

# Strategy Research Project

## Start With How: Improving Army Ethics Training

by

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## Start With How: Improving Army Ethics Training

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### Abstract

Current Department of Defense/Army mandated ethics training is incomplete and aimed at teaching compliance instead of ethical decision-making skills. The recently approved Framework for Character Development from the Center for the Army Professional Ethic starts to embed ethical and moral considerations into current training, but more must change in order to break away from a regulatory-compliance-based training requirement. The Army currently “trains to the test” instead of developing skills for the future. Behavioral scientists such as Max Bazerman provide updated terminology regarding lapses in ethical decision-making that could be integrated into existing professional military education without effecting course length. Recently designed development programs from private-sector organizations such as the Center for Creative Leadership can serve as templates for the Army to update its current outmoded ethics training. The Army must also consider ways to evaluate the effectiveness of their character development programs to ensure any redesigned ethics training is accomplishing its purpose.

## Start With How: Improving Army Ethics Training

The vast majority of our Army does the right thing, at all times, even when nobody is watching. What concerns me is the damage and erosion of trust both internally and externally that ethical lapses...can have on our Army.

—Honorable Mark Esper<sup>1</sup>

Senior United States Army leaders are fond of emphatically stating that Army training should teach “how to think” and not “what to think,” yet the foundation of Department of Defense and Army mandated ethics training relies on ensuring those trained learn what “right” is instead of learning different decision-making processes and the ethical traps they must avoid.<sup>2</sup> This method does little to improve soldier’s ethical decision-making skills and simply “trains to the test.” The Army must upgrade current ethics training requirements, focusing less on compliance and more on developing decision-making skills using proven methods from academia and the private sector. This paper will explore the current guidance from the Department of Defense and Army headquarters and examine how academia and the private sector treat the issue of ethics training. It concludes with recommended changes to Army training and education, strengthening the recently adopted *Framework for Character Development* with proven private sector training techniques.

Maintaining the military’s strong ethical foundation is critical to sustaining the high level of public trust enjoyed by the military.<sup>3</sup> Secretary of Defense James Mattis reinforced the importance of ethical decision making in an August 2017 memo for all Department of Defense employees, stressing that the force must operate in the “ethical midfield” away from the “sidelines, where even one misstep will have you out of bounds.”<sup>4</sup> This description shows a need for developing self-aware individuals who understand complex ethical situations, not just leaders who memorize rules.

Current required ethics training, as written in Department of Defense instructions and regulations, does not mention developing individuals as the desired outcome and focuses instead on data dissemination and retention.<sup>5</sup> The regulations do not mention training methodology except for one example of a decision-making model, and the only guidance outside of necessitating instruction on gift acceptance, contractor relationships, and financial actions is the requirement that trainers be certified ethics instructors.<sup>6</sup> There are additional technical training requirements for a small population of senior leaders, but overall the bulk of leadership within the Army is required to complete the compliance based training instead of training that could positively affect the climate of their organization.<sup>7</sup>

It seems as if the military is missing the proverbial forest for the trees. Some military ethics researchers claim the military's aim in ethics training is to create leaders of virtue, able to make the "right" decision under pressure in an ambiguous situation, echoing the idea of operating in the "ethical midfield" outlined by Secretary Mattis.<sup>8</sup> The regulations, however, do not match the intent of senior military leadership and use subject-matter experts to review regulatory compliance requirements instead of developing ethical decision-making skills.

Skeptics may question if ethics are trainable. Research shows improvement in ethical decision making after training, as measured using various ethical inventory methods, even after a series of short classes.<sup>9</sup> The importance of ethical decision making and ethical behavior to an institution like the United States military, coupled with the military's belief that it can train nearly anyone to accomplish any assigned task, forms the foundational assumption that the military can train this and improve the ethical

decision-making skills of its force. The specific, unimaginative guidance to the field on ethics training obscures the importance of ethical decision-making. The result of that unimaginative guidance is an Army fighting its bureaucratic past as it tries to implement new technology in ethics training with minimal success.

### How Does the Army Currently Train Ethics?

The United States Army takes the Department of Defense's laser focused, detailed, yet vague in intent guidance and places emphasis on decision-making while complying with required ethics topics. Army Doctrinal Publication-1 (ADP-1) *The Army*, outlines the Army's view on acting ethically, describing the role of values within the ranks and stratifying the difference between the leader and led.<sup>10</sup>

One common tool to stratify ethical motivation is the Kohlberg scale, developed by psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg during his 1950s research into moral development. The scale measures motivation ranging from fear of punishment on the low end to the desire to conform to societal norms and the individual's conscience at the highest level. While not explicitly stated, the Army sees junior soldiers on the lower spectrum of the Kohlberg scale, doing the right thing for fear of punishment. The Army places leaders such as Non-Commissioned Officers and Officers higher on the Kohlberg scale, necessitating virtuous decision making from those in charge.<sup>11</sup> The short amount of time—on average 35-45 minutes—spent on ethics and values instruction during initial entry training reinforces this attitude.<sup>12</sup> Limited time requirements for ethical development continue outside of initial entry training, with many commands giving more guidance on the conduct of winter driving than to ethical decision-making.<sup>13</sup>

Despite a lack of change in Army ethics training regulations, the Army did reorganize its ethics-related doctrinal “think tank” to facilitate better leader development

literature and programs. Reorganizing the Center for the Army Professional Ethic (CAPE) under the Combined Arms Center from the United States Military Academy gave Army ethics researchers a direct path to affect change in Army doctrine and regulations. Most notably, CAPE synthesized the various moral, values, and ethics-based training into a single character-building campaign. The *Army's Framework for Character Development* includes multiple training support packages for commanders to train ethics in their formations, forming the Army's foundation of non-regulatory based ethics training.<sup>14</sup>

Those packages center on web-based vignettes of soldiers and leaders in ethically challenging situations. Vignettes aimed at recruits and junior soldiers focus on negative repercussions of rule-breaking instead of the process of making an ethical decision. A focus on rules and outcomes can be valuable at inculcating new values to a population but does little to produce people who understand when they are on the "ethical sideline" and about to go out of bounds.<sup>15</sup>

To broaden where the "ethical midfield" could exist, the vast majority of CAPE vignettes target leaders and the effort to create ethical organizational climates through their actions.<sup>16</sup> Vignettes such as "The High Ground" expose junior leaders (Staff Sergeant/E6 and Second Lieutenant/O1) to concepts about moral and ethical decisions they may face in their new positions. The weakness of the vignettes is that they focus on the outcome instead of the process, simply defining the ethical result instead of the reasoning behind the decisions.<sup>17</sup>

The vignettes and other CAPE training supplements reveal the Army's desire to build a shared value-based ethic (the "Army Values") in the force while developing

leaders into what ethics researcher Mary Louise Arnold would call an “agent of moral good.” Arnold’s work relied heavily on a 1992 study on people identified as having strong commitments to moral and ethical behavior in challenging situations, regardless of the level of ethical development as measured on a Kohlberg scale.<sup>18</sup> The common thread in these individuals was a firm understanding of the role of ethics and morality in self-awareness. The Army’s use of these vignettes starts integrating Army values into a sense of self, falling short of explaining how the soldier could or should make decisions based on those values in the future.

The Army’s current ethical training model attempts to build character from a checklist, turning moral leadership into a rote memorization exercise like disassembling and assembling a weapon. This approach fails to make the critical shift from introducing and inculcating value-ethic information on right and wrong to teaching soldiers how to reach ethical outcomes when the problem is not similar to a vignette or a simple binary choice. The private sector, often more agile in changing how it develops its personnel, provides ideas for the Army to improve its ethics training and learn from academic research into ethical behavior.

#### What Does Right Look Like In Ethics Training? Private Sector Perspectives

The research of three behavioral scientists stands out in successful ethical decision-making studies. Max Bazerman, Dan Ariely, and Chase Thiel define established decision-making concepts in new ways, making them readily applicable to business and military leaders alike. Private sector businesses, such as the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) and Lockheed Martin, use Bazerman and other research to build effective leader development programs. The Army can pull ethical concepts from

academia and combine them with private sector leader development programs to improve current training methods.

### Academic Study of Ethical Decision Making

A handful of United States Army War College instructors use excerpts of Max Bazerman's *Blind Spots: Why We Fail to What's Right and What to Do About It* to instruct ethical reasoning and strategic leadership but other Army ethics training programs do not utilize Bazerman's research.<sup>19</sup> Bazerman's concepts of "in-group bias," "egocentrism," "ethical fading," and the struggle between the "want/should self" provide easy-to-understand reasons why moral actors may struggle to make the right decision.<sup>20</sup>

"In-group bias," the act of favoring a subordinate or applicant who is similar to the decision-maker, is a dangerous trap for young leaders in the military. The risk resides in young leaders choosing whom to trust when making decisions in ethical minefields such as a sexual harassment or assault allegation. A young leader may subconsciously trust the accused's account or slow-roll administrative actions against them if they are members of the same "in-group." This subconscious trust manifests itself in the 'good soldier' defense; a defense recently eliminated for use in courts-martial by Congress because of its problematic use.<sup>21</sup>

Introducing trainees to Bazerman's "egocentrism" concept of interpreting inconclusive data as favoring one's stated perspective could indirectly improve ethical reasoning in young leaders.<sup>22</sup> An improvement in avoiding thinking traps would correspond with improved ethical decisions by facilitating better critical thinking. Army-developed ethics training below the Senior Service College level does not currently include egocentrism even though military decision-making process exercises and training often warn against falling victim to confirmation bias.<sup>23</sup>

The final two Bazerman concepts serving as examples of best practices in private sector ethics discussions - the "should/want self" and "ethical fading" - depart from how a person interprets incoming data/evidence while making decisions and focuses internally on the decision-maker's view of the problem. The "should" self knows the value-ethic based right answer and, in a vacuum, predicts an ethical outcome when presented with a dilemma. The "want" self emerges when the challenge presents itself, and the answer is not as clear as envisioned. The individual rationalizes the choice made, falling victim to "ethical fading" as they mentally lessen the impact of the unethical choice. Well-respected publications such as *Harvard Business Review* promote the use of training involving these conflicting thoughts and teaching them to Army leaders or adding them to CAPEs vignettes would provide facilitators and trainees valuable takeaways untethered to the specific situations from the training.<sup>24</sup>

Behavioral scientist Dan Ariely's provides additional terminology relevant to Army ethics trainers in *The (Honest) Truth About Dishonesty*. Ariely, a cognitive psychologist studying economic behavior, terms his version of confirmation bias "wishful blindness" and provides a label for when busy individuals in high stress situations slide into Bazerman's ethical fading: "ego depletion." Ariely posits "resisting temptation takes considerable effort and energy" and ethical failures rise as temptations increase over time. Ariely believes ethical decision-making improvement in the face of depletion begins with self-awareness of how susceptible an individual is to moral weakness when fatigued.<sup>25</sup> The Army values leaders with the ability to make decisions under pressure and while fatigued. These definitions could improve training and provide observer/coach

trainers at combat training centers additional terms of reference to assess leaders making decisions under stress.

Academia's assessment of decision-making models reveals another successful method for defining the "how" behind leader's thought processes. Chase Thiel's 2012 study of "Sensemaking" combines the work of Scott Sonenshein and earlier ethical reasoning researchers into a leader-focused ethical decision-making model readily available to integrate into Army character development and ethics training programs. Thiel's model blends analogical frameworks with four leader sensemaking strategies (emotion regulation, forecasting, self-reflection, and information integration) and three constraints (environmental, situational, and personal) to provide a path to an ethical decision.<sup>26</sup>

The four strategies focus the decision-maker internally and provide methods for mitigating the impact of emotion and heuristics on a decision. Most helpful to the military would be emotion regulation and information integration, blunting the effect of anger on a decision while simultaneously assisting the decision-maker's ability to diagnose the relevant relationships pertinent to the problem accurately.

Key to Thiel's model is the proper use of analogical frameworks. Current Army training risks younger leaders using training vignettes to establish their heuristics without understanding how analogical frameworks set the conditions for decision-making under stressful situations. Sensemaking also requires dedicating time to making a decision, making it harder to embed in an Army culture that values speed and efficiency.

Academia provides more than terms and concepts for training developers. This researcher found an evolution in successful training methodologies over the past decade as technology changed and companies rushed to embrace remote training yet found the results did not match the promise. More recent studies reveal techniques for successful integration of technology and interpersonal teaching and mentoring. Programs conducted by leaders/managers in small, yet inclusive, groups mirroring organizational demographics with dedicated reflection time for participants were the most effective.<sup>27</sup> Those studies reinforce the importance of leader involvement in training as opposed to entirely outsourcing critical developmental tasks to specialists such as "ethics officers."<sup>28</sup> Less effective programs relied on technology alone to deliver the training, reducing leader involvement and diminishing the importance of the topic and to the training audience.<sup>29</sup>

Interpersonal training research results support additional hypotheses that team-based approaches are more effective than self-paced interactive or lecture-based training.<sup>30</sup> Team training events succeed more often when targeted at critical junior personnel, facilitated by managers/leaders at the local level after regional and national leaders qualified local instructors. Group-based training solutions in recent research studies harken back to Lawrence Kohlberg's 1970s research on the ethical impacts of shared decision-making. Studies found this business-sector version of the military "train the trainer" highly effective, owing some of the success to the ability of the local leadership to apply relevant scenarios to the team training instead of canned, generic situations.<sup>31</sup>

## Private Sector Development Training Methods

Silicon Valley's work with the Center for Creative Leadership provides the Army with recent lessons learned on employee training methodologies and integrating technology into established organizational cultures. The Army's tactics, techniques, and procedures for leader development mirrors Silicon Valley's more than one would think. Those similarities provide insight into how the Army could improve training methods for critical skills like ethical decision-making.

Nick Petrie's CCL white paper, *Fast Track: How Silicon Valley Companies Accelerate Leadership Development*, provides short outlines of seven techniques to best train the self-described "different leaders" in Silicon Valley. Comparing Army training and these practices reveals more similarities than differences in building development plans for junior military leaders and software engineering team chiefs.<sup>32</sup>

Petrie's seven principles do not mention "ethics training," but they can serve as a guide for training individuals in high stress environments where change is constant, the fight for personnel never ends, and with an insular culture held in high regard by its members. One critical takeaway from Petrie's work: that the giants of the tech industry prefer leaders conduct training face-to-face and are "allergic" to tech-only solutions to training needs.<sup>33</sup> That aversion should serve as a warning to not swing the pendulum too far away from its hands-on training roots as the Army updates its training

Petrie's first three principles have direct parallels in current Army development models and training methods. "Give leaders heat experiences," "build ecosystems of peer to peer learning," and "design training for a closed culture" have parallels in the Army's initial entry training and basic officer/non-commissioned officer training courses. The Army versions of Petrie's principles, events such as leader reaction courses and

rotational peer leadership, exist primarily in the institutional domain of development. Ample opportunity to integrate CCL's ideas into sustainment training resides in the remaining two Army learning domains: operational and self-developmental.<sup>34</sup>

Petrie's final three principles provide the best roadmap for improving sustainment training in organizations like the U.S. Army. His research revealed success occurred when leaders/managers taught tangible skills able to be put to use quickly during short blocks of training. Petrie found trainers performed better with additional motivation, making the exercise attractive to both trainee and instructor. The suggestion Petrie uses—inviting customers to sessions to motivate the trainers—is not directly translatable to military training, but the concept of motivating trainers and using leaders instead of “ethics officers” to train important topics is certainly useful. His study of tech companies' training programs found Silicon Valley leadership preferred “snackable” use of mobile training applications despite their stated resistance to technology-centric training solutions.<sup>35</sup> The successful integration of the ‘right amount’ of technology can guide Army training improvements, as long as the Army finds a way to integrate reflection time into its hectic schedule as Silicon Valley was able to do.<sup>36</sup>

A successful private sector program currently integrated into the Army's *Framework for Character Development* is Mary Gentile's *Giving Voice to Values*. Gentile's program focuses on pre-planned action addressing ethical dilemmas instead of value-ethic based “what is right” training found in many other programs. *Giving Voice to Values* fits well with the action-oriented personality of military members and builds upon initial entry and junior leadership training focused on inculcating Army values-based ethics.<sup>37</sup> Large companies who, like the Army, require the dissemination of critical

compliance information while simultaneously needing to develop multiple echelons of managers and leaders capable of creating ethical organizational climates use *Giving Voice* in their training. Those large companies found that weaving ethics into everyday training events, improved upon with regular updates fed through trainee feedback, was the most effective reinforcement mechanism available, just as the Army is currently doing with the *Framework for Character Development*.<sup>38</sup>

The Center for the Army Professional Ethic's work with the private sector improved the content of Army ethics training, and small numbers of general officers and senior field grade leaders' attendance at CCL workshops exposes strategic leaders to innovative development techniques. The opportunity exists now, with the Chief of Staff of the Army's review of required training, to improve even more. The CAPE's current framework for character development uses several private sector best practices combined with military training expertise to form a solid foundation for developing ethical soldiers, but there is still room to improve.

#### Army Ethics Training – A Way Ahead.

Military ethicist Paul Robinson's thoughts on ethics training should guide leaders on the way ahead: "Ethics training should not be a substitute for moral leadership. Even the best instruction, conducted according to the best thought out principles, will count for nothing if soldiers can see that their commanders do not in fact value what they say they value."<sup>39</sup> Behaving ethically is primarily about making good decisions. Right now, the Army's mandatory training centers on what the right choice is, not how to make that decision and the traps one can fall into while making decisions. Training and developing ethical decision-making skills and concepts instead of compliance-based programs could address the Army's concerns about ethical behavior by getting "left of the boom."

This paper's recommendations fall into four categories: policy updates, professional military education (PME) changes, mandated training refinement, and assessment methodology.

### Policy Updates

First, the Chief of Staff of the Army must use concise terminology in his training requirements. The Department of Defense required ethics training addresses issues pertaining to conflicts of interest. The Army risks confusion amongst its training audience and cheapens the meaning of "ethics training" by calling a list of conflict of interest regulations "ethics." Lockheed Martin avoided this trap when it used *Giving Voice to Values* and adjusted its training terminology to match its target audience.<sup>40</sup> The Army should do the same, changing any Department of Defense/Joint Ethics Regulation training reference in Army Regulation 350-1 to "conflict of interest" training. The updated training will cover compliance requirements for service members likely to interact with contractors and/or support personnel for Senior Executive Service/General Officers to ensure compliance with often complex travel/gift regulations. Subject matter experts such as Judge Advocate General Corps officers should remain the primary trainers for this regulatory and compliance-focused training.

Leaders must be the primary trainers for all other ethics training. Placing the onus on leaders at various levels--from squad leader to battalion commander--aligns with the best practices of private sector training and is in keeping with military traditions on the role of leaders in soldier development.<sup>41</sup> Training is less effective when "ethics officers" are responsible for it and studies show an increase in information comprehension and retention when leaders/managers are the instructors.<sup>42</sup> The Army followed the tenet of putting a leader in charge of essential programs at the institutional

level by naming the Combined Arms Center commander, a three-star general, as the proponent for ethics training and character development. Combined Arms Center is now responsible for integrating ethics training into more than the required initial entry training and professional military education courses. The *Framework* directs weaving “army ethic” considerations into overall character development in soldiers. An update to the framework should address decision-making skills as part of character development and describe at least one ethical decision-making such as Thiel’s “sensemaking” in an annex.

The Chief of Staff’s professional reading list is a low-cost method of increasing awareness of a topic. Adding Bazerman’s *Blind Spots: Why We Fail to Do What’s Right and What to Do About It* to the list would increase understanding of key ethical reasoning concepts and how to combat the traps involved in decision-making processes. *Blind Spots*’ inclusion would also expose leaders whose professional military education lacked instruction on “in group bias” and “ethical fading” to receive exposure to those terms. Including private-sector books like *Blind Spots* is not without precedent. The current reading list contains works structured and written similarly to Bazerman such as Simon Sinek’s *Leaders Eat Last*.<sup>43</sup>

### PME Changes

The Center for the Army Professional Ethic should review available ethical decision-making models from academia and include two of these in programs of instruction at junior leader levels (Officer Basic, Captain’s Career, Warrior Leader, and Advanced Leader Courses). Junior leader qualification courses should modify current training time on composite risk management to include decision-making process instruction. A one-hour investment during professional military education facilitates

leaders teaching decision-making skills to their formations after graduation, potentially reducing mistakes in the future when those leaders attempt decision-making shortcuts. As the commander of the Joint Readiness Training Center once put it, "You cannot abbreviate what you do not already know."<sup>44</sup>

Current Army Ethic training during initial entry should not change and should retain the goal of establishing common values and promoting lower-level competency on the Kohlberg scale of moral reasoning. Researchers into military ethics topics agree on the limited, compliance-based focus in initial ethics training.<sup>45</sup> Pre-commissioning sources (Reserve Officer Training Corps, Officer Candidate School, and the U.S. Military Academy) should retain their current training on the army ethic, with a mirror-image course on a decision-making template from the updated Officer Basic Course program of instruction.

Officer Basic and Warrior Leader Courses should also include discussions of heuristics and other biases as they relate to decision-making by leaders. Max Bazerman's "in-group bias" concept should form the foundation of an easy-to-understand character development module. The discussion could occur without adding time to the program of instruction through integration into existing teambuilding events such as the leader reaction course or after-action reviews of tactical decision-making exercises. Those events place young leaders in charge of their peers, a situation ripe for what Bazerman terms "bounded ethicality" as the trainee tries to be a good teammate to the peers most similar to themselves while dismissing the input of others.<sup>46</sup> The trainer could use Bazerman's concepts as they review the trainee's decision-

making process, highlighting the traps the group fell victim to or avoided during the event.

As leaders grow and progress further, the decision-making models provided to them can increase in complexity. Captain's Career/Senior Leader Courses, as well as the U.S. Army Sergeant's Major Academy, should include an in-depth discussion of the "sensemaking" model as part of military decision-making process (MDMP) instruction. If proponents of MDMP instruction cannot support a slight reduction in training time, existing leadership/history case studies could integrate sensemaking into their discussion of how historical figures visualized their operating environment.

#### Mandated Training Refinement

Any new decision-making training must integrate into current Army Regulation 350-1 training requirements to prevent additional tasks, reflecting the National Commission on the Future of the Army's recommendations to reduce mandatory training.<sup>47</sup> Implementation of successful private sector training techniques will improve retention of essential training topics and may reduce the stigma of mandatory training events.

Congressionally-mandated sexual harassment and sexual assault prevention/response training are primed for successful integration of ethical decision-making skills and concepts. Decisions made after an allegation of sexual harassment or assault are a common ethical minefield for leaders. Integrating ethical decision-making training into these events aligns with Secretary of Defense Guidance on recognizing areas requiring ethical performance improvements.

Units often use large briefings by subject matter experts to accomplish mandated training, discounting the power of small groups of leaders engaging in a case study of a

recent incident in a similar unit. Leaders trained in sensemaking as a decision-making model and versed in the concepts of “in-group bias” and “the should/want self” could facilitate one-hour case study discussions as recommended by studies on effective ethics training in the private sector. The facilitator should highlight the decision-making process, not the value-ethic based right or wrong choices in the case study. Did the command team in question fall to “in group bias?” Did a junior leader in the case study successfully fight “wishful blindness” and see the incident for what it was? Discussions of these questions would prove more valuable during future ethical dilemmas than a laundry list of the successes/failures of a command team in response to an ethical dilemma. The case study should end with the development of an action plan for the next ethically challenging situation, in line with the action-oriented approach of *Giving Voice to Values*.

Outside of integrating ethical decision-making into other requirements, there is still room to improve the current ethics training vignettes and products. The use of technology to drive a face-to-face interaction between a leader and subordinate is a best practice in bridging generational gaps and succeeding in training personnel in high stress, closed cultures. The Center for the Army Professional Ethic should break their online products into smaller, more “snackable” sections found in successful Silicon Valley training programs.

The Center for the Army Professional Ethic should consider creating a leader professional development mobile application where leaders from squad to battalion level could disseminate shortened online videos with 5-7 short answer/multiple choice questions to a small group of trainees before a recurring leader development event. The

application would provide leaders with data from the post-vignette survey, relevant articles to use when the group meets face-to-face, and provide insight into how the group sees ethically challenging situations. Meeting to discuss the vignettes mitigates possible negative aspects of creating false analogical frameworks and develops more positive mental shortcuts in junior leaders through interaction with a more experienced instructor.

### Assessment Methodology

The absence of an accident does not indicate the presence of safety, just as the absence of unethical behavior does not indicate the presence of ethical reasoning and sound decision-making. The Center for the Army Professional Ethic states the current assessment method of successful ethics/character training is the absence of evidence of unethical behavior.<sup>48</sup> The Army should find a way to assess the ethical fitness of its leaders, not to weed out those that may fail, but to provide an opportunity for them to improve. The current Multi-Source Assessment and Feedback (MSAF) provides a template and delivery method for this assessment without risking pre-judgment of individuals found in need of ethical development. Including a tool such as Jonathan Haidt's Moral Foundation Questionnaire would enable participants to identify possible shortcomings in their ethical reasoning.<sup>49</sup> Researcher Scott Clifford used Haidt's work extensively in the creation of his moral vignette database, a resource the Army should use to find additional questions for the evaluation. Those answers would provide respondents an idea of their strengths and weaknesses in seven moral/ethical categories: care, fairness, loyalty, authority, sanctity, liberty, and social norms. The updated MSAF deliverable could include decision-making traps corresponding with the moral foundations' vignette responses and ways to counter their effects. The recurring

nature of the MSAF would provide longitudinal feedback on the individual leader's development and would double as an evaluation of the *Framework for Character Development's* campaign effectiveness. Successful training programs include longitudinal evaluations of training methods into their design.<sup>50</sup>

These recommendations do not come without risk. Additional training requirements can distract from other commander priorities, risking becoming an ignored or falsified statistic--one more data point about which the Army can lie to itself.<sup>51</sup> Any updates to the CAPE training products should not be mandatory and should only serve as vehicles to sustain ethical decision-making skills built through the development of character in professional military education and leader development programs. Combined Arms Center must continue to make it easier for junior leaders to integrate ethical decision-making skill development into everyday operations and training events by providing ready-to-use products.

The proposed MSAF update to include ethics measurements risks negative repercussions from raters without evidence of actual ethical failings. The Army can mitigate those risks through education and policy – making the proposed ethical strength portion of the MSAF optional and specifying in regulatory guidance that the results are only for use by the participant.

The Army has an opportunity to adjust its mandated training as it updates AR 350-1 and a Chief of Staff willing to cut requirements and entrust commanders with the decision on what to train. The Center for the Army Professional Ethics current approach to character development and its interwoven ethical education must combine with

proven private-sector techniques focusing on ethical decision-making skills vice the compliance-based training of the past.

### Conclusion

Senior military leaders recognize the importance of ethical decision making, but the Army's bureaucracy is slow to adapt to ethical training requirements. Army leadership must eliminate the compliance-based ethical training currently required for all soldiers, replacing it with "snackable" decision-making training conducted by mobile applications and small-group instruction. The recent focus on character development by the Center for the Army Professional Ethic provides an excellent foundation for updating current ethics education and training. Center for the Army Professional Ethics falling under the Combined Army Center gives the office a direct link to Army training requirement writing and facilitates the delivery of future ethical decision-making training modules.

### Endnotes

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