the armed services of the United States. It was commissioned by the U.S. Naval Academy, Class of 1964, to be bequeathed annually to upcoming graduates of their alma mater. It is designed for reflection and reference throughout a person's first few years as a commissioned officer. Periodically, the case studies of the volume will be reviewed for timeliness and applicability, with an eye toward keeping the book up-to-date and on the mark.

Underlying all these cases are ethical considerations that go a long way in the final determination of whether the young officer's real-life solution to the dilemma served our country ill or well. In fact, the focus of the whole book is to dramatize for Navy ensigns and Marine second lieutenants and their junior officer counterparts in other services just exactly what constitutes ethical behavior and what does not. Each case appears in two areas of the book. The facts of a situation are laid out first, in sufficient detail to allow the reader to take on the problem as a personal challenge and form a tentative solution. Then a section bearing on the ethical considerations of the case follows. This part at least makes sure the reader is aware of the ethical issues involved so that he or she may reconsider a tentative way of handling it. Lastly – and sometimes with surprise – the real-life results are delineated. Cases were picked based on their potential to stimulate discussions in the junior officer quarters and, on occasion, the advice of willing seniors. JAG Corps officers, and chaplains – when appropriate – were independently queried in the interest of our readers' self-education and their speedy assimilation of the "feel" for what is expected of them in their new profession.



[Home](#)



Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Message From Vice Admiral James B. Stockdale



These real-life case studies were solicited from the Navy inspector general, the Navy Safety Center, and senior officer sources of the Army, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and Navy. Their presentation and organization in the original edition underwent an extensive editorial review process under the direction of the late Karel Montor, Ph.D., Professor of Leadership at the Academy.

I hope this book serves to create in each of your hearts a happy understanding of the down-to-earth “rules of the game” of this life of American military officership on which you are embarking. It is fitting that the focus of the whole book is on the military ethic because that is the core value of every operational specialty of every service. Whether you go forth from the Naval Academy to fly or submerge or fight on the surface, or go ashore with the Marines or the SEALs, you have to be worthy of the trust of both your seniors and juniors, or all is lost for you.

I’ve sat on many selection boards for officer promotion, read the candidates’ jackets, heard the briefs and board discussions on many people of high operational qualification, advanced engineering degrees, and other intellectual badges of distinction. You should know that once the board agrees that a history of indirectness or deviousness is in the record of an aspirant, the probability of that person’s promotion all but vanishes. All considerations fall before that of personal integrity. It is the core value expected of an American military officer. If it does not come naturally to you, be honest with yourself and choose some other line of work.



[Home](#)

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Message From Vice Admiral James B. Stockdale



You might question my use of the word *happy* as a descriptive adjective in understanding all this. I use it because if you develop the right “hang” of things, you will be happy as you realize that the military ethic in most units – certainly in all good ones – is not the nagging, nitpicking hairsplitting bother that we hear complaints about in other professions. The military ethic comes naturally to people of many personality “cuts,” many “cuts of their jib.” The idea is not to hammer everybody into one mold; the services are rich in the diversity of leadership styles of their better officers. It’s just that the people under them are our most precious asset, and they must be treated in a manner above reproach. We insist that they deserve leaders with integrity.

There’s that word again. It’s not just a good-sounding term. The original meaning of *integrity* was “whole,” a unity, as opposed to a broken thing, or something in parts only. The readers of Plato and Aristotle will relate it to those ancients’ distinction between “living” and “living well.” It refers to the possibility of living according to a strong and coherent sense of oneself as a person whose life, considered as a whole, reflects a definite and thoughtful set of preferences and aspirations. If well composed, the person who possesses it knows he or she is whole, not riding the crest of continual anxiety, but riding the crest of delight.

This ethic is natural to, not artificially grafted to, the profession of arms, the profession of warfighting, in which friendships are consumed by the more powerful and generous force of comradeship. This was an idea propounded by philosopher Jess Glenn Gray, who spent all of World War II as a ground soldier in Europe. He noted how men in battle would lay down their lives for unit companions they were known even to dislike.



[Home](#)

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Message From Vice Admiral James B. Stockdale



People of integrity facing a common danger coalesce into a unity that surpasses friendship. It is not a willful change of heart; it happens as a function of human nature. And I've seen it happen. J. Glenn Gray, in his book [*The Warriors: Reflections of Men in Battle*](#) (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1959), writes:

Loyalty to the group is the essence of fighting morale. Friendship is not just a more intense form of comradeship but its very opposite: While comradeship wants to break down the walls of self, friendship seeks to expand these walls and keep them intact."

So whereas an "ethics program" may seem unnecessary or foreign to some professionals (we read of businessmen who think it is foreign to those engaged in free enterprise), the profession of arms is at home with it. Our major product, you might say, is comradeship in the heart of battle. And in our business, how we lavish our skills of leadership on comrades is "bottom-line stuff."

Am I old fashioned, in this post-Cold War period, to use the heart of battle as the control point for a personal strategy of how we live? The United States has never been far from wars, and now as the world's only super-power, we're the natural choice to resolve the knotty problems in the world. Geoffrey Perret wrote a book about America and wars entitled [*A Country Made by War*](#) (New York: Random House, 1989). In the 217 years between 1775 and 1992, we were involved in 10 major wars. In more than 20 percent of the years of our existence, we have engaged in major wars (the Indian Wars, Philippine Insurrection, Mexican War of 1916, etc., excluded).

Home



Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Message From Vice Admiral James B. Stockdale



Between 1945 and 1993, the proportion of years we've engaged in major wars has been considerably higher than 20 percent. So keep your powder dry.

In tight spots in this service life of ours, the higher the pressure gets, the greater is our need for mutual trust and confidence. And the more trust and confidence among us, the more power we draw from one another. [Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr.](#), for nearly 30 years one of America's favorite Supreme Court justices, was famous for his tales of life as a young officer in our Civil War. In *The Mind and Faith of Justice Holmes* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1943), he says, "Perhaps it is not vain for us to tell the new generation what we learned in our day, and what we still believe." The essence of what I learned and what I still believe came about not in some grand office, but more than 25 years ago, face down in a prison cell, leg irons attached, signaling under the door to my comrades across the courtyard during those few early morning minutes when the guards were too busy to watch us. It was the third anniversary of my shoot-down, and I had just got the message, swept out with strokes as my ten comrades, one at a time, scrubbed their toilet buckets: "Here's to Cag for three great years. We love you; we are with you to the end." And I said to myself, "You are right where you should be; thank God for this wonderful life."

Holmes was more eloquent about what he learned and what he still believed:



Home

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Message From Vice Admiral James B. Stockdale

That the joy of living is to put out all one's powers as far as they will go; to pray, not for comfort but for combat; to keep the soldier's faith against the doubts of civil life; to love glory more than the temptation of wallowing ease, but to know that one's final judge and only rival is oneself with all our failures in act and thought, these things we learned from noble enemies in Virginia or Georgia or on the Mississippi, thirty years ago; these things we believe to be true.



Jim Stockdale
20 August, 1999

Home



Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Facilitator Guide



Research shows people commonly go through a [four step process](#) when faced with an ethical decision. The process starts at an initial recognition or [awareness](#) of morally salient features of environment – that is, problem situations. The second step is a reasoning or [judgment](#) phase, where possible resolutions and consequences are explored. The process ends with [intention](#) and [action](#) phases, in which a decision is made to implement or refrain from implementing one of the resolutions.

There are ethical, social, and psychological factors that affect this process at each stage. The social and psychological factors can exert influence without our being aware of them. Sometimes these influences lead to good choices, sometimes not. The Stockdale Center’s decision-making model is one way to approach making practical decisions quickly, yet with conscious and deliberate awareness of these factors. The model also helps people to recognize the ethical, professional, and legal dimensions of problems.

Practice with the four-step model, in concert with cases presented in this volume, will assist in developing the moral “muscle memory” that is required in high-stress, time-constrained situations. Such practice increases the likelihood of making sound moral choices, even in difficult circumstances. Ethical decision making becomes easier when it is built on the foundation of ongoing practice. Walking the steps from moral awareness to moral action is an indispensable skill for an ethical leader.

This guide can be used, along with the 16 cases, as a basis for discussion of typical ethical challenges encountered in military service. In each of the four sections, one case has a “considerations and questions” section with questions categorized to coincide with the steps of the Stockdale Center ethical decision-making model. Let’s use one such case (“[Zero the Truth](#)”) to see how it can be used in concert with the model.

Case Home

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Facilitator Guide



Ethical Leadership Decision Model Overview

Moral Action

Moral Intention

Moral Judgment

Moral Awareness

Guide Home

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Facilitator Guide



The four-step approach used here is based on a model constructed by Dr. James Rest and validated by research led by Dr. Elizabeth Holmes on populations of Naval Academy midshipmen and Navy chaplains. The model combines Rest's model with Dr. Thomas Jones' concept of "moral intensity factors." These factors influence each step in the process. For example, how much someone is harmed or benefited by a decision, as well as how much a peer group approves a given action, can influence how sensitive a person will be to the moral facets of a situation. How close one feels to those affected, and the perceived probability of harms or benefits will also color decision making. By asking questions that probe the various moral intensity factors, a decision maker becomes aware of how they are affecting his or her awareness, judgment, and action. To make an ethical decision using the model, we work through the stages in the process from moral awareness to action, as a series of steps. We begin with the first step.

Ethical Leadership Decision Model Overview

[Guide Home](#)

[Steps](#)

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Facilitator Guide



In the first stage, we mimic the gut-level ‘recognitions’ of real-life situations – those times we’ve all experienced when we see suddenly that a situation is morally charged. Anger, fear, anxiety, confusion, concern, and empathy are aroused. They indicate that something of value is at risk. The decision maker’s “gut” is answering the question: “Is there something wrong here?”

Two moral intensity factors – Proximity (how close one feels to the people affected) and Social Consensus (whether a social group, such as peers, perceives a given action as right or wrong) – can influence whether one sees an ethical issue at all. Becoming consciously aware of these influences can help one correct for oversensitivity or insensitivity in such cases.

Questions in the “Considerations and Questions” sections are designed to highlight these influences, as well as the ethical issues.

Ethical Leadership Decision Model

Step 1: Moral Awareness

The model can be used to work through the decision point in “Zero the Truth.” The first step is to ask is if the situation involves an ethical problem. This is an application of the Moral Awareness step of the model. [To see how the first step of the model can apply to the case, see the next page.](#)

Guide Home

Steps

Case Study
“Zero the Truth”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Truth *Zero the Truth – Considerations &* *Questions: Moral Awareness*



*Ethical
Leadership
Decision Model*

*Step 1: Moral
Awareness*

Tallarico is feeling several **emotions** now. Which of these is associated with his concern for himself? Which with his concern for others? Which with his oath?

Who is at **risk** if the incident goes unreported?

What is Gage’s **responsibility** as a fitness report senior?

What safety **responsibilities** do pilots have to their units?

What **obligations** does Tallarico have, according to NATOPS? What is his duty to the command?

Given that factory pilots did similar maneuvers, isn’t the regulation out of step with reality?

Should Tallarico be so anxious for those who used the aircraft after the incident? After all, it seems to be undamaged at this point. No incidents have occurred.

*The questions here revolve around delineating **risks** and **obligations**. Who is at risk? What persons, institutions, or ideals are at risk? What legal or professional obligations are there? Other questions pinpoint moral intensity factors. For instance, the last question (**in blue**) is based on the assumption that lack of subsequent mishaps involving the plane indicates a low probability of future harm. That inference may tend to make Tallarico downplay the importance of the incident, even if it doesn’t entirely ease his conscience. Note also that some questions ask us to examine our **emotional reactions**. This capitalizes on the fact that the emotions indicate something of value is at risk.*

Guide Home

Steps

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Facilitator Guide



Assuming that we identify an ethical issue, we begin to weigh various options in the next stage. We begin to reason concerning our options.

The aim of this reasoning is to distinguish right from wrong, better from worse outcomes, and to compare competing obligations. The decision maker weighs his or her possible actions in light of these.

Which actions respect rights or dignity?
Which actions are fair? Which actions will allow me to be a person of character? Which actions produce the most good or least harm?

Moral intensity factors such as Magnitude of Consequences (how much a person or group is harmed or benefitted by an action), Probability of Effect (the likelihood that predicted circumstances and expected level of harm or benefit will occur), and Social Consensus continue to play a role.

Ethical Leadership Decision Model

Step 2: Moral Judgment

We see after applying the first step to “Zero the Truth” that there is an ethical problem. Lives are at risk, and sworn duty comes into play. Using the Moral Judgment step, we now formulate questions that help weigh various options. [See application of the second stage of the model here.](#)

Guide Home

Steps

Case Study
“Zero the Truth”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Truth *Zero the Truth – Considerations &* *Questions: Moral Judgment*



*Ethical
Leadership
Decision Model*

*Step 2: Moral
Judgment*

What are Tallarico’s options here?

If Tallarico chooses to report now, **what does this entail** for Gage? If he fails to report now, how might this affect **Gage’s future behavior**?

Which option is more likely to create an **unfavorable work environment**?

What are some possible **long-term consequences** for the Navy if Gage remains as a trainer? If he does not?

What climate is created if people learn that regulations have been ignored?

What role, if any, should Tallarico’s **concern for his career** play in his decision?

*The issues have been clarified now, and second-stage questions help to weigh the various options, asking us to **project ethical consequences** and compare them with each other. Some questions involve Tallarico’s **self-interest**, a moral intensity factor. You will also see that one question helps you become aware of the moral intensity factor of Social Consensus. It asks you to project the **likely social impact** of the actions Tallarico is considering. Another question asks what sort of impact the options will have on **Gage’s future behavior and character**, something of importance. The overall purpose of these questions is to help pick the ethically best resolution of the problem.*

Guide Home

Steps

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Facilitator Guide



The next stages build on the results of the previous two.

At this time, the decision maker has narrowed his options, usually to one, and has to make the final decision to carry out that option. The decision maker has to decide if he or she really intends to do it. A person implements his or her intention in spite of opposition or consequences, or chooses to avoid these and fails to act.

At this stage, research shows Social Consensus plays the biggest role. Sometimes, people can recognize an ethical challenge, know “the right thing to do,” even resolve to act, and yet shrink from that act when the moment of truth comes. The power of other people present is the most commonly cited reason for this.

Questions in the “Considerations and Questions” sections show the roadblocks that moral intensity factors can create.

Ethical Leadership Decision Model

Steps 3 & 4: Moral Intention and Action

Using the Moral Intention step, and playing the role of Tallarico, narrow your options. What are you going to do in the given situation? Do you really intend to act, to follow standard procedures and regulations? Will you follow through or take the path of least resistance? [See application of the third and fourth stages here.](#)

[Guide Home](#)

[Steps](#)

Case Study
“Zero the Truth”

Considerations &
Questions

What
Happened?

Lessons
Learned

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Case Studies in Truth *Zero the Truth – Considerations & Questions: Moral Intention*



*Ethical
Leadership
Decision Model*

*Stage 3 & 4:
Moral Intention
and Action*

What might cause Tallarico to not tell the truth?

Who might have **positive reactions** toward Tallarico if he reports? Who would react negatively? Which of these projected reactions exerts more influence upon him?

How does the **possibility of being labeled as disloyal** influence him?

How might the fact that Tallarico has already delayed reporting suppress his intention to report?

How might the delay lend more urgency to the promptings of conscience in this case?

How might the **seemingly innocuous outcome of the events** influence his intention to report?

*Using the last two stages, we ask if Tallarico will carry through with what his honest ethical reasoning has determined to be the correct course of action. Ethically and legally, he is bound to report. But there are factors to inhibit him from doing so. Fear of peer reaction (**Social Consensus**) and apparent lack of real risk (**Probability of Harm**) are among these. On the other hand, **possible commendations** may exert an influence. He may also in this case ask himself how others would behave in his position, or how people he admires would deal with the problem.*

Guide Home

Steps

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

Facilitator Guide



Learning to apply this ethical decision-making model, as you role-play the characters in the case studies presented in this volume, will help you develop the ability to make quick but ethically and legally correct decisions in the often difficult, stressful, and time-constrained real world.

Ethical decision making becomes easier when it is built on a foundation of practiced, honest, and conscientious reflection. Walking the steps from moral awareness to moral action in a deliberate manner is an indispensable skill of ethical leaders.

Ethical Leadership Decision Model Conclusion

[Guide Home](#)

[Steps](#)

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

About ELJO

Case Studies

Comments

Submit a Case

Stockdale
Center

USNA Class of
1964

UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY
Stockdale Center for Ethical Leadership



Ethics for the Junior Officer: Feedback

Date:
Name:
Address:
State/Province:
Zip/Postal Code:
E-mail:



Stockdale Center for Ethical Leadership
115 Cooper Road
Annapolis, Maryland
United States
21402-1305
Fax: 410-393-6081
www.usna.edu/Ethics

Please rank the three or four cases you found most useful, by title, from most to least useful.

What features of your these higher ranked cases made them most useful to you?

Please list the three or four cases you found least useful, by title, from most to least useful.

What features of these lower ranked cases made them least useful to you?

How do you rate the decision making model for ease of use and applicability to cases?

Do you find the model personally useful, and does it serve as a good basis for discussion of ethical issues?

Clicking the image to the left will take you to our PDF comments form. You may fill it out and submit via e-mail, or print and fax. You may also use it as a template for an email, if you have trouble filling out the form. Simply copy the questions, and answer. Submit your results to ethicsweb@usna.edu.

Thank you for your feedback. We value it highly.

Please be patient with the download. It may take one to two minutes.

Home

Ethical Leadership for the Junior Officer

About ELJO

Case Studies

Comments

Submit a Case

Stockdale
Center

USNA Class of
1964

UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY 
Stockdale Center for Ethical Leadership
Ethics for the Junior Officer
Case Study Submission Form

Date:
Name:
Address:
State/Province:
Zip/Postal Code:
E-mail:



Stockdale Center for Ethical Leadership
111 Cooper Road
Annapolis, Maryland
United States
21402-1305
Fax: 410-293-6081
www.usna.edu/Ethics

In the space below, please give as thorough and detailed a presentation of your case as you can. Who is the person with the ethical dilemma? What is the dilemma? What are the relevant obligations or duties? Where is the conflict? Be as detailed as possible in setting your case out. Feel free to include 'questions for consideration' and discussion notes that may help the judging panel. There is a second page if you need it.

In the future, as an incentive, the [USNA Class of 1964](#) will offer prizes for best cases. Check back here for details, and also check for announcements on the [Stockdale Center website](#).

Home