



Enhancing Professionalism in the U.S. Air Force

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Preface

Writing about the profession of arms in a February 2012 white paper, then–Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff GEN Martin Dempsey wrote, “We must continue to learn, to understand, and to promote the knowledge, skills, attributes, and behaviors that define us as a profession.”¹ In January 2014, the U.S. Air Force announced an investigation into officers of the 341st Missile Wing who were alleged to have cheated on a proficiency exam. In February 2014, the U.S. Navy announced an investigation into cheating by trainers at a school for nuclear power reactor operators. These examples highlight behaviors that most would agree are unbecoming to the military profession. In March 2014, in response to these and other ethical lapses by military personnel, then–Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel announced the appointment of RADM Margaret Klein to be his special assistant for military professionalism.

In this report, we consider the U.S. Air Force definition of professionalism—“A personal commitment and loyalty to Air Force standards and expectations framed within an environment of shared trust, guided by Air Force Core Values”²—as a starting point to address the question: What can the Air Force do to increase its professionalism?

The research reported here was commissioned by the vice commander of U.S. Air Force Air Education and Training Command and conducted within the Manpower, Personnel, and Training Program of RAND Project AIR FORCE as part of a fiscal year 2015 project titled, “Air Force Professional Development.” This report is intended for leaders of all ranks throughout the Air Force.

RAND Project AIR FORCE

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¹ Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, “America’s Military: A Profession of Arms,” white paper, February 2012.

² Profession of Arms Center of Excellence, *Strategic Roadmap: United States Air Force Profession of Arms*, Air Education and Training Command, May 2015, p. 4.

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Summary

In recent years, the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) has increased its departmentwide focus on military professionalism after a series of highly publicized transgressions by members of the U.S. military across the services. In spring 2014, then–Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel established the role of special adviser for military professionalism, with the responsibility to “focus on ethics, character, and competence at every level of command with an uncompromising culture of accountability.” Hagel stated, “This will continue to be a top priority for DoD’s senior leadership.”¹ In line with this focus, the U.S. Air Force was undertaking its own efforts to improve professionalism, many of which were already under way. In fall 2014, the Air Force Air Education and Training Command (AETC) asked RAND Project AIR FORCE to address the overarching question, “How can the Air Force best improve the professionalism of Airmen?”²

The Air Force definitions related to its profession of arms and professionalism are as follows:

Air Force Profession of Arms:

A vocation comprised of experts in the design, generation, support and application of global vigilance, global reach and global power serving under civilian authority, entrusted to defend the Constitution and accountable to the American people.³

Air Force Professional:

An Airman (Active Duty, Reserve, Guard or civilian) is a trusted servant to our Nation who demonstrates unquestionable competence, adheres to the highest ethical standards and is a steward of the future of the Air Force profession. Air Force professionals are distinguished by a willing commitment and loyalty to the Air Force Core Values.⁴

Air Force Professionalism:

A personal commitment and loyalty to Air Force standards and expectations framed within an environment of shared trust, guided by Air Force Core Values.⁵

¹ Andrew Tilghman, “Hagel Names ‘Military Professionalism’ Adviser,” *Military Times*, March 25, 2014.

² In 2004, then–Chief of Staff Gen John Jumper established the practice of capitalizing the term *Airman*. In this report, we follow that convention. See John P. Jumper, “Airman with a Capital ‘A,’” U.S. Air Force website, March 23, 2004.

³ Profession of Arms Center of Excellence (PACE), *Strategic Roadmap: United States Air Force Profession of Arms*, AETC, May 2015, p. 4.

⁴ PACE, 2015, p. 4.

⁵ PACE, 2015, p. 4.

Using the central concepts of these definitions (expertise, service, and morals and ethics) as a reference point, we sought to answer five key questions:

- How does the Air Force define the term *professionalism*, and are current definitions sufficient to support cohesive, effective efforts across the Air Force?
- What can be learned from past professionalism efforts in the U.S. military?
- In the absence of metrics intended specifically to measure professionalism, what can we learn about the current state of professionalism as reflected by existing data sources:
 - violations of the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ)
 - surveys of attitudes among civilian and military Air Force members
 - Air Force learning opportunities related to professionalism?
- How can key themes from the literature on organizational culture and change inform the effort to improve Air Force professionalism?
- Based on the findings from the questions above, what steps can the Air Force take to increase professionalism?

We drew on numerous sources of information to address the research questions. We examined government documents, survey data, research literature, news media, and Air Force learning materials. We also conducted meetings and interviews, observed training sessions, and attended a summit on Air Force professionalism. Given that metrics intended specifically to measure professionalism do not exist, we examined data from annual reports of the UCMJ, along with data from annual surveys—the Status of Forces Survey (SOFS) and Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS).

The Definition of Air Force Professionalism Needs Clarification

Our analysis surfaced two key concerns with the existing definitions. First, the definition of *Air Force professional*, in its use of the term *Airman* to include active-duty, reserve, guard, and civilian members, overlooks an important distinction between members of the profession of arms and civilian Air Force professionals—specifically, that military members are expected to bear arms and be willing to give up their lives in service, while civilians are not.⁶ Second, although the Air Force has published definitions of the terms related to professionalism, in our meetings and interviews with Air Force stakeholders, we found little shared understanding of the meaning of Air Force professionalism. Further, some might not agree with or accept the current definitions.

⁶ Carl H. Builder, *The Icarus Syndrome: The Role of Air Power Theory in the Evolution and Fate of the U.S. Air Force*, New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction, 1994, p. xvii; and Sam C. Sarkesian, John Allen Williams, and Fred Boyd Bryant, *Soldiers, Society, and National Security*, Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995, p. 15.

Past Professionalism Efforts Reveal Patterns and Highlight the Role of Senior Leadership

Understanding that recent initiatives to improve professionalism in the Air Force and DoD are not the first, we examined past events and actions related to professionalism and core values across DoD for the 25-year period spanning 1990 through 2014. We chose this period because it began just before the Air Force established its current core values, which serve as one of the foundations for its professionalism-related definitions today, and because its endpoint was just before this study began. We established a chronology of major ethical incidents, large-scale military conflicts, and institution-level efforts, and we interviewed senior leaders responsible for initiating past and current efforts to improve professionalism. The findings lend support to widely held speculation that two factors—lower intensity of military conflict and public attention to ethical violations—are associated with the presence and timing of professionalism efforts. The findings also underscore the critical role of senior leadership—that senior leaders must personally endorse and promote efforts to improve professionalism, which aligns with concepts in management literature.

Preliminary Indicators of the Current State of Air Force Professionalism

Because the Air Force does not currently have metrics specifically designed or selected to measure professionalism, we used existing data to conduct a preliminary assessment of the state of professionalism. While there is no single perfect indicator of professionalism, each data source provided preliminary insights. First, we examined UCMJ violations as an indicator of failures in professionalism. Second, we analyzed data from the FEVS and the SOFS as indicators of attitudes toward workplace culture and values, which relate to the Air Force definition of professionalism. Third, we analyzed a small selection of Air Force learning opportunities to examine the extent to which they aligned with current Air Force professionalism goals. These indicators provided preliminary insight into the state of Air Force professionalism, and the data sources included officers, enlisted, and civilians. The indicators we used, such as UCMJ violations, are consistent with those reported by agencies associated with other professions. For example, the state agencies that license psychologists and physicians also report violations, as do state bar associations for lawyers. Also, researchers have used attitude surveys of members of professions as indicators of the degree to which members ascribe to values specific to the profession.

UCMJ Violations Show Positive and Negative Trends

To establish a baseline for failures of professionalism in the Air Force compared with those in the other military services, we analyzed data from annual reports pursuant to the UCMJ for fiscal

years 1990 through 2014.⁷ We found that the Air Force exhibited longitudinal trends similar to those of the other services, but the Air Force was consistently lower in terms of the frequency of general, special, and summary courts-martial, as well as in the frequency of less-serious nonjudicial punishments. However, while other services have seen declines in rates of officer dismissals and dishonorable discharges during this period, the Air Force rates have remained stable. For complaints under Article 138 (which represent instances of a service member requesting redress if believing he or she was wronged by a commanding officer⁸), we found complaint rates decreased in the other services but increased in the Air Force. While the data do not indicate whether the complaints are substantiated, the matter bears further investigation.

Attitudes Surveys Reveal Items of Concern

Again, in the absence of specific metrics for professionalism, we turned to indicators of Air Force members' attitudes on workplace culture and military values. Thus, we analyzed survey data from the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's FEVS of the federal civilian workforce and the DoD's SOFS of military personnel. We focused on questions related to professionalism on topics of leadership and values.

We found that, for the period 2010 through 2014, Air Force civilians were positively inclined toward their supervisors (approximately 72 percent) but increasingly less positive about their senior leaders (58 percent to 54 percent). Similarly, Air Force military personnel tended to view their supervisors in a positive light from 2010 to 2013. Data from Air Force military personnel indicated that they were generally proud to be in the military, but there was a small decline from 2012 to 2013. Of greater concern was the finding that almost 40 percent of Air Force military personnel did not respond positively to a statement about identifying with the military's values, and the responses from the Air Force were slightly lower than those from the other services.

Learning Opportunities Vary in Reinforcing Professionalism Goals

To understand how the Air Force is currently training and educating its members on professionalism, we conducted an exploratory analysis of a small selection of courses and seminars that reach officer candidates; officers; and, to a limited extent, enlisted personnel and civilians. The analysis examined the alignment between the courses' stated objectives and the goals stated in the recently signed Air Force strategic road map for professionalism. We found limited alignment between current learning activities and the goals stated in the road map. The findings suggest that more work may be needed to establish a common understanding of the

⁷ "Annual Reports Pursuant to the Uniform Code of Military Justice," Military Legal Resources website (Library of Congress), August 12, 2014.

⁸ Air Force Instruction 51-904, *Complaints of Wrongs Under Article 138, Uniform Code of Military Justice*, Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, U.S. Air Force, Judge Advocate General, June 30, 1994.

meaning of Air Force professionalism among Air Force educators and trainers and then to align professionalism-related learning opportunities with the goals in the Air Force strategic road map.

Improving Professionalism Requires Several Key Ingredients

Understanding that improving Air Force professionalism relates to its culture and involves some degree of change, we identified important themes from the literature on organizational culture and change that relate to the Air Force’s effort to improve professionalism. They are urgency, cultural leadership, communication, empowerment, and measurement. The following recommendations incorporate these themes.

Recommendations

Based on the findings from this study, we offer the following recommendations.

1. Actively promote a clear definition of what professionalism means for Air Force personnel to create a shared understanding of behavioral expectations.

Our meetings and interviews with stakeholders underscored the need to devote more attention to refining and then promulgating the definitions associated with Air Force professionalism. This may be the most important starting point for any actions based on this research. These definitions should provide behavioral descriptions of the standards and expectations of professionalism. Defining the complicated and multifaceted nature of professionalism in terms of concrete and observable components will increase the likelihood that all members will develop a shared understanding of professionalism.

To do this, the Air Force should begin by developing, publishing, and promulgating accessible narrative examples of both professional and unprofessional behaviors. The “Encyclopedia of Ethical Failure,”⁹ which reports and categorizes actual ethical failures, could serve as one example. The “Cadet X letters”¹⁰ used to teach the Honor Code at the U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA) could serve as another.

Those leading this effort should also consider leveraging existing resources—such as the Air Force Institutional Competencies List, the USAFA Outcomes,¹¹ and existing bodies, such as the Air Force Professionalism Working Group—to shape the efforts. Members of the Professionalism Working Group could be tasked with drafting professionalism competencies and targeted outcomes that could later be integrated into the Institutional Competencies List and USAFA Outcomes.

⁹ DoD, Standards of Conduct Office, *Encyclopedia of Ethical Failure*, September 2016.

¹⁰ “Cadet X letters” refers to case studies of actual honor code violations.

¹¹ USAFA, *Outcomes*, 2009.

2. Ensure that Air Force senior leaders consistently embrace and hold themselves and others accountable to the institution's standards and expectations for professionalism—regardless of media exposure and/or level of military activity.

The analysis of past events, examination of learning opportunities, survey findings, and management literature all pointed to the important role of senior leaders in influencing professionalism in an organization. As a first step, senior leaders themselves must all serve as examples of the level of professionalism expected of them and those they lead. Second, their behavior and expectations should be consistent across time and varying circumstances. We found that professionalism receives more attention in times of lower military activity and after negative publicity for ethical violations. It stands to reason that consistent—rather than episodic—attention to professionalism will more likely produce consistent results over time.

Professionalism must be treated as a priority under all conditions at all times, whether or not the nation is at war and even when violations are not spotlighted in the media.

3. Establish a sense of urgency for enhancing professionalism by increasing the visibility, engagement, and communication of senior leaders on the topic to reinforce its importance within Air Force culture.

John Kotter, a well-known organizational change expert, finds that the biggest reason that change efforts fail is *not* establishing a great enough sense of urgency; efforts fail when people are not motivated to do something differently.¹² Because the professionalism effort, whether it is viewed as an organizational change or simply a reinvigoration of existing values, requires actions different from the status quo, the Air Force should leverage senior leaders who are committed to displaying professionalism to serve as cultural leaders and change agents who inspire and motivate others to behave in accord with the highest standards of professionalism.

The Air Force should do this by encouraging senior leaders to consistently discuss the importance of professionalism in a wide variety of activities (ranging from formal speaking engagements to informal interactions). This continued engagement and communication will increase the visibility of the topic and strengthen the perception that it is an important part of Air Force culture. At the same time, it is critical that those leaders conduct themselves according to the standards expected of their subordinates. Without this consistency between words and actions, the communication from senior leaders may produce the opposite effect from that intended.

4. Establish goals and standards for learning opportunities intended to foster professionalism.

¹² John P. Kotter, “Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail,” *Harvard Business Review*, January 2007.

While the Air Force strategic road map for professionalism lays out general goals, the Air Force should establish specific goals and standards for professionalism-related education and training and better align the content of professionalism learning opportunities with them. We recommend that the Air Force involve its experts in adult learning, instructional design, curriculum design, and organizational psychology from across AETC to develop clear operational goals and standards for professionalism education and training that are aligned with the Air Force strategic road map for professionalism. Those standards should also encourage the use of instructional methods that are more conducive to instilling professionalism behaviors, which might include increasing in-residence learning opportunities.

5. Establish a dashboard of professionalism metrics to support ongoing monitoring of progress and needs.

Finally, the fact that we had to leverage indirect, *ad hoc* indicators of professionalism underscores the need for specific and deliberately selected professionalism metrics. Without measurement, it is difficult to know the scope of the problem or whether efforts at improvement are making a difference. We recommend that the Air Force take an inventory of existing metrics related to professionalism to better understand what data are available and identify remaining gaps, which may call for new metrics to be integrated into existing tools, such as climate surveys. Items representing the most critical behaviors and attitudes should be selected and monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure that professionalism standards are met and sustained over time.

For example, indicators from the Air Force general counsel, inspector general, and judge advocate offices may represent a useful starting point. In addition, modifications to regularly administered climate surveys that query Airmen about ethical dilemmas they face could prove valuable in pointing toward policy changes that would support professional behaviors. The Air Force professionalism dashboard should be populated with the smallest number of metrics that would be effective in representing the state of professionalism of the organization over time. Keeping in mind the principle that what is measured changes, the Air Force should carefully consider the implications of each metric selected to avoid unanticipated negative consequences and identify those metrics which, when tracked over time, are most likely to lead to positive change.

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Abbreviations

ACSC	Air Command and Staff College
AETC	Air Education and Training Command
AFB	Air Force base
AFI	Air Force Instruction
AFOSI	Air Force Office of Special Investigations
AU	Air University
AWC	Air War College
BCD	bad-conduct discharge
BMT	basic military training
CDI	commander-directed investigation
CJCS	Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
DMDC	Defense Manpower Data Center
DoD	U.S. Department of Defense
FEVS	Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey
FY	fiscal year
GAM	game à la military
GAO	U.S. Government Accountability Office
IG	inspector general
MTI	military training instructor
NJP	nonjudicial punishment
OPM	U.S. Office of Personnel Management
PACE	Profession of Arms Center of Excellence
PME	professional military education
ROTC	Reserve Officer Training Corps
SOFS	Status of Forces Survey
SOS	Squadron Officer School

UCMJ	Uniform Code of Military Justice
USAFA	U.S. Air Force Academy

1. Introduction

In recent years, after a series of highly publicized transgressions by members of the U.S. military, such as fraud in the Army Recruiting Assistance Program,¹ a large web of bribery and contracting fraud in the U.S. Navy,² sexual assaults by military trainers at Lackland Air Force Base (AFB),³ and the photos and videos showing marines defiling the bodies of dead adversaries,⁴ the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) increased its departmentwide focus on military professionalism. In spring 2014, then-Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel established the role of special adviser for military professionalism, to which he appointed Navy RADM Margaret Klein with the charge to “focus on ethics, character, and competence at every level of command with an uncompromising culture of accountability,” and stated, “This will continue to be a top priority for DoD’s senior leadership.”⁵

Along with the other branches of the military, the U.S. Air Force was beset by serious and highly publicized misdeeds among some of its members—for example, besides the sexual assault scandal mentioned above, there was widespread cheating on proficiency tests by nuclear missile launch officers at Malmstrom AFB.⁶ Although the vast majority of Air Force service members were not committing such misdeeds, the organization was undertaking its own efforts to improve professionalism. Although substantial educational and training programs were already in place within the Air Education and Training Command (AETC), including those at Air University (AU), the U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA), Air Force leaders were looking for ways to strengthen adherence to the Air Force core values, ethics, and high standards of professional behavior even further. While this research was under way, the Air Force took steps to establish a center to focus on professionalism within the Air Force, and the Air Force Profession of Arms Center of Excellence (PACE) was formally established in March 2015 within AETC.

¹ Tom Vanden Brook, “Recruiting Fraud, Kickback Scandal Rocks Army,” *USA Today*, February 3, 2014.

² Craig Whitlock, “Navy Fraud Case Prosecutors: Contractor Got More Work Despite Poor Performance,” *Washington Post*, December 4, 2013.

³ “Lackland Sex Scandal Prompts U.S. Air Force to Discipline Former Commanders,” CBS News, May 2, 2013.

⁴ Patrick Dickson, “Photos Surface of Marines Apparently Violating Corpses in Iraq,” *Stars and Stripes*, January 15, 2014.

⁵ Andrew Tilghman, “Hagel Names ‘Military Professionalism’ Adviser,” *Military Times*, March 25, 2014.

⁶ Helene Cooper, “Air Force Fires 9 Officers in Scandal over Cheating on Proficiency Tests,” *New York Times*, March 27, 2014.

Study Background

In fall 2014, leaders in the Air Force AETC asked RAND Project AIR FORCE to address the overarching question: “How can the Air Force best improve the professionalism of Airmen?” The question was meant to encompass all members of the workforce, including officers, enlisted, guard, reserve, and civilians, but they suggested the order of priority of active-duty officers, enlisted, and civilians. We assumed that a level of professionalism was already present within the Air Force and that leaders were concerned with improving on it, not creating it.

To address this very broad question, the RAND research team identified the following research questions as a guide:

- How does the Air Force define the term *professionalism*, and are current definitions sufficient to support cohesive, effective efforts across the Air Force?
- What can be learned from examining U.S. military professionalism efforts from the recent past to guide current efforts?
- In the absence of metrics intended specifically to measure professionalism, what can we learn about the current state of Air Force professionalism as indicated by existing data sources:
 - violations of the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ)
 - surveys of attitudes of Air Force personnel (including civilian and military)
 - Air Force learning opportunities related to professionalism?
- How can the literature on organizational culture and change inform the effort to improve Air Force professionalism?
- Based on the findings from the questions above, what steps can the Air Force take to increase professionalism?

Research Approach and Data Sources

To address these research questions, we adopted a necessarily broad perspective. Because varying definitions of professionalism exist, we reviewed numerous definitions as part of the study. To begin this effort, we examined the Air Force’s current definition of the meaning of professionalism and found similarities between it and other definitions in use in DoD. We also focused primarily on Air Force data, except for the part of the study in which we examined professionalism efforts over the past 25 years.

We drew on the following sources of information to address the questions above:

- **Meetings and interviews:** We conducted more than 20 meetings and interviews with key stakeholders in the Air Force. These individuals included training developers, curriculum developers, instructors, managers, and top leaders involved with professionalism efforts.
- **Research literature:** We reviewed research literature related to organizational culture, organizational change, and professionalism.

- **Government documents:** We reviewed documents from the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), DoD, the Air Force, and other U.S. military services related to core values and professionalism.
- **Documentation of learning opportunities:** We reviewed course descriptions, course syllabi, and survey evaluations for select courses from USAFA, AU, and PACE. We analyzed course syllabi from USAFA, learning objectives from AU, survey findings from AU, and survey evaluations from PACE.
- **News media:** We reviewed articles from *Air Force Times* and popular mainstream news outlets for stories related to misconduct and efforts to improve professionalism.
- **Survey data:** We analyzed data from the Status of Forces Survey (SOFS) from 2010 through 2013 and the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) from 2010 through 2014. These two data sources provide insight into active-duty members and civilians.
- **Annual reports pursuant to the UCMJ:** We analyzed data on UCMJ convictions from 1990 through 2014.
- **Air Force Professionalism Summit:** We attended the two-day professionalism summit meeting held in May 2015, which highlighted selected professionalism-related efforts from across the Air Force.
- **Observations:** We observed two relevant training events—the Enhancing Human Capital course offered by AETC and selected sessions from Airmen’s Week, which follows basic military training (BMT).

Each of these sources of information served as background either to help us understand the topic of professionalism or to directly address the research questions identified above. We selected these sources to examine the concept of professionalism from both inside and outside the Air Force. The research literature provides objective, generalizable background information on professionalism, organizational culture, and change. The Air Force sources (stakeholders, documents, learning opportunities, and summit) reflect how the service is addressing professionalism. In the absence of metrics specifically designed to measure professionalism, the survey and UCMJ data provide information from across DoD to enable us to compare the Air Force with other services, for both active-duty members and civilians. Finally, stories in the news media provide insight into the issues that have received attention from outside the Air Force.

Organization of This Report

We have organized this report around the research questions. In Chapter 2, we address the first research question, examine the Air Force definition of *professionalism*, and identify our working definition for this report. Chapter 3 addresses the second research question and examines professionalism initiatives from across the U.S. military services. The next three chapters address the third research question and discuss existing data that provide insight into the state of Air Force professionalism in the absence of metrics specifically meant to measure Air Force professionalism. Chapter 4 presents an analysis of UCMJ data as a rough indicator of failures in professionalism. Chapter 5 discusses survey data on civilian and military attitudes related to

professionalism, and Chapter 6 describes some of the learning opportunities meant to teach and/or enhance professionalism in the Air Force. Chapter 7 relates key themes from the literature on organizational culture and change to the effort to improve Air Force professionalism. Finally, Chapter 8 summarizes the study's findings and presents recommendations for actions to strengthen professionalism across the Air Force. Appendix A provides background information to support information in Chapter 3. Appendix B summarizes an ancillary analysis of reports of ethical incidents in a public news outlet focused on the Air Force.

2. Defining Air Force Professionalism

On March 24, 2015, DoD posted a brief video of former Secretary of Defense Hagel and then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) GEN Martin E. Dempsey on YouTube titled, “A Message on Military Professionalism.”¹ Speaking in this video, General Dempsey said, “we must rekindle within the force both our understanding and our resolve as a profession. We must strengthen the enduring norms and values that define us.” One day later, in his call to action in appointing a senior adviser on military professionalism, Secretary Hagel referred to the need for the military services to focus on *ethics, character, competence, and accountability*.² Together, these messages set the terms of reference for an increased focus on professionalism and the military profession across the military services. As noted in Chapter 1, RAND Project AIR FORCE was asked how the Air Force can improve the professionalism of its members. Addressing this question requires a clear understanding of what the Air Force means by the term *professionalism*.³

In this chapter, we briefly discuss the concept of professionalism as defined in the literature, report the definitions currently in use in the Air Force, relate them to definitions of military professionalism from the literature, and highlight key concerns that the use of these definitions raises. Finding considerable conceptual overlap between the Air Force definitions and the definition used in DoD, we understand professionalism to encompass the key concepts of expertise, service, and morals and ethics.

Definitions of Military Professionalism from the Literature

To develop a deeper understanding of the professionalism concept as it applies to the military profession, we examined foundational works on professions and the profession of arms.⁴ We

¹ DoD, “A Message on Professionalism in the Department of Defense,” Department of Defense YouTube channel, March 24, 2015.

² Tilghman, 2014.

³ We recognize the possibility of the confusion resulting from the use of the related terms *profession*, *professional*, and *professionalism*. However, although the focus of remarks by General Dempsey and Secretary Hagel was on military professionalism, to understand what that term means requires delving into the meaning of the terms *profession* and *professional* in the following sense: that *professionalism* refers to the expected behavior of a professional who is a member of a profession.

⁴ Sources include Andrew Abbott, *The System of Professions: An Essay on the Division of Expert Labor*, Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1988; Bernard Barber, “Some Problems in the Sociology of the Professions,” *Daedalus*, Vol. 92, No. 4, 1963; Ernest Greenwood, “Attributes of a Profession,” in Sigmund Nosow and William Humbert Form, eds., *Man, Work, and Society: A Reader in the Sociology of Occupations*, New York: Basic Books, 1962; John Winthrop Hackett, *The Profession of Arms*, New York: Macmillan, 1983; Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil–Military Relations*, Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957; Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait*,

selected these sources either because they emerged as important in our literature searches on the profession of arms or because they were cited in the meetings and interviews we conducted as part of this research. We also reviewed defense publications from three allied nations (Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom) and from the four services within DoD: Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, and Navy.⁵ The defense journals included *Air and Space Power Journal*, *Australian Army Journal*, *Canadian Military Journal*, *Joint Force Quarterly*, *Journal of Character and Leadership Integration*, and *Parameters*.

Although the characterizations of professions in the literature differ from one another, three attributes repeatedly appear and were consistent with the Air Force definitions (listed in the next section):

1. *expertise*: specialized education or training required for membership
2. *service*: orientation toward service by the profession and its members
3. *code of morals and ethics*: self-regulation of the members' behavior by the profession.

Consistent with the first and third of these attributes, DoD notes, in *The Armed Forces Officer*,⁶ that the profession of arms has two major components that subsume everything that is important: a *functional* component and a *moral* component. The functional component includes the technical expertise and skill demanded of each specific occupational specialty in carrying out its assigned mission. There are individual and organizational elements to this functional component, and it is essentially the officers who bear the additional burden of responsibility for the skills of the collective unit.⁷ The moral component guides behavior both in peacetime and in the chaotic circumstances of war.

Although some may see the military services as bureaucracies, Snider distinguishes the military profession from bureaucracies: "Professions create and expand expert knowledge," while "bureaucracies apply the knowledge that professions have developed and discarded."⁸ Building on the notion that there is a strong moral component in professions, he points out that it is professional ethics and not bureaucratic controls (such as promotion and monetary rewards) that are most powerful in "controlling individual behavior in large groups that are functioning under ambiguous, chaotic and dangerous circumstances, such as war."⁹

Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1960; Charles C. Moskos, "The All-Volunteer Military: Calling, Profession, or Occupation?" *Parameters*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 1977; Sam C. Sarkesian, John Allen Williams, and Fred Boyd Bryant, *Soldiers, Society, and National Security*, Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995; Don M. Snider, "The U.S. Army as a Military Profession," West Point, N.Y.: Center for the Army Profession and Ethic, November 20, 2014.

⁵ We did not include the Coast Guard because it falls under the Department of Homeland Security, not DoD.

⁶ DoD, *The Armed Forces Officer*, January 2006.

⁷ DoD, 2006.

⁸ Snider, 2014.

⁹ Snider, 2014, p. 11.

Abbott views professions from a slightly different angle, focusing on the character of the work that professions do as important in understanding how occupations become professionalized and in defining what characterizes a profession.¹⁰ He gives his definition of professions as “exclusive occupational groups applying somewhat abstract knowledge to particular cases.”¹¹ So, for example, the knowledge of how to wage a military campaign is quite abstract and becomes concrete only in waging a specific military campaign.

If a profession is characterized as having a functional component of expertise and a moral component that guides behavior under uncertain circumstances, a *professional* is someone with highly specialized knowledge and skill who follows a code of ethics and standards of behavior laid out by the profession to which he or she belongs. In the next section, we examine the profession of arms and the related terms as the Air Force defines them.

The concept of military professionalism referenced by Secretary Hagel and General Dempsey in the quotes at the beginning of this chapter, while strongly emphasizing the moral and ethical aspects of professionalism, is generally consistent with these conceptualizations.

How the Air Force Defines *Profession of Arms*, *Professional*, and *Professionalism*

In 2015, the Air Force issued a strategic road map for professionalism that includes definitions that are specific to the Air Force and meant to support its current efforts to build the related attributes among its members. The relevant Air Force definitions are:

Air Force Profession of Arms:

A vocation comprised of experts in the design, generation, support and application of global vigilance, global reach and global power serving under civilian authority, entrusted to defend the Constitution and accountable to the American people.¹²

Air Force Professional:

An Airman (Active Duty, Reserve, Guard or civilian) is a trusted servant to our Nation who demonstrates unquestionable competence, adheres to the highest ethical standards and is a steward of the future of the Air Force profession. Air Force professionals are distinguished by a willing commitment and loyalty to the Air Force Core Values.¹³

¹⁰ Abbott, 1988.

¹¹ Abbott, 1988, pp. 8–9.

¹² PACE, *Strategic Roadmap: United States Air Force Profession of Arms*, AETC, May 2015, p. 4.

¹³ PACE, 2015, p. 4.

Air Force Professionalism:

A personal commitment and loyalty to Air Force standards and expectations framed within an environment of shared trust, guided by Air Force Core Values.¹⁴

Airman:

Airman includes all commissioned officers, noncommissioned officers, airmen, and civilian members that serve in support of the almost 200 Air Force specialties [sic] codes.¹⁵

The wording in these definitions highlights concepts similar to the three basic elements of professions we identified earlier:

1. *expertise*: “A vocation comprised of *experts* in the design, generation, support and application of global vigilance, global reach and global power serving under civilian authority”
2. *service*: “An Airman (Active Duty, Reserve, Guard or civilian) is a trusted *servant to our Nation*”
3. *morals and ethics*: “willing commitment and loyalty to the Air Force Core Values”—that is, a moral code that guides behavior.¹⁶

Abstracting from the above definitions, we understand the Air Force profession of arms to include professionals with highly specialized knowledge and skill who are committed to serving society and who follow a code of ethics and standards of behavior laid out by the Air Force—a conceptualization consistent with DoD (in *The Armed Forces Officer*¹⁷) and its top leaders, as quoted at the beginning of this chapter. Therefore, for our purposes, we retain an understanding of professionalism that encompasses highly specialized knowledge, commitment to service, and adherence to a code of morals and ethics. The next section highlights some of the challenges that the specific wording of the Air Force definitions poses to increasing Air Force professionalism.

Challenges to a Shared Understanding of Air Force Professionalism

Although we found the Air Force definitions of *profession of arms*, *profession*, and *professionalism* to be consistent with other established conceptualizations, our study surfaced two concerns that pose challenges to a shared understanding across the organization. First, the use of the term *Airman* to include active-duty, reserve, guard, and civilian members overlooks an important distinction among members of the profession of arms, other professionals, and competent experts who do not necessarily identify with a profession. Second, in our meetings

¹⁴ PACE, 2015, p. 4.

¹⁵ Thomas N. Barnes Center for Enlisted Education, *Airman Leadership Distance Learning Course: Professional Airman*, Maxwell-Gunter AFB, Ala., 2014, p. 10.

¹⁶ PACE, 2015 (emphasis added).

¹⁷ DoD, 2006.

and interviews with Air Force stakeholders, which took place from October 2014 through September 2015, we found little shared understanding of the meaning of Air Force professionalism.

The Term Airman Overlooks Important Distinctions

The literature on *professions* and the *profession of arms* points to an additional important concern regarding the current Air Force definitions. The current definition of *Airman* includes active-duty members, reserve, guard, and civilians, but there is an important difference between civilians and the other three categories. A necessary part of membership in the Air Force profession of arms is the willingness to give one's life in service. While this applies to all military members, it does not apply to civilians. The use of the term *Airman* to include civilians could be compared to the Army referring to its civilian employees as *soldiers*, or the Marine Corps referring to its civilian employees as *marines*; however, neither of those services uses such terminology. It is possible that this use of the term *Airman* seems inaccurate to both civilian and military members of the Air Force. Although expected to adhere to Air Force standards and expectations, civilians are not subject to the UCMJ, as are uniformed members. An example that highlights the stark distinction between standards of behavior for uniformed members and civilian employees can be seen in Article 85 of the UCMJ, Desertion, which specifies that a uniformed member may face the death penalty if he or she deserts during time of war.¹⁸ A civilian employee would face no such sanction for walking away from a position. This suggests the need for a shift in the use of terminology such that military members are distinct from civilians. Such a clarification would allow a more tailored concept of professionalism for each group.

Limited Shared Understanding of What Air Force Professionalism Means

In our meetings and interviews with Air Force stakeholders, we found little shared understanding of the meaning of Air Force professionalism. Some asked, "What do you mean by professionalism?" Some focused on very specific behaviors, such as tucking in one's shirt, and some interpreted the term as referring solely to technical expertise. This finding was not necessarily unexpected. In fact, it aligns with what Wiersma described as the responses he received when he asked senior executives what it meant to be a professional:

These senior executives (the big-title, gray-hair crowd) appreciated the question and saw it as important, but it was clear that they had not thought much about the answer, perhaps because of their own understanding of the term. Professionalism is a part of our everyday vernacular and those senior executives had their own ideas. But what seemingly appeared as a no-brainer turned into a brain-freeze. Not a freeze in terms of ideas on the subject of professionalism—there were certainly plenty of those—but a freeze in terms of being able to define what

¹⁸ U.S. Code, Title 10, Chapter 47, Uniform Code of Military Justice, multiple dates.

professionalism means to them personally, as well as what the implications were regarding their conduct.¹⁹

This description also applies to what we observed in meetings and interviews for this study. The lack of a widely shared understanding of the meaning of Air Force professionalism represents a challenge because it allows for many different interpretations, which may lead to differing standards of behavior. While we are not advocating that all members of the Air Force should be required to memorize a single definition word for word, we are suggesting that developing a shared understanding of professionalism, which is an exceedingly abstract and multifaceted construct, may be best achieved through more concrete, behavioral descriptions.

Recommendations for the Way Forward

In this chapter, we briefly examined the meaning of the concept of professionalism, as well as the distinguishing characteristics of the profession of arms from the literature. Considering the current definitions of Air Force professionalism alongside those concepts, we found the common themes of expertise, service, and morals or ethics. We noted two key challenges regarding the current definitions. One is that the terms in the strategic road map conflate military and civilian members together. While this might be done in the spirit of inclusion, it overlooks an important difference between military and civilian members. The overgeneralization of *Airman* and the profession of arms may lead members on either side to feel less identified with these terms and thus less responsible for adhering to the corresponding expectations. Another challenge is that the terms related to Air Force professionalism and their meanings are not yet widely known. This lack of shared understanding provides a weak foundation for shared standards of behavior. From these findings, we offer the following recommendations.

First, we suggest using consistent language across all documents, materials, and websites that refer to Air Force professionalism and the core values. Although implementing this recommendation will take time, the emphasis on and attention to consistent messaging will likely assist in creating a shared understanding of the ideal state that the Air Force wishes to achieve.

Second, we recognize that the Air Force has engaged in thoughtful discussion pertaining to the term *Airman* and the inclusion of both uniformed personnel and civilians; however, we recommend that those responsible for professionalism efforts carefully consider the potential consequences of conflating the two groups under a term that may seem disingenuous and find ways to differentiate the two groups in ways that recognize their respective value to the organization.

Third, and perhaps most important, we suggest developing and disseminating concrete definitions and examples for abstract terms, such as *loyalty*, *commitment*, and other terms that

¹⁹ Bill Wiersma, *Power of Professionalism: The Seven Mind-Sets That Drive Performance and Build Trust*, Los Altos, Calif.: Ravel Media, 2011, pp. 10–11. Note that Wiersma's concept of a professional does not require an individual to belong to a formal profession to be considered a professional.

appear in the core values. Doing so will facilitate organizationwide shared understanding of professionalism standards and provide a shared foundation for education and training, both of which are critical because Air Force personnel come from diverse backgrounds and cannot be expected to enter with the same standards of behavior. The definitions and examples will also facilitate the identification of metrics, which, as we discuss in Chapter 3, are important to inform efforts to improve Air Force professionalism.

3. An Examination of Professionalism-Related Events from the Recent Past

In Chapter 2, we discussed how scholars, DoD leaders, and the Air Force define *professionalism*. We saw that the definitions generally refer to concepts of expertise, service, and morals or ethics. In this chapter, we examine events related to professionalism—both violations and efforts to improve it—from the recent past. Early information-gathering activities in this study revealed that today’s professionalism efforts are often intertwined with discussions of ethical incidents, military conflicts, and previous professionalism efforts.¹ This finding made it clear that any recommendations of where the Air Force should go would require a more-complete understanding of where the Air Force has been and where it is currently with respect to professionalism efforts. Because of the lack of specific data, we adopt a macrolevel perspective in this chapter; specifically, we consider a broader viewpoint that includes all the military departments (Department of the Navy [including the Marine Corps], Department of the Army, and Department of the Air Force) and a time frame that takes into account the past 25 years.² From this macrolevel perspective, we present a chronology of professionalism-related events, which include high-profile ethical transgressions; military conflicts; and official actions to address professionalism, ethics, and values. Then, to offer a deeper examination of professionalism efforts, we report on semistructured interviews we conducted with senior leaders directly involved with these efforts. Together, these analyses help address the following question: What can be learned from examining past professionalism efforts in the U.S. military that could guide current efforts?

Establishing a Need to Adopt a Macrolevel Perspective

No action is ever taken or decision is ever made, in any institution, which is disconnected from what’s going on in the environment.

—former Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel (interview with authors)

It is critical to acknowledge the larger context in which the Air Force operates to fully understand the Air Force’s current efforts to strengthen the professionalism of all its members. While such an understanding is always important, it was even more so for this research because

¹ The specific information-gathering activities were meetings and interviews we conducted with stakeholders. These activities also included reviews of the literature (i.e., official publications, speeches, press releases, articles).

² We opted to examine the past 25 years because this time period allowed for a more complete representation of recent professionalism efforts. Specifically, we sought to include the core values initiatives of the 1990s. After learning more about the context in which those core values emerged, we included the Tailhook Scandal and the Persian Gulf War to more fully capture relevant DoD events.

external pressures influence the Air Force’s institutional focus on professionalism initiatives. Primarily, these pressures stem from publicized ethical transgressions committed by service members and deescalating military conflicts.

The Air Force is not alone in undertaking actions to strengthen professionalism. The Navy, Marine Corps, and Army have established and continue to conduct their own professionalism efforts (to be discussed). Moreover, in March 2014, the Secretary of Defense named a senior adviser on military professionalism to serve a two-year appointment and, among other responsibilities, offer a coordinating entity among the military departments.³ Thus, the professionalism-related events occurring in the other military departments may have influenced the actions of the Air Force.

In addition to widening our scope, we extended our period of consideration because the current initiative is *not* the military’s first attempt to rekindle military professionalism. In the 1990s, the military departments expended considerable energy to institutionalize their core values. Core values, as we explained in Chapter 2, are at the heart of professionalism. Therefore, the incidents, activities, documents, speeches, and other materials from the 1990s, when the current Air Force core values were implemented, may be informative to today’s professionalism initiative.

In this chapter, we facilitate a macrolevel understanding by defining the chronology of events and exploring the interrelationships, as well as reporting findings from semistructured interviews with senior leaders heavily involved in past and present professionalism efforts. We conclude with an assessment of which factors emerged as most critical to the success and/or failure of professionalism efforts.

Timeline of Major Ethical Incidents, Military Conflicts, and Professionalism Efforts

I believe that taking a historical perspective helps us understand how to deal with some of the challenges that we see.

—former Air Force Chief of Staff Gen Ronald R. Fogleman, September 7, 1995

Institutional professionalism efforts are commonly associated with ethical incidents and/or military conflicts both explicitly and by chronological proximity. Interestingly, these factors were frequently mentioned by stakeholders (implicitly and explicitly) as the reasons DoD is currently pursuing institutional efforts to enhance its professionalism. To explore this notion, we developed a timeline of ethical incidents, military conflicts, and professionalism efforts across DoD (Figure 3.1). *We do not intend for this timeline to be a comprehensive collection of incidents, conflicts, and efforts, nor do we encourage direct comparisons between the military departments or causal conclusions between professionalism-related events.* Our goal was to

³ Jennifer Hlad, “Hagel Appoints Top Ethics Officer,” *Stars and Stripes*, March 25, 2014.

identify *major* events relevant to professionalism so that we could better understand the factors influencing professionalism efforts. We consider this important because it offers insight into strategies intended to strengthen professionalism and sustain it over time. Below, we discuss how we defined these professionalism-related events and the rules that guided our selection of the information displayed on the timeline (see Figure 3.1).

Defining Events Related to Professionalism

For this analysis, we considered professionalism-related events to include three variables: highly publicized ethical violations, military conflicts, and professionalism efforts. In this subsection, we define each variable and stress that the current definitions guided the selection of events to incorporate on the timeline.

We use the term *major ethical incident* to refer to an ethical violation that demonstrably involved moral shortcomings and caused significant public impact. Given that the primary focus of these efforts is to target the value-laden aspects of professionalism, we focus only on incidents with moral implications and/or those that heavily influenced the dialogue on professionalism, such as those that involved issues related to accountability.

Being considered as having a significant public impact required widespread media attention and high-level DoD consideration, in addition to exerting a lasting influence on the professionalism dialogue. First, *widespread media attention* means that news media across the country (e.g., *Los Angeles Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *New York Times*, *TIME*) covered the incident. Second, *high-level DoD consideration* means that at least one formal investigation was conducted or that the most-senior echelons of leadership devoted direct attention to the particular matter (e.g., Secretary of the Air Force or Chief of Staff of the Air Force). Finally, *lasting influence on the professionalism dialogue* means that the incident was mentioned in our early information-gathering activities. See Appendix A for a brief summary of each incident, as well as relevant references that provide additional details on each incident.

A *major military conflict* refers to hostile engagements. According to the Defense Casualty Analysis System,⁴ major military conflicts since 1990 include the Persian Gulf War (which began on August 2, 1990, and formally ended on April 11, 1991), as well as the Global War on Terror (which began on October 7, 2001, and ended on December 15, 2014).⁵

⁴ Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC), “Conflict Casualties,” undated(b).

⁵ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “NATO Secretary General’s Statement on a New Chapter in Afghanistan,” press release 188, December 28, 2014.

Figure 3.1. Timeline of Events

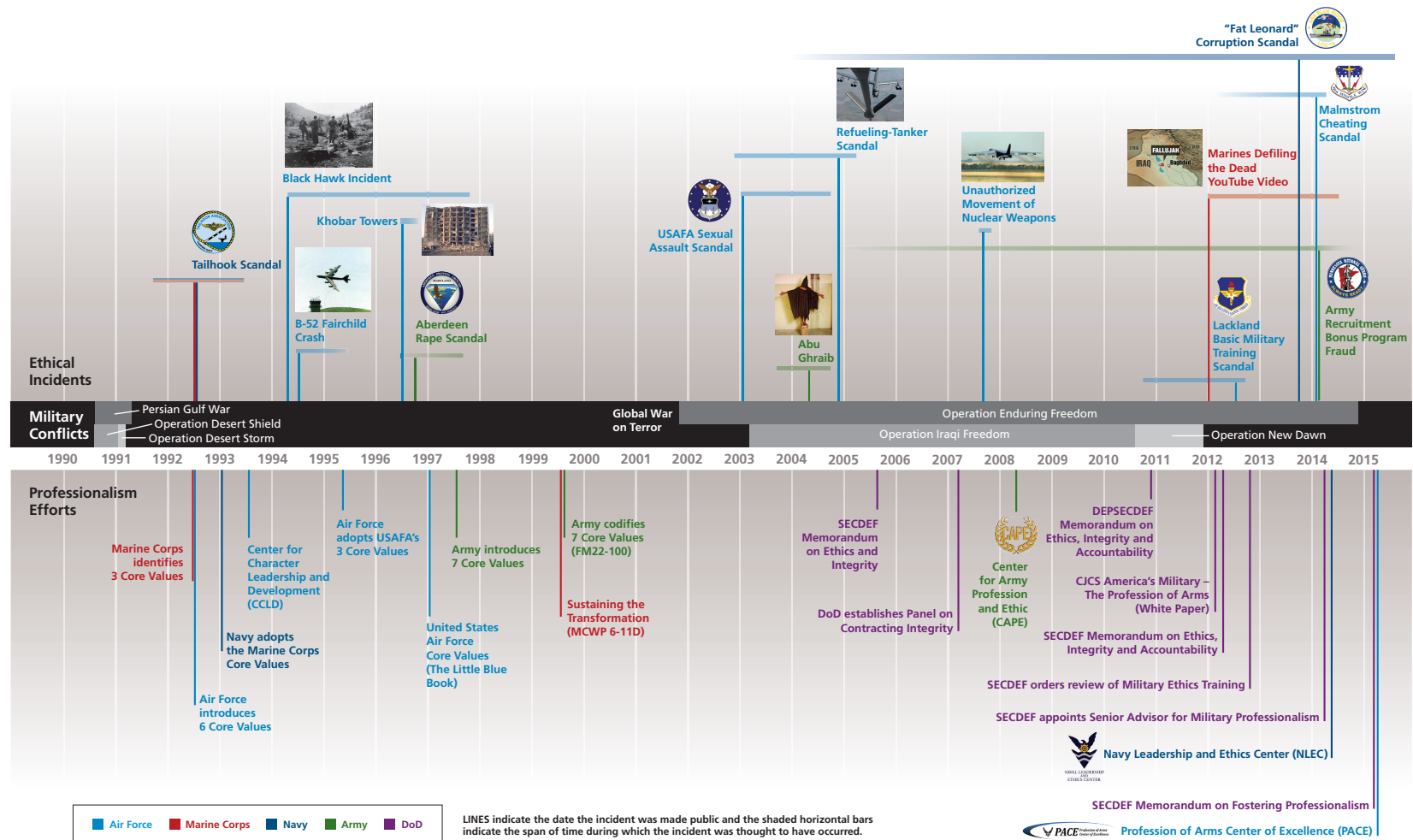


Photo credits: U.S. Air Force; U.S.A.F.

MS-4707

NOTE: MCWP = Marine Corps warfighting pamphlet. FM = field manual. DEPSECDEF = Deputy Secretary of Defense. SECDEF = Secretary of Defense.

A *major professionalism effort* refers to a seminal action related to the topic of professionalism, which included participation from senior military leadership, the establishment of a professionalism-related entity (e.g., center of excellence), or an influential document commonly cited in the professionalism discourse. Again, we emphasize that our purpose was not to comprehensively document all professionalism-related efforts; there are certainly many more efforts than presented in Figure 3.1. For example, we did not include changes to professional military education (PME; e.g., the development of the Thomas N. Barnes Center in 1993 or the establishment of the Aerospace Basic Course in 1997).⁶ We also did not include evaluations of professionalism (e.g., Navy Core Values Survey in 1994, 1995, and 1996; the review of general and flag officer ethics training beginning in November 2011; or the assessment to evaluate PME curricula for military officers at all levels in 2013). We recommend examining the GAO publication *Additional Steps Are Needed to Strengthen DOD's Oversight of Ethics and Professionalism Issues* for a listing of additional efforts.⁷ See Appendix A for a brief summary of each incident, as well as relevant references that provide additional details on each incident.

Timeline of Professionalism-Related Events

To compose the timeline, we selected from the professionalism-related events (major ethical incidents, military conflicts, and professionalism efforts) that met the criteria described in the definitions (shown in Figure 3.1) and inserted key events that illustrated the general pattern we observed from the larger body of data. To represent the source (Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, Navy, or DoD) associated with each event, the events are color coded (see the legend in the bottom left-hand corner of the figure).

The events are placed on the timeline in association with their dates of occurrence. For military conflicts and professionalism efforts, which were typically associated with a particular date, the placement was straightforward. However, dates associated with ethical incidents were not as straightforward. This, of course, was because major ethical incidents occurred over time. Therefore, we included a horizontal bar to signify the time from when the event began to when it ended. Commonly, the end date was associated with the publication of a report or ending of an investigation. For dates that are undetermined, the bar is faded at the end to indicate the uncertainty. The vertical line points to when the incident first garnered widespread public interest.

⁶ The original title was Air and Space Basic Course in 1997. It was subsequently changed to Aerospace Basic Course in 1999, and the course was closed in 2011.

⁷ GAO, *Military Personnel: Additional Steps Are Needed to Strengthen DOD's Oversight of Ethics and Professionalism Issues*, Washington, D.C., GAO-15-711, September 2015.

Results

The primary goals for the timeline were to systematically organize the chronology of professionalism-related events and to identify relationships between ethical incidents, military conflicts, and professionalism efforts. Here, we will discuss emerging patterns but caution against overstating these associations because many other factors (not captured in Figure 3.1) are also likely to influence professionalism efforts (e.g., the era of Total Quality Management, sequestration).⁸ First, we examine the relationship between ethical incidents and professionalism efforts; next, we investigate the connection between military conflicts and professionalism efforts; and finally, we explore the association between military conflicts and ethical incidents. This examination is not limited to the Air Force. We purposefully consider ethical incidents and professionalism initiatives across the U.S. military services because their actions are often interdependent. As noted earlier, Secretary Hagel told us that “No action is ever taken or decision is ever made, in any institution, which is disconnected from what’s going on in the environment.” From examining events across the services, we see patterns.

The Relationship Between Major Ethical Incidents and Professionalism Efforts

As we discuss in Chapter 3, the literature on organizational change associates a sense of urgency with action toward change. Widespread media attention arguably creates such urgency. Following this logic, there is likely to be a consistent relationship between ethical incidents garnering public attention and the reaction of senior leadership attempting to address such shortcomings. An important feature of this timeline is the color-coding scheme. This coding assists the reader to visually identify patterns. Indeed, there is some evidence of an action-reaction relationship. Specifically, the action is an ethical incident, and the reaction is a professionalism effort. In this subsection, we review two ethical incidents and the two associated professionalism efforts.

After the Tailhook Scandal, the Marine Corps Identified Three Core Values

The Tailhook scandal involved Navy and Marine Corps aviation officers and their behavior at the 35th Annual Tailhook Association Symposium in Las Vegas, Nevada (September 5–7, 1991). The Navy’s post-Tailhook management was arguably as problematic as the incident itself. Following a series of allegations, the U.S. Department of the Navy launched an investigation led by RADM Duvall M. Williams, Jr., and RADM John E. Gordon. The initial report largely attributed the poor behavior to lower-ranking enlisted personnel. However, subsequent interactions caused great concern. Specifically, in the presence of Assistant Secretary of the

⁸ Regarding Total Quality Management, see, for example, Brian E. Mansir and Nicholas R. Schacht, *Total Quality Management: A Guide to Implementation*, Bethesda, Md.: Logistics Management Institute, DTIC AD-A232070, August 1989. Regarding sequestration, see, for example, GAO, *Sequestration: Observations on the Department of Defense’s Approach in Fiscal Year 2013*, Washington, D.C., GAO-14-177R, November 7, 2013.

Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs Barbara S. Pope, Admiral Gordon made comments to the effect that many female Navy pilots were “go-go dancers, topless dancers, or hookers.” The Assistant Secretary later demanded that Secretary of the Navy Henry L. Garrett III reopen the investigation. Secretary Garrett assigned the DoD inspector general (IG) to review the events and then tendered his resignation over his “leadership failure” of the scandal. The DoD IG’s *Tailhook 91* part 1 found “collective management and personal failures” of several senior-ranking officials involved in the investigation, while part 2 found that 90 victims had been assaulted.

In response, on June 18, 1992, commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. Carl E. Mundy, Jr., issued a letter.⁹ In it, he cites “unethical conduct,” as well as a host of other moral offenses, many of which transpired at the 1991 Tailhook symposium, as the reason for his attention (i.e., “to take stock of our core values”):

1. Incidents and individual actions contrary to the core values of our Marine Corps involving unethical conduct, lack of self and organizational discipline, excessive use of alcohol, insensitivity to or abuses of human dignity, and violent use of personal weapons are strong challenges to those values which are, and should be, the very underpinnings of our Corps.

2. Incidents of the foregoing type are not epidemic, nor are those which have occurred the first of their kind; but they are clear signals that we need to take stock of our core values.

[. . .]

5. I want a renewed, sustained emphasis on ethics, conduct, and human dignity in our Corps. I intend and direct that all Marines focus your priorities on reaffirming and achieving expected standards of ethics, behavior, and respect for each other and those around us. To do any less is to be less than a Marine.¹⁰

Soon after this white letter, General Mundy defined U.S. Marine Corps core values as honor, courage, and commitment in a speech titled “Commandant’s Statement on Core Values of the United States Marines.”

After the Aberdeen Rape Scandal, the Army Introduced Seven Core Values

In November 1996, the U.S. Army began an investigation after receiving complaints from young female soldiers alleging that their instructors at Aberdeen Proving Ground, an Army facility in Maryland, had sexually assaulted or harassed them. Investigations revealed that drill sergeants created “the GAM” or “game à la military,” which was a contest to see who could have sex with the most trainees.¹¹ Twelve soldiers were charged with various sexual improprieties, ranging from adultery to rape. Reports from the Secretary of the Army implicated leadership and human-

⁹ Carl E. Mundy, Jr., “The Core Values of the Corps,” White Letter 10-92, June 18, 1992.

¹⁰ Mundy, 1992, pp. 1–2.

¹¹ Bryna Zumer, “Retired APG General: The Players Change, the ‘GAM’ Remains the Same,” *Baltimore Sun*, May 23, 2013.

relations failures and contained the first reference to the Army core values: “The Army is an institution grounded in seven core values: honor, integrity, selfless service, courage, loyalty, duty, and respect.”¹² Certainly, the research underlying that report was conducted in response to sexual improprieties occurring at multiple installations, not just Aberdeen; however, Aberdeen does appear to be a contributing factor to the inception of Army core values. In August 1999, the Army formally adopted these core values.¹³

The Relationship Between Major Military Conflicts and Professionalism Efforts

Major military conflicts are relevant to professionalism initiatives for three reasons. First, the military’s principal and decidedly unique capability is warfighting or the mastery of organized violence.¹⁴ Therefore, any discussion regarding professionalism should include its chief area of expertise. Second, a high level of military activity suggests that societal resources and attention will be devoted to preparing and executing wartime responsibilities, as well as to caring for casualties and their families.¹⁵ Third, military conflict exemplifies uncertainty. As one senior leader whom we interviewed noted, a period of stability is most needed when transitioning away from a period of intense turbulence. During periods of stability, efforts to strengthen professionalism re-anchor the chaos associated with military conflict in fundamental conversations of identity, standards, and expectations. Therefore, unlike with ethical incidents, it is the absence of or transition from a major military conflict that can facilitate the emergence of an institutionwide professionalism effort.

The association between (deescalating) military conflict and professionalism efforts was articulated in General Dempsey’s white paper titled “America’s Military: A Profession of Arms” on February 12, 2012.¹⁶ In reference to the Global War on Terror, General Dempsey attributed the transition from a higher operational tempo to a lower operational tempo as his motivating reason for calling renewed attention to the profession of arms:

Following September 11, 2001, America’s All-Volunteer Force embarked on campaigns extending well beyond any limits imagined as the era of persistent conflict unfolded, its resilience arguably exceeded expectations of its architects. As we reflect on a decade of war, America’s Service men and women fought as a

¹² Secretary of the Army, *Senior Review Panel Report on Sexual Harassment*, Vol. 1, July 1997a, p. 7.

¹³ Field Manual 22-100, *Army Leadership: Be, Know, Do*, Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, August 1999.

¹⁴ As indicated in Joint Publication 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, Washington, D.C., March 25, 2013, the military is used for a range of operations (from peace to war; from deterrence to major operations). These also include such operations as crisis response (e.g., humanitarian aid and disaster relief). Nevertheless, we consider the military’s principal capability to be warfighting because, even if it is not the most-frequent activity, it is its most critical.

¹⁵ *Societal* is meant to refer to DoD, as well as to the American public.

¹⁶ CJCS, “America’s Military: A Profession of Arms,” white paper, February 2012.

Joint Force *selflessly serving* our Nation, answering the call to duty repeatedly, continuously adapting. The sacred element of *trust* enabled them to persevere.

With the campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq in transition, we must prepare for a different future as we shape *Joint Force 2020* in an environment of increasing fiscal pressure. Renewing our commitment to the Profession of Arms is essential to ensure we maintain the best led and best trained force in the world—*Leadership* is the foundation of our profession. This is essential to ensure we remain the finest military in the world.¹⁷

The Relationship Between Military Conflicts and Ethical Incidents

Thus far, we have treated military conflict as a unitary block; however, within a period of conflict, there are varying degrees of intensity (or combat). One metric to capture combat intensity is U.S. active-duty military deaths, which reached its highest between 2003 and 2007. While the death toll remained significant through 2012, it was declining relative to previous years.¹⁸ Interestingly, according to separate analyses we conducted on approximately 200 articles reporting ethical incidents in the *Air Force Times* between 2001 and 2014 (see Appendix B for a full overview), notably lower levels of articles reporting ethical incidents appeared between 2006 and 2009. That is not to say that unethical behavior did not occur during this period. Indeed, as indicated by the timeline (see the horizontal bars) and, perhaps more important, as indicated by the rate of UCMJ violations reported in Chapter 4, demonstrations of unethical behavior remained the same. Other plausible explanations would suggest that ethical incidents that did occur were not reported or that those that were reported did not receive the same degree of media attention because the media's focus was on wartime efforts and casualties.¹⁹

Interviews with Senior Leaders Responsible for Initiating Professionalism Efforts

A review of public records (e.g., speeches, articles, official publications) results in a wealth of information reflecting senior leaders' thoughts and decisionmaking with respect to professionalism.²⁰ Although existing documentation is useful, we aimed to capture such knowledge more directly, along with some of the more nuanced thinking that might not be represented in publicly available documents. Therefore, to gain unfiltered insight, we conducted

¹⁷ CJCS, 2012, p. 3.

¹⁸ DMDC, undated(b).

¹⁹ Of course, there are other explanations for a lack of media attention. It is possible that incidents of unethical behavior did decline or such incidents were not reported.

²⁰ Examples include Richard H. Kohn, ed., "The Early Retirement of Gen Ronald R. Fogleman, Chief of Staff, United States Air Force," *Aerospace Power Journal*, Spring 2001, pp. 6–23; Mark A. Welsh, III, "Remarks," speech delivered to the Air Force Association, February 15, 2012; and Chuck Hagel, "Guidance on Fostering Professionalism Within the Department of Defense," memorandum for Secretaries of the Military Departments et al., Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, February 12, 2015.

semistructured interviews with three senior leaders responsible for initiating professionalism efforts. In this section, we summarize key themes that emerged from interviews with former Air Force Chief of Staff Gen (ret.) Fogleman (1994–1997), former Secretary of Defense Hagel (2013–2015), and then–Air Force Chief of Staff Gen Mark A. Welsh III (2012–2016). The key themes we identified were:

1. Values and standards must be universally known, unconditionally embraced, and uniformly enforced.
2. Professionalism efforts should be tailored to groups within an organization.
3. Senior leadership must prioritize professionalism.

Below, we discuss each of these themes in more detail.

Values and Standards Must Be Universally Known, Unconditionally Embraced, and Uniformly Enforced

The first message that emerged as important to strengthening military professionalism from the three interviews was that standards of behavior and the values on which the standards are based must be universally known and unconditionally embraced by all members of the organization and uniformly enforced for all members regardless of rank or other individual characteristics.²¹ In this subsection, we discuss each of these subthemes in more detail.

Universally Known

Consistent with the literature summarized in Chapter 3 is the finding that training and educating service members to know the military’s code of conduct is an essential component of organizational change. If one does not know the values and standards by which one’s behavior will be judged, how can one be expected to behave in accordance with them or be fairly held accountable for them? Reinforcing this point, General Fogleman stated, “I have always believed that, if you want people, or an institution, to do something, then you must explain what you expect of their behavior.”²² In the military, perceptions of acceptable behavior are likely to differ because, as General Welsh noted in an interview, “[our recruits come] from a huge spectrum of society, and within [eight weeks], we want them operating under a common understanding.”²³ Under such time constraints, this type of fundamental transformation represents a monumental

²¹ In a 2001 interview, General Fogleman stated, “The rules and standards for the behavior of any individual, group, or unit must be universally known and uniformly applied” (Kohn, 2001, p. 11). Because the phrase “universally known and uniformly applied” offers a concise statement of important elements involved in strengthening professionalism that surfaced in interviews, as well as in the literature, we extended this phrase to summarize interviewees’ perspectives as “values and standards must be universally known, unconditionally embraced, and uniformly enforced.”

²² Interview with Gen Ronald R. Fogleman, Fullerton, Calif., July 15, 2015.

²³ Interview with Gen Mark A. Welsh, Arlington, Va., September 2, 2015. Air Force BMT for enlisted accession lasts approximately eight weeks. Those attending the military academies or participating in Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) may have up to four years to learn military standards and values in very different environments.

task. Indeed, according to social science literature, an individual embodies multiple cultural identities stemming from many influential factors (e.g., race, gender, climate, religion, and politics). These cultural influences serve to create a “cultural mosaic” unique to each individual.²⁴ This framework is useful because it conveys the diversity of values, behavioral expectations, and frames of reference people have when they enter the Air Force. Applying a cultural-mosaic perspective would serve to highlight the many influences acting on a person, which could result in behavior contrary to Air Force values or standards and thus create moral or ethical dilemmas that new members might be ill prepared to resolve. Take, for instance, the value of loyalty. But then, loyalty to whom or what? Loyalty to a wingman can come into conflict with loyalty to the Air Force when the wingman engages in behavior that the Air Force does not sanction. Does an individual make the Air Force aware of a wingman’s behavior? Or does an individual “protect” a wingman with their silence? Both courses of action demonstrate loyalty. Thus, building a common understanding of Air Force values, standards, and conduct to transcend cultural differences and prepare people to navigate these dilemmas is essential.

Unconditionally Embraced

Once known, values must be embraced. As we report in Chapter 5 in a recent survey, approximately 40 percent of enlisted members of the Air Force did not agree with the statement, “I really feel as if the military’s values are my own.” Values and standards are more than just written words. They must foster a state of mind, guide the heart, and drive behavior. In the words of General Welsh,

We are asked to fight and win the nation’s wars. There is no failure. There is no second place. To be successful, it is a calling, a commitment. The cost is just too high. You have to feel this or you just don’t get it.²⁵

Furthermore, everyone has to “get it” and share the responsibility. In a world of increasing technical differences, values and standards might be the unifying bond. General Fogleman reinforced the shared nature of values when he noted, “professionalism is everyone’s job.”²⁶

Uniformly Enforced

Once everyone knows and embraces the values and standards, a system of accountability must uniformly enforce adherence to values and standards. As Secretary Hagel pointed out,

²⁴ Georgia T. Chao and Henry Moon, “The Cultural Mosaic: A Metatheory for Understanding the Complexity of Culture,” *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 90, No. 6, 2005. Demographic, geographic, and associative features shape a person’s cultural mosaic. The demographic tiles of the cultural mosaic are the physical characteristics and social identities inherited from one’s parents and ancestors (e.g., race, gender). The geographic tiles capture the natural or human-created physical features of a region that can shape group identities (e.g., climate, urban/rural, coastal/inland). The associative tiles are the formal and informal groups with which someone chooses to associate and identify (e.g., religion, politics).

²⁵ Interview with Welsh, 2015.

²⁶ Interview with Fogleman, 2015.

“Accountability is the essence of everything. Every human being is accountable in some way for something or to someone.”²⁷ The consistency and certainty that appropriate consequences will follow unacceptable behavior—regardless of rank—adheres to classic behaviorism theories and is, arguably, the foundation for perceived justice.²⁸ As General Fogleman explained,

With values and standards, you have to have accountability. In the course of thinking about accountability, how I think about it, at some point in your career you may violate it or may be accused of violating it. At that point, you will be judged by the standards and values of our profession. You will be held accountable. When that happens, there will be an investigation, and something will come out of it. If proved guilty, you should expect some sort of punishment. If proved innocent, then senior leadership has an obligation to step up and support you.²⁹

General Fogleman’s comment underscores an essential aspect of an effective system of accountability—it must be not only rigorously adhered to but also fairly applied. Conversely, failure to be either rigorous or fair in its application completely undermines its effectiveness for shaping behavior. General Dempsey asserted, “We are all accountable for meeting ethical and performance standards in our actions and, similarly, accountable for our failure to take action, when appropriate.”³⁰ That is, a leader is responsible for holding people accountable and is himself or herself accountable for failing to hold others accountable. This leads to the conclusion that, if behavior in accord with values and standards is important to an institution, the institution must uniformly enforce behavior that is in accord with these values and standards.

Professionalism Efforts Should Be Tailored by Level and Position

As reviewed in Chapter 2, professionalism involves common elements of technical expertise, social responsibility, and self-regulation; however, the specific efforts to infuse professionalism should be tailored to the needs of the institution. Secretary Hagel noted, “each service has a unique area of responsibility for national security . . . so [each service has] to find [its] own center of gravity.”³¹ General Welsh reinforced the importance of tailoring by highlighting challenges unique to the Air Force:

The characterization of the problem is different for us. . . . It doesn’t have anything to do with combat fatigue because we [the Air Force] never left after the

²⁷ Interview with Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, Washington, D.C., July 31, 2015.

²⁸ One example of this is *operant* or *instrumental conditioning*, which is a learning process in which behavior is controlled by its consequences. See J. E. R. Staddon and D. T. Cerutti, “Operant Conditioning,” *Annual Review of Psychology*, Vol. 54, February 2003, pp. 115–144.

²⁹ Interview with Fogleman, 2015.

³⁰ CJCS, 2012, p. 4.

³¹ Interview with Hagel, 2015.

first Gulf War. We face much confusion over available resources, and there is tension building around this.³²

Moreover, within a given institution, professionalism efforts should be tailored to every level and function. As former Secretary Hagel commented, “You have to structure [the professionalism effort] so that it is relevant in every aspect of what you are doing.”³³ For example, as noted in Chapter 2, both the profession and the organization to which one belongs determine appropriateness of behavior. And as we describe in Chapter 6, the characteristics of professionalism training and education that make them well received, and thus more likely to be embraced, can vary among groups.

Extrapolating from these comments, we also find elements of rank or position that define appropriate and expected behaviors. For example, if a uniformed Airman witnesses inappropriate behavior, the prescribed “right thing” to do might differ depending on rank. The Air Force might expect or require an officer to intervene directly, whereas it might expect or require a junior enlisted Airman to report the inappropriate behavior to a higher-ranking person.

Even people of the same rank might need different understandings of the “right thing,” depending on their career fields or positions. For example, specific kinds of ethical dilemmas that require knowing what the “right thing” to do is may differ from career field to career field, and the educational content that prepares members of the Air Force for these dilemmas is best tailored to specific needs. Roles also matter. For example, commanders and first sergeants have a distinctive role within a unit that is different from the role of others of equal rank within the unit. The Air Force Instruction (AFI) 1-2 outlines commander’s responsibilities.³⁴ Among them, this document states, “Accordingly, commanders must be above reproach, both morally and ethically, and exemplify Air Force Core Values and standards in their professional and personal lives.” Also, as indicated in AFI 36-2618, “First sergeants provide a dedicated focal point for all readiness, health, morale, welfare, and quality of life issues within their organizations.”³⁵ In short, efforts at increasing professionalism will need to be tailored for different populations of Air Force personnel.

Senior Leadership Must Prioritize Professionalism

The themes discussed earlier relate to facilitating conduct in line with the core values and standards; however, our interviewees also emphasized the point that these efforts are for naught

³² Interview with Welsh, 2015.

³³ Interview with Hagel, 2015.

³⁴ Air Force Instruction 1-2, *Commander’s Responsibilities*, Washington, D.C.: Secretary of the Air Force, May 8, 2014.

³⁵ Air Force Instruction 36-2618, *The Enlisted Force Structure*, Washington, D.C.: Secretary of the Air Force, February 27, 2009, certified current March 23, 2012, p. 17.

if senior leadership does not personally endorse professionalism-related efforts. As Secretary Hagel plainly stated,

in any institution, nothing happens unless the leaders of that institution put emphasis on it. Every leader of every institution has to maintain a focus on ethics and standards. It is the soul, the heart, the fiber of the institution. The institution is only as good as its people. There must be a constant vigilance, constant management. And this must be at every level [of an] institution . . . [Put simply,] it's either a priority or not.³⁶

General Fogleman echoed this sentiment:

[Senior leadership] must personally embrace it, reinforce it, and recruit MAJCOM [major command] commanders to do the same. No amount of hard work [on the part of others] will matter if [senior leadership] does not take personal responsibility. It needs to be linked to the mission and it is essential for the functioning of the organization.³⁷

These comments strongly align with insight gleaned from the literature, which we discuss in Chapter 7. Notably, senior leadership has a crucial responsibility to establish urgency and prioritize professionalism highly. Without visible commitment (i.e., in the form of speech and actions) and consistent endorsement from senior leaders, professionalism efforts are unlikely to be successful because other priorities will take precedence.

Conclusions

In this chapter, we sought to identify what can be learned from examining past professionalism efforts in the military. We addressed this question by defining the chronology of professionalism-related events and conducting semistructured interviews with senior leaders personally involved with strengthening professionalism. From the timeline, we can extract patterns between ethical incidents, military conflicts, and institutional-level efforts aimed at increasing professionalism. These relationships suggest that certain factors—specifically, ethical incidents and military conflicts—are associated with professionalism efforts. From the semistructured interviews with senior leaders, we gleaned additional insights into critical elements likely to instill professionalism. Taken together, these analyses suggest two noteworthy recommendations.

First, the Air Force should constantly emphasize professionalism regardless of military conflict and media attention. The timeline suggests that institutional-level professionalism efforts oscillate. Nevertheless, as will be discussed in Chapter 6, individual attention to professionalism occurs throughout the career of a service member during PME. In our meetings and interviews for this study, some stakeholders have suggested that episodic emphasis on professionalism may

³⁶ Interview with Hagel, 2015.

³⁷ Interview with Fogleman, 2015.

be sufficient. However, the senior leaders interviewed here would suggest otherwise. They emphasized the need for “constant vigilance” because it is essential for the “functioning of the organization.” This perspective is supported by the research literature as well (see Chapter 7). Thus, the Air Force should focus on determining sustainable strategies to weave professionalism efforts into the fiber of the institution.³⁸

Second, senior leaders must personally embrace professionalism. Senior leaders serve as their institutions’ chief moral authorities. To retain this authority, senior leaders must have a deep understanding of what professionalism means and prioritize it such that they personally champion these efforts and continually reinforce them. More specifically, they must also ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place so that the values and standards are universally known, unconditionally embraced, and uniformly enforced. This may be accomplished by ensuring these values and standards are relevant (i.e., tailored) to the institution and its people.

³⁸ In the process of examining past materials, previous sources—already tailored to the Air Force (see Pat Tower and Doug Dunford, *Air Force Core Values Guru’s Guide*, undated)—are likely to contain relevant insights and would require minimal tailoring to apply to the current initiative.

4. Violations of the Uniform Code of Military Justice as an Indicator of Failures of Professionalism

In Chapter 3, we examined professionalism events from the past 25 years and observed that highly publicized ethical violations often precede professionalism initiatives. Understanding that these highly publicized incidents are relatively small in number, we sought objective, quantitative data to gain a preliminary assessment of the state of professionalism in the Air Force. While there is no existing metric for the *presence* of professionalism, indicators of *failures* of professionalism do exist. One source of such indicators is the data from enforcement of the UCMJ. For this study, we used violations of ethical and legal expectations that rise to the level of punishments meted out under the UCMJ as objective indicators of members of the Air Force acting unprofessionally.¹ Although UCMJ violations are an imperfect measure, they can be viewed as reflecting violations of a minimal standard of conduct—a low threshold for military professional behavior.

The annual report of the code committee on military justice is officially reported to the committees on Armed Services of the Senate and the House of Representatives, the Secretary of Defense, and the secretaries of the departments to survey the operations, status, and implementation of current military justice across the departments.² For establishing a baseline of breaches of professionalism over time, the UCMJ annual reports are invaluable for reporting quantifiable violations of the UCMJ (e.g., court-martial convictions), punitive judicial outcomes from court-martial convictions that reflect poorly on the Air Force (e.g., officer dismissals and dishonorable discharges), nonjudicial punishments [NJP] authorized under Article 15 of the UCMJ, and complaints of failures in leadership (e.g., complaints under Article 138 of the UCMJ).³ These indicators should be considered a nascent attempt to identify professionalism metrics and are meant to shed preliminary insight on the current state of professionalism relative

¹ The UCMJ annual reports do not disaggregate UCMJ violations by reserve component and Air National Guard from active duty. Similarly, these reports do not disaggregate UCMJ violations for any of the other departments' reserve components for purposes of between-services comparison (see U.S. Code, multiple dates). In a similar way for civilian professions, such as psychologists, lawyers, and physicians, state licensing and bar associations typically provide publicly available reports of violations that result in the loss or restriction of a license or disbarment from the practice of law. For an example of a report of attorney sanctions by the State Bar of Arizona for 2015, see "Attorneys Sanctioned, Attorneys Transferred to Disability Inactive Status, and Attorneys Reinstated," Arizona State Bar, 2015.

² "Annual Reports Pursuant to the Uniform Code of Military Justice," Military Legal Resources website (Library of Congress), August 12, 2014.

³ U.S. Code, Title 10, Section 815, Article 15, Commanding Officer's Non-Judicial Punishment, November 25, 2002; U.S. Code, Title 10, Chapter 47, Section 938, Article 138, Complaints of Wrongs, August 10, 1956; Air Force Instruction 51-904, *Complaints of Wrongs Under Article 138, Uniform Code of Military Justice*, Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, U.S. Air Force, Judge Advocate General, June 30, 1994.

to the past. Furthermore, the UCMJ annual reports also detail this same information from the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps and thus provide the opportunity to compare the Air Force with other services. Using these objective data, we can examine two research questions: (1) Does the Air Force currently exhibit increasing or decreasing professionalism? (2) Does the Air Force exhibit more or less professionalism than the other services do?⁴

Method

Data Available

We obtained UCMJ annual reports for the past 25 years from the Library of Congress and compiled them into a single data set consisting of the Air Force, Army, Navy, and Marine Corps annual reports. This data set included an array of UCMJ statistics that are tracked in common across the departments, comprising every type of court-martial (i.e., general, special, and summary), discharges because of courts-martial (both officer dismissals and dishonorable discharges), NJPs under Article 15, and complaints under Article 138 of the UCMJ.⁵

The UCMJ annual reports track these data to report on the administration and processing of the court, rather than as any kind of evaluation of the violations of the UCMJ across the departments. Accordingly, many variables that may reflect the severity of the violation (e.g., count and length of prison sentences, particular UCMJ violations) are not included. The UCMJ annual reports also include court information that is not relevant for identifying a rough metric for professionalism. For example, UCMJ annual reports also include total trials and acquittals across the services. These were *not* included in any analyses, as we maintained the presumption of innocence and included only the absolute numbers of convictions.

Sample

The UCMJ applies to individuals on active duty, which includes members of the reserve component and Air National Guard while they are on active duty.⁶ Reservists may be subject to the UCMJ when their status is (1) active-duty full-time support personnel or active guard and reserve,⁷ (2) traditional part-time reservists performing as full-time active duty for a specific period, or (3) performing inactive-duty training. Uniformed members of the Air National Guard are only subject to the UCMJ when activated in a federal capacity by a presidential executive order. Thus, any violations of the UCMJ that an individual may commit outside these restrictions

⁴ For the purposes of comparison, this approach assumes that the UCMJ is consistently and fairly applied across both time and the services. Given lack of credible evidence to the contrary or quantitative information as to how to control for changes over time, this appears the most valid approach.

⁵ U.S. Code, 1956.

⁶ U.S. Code, multiple dates.

⁷ Note that the same standards do not apply when they are not on active-duty status.

would not be included in the present data. However, annual reports do not disaggregate these individuals and therefore only indirectly reflect the reserve component and Air National Guard. Civilians, who are not under the UCMJ's purview, are not included in these reports.

Relatedly, departments differ in terms of accessions and average active-duty strength per year, which necessarily affects the absolute frequency of UCMJ violations per department. That is, larger forces (e.g., the Army) are more likely to exhibit a higher frequency of unprofessional conduct than smaller forces, even if unprofessional conduct is less common. Because of this, the absolute numbers of UCMJ violations are *not* directly comparable between the Air Force and other services. To account for this, we calculated the frequency of Air Force UCMJ violations as the ratio of absolute violations to the average active-duty strength. Similarly, we first collapsed together the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps UCMJ violations, then sample weighted all Army, Navy, and Marine Corps UCMJ violations by each department's average active-duty strength. We repeated this process for each year using the average active-duty strength reported for that year.

Violations of the UCMJ are rare events. For ease of interpretation, we rescaled violations to reflect the relative number of UCMJ violations per 10,000 service members in the active-duty force for that year.⁸ We rescaled particularly rare events to the relative number of UCMJ violations per 100,000 service members in the active-duty force for that year. Procedures and penalties for violations sometimes differ across departments, and, when the Air Force is unique, we provide a note.

Types of Courts-Martial

The most serious sanctions, courts-martial, fall under three categories in descending severity: general courts-martial, special courts-martial, and summary courts-martial. The UCMJ applies to all service members, including officers, enlisted service members, and students at the military academies. However, the courts and the punishments may differ depending on the rank of the person accused. The *Manuals for Courts-Martial* detail the appropriate punishments for particular offenses, based both on the severity of the offense and the rank of the accused.⁹ For example, enlisted personnel can receive dishonorable or bad-conduct discharges (BCDs), but only officers can receive dismissals.¹⁰ Summary courts-martial are less punitive and exist to provide a simple procedure to resolve charges of relatively minor misconduct and noncapital offenses. Table 4.1 provides details regarding the types of courts-martial.

⁸ Average active-duty component strength was included in the annual reports, but this did not include reserve or National Guard components.

⁹ Joint Service Committee on Military Justice, *Manuals for Courts-Martial, United States*, Washington, D.C., 2012.

¹⁰ Although prison sentences are a common penalty following courts-martial, data on the incidence and length of prison sentences are not available from the UCMJ annual reports.

Table 4.1. Types of Courts-Martial

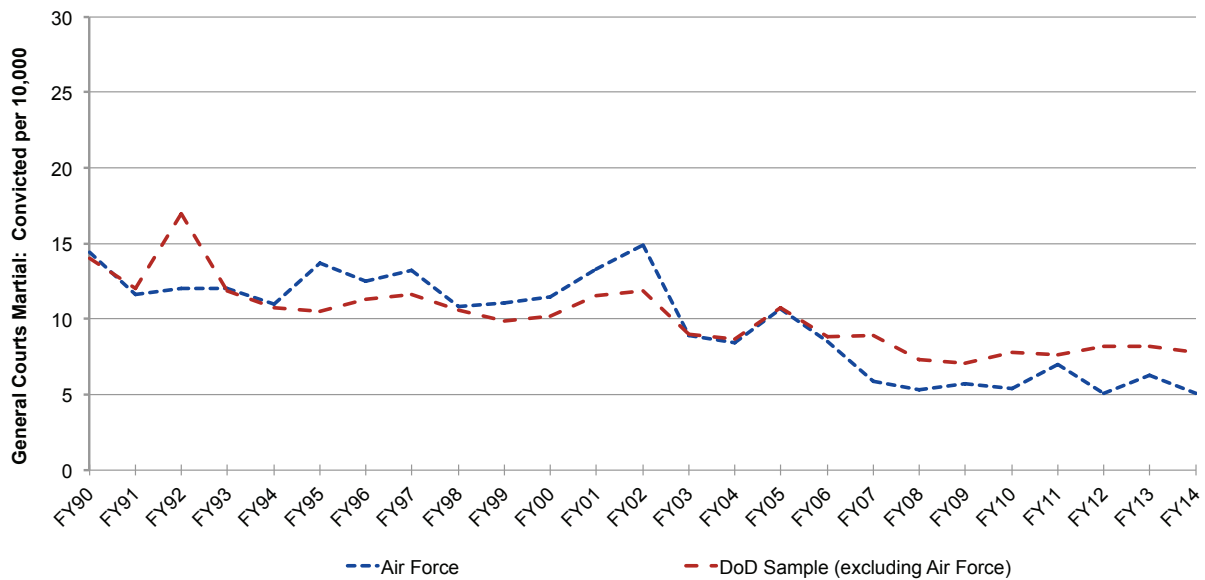
Type	Description	Who May Be Tried?	Highest Potential Punishments	Civilian Equivalent
General	Highest court, reflecting the most serious violations of the UCMJ	Officers, enlisted members, and students at military academies	Officers: dismissal, confinement, death Enlisted: dishonorable discharge or BCD, confinement, death	Felony court
Special	Intermediate court, reflecting moderate to serious violations of the UCMJ	Officers, enlisted members, and students at military academies	BCD; limitations on pay forfeiture (two-thirds, <1 year), length of confinement (<1 year), and hard labor (<3 months)	Misdemeanor court
Summary	Lowest court, adjudicating relatively minor misconduct and noncapital offenses	Enlisted members	Maximum punishment varies with the accused's pay grade	Infraction or low-level misdemeanor court

Differences between the courts, punishments, and even departments can become quite complex and nuanced. Given the limitations of the data, and for the purposes of understanding whether the Air Force demonstrates increasing or decreasing professionalism over time and across departments, we do *not* make assumptions about whether the increasing severity of the court-martial necessarily reflects a more-serious violation of the code of military ethics and therefore a greater breach of professionalism. Clearly, higher-level courts address more-serious offenses; however, given the broad nature of possible offenses and a lack of more-detailed information grouping these offenses, it is difficult if not impossible to draw conclusions about qualitative differences (i.e., without offense-related information [e.g., specific crime, impact on others, and monetary cost of the offense]). Thus, we focus on the counts themselves, rather than the specific type of court-martial.

Results

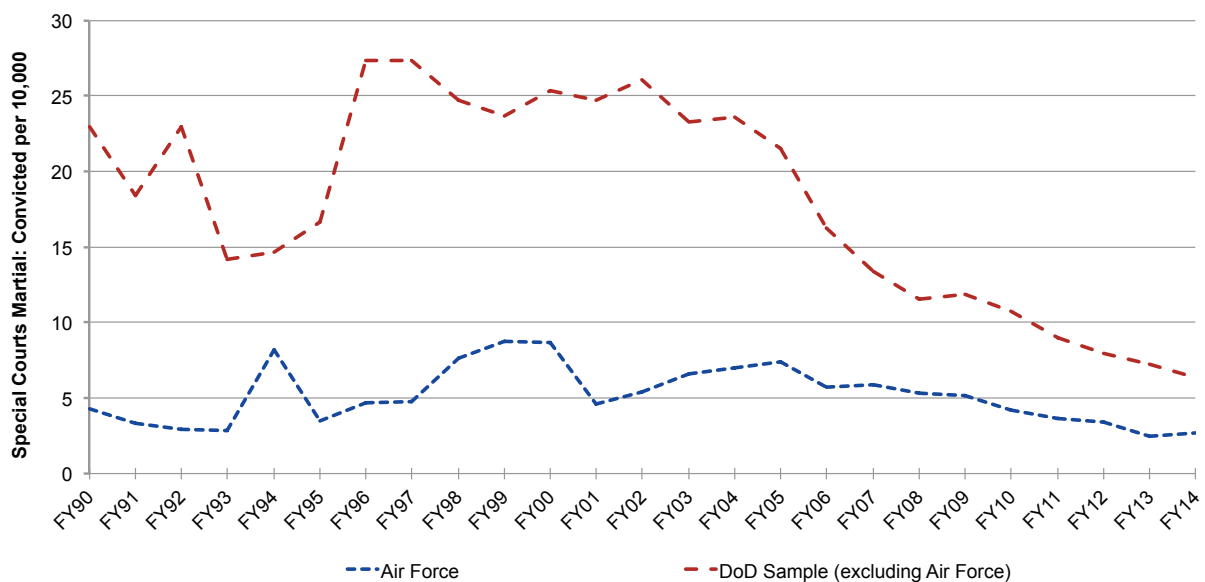
In terms of courts-martial, the Air Force exhibits systematically fewer-than-average general, special, and summary courts-martial than the other services. This differs across years, naturally, but generally appears and is less variable across services in recent years (Figures 4.1–4.3). Similarly, the Air Force exhibits fewer-than-average NJPs across the services, even after controlling for average active-duty strength (Figure 4.5). Nevertheless, it is notable that complaints under Article 138, wrongs committed by one's commanding officer, are the only metric that exhibits an upward trend (Figure 4.6). However, we cannot conclude whether the findings on this item are due to increases in the numbers of offenses or increases in reporting of offenses.

Figure 4.1. General Court-Martial Convictions per 10,000 People, Comparing the Air Force and DoD



NOTE: With two digits, as in the horizontal axis here, read fiscal year (FY)90 through FY99 as FY 1990 through FY 1999 and all others as FY 20xx (e.g., FY00 = FY 2000).

Figure 4.2. Special Court-Martial Convictions per 10,000 People, Comparing the Air Force and DoD



NOTE: In some departments, special courts-martial are split into two types of courts-martial: BCDs and non-BCDs. Because of inconsistencies in reporting these variations on special courts-martial and differences in policy (i.e., Air Force does not convene non-BCD special courts-martial), we aggregated these two reports for comparison across departments.

Standardizing Summary Courts-Martial Across Services

Only enlisted service members may be tried under summary courts-martial—however, there are known differences between the proportions of enlisted service members across the services within DoD. Specifically, the Air Force includes a smaller proportion of enlisted service members as part of its total force than do the other services. The UCMJ annual reports, however, include information only for average active-duty strength—regardless of the enlisted-to-total active force proportion. Thus, the lower rates of summary courts-martial may simply reflect a smaller enlisted force, rather than proportionally lower rates of summary courts-martial. To standardize across the services, we calculated the ratio between the proportion of Air Force enlisted service members and the proportion of enlisted service members across the rest of DoD.

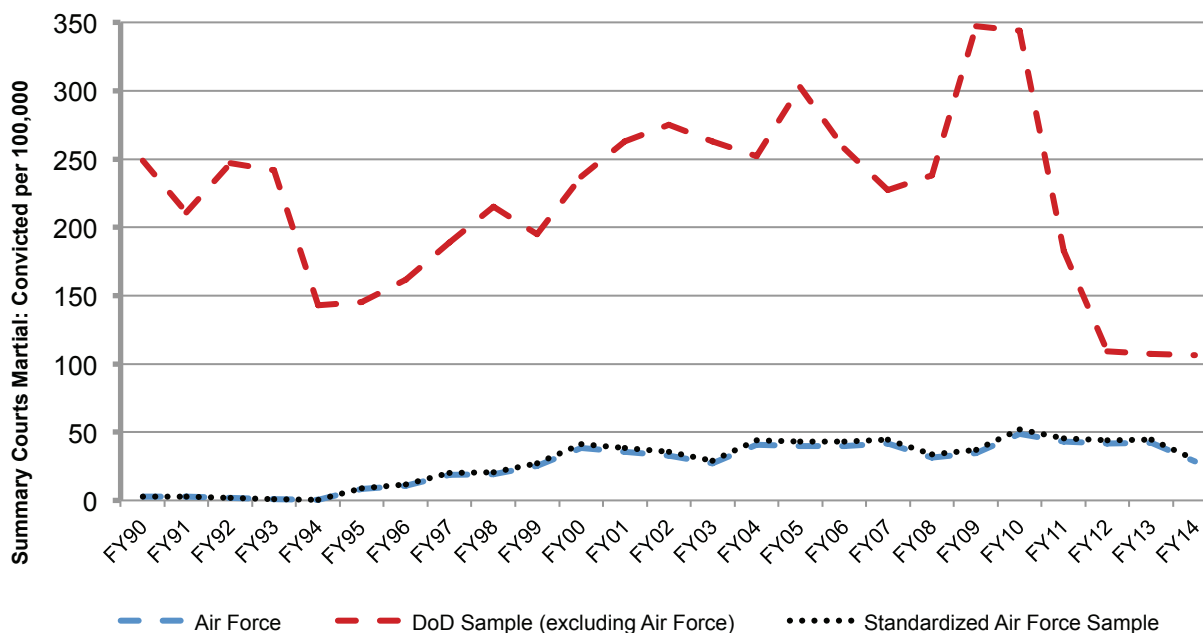
To calculate this ratio, we began with DMDC’s yearly reports on the DoD workforce, which provide the numbers of enlisted and officer service members for each service.¹¹ We then used those data to calculate the proportion of enlisted personnel in each service’s active-duty end strength. Next, we weighted those proportions equally by service, regardless of the total size of the particular service.

Across 25 years of personnel data (FYs 1990–2014), the proportions of enlisted service members across DoD were relatively similar. The overall proportion of enlisted members for the Navy, Marine Corps, and Army, 86.13 percent, differed by only 5.91 percent from that for the Air Force, 80.22 percent. To standardize these figures, the number of Air Force summary courts-martial per 100,000 service members was multiplied by the ratio of the proportion of enlisted service members across the Navy, Marine Corps, and Army with the proportion of Air Force enlisted service members. This ratio differed from year to year based on the DMDC’s DoD workforce yearly reports.

Both the raw and standardized number of summary courts-martial per 100,000 service members are reported in Figure 4.3. This standardization did not dramatically change the magnitude or pattern of the results, particularly in the context of the large differences between the Air Force and the rest of DoD in terms of summary courts-martial.

¹¹ DMDC, “Active Duty Military Strength by Service,” undated(a).

Figure 4.3. Summary Court-Martial Convictions per 100,000 People, Comparing the Air Force and DoD



NOTE. For FYs 2009, 2010, 2013, and 2014, the Army is missing data on summary courts-martial convictions and is not included in the comparison group for those years.

Outcomes of Courts-Martial

The outcomes of courts-martial can be quite serious. For the institution of the Air Force as a whole, this can include the loss of trained, educated, and experienced Air Force officers and enlisted service members. For individuals, it may involve loss of freedom, career, and reputation, among other things. Differences in reporting inconsistencies across years and between departments made it impossible to meaningfully differentiate between officer dismissals and enlisted dishonorable discharges, so we reported all officer dismissals and dishonorable discharges as totals. When we did report them separately, we aggregated them for the present analyses.

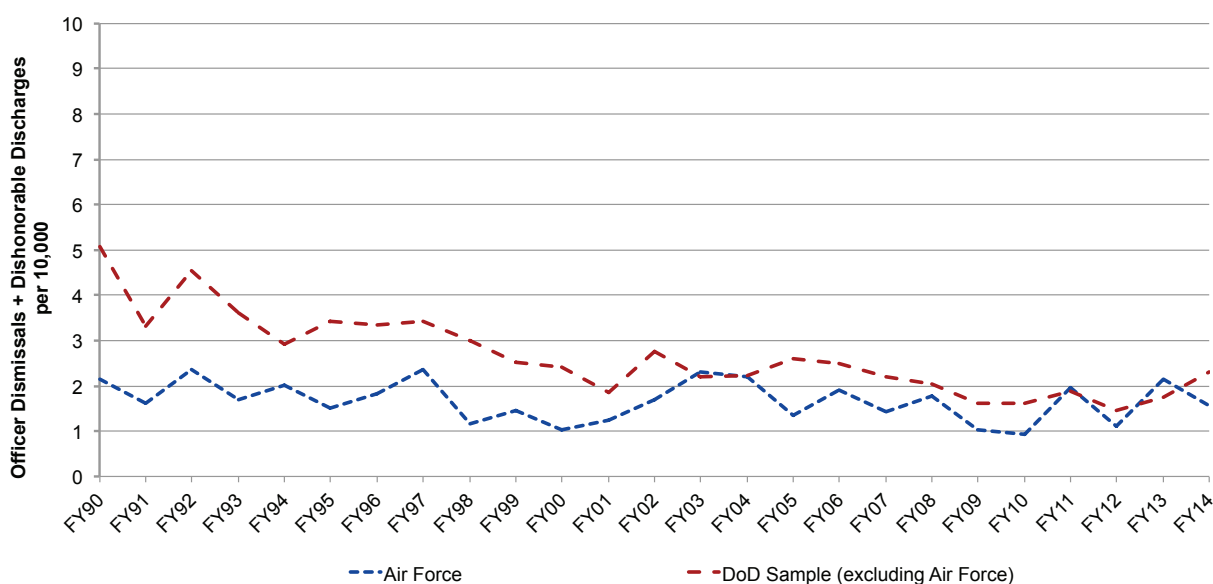
Dishonorable Discharges

Enlisted members convicted by general courts-martial can be dishonorably discharged and sent to prison for what the military justice system considers the most serious of offenses (e.g., sexual assault, murder, desertion). On dishonorable discharge of an enlisted member's service, all veterans' benefits are lost, regardless of any previous service. Furthermore, federal law prohibits those who have been dishonorably discharged from owning firearms, and many states consider a dishonorable discharge the equivalent of a felony conviction, with attendant loss of civil rights. A dishonorable discharge results from a criminal act.

Officer Dismissals

Commissioned officers convicted by general courts-martial can be “dismissed” as their sentence: a separation carrying the same consequences as a dishonorable discharge. Because an officer cannot be given a BCD or dishonorable discharge or be reduced in rank by a court-martial, an officer’s dismissal reflects a *serious* penalty for an officer’s violation of the UCMJ. Considering the severity of these consequences, an officer dismissal is considered a serious breach of professionalism and a violation of the code of military ethics. Figure 4.4 compares Air Force and DoD dishonorable discharges and officer dismissals.

Figure 4.4. Officer Dismissals and Dishonorable Discharges per 10,000 People, Comparing the Air Force and DoD



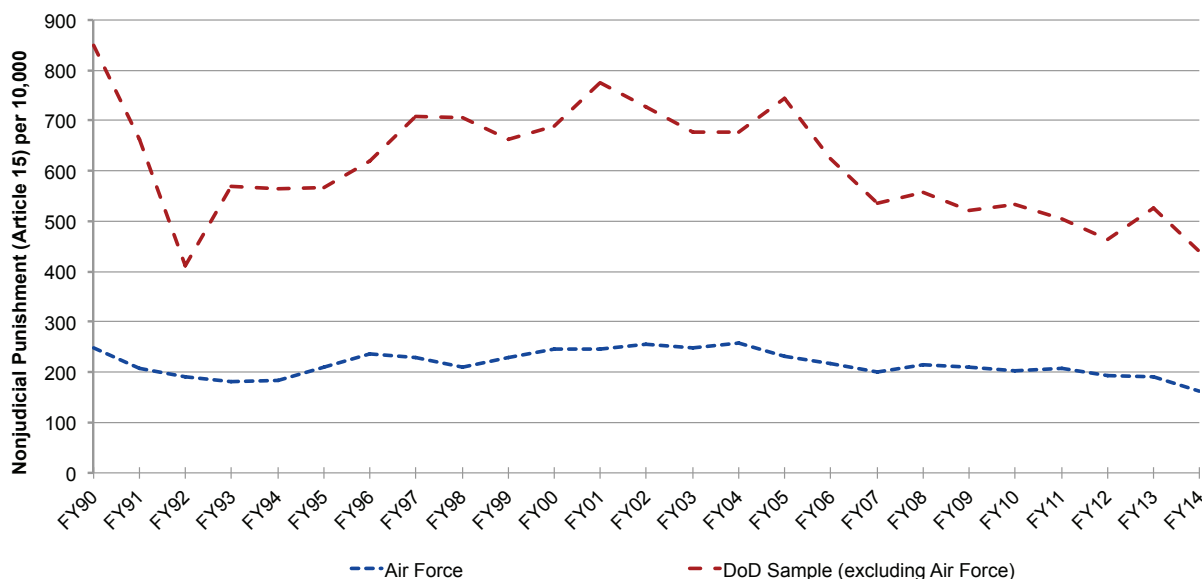
Nonjudicial Punishments (Under Article 15)

Authorized by Article 15 of the UCMJ, commanders may administratively discipline troops under their command in the form of NJPs. NJPs are likened to a civil action; NJPs do not include courts-martial and are not considered criminal convictions. Offenses punishable under Article 15 are what the commanding officer considers “minor,” usually taken to mean misconduct that would not extend beyond that covered in a summary court-martial. Specifically, a minor offense meriting an NJP is what the *Manuals for Courts-Martial* defines as “ordinarily an offense which the maximum sentence imposable would not include a dishonorable discharge or confinement for longer than one year if tried by a general court-martial.”¹² Thus, breaches of command standards (e.g., traffic laws, disrespect to military superiors) would be grounds for an Article 15 NJP,

¹² Joint Service Committee on Military Justice, 2012.

whereas more-serious (criminal) offenses (e.g., theft, assault) would not. Arguably, the underlying nature of NJPs that holds military members to higher standards of conduct than their civilian counterparts is a particularly important measure for breaches of professionalism because they reflect fundamental violations of expectations of a uniformed service member.¹³ Figure 4.5 shows the data for NJPs per 10,000 people for the Air Force and DoD.

Figure 4.5. Nonjudicial Punishments per 10,000 People, Comparing the Air Force and DoD



Complaints Under Article 138

Any member of the armed services who believes himself or herself wronged by his or her commanding officer can request redress under Article 138 of the UCMJ. AFI 51-904 defines a *wrong* as a “discretionary act or omission by a commander, that adversely affects the member personally.”¹⁴ This includes behaviors that are (1) violations of law or regulation; (2) beyond the legitimate authority of that commander; (3) arbitrary, capricious, or an abuse of discretion; or (4) an unfair application of some administrative standard or action. The commanding officer must formally and promptly notify the complainant whether the demand for redress is granted or denied and explain the basis for this decision.

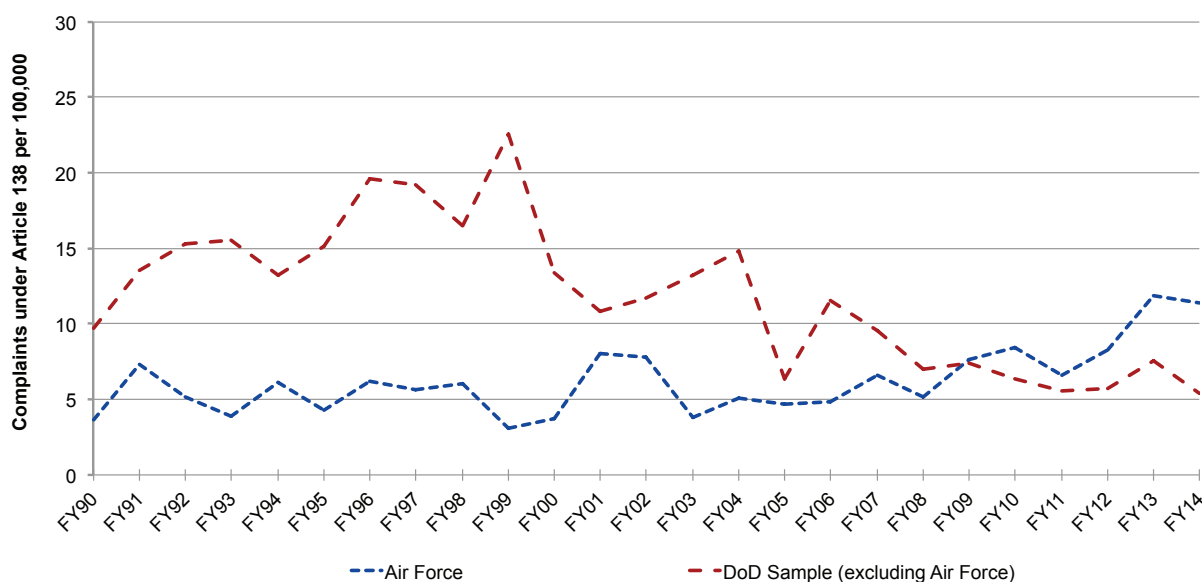
If the commanding officer refuses such redress, an Article 138 complaint can then be made to any superior commissioned officer, which subsequently mandates a court-martial-convening authority. Only the Air Force allows the complainant to bypass his or her direct chain of command in this process. The court-martial-convening authority over the accused commanding

¹³ It has been suggested anecdotally that the lower observed rate for the Air Force could be because of an unwillingness to discipline; however, confirmation was beyond the scope of this study.

¹⁴ Air Force Instruction 51-904, 1994, pp. 2–7.

officer will examine the complaint and, if justified, will redress the wrong and report the findings to the Secretary of the Air Force. Retributions or reprisals by commanding officers for subordinates filing an Article 138 complaint can also be the basis for additional complaints. As such, complaints under Article 138 may thus represent a unique violation of professionalism reflecting a failure in leadership. However, this statistic must be viewed with caution. The UCMJ annual reports do not distinguish between total complaints filed and substantiated complaints, so we do not know whether an increase in the number of complaints reflects a larger number of offenses or simply an increase in reporting behavior. Further, we do not know whether the complaints are being used as intended to identify offending supervisors or whether subordinates are using them as mechanisms for other reasons, such as retaliation. Whatever the reason, the increase in Article 138 complaints merits further examination to identify the underlying causes and to address them appropriately. Figure 4.6 shows the complaints under Article 138 per 100,000 people for the Air Force and DoD.

Figure 4.6. Total Filed Complaints Under Article 138 per 100,000 People, Comparing the Air Force and DoD



Limitations

The UCMJ annual reports represent macrolevel criteria used for internally tracking the administration and processing of the court. Thus, the reports do not include the context, nature, or impact of UCMJ violations. This can be challenging for some of these metrics. For example, in the case of Article 138, it is possible that multiple individuals are filing complaints against a single superior rather than multiple individuals complaining about unique superiors. For similar reasons, these data also cannot directly speak to the nature of UCMJ violations because the type of violations is not tracked.

The annual reports also do not clearly disaggregate active-duty members of the Air Force from the Air Force Reserves or Air National Guard, limiting the research team's ability to draw inferences about professionalism across these groups. Indirectly, however, the annual reports *do* include violations of the UCMJ perpetrated by the Air Force Reserves or Air National Guard, if these individuals committed these violations while serving in this capacity. However, because these are not reported separately, it is impossible to draw conclusions regarding the proportion of reserve versus active-duty violations. Furthermore, given that the civilian component of the Air Force is not bound to the UCMJ,¹⁵ these reports and results cannot directly speak to differences in professionalism between Air Force civilians and active-duty members across the services.

Conclusion

UCMJ violations are, fortuitously, rare events that demonstrate a fundamental lack of professionalism. The UCMJ annual reports offer valuable, objective metrics for evaluating the Air Force's number of infractions over time and therefore offer a comparison with the other services. Generally, the Air Force exhibits lower trends of UCMJ violations than the other services.

In terms of general courts-martial, which address criminal matters and are considered the most-serious breach of professionalism in these analyses, the Air Force showed similar trends to those of the other services through 2005 and then began declining. The Air Force rate of general courts-martial fell below the average for other services in 2006 and remained below through 2014, the last year of data available for this research. Air Force special and summary courts-martial have been consistently lower than those in the other services since 1990. Similarly, the Air Force's frequency of NJPs is consistently lower than that of the other services. In recent years, officer dismissals and dishonorable discharges have declined across the services; yet, since 1990, the Air Force rates of dismissals and discharges have remained stable. Since 2011, the Air Force and other services have had approximately even rates of dismissals and discharges. One notable outlier remains: complaints under Article 138.

Where other services appear to exhibit a decline in complaints under Article 138, the Air Force exhibits an increase and has remained higher than the other services since 2009. This finding merits additional investigation. On one hand, increased complaints under Article 138 may indicate actual failures in leadership. If true, this is highly problematic because leadership is vital to developing and maintaining a professional culture. Leaders who violate regulations, abuse their authority, and unfairly apply standards to their subordinates will negatively affect culture more than any particular violator of the UCMJ. On the other hand, increased complaints under Article 138 may indicate an alternative explanation, for instance, a greater likelihood to

¹⁵ Civilians do fall under the purview of the UCMJ in specific field situations.

report, since such reports do not go through the chain of command. Of course, this would hold noteworthy implications too and requires further examination.

This was a descriptive analysis based on the numbers and rates of incidents that would be considered to represent unprofessional behavior that rises to the level of violating the UCMJ. We examined these data as a preliminary and rough indicator of rates of lack of professionalism, given the absence of specific professionalism metrics, as we have mentioned previously. Clearly, reducing UCMJ violations is an admirable goal unto itself, but, in absolute terms, the Air Force does not appear to exhibit increasing violations. Neither do the Air Force personnel have more violations than the other services. In fact, according to the UCMJ annual reports, it appears that the Air Force exhibits much lower rates of violations across a range of outcomes than the other services do. Nevertheless, understanding the causes behind the Air Force's greater and increasing rates of complaints under Article 138 might indicate the most viable focus for interventions to increase professionalism.

5. Civilian and Military Attitudes Related to Professionalism

In Chapter 4, we identified potential *objective* metrics of professionalism from existing data sources. In this chapter, we identify potential *subjective* metrics of professionalism from existing data sources. Again, we turned to these data in the absence of metrics specifically intended to measure professionalism. The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and DoD conduct regular surveys to understand the views of civilian and uniformed individuals. For civilian employees, it is the FEVS; for DoD, it is the SOFS.¹ In this chapter, we examine trends in responses beginning in 2010 and continuing to 2014 (FEVS) or 2013 (SOFS). Neither of these surveys focuses directly on professionalism, but each does include items that we judge relevant to professionalism concepts, such as integrity and values. For example, OPM describes items assessing the “Leaders Lead” subfactor of the FEVS as reflecting “the employees’ perceptions of the integrity of leadership, as well as leadership behaviors such [as] communication and workforce motivation.”²

Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey

As described by OPM, “The Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey is a tool that measures employees’ perceptions of whether, and to what extent, conditions that characterize successful organizations are present in their agencies.”³ The FEVS was first administered in 2002 and conducted on a biennial time frame until 2010, and it has since been administered annually. The FEVS includes four indices: (1) Employee Engagement Index, (2) Global Satisfaction Index, (3) New Inclusion Quotient, and (4) Human Capital Assessment and Accountability Framework. Agencies comprising 97 percent of the federal workforce were surveyed for the 2014 data collection, with a response rate of almost 47 percent. The Air Force response rate was 30.1 percent. The margin of error for the 2014 FEVS was plus or minus 1 percent.⁴

¹ Surveys of members in the nongovernment employment sector also are used to understand the level of professionalism within a profession. For example, see Eric G. Campbell, Susan Regan, Russell L. Gruen, Timothy G. Ferris, Sowmya R. Rao, Paul D. Cleary, and David Blumenthal, “Professionalism in Medicine: Results of a National Survey of Physicians,” *Annals of Internal Medicine*, Vol. 147, No. 11, 2007.

² See OPM, “2014 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey Results: Employees Influencing Change,” undated, p. 6.

³ OPM, “2014 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey,” 2014.

⁴ While it is possible that these results may be subject to survey nonresponse bias, results from this survey have been weighted to account for nonresponse. Thus, this weighting should minimize concerns about nonresponse bias.

Civilian Employee Engagement

For purposes of examining elements of professionalism that are relevant from the FEVS, we focus on the Employee Engagement Index, which has three subfactors labeled “Leaders Lead,” “Supervisors,” and “Intrinsic Work Experience.” OPM describes the Employee Engagement Index as “the employees’ sense of purpose that is evident in their display of dedication, persistence and effort in their work or overall attachment to their organization and its mission.”⁵ As we explained in preceding chapters, metrics specifically intended to measure professionalism, including attitudes about professionalism, are not yet available. So for this study, we looked to existing measures that relate to concepts of professionalism. The findings from Leaders Lead and Supervisors are relevant because of the strong influence leaders and supervisors have on workplace culture and professionalism, as established in the research literature.⁶ The findings from Intrinsic Work Experience reveal civilian employees’ level of engagement, which relates to their motivation to meet the standards of their organization. Table 5.1 lists items included in the Employee Engagement Index.

Table 5.1. Item Content of the Employee Engagement Index

Subfactor	Items Included
Leaders Lead	• In my organization, senior leaders generate high levels of motivation and commitment in the workforce. • My organization’s senior leaders maintain high standards of honesty and integrity. • Managers communicate the goals and priorities of the organization. • Overall, how good a job do you feel is being done by the manager directly above your immediate supervisor?* • I have a high level of respect for my organization’s senior leaders.
Supervisors	• Supervisors in my work unit support employee development. • My supervisor listens to what I have to say. • My supervisor treats me with respect. • I have trust and confidence in my supervisor. • Overall, how good a job do you feel is being done by your immediate supervisor?*
Intrinsic Work Experience	• I feel encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things. • My work gives me a feeling of personal accomplishment. • I know what is expected of me on the job. • My talents are used well in the workplace. • I know how my work relates to the agency’s goals and priorities.

NOTE: All items except those marked with an asterisk (*) are rated on a five-point scale of *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*. Items marked with an asterisk (*) are rated on a five-point scale of *very poor* to *very good*.

⁵ OPM, undated, p. 6.

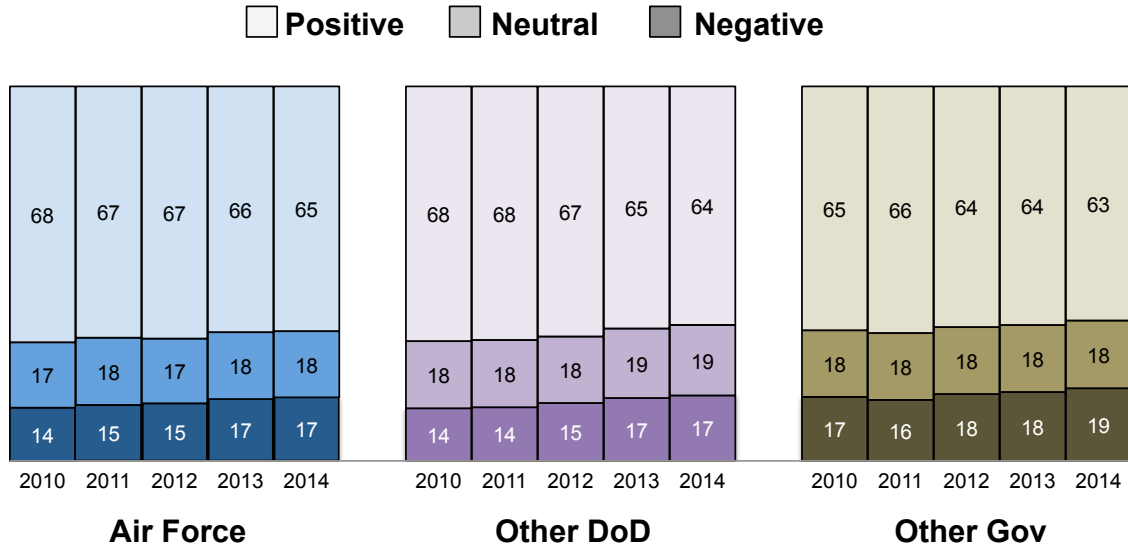
⁶ Achilles Armenakis, Steven Brown, and Anju Mehta, “Organizational Culture: Assessment and Transformation,” *Journal of Change Management*, Vol. 11, No. 3, 2011; Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, San Francisco, Calif.: Jossey-Bass, 2004.

The FEVS data sets are publicly available from OPM and were the data source for our analyses. In addition to responses to items in the Employee Engagement Index, the data sets include demographic information, such as organizational membership of the respondent. To offer some benchmarking, we compare the responses of Air Force civilian employees with those of civilian employees of all other DoD departments and agencies and with those of civilian employees of all other government departments and agencies excluding DoD.

Figure 5.1 shows that, from 2010 through 2014, although respondents remain more than 60-percent positive,⁷ there has been a slow decline of 2 to 4 percent in the Employee Engagement Index. That is, civilian government employees became slightly less engaged during the five-year period from 2010 to 2014. However, this decline is not consistent across the three subfactors that make up the index. First, positive responses to the Leaders Lead subfactor (Figure 5.2) are substantially lower than responses to the Supervisors (Figure 5.3) and Intrinsic Work Experience (Figure 5.4) subfactors. Second, positive responses to leaders hover between 49 and 58 percent across the five years for which we have data, and these levels of positive responses to Leaders Lead are 15 to 20 percent lower than positive responses to Supervisors and Intrinsic Work Experience. Third, positive responses to Supervisors have remained relatively constant throughout this period and are highest overall of the three subfactors included in the index (Figure 5.3). Fourth, positive responses to Intrinsic Work Experience, although hovering between 68 and 74 percent, have seen declines similar to those in positive responses to Leaders Lead during this period (Figure 5.4). Finally, although Air Force civilian employees show similar declines in positive responses across this period, the positive responses of Air Force civilian employees are either similar to or higher than those from other DoD civilian employees or other government employees.

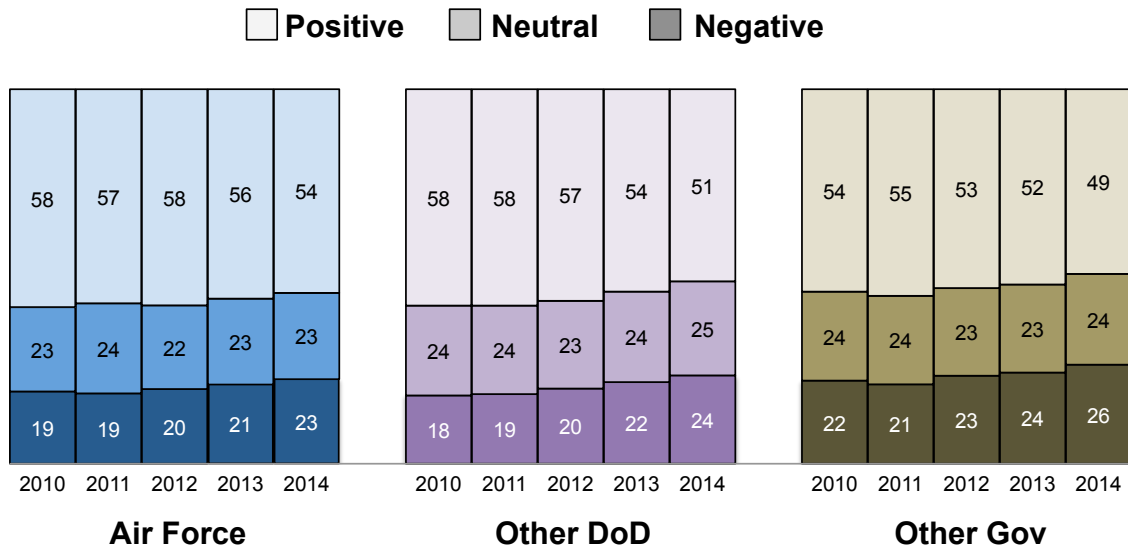
⁷ To be consistent with OPM reports of the results of the FEVS, we scored survey responses on the SOFS of *agree*, *strongly agree*, *good*, or *very good* as positive in our calculations.

Figure 5.1. Employee Engagement Index



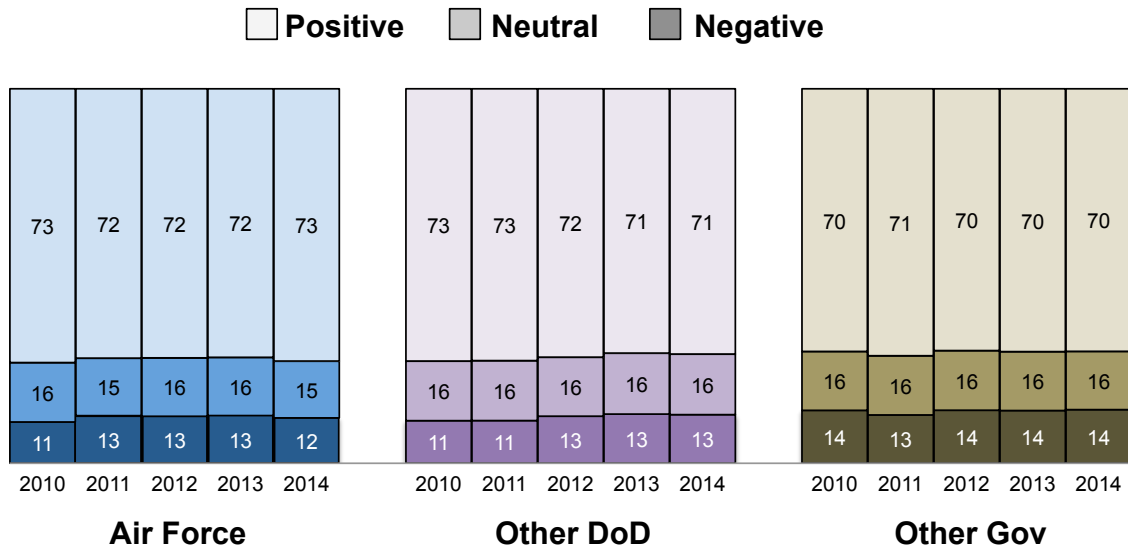
SOURCE: Our analysis of OPM data, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014.

Figure 5.2. Employee Engagement Index: Leaders Lead



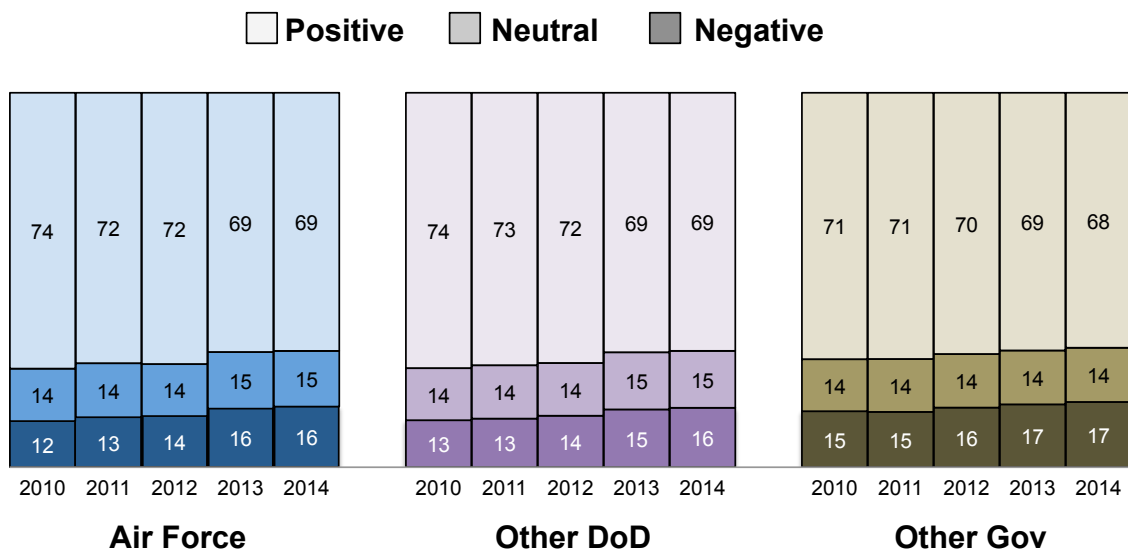
SOURCE: Our analysis of OPM data, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014.

Figure 5.3. Employee Engagement Index: Supervisors



SOURCE: Our analysis of OPM data, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014.

Figure 5.4. Employee Engagement Index: Intrinsic Work Experience



SOURCE: Our analysis of OPM data, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014.

We also looked for differences between responses of those civilian Air Force employees who have had military experience in the past or are still in the guard or reserves and responses from those without prior military experience. We found essentially no differences related to prior military experience in the percentage of positive responses to the Employee Engagement Index

for 2012, 2013, and 2014—the prior-military-experience variable is not available in the 2010 and 2011 data. In the subfactors (Leaders Lead, Supervisors, and Intrinsic Work Experience), there are occasional differences of no more than 2 percent, and the directionality is not consistent favoring either prior or non-prior military experience, and these few differences have no practical value.

Status of Forces Survey of Active-Duty Members

The Human Resource Strategic Assessment Program within DMDC conducts regular surveys of the entire DoD, including active-duty and reserve members, civilian employees, and family members on a wide range of topics in its SOFS.⁸ The surveys of active-duty members include core items on overall satisfaction, retention, tempo, readiness, stress, and permanent change of station moves. Additional topics are added as needed. For example, the February 2012 SOFS included questions on the impact of deployments, recovering warrior programs, the DoD Safe Helpline, family life, and other topics. Most surveys are web based, but such sensitive topics as sexual harassment are conducted on paper-and-pen surveys. The target population for surveys of active-duty military personnel are members of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force with at least six months of service when the survey is first fielded and below flag officer rank as of six months prior to fielding the survey. Reserves and National Guard who are in active-duty programs are excluded from the survey of active-duty military personnel.⁹

The four items we analyzed came from the Satisfaction and Retention categories and are listed in Table 5.2.

⁸ See, for comparison, DMDC, *June 2012 Status of Forces Survey of Active Duty Members*, Alexandria, Va., 2012-058, 2013b. SOFS data were weighted using the industry-standard three-stage process. This form of weighting produces survey estimates of population totals, proportions, and means (as well as other statistics) that are representative of their respective populations. While it is possible that the results may be subject to survey nonresponse bias, results from this survey have been weighted to account for nonresponse. Thus, this weighting should minimize concerns about nonresponse bias.

⁹ DMDC, *February 2012 Status of the Forces Survey of Active Duty Members: Tabulations of Responses*, DMDC Report No. 2012-037, 2013a, p. 1.

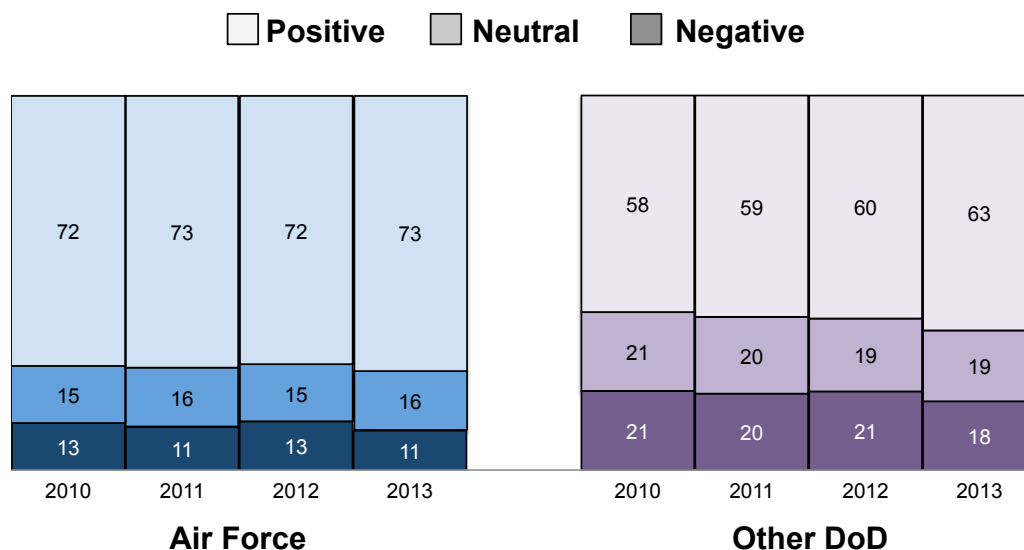
Table 5.2. Items Analyzed from the Status of Forces Surveys of Active-Duty Members

Category	Items Analyzed
Satisfaction	- Taking all things into consideration, how satisfied are you, in general, with each of the following aspects of being in the military? - The quality of your supervisor*
Retention	- How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? - Serving in the military is consistent with my personal goals. - I really feel as if the military's values are my own. - Generally, on a day-to-day basis, I am proud to be in the military.

NOTE: All items except the one marked with an asterisk (*) are rated on a five-point scale of *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*. The item marked with an asterisk (*) is rated on a five-point scale of *very dissatisfied* to *very satisfied*.

To be consistent with our analyses of the FEVS, we focused the discussion on the percentage of responses that are positive for each of the items. Figures 5.5 through 5.8 show the results of our calculations for each of the four items for the Air Force and for the remainder of DoD, excluding the Air Force. Similar to what we found with the FEVS, there has been a slight uptick in positive responses regarding the quality of supervisors and a slight downtick in the Retention items. Air Force responses are substantially more positive than those for the rest of DoD on the quality of supervisors and equally or slightly more positive on the Retention items.

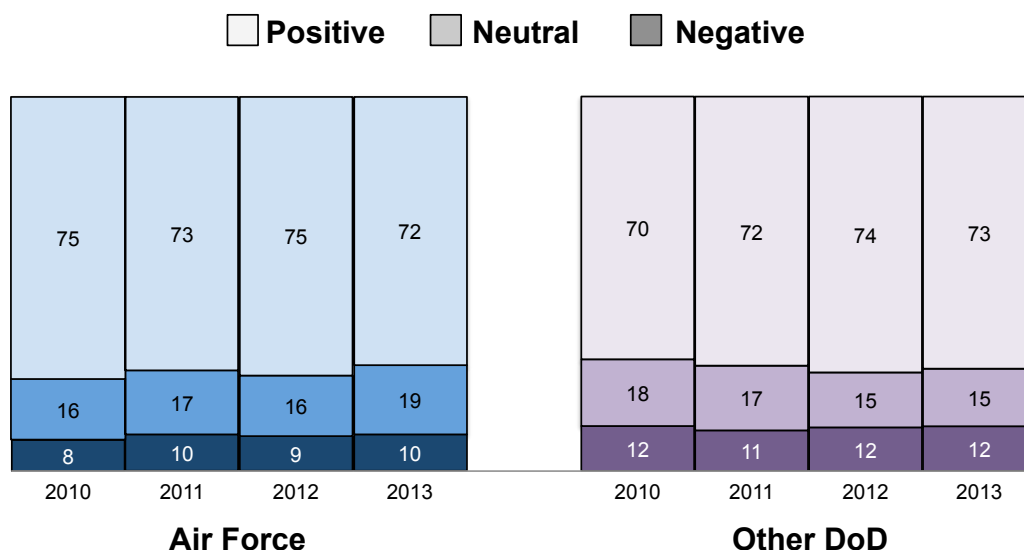
Figure 5.5. The Quality of Your Supervisor



SOURCE: Our analysis of DMDC data, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013.

Just over one-fourth of military personnel across DoD do not agree that serving in the military is consistent with their personal goals (Figure 5.6).

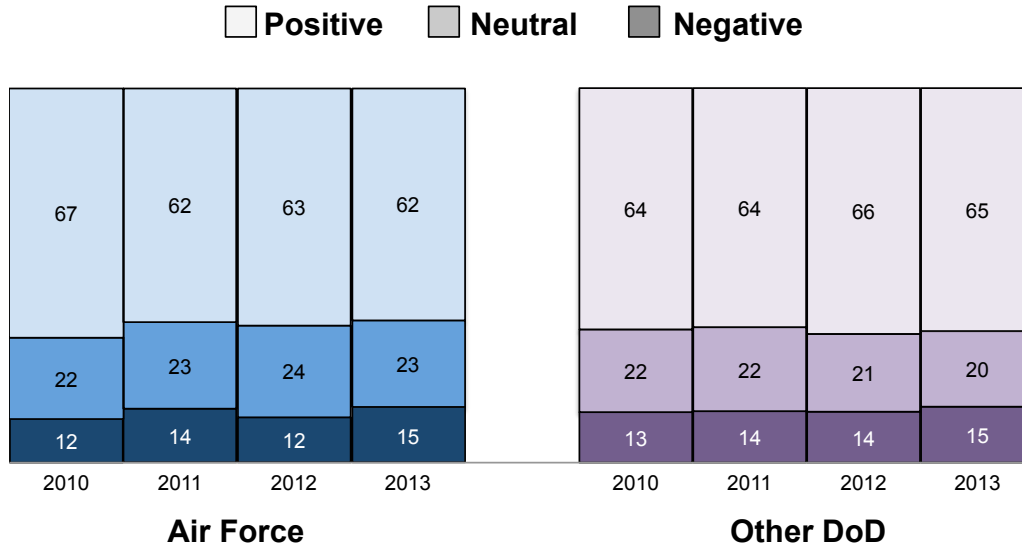
Figure 5.6. Serving in the Military Is Consistent with My Personal Goals



SOURCE: Our analysis of DMDC data, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013.

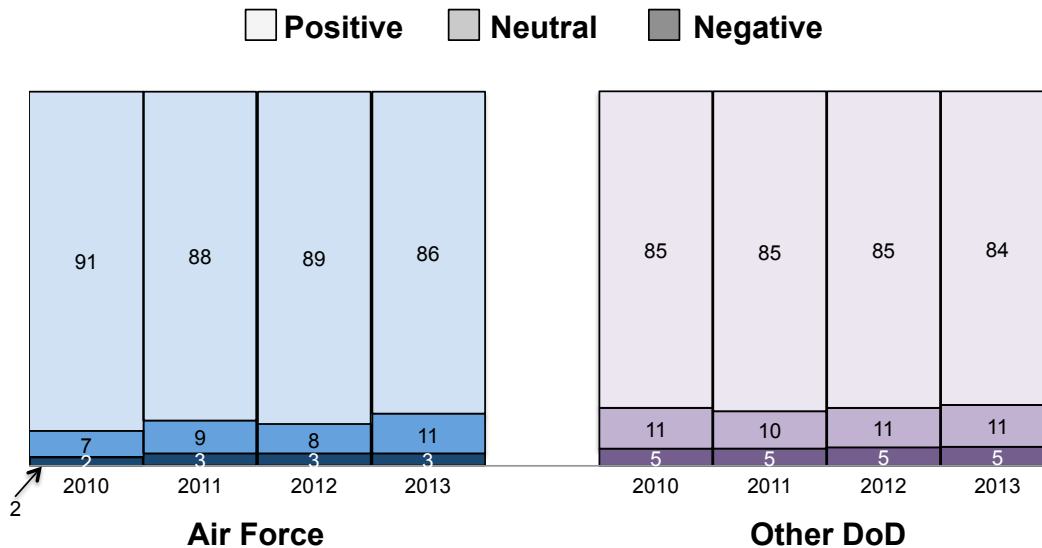
Understanding and behaving according to core values are essential to professionalism, as noted in Chapter 2. In this light, it is especially noteworthy that more than one-third of uniformed military personnel do not respond positively to the item “I really feel as if the military’s values are my own.” Also, although a high proportion of uniformed military personnel respond positively about being “proud to be in the military” (Figure 5.8), there has been a slight downtick in positive responses from uniformed Air Force personnel even to this item.

Figure 5.7. I Really Feel as If the Military's Values Are My Own



SOURCE: Our analysis of DMDC data, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013.

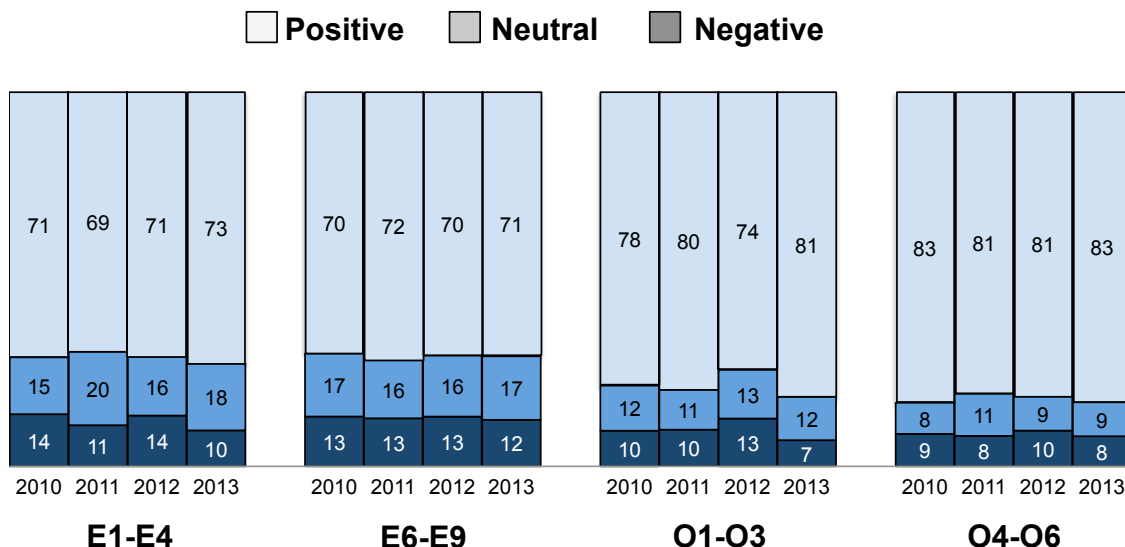
Figure 5.8. Generally, on a Day-to-Day Basis, I Am Proud to Be in the Military



SOURCE: Our analysis of DMDC data, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013.

We also examined responses to these items from uniformed Air Force personnel of different ranks (Figures 5.9 through 5.12). In general, officers responded more positively than enlisted personnel did to all four items, and the proportion of positive responses generally rises with rank.

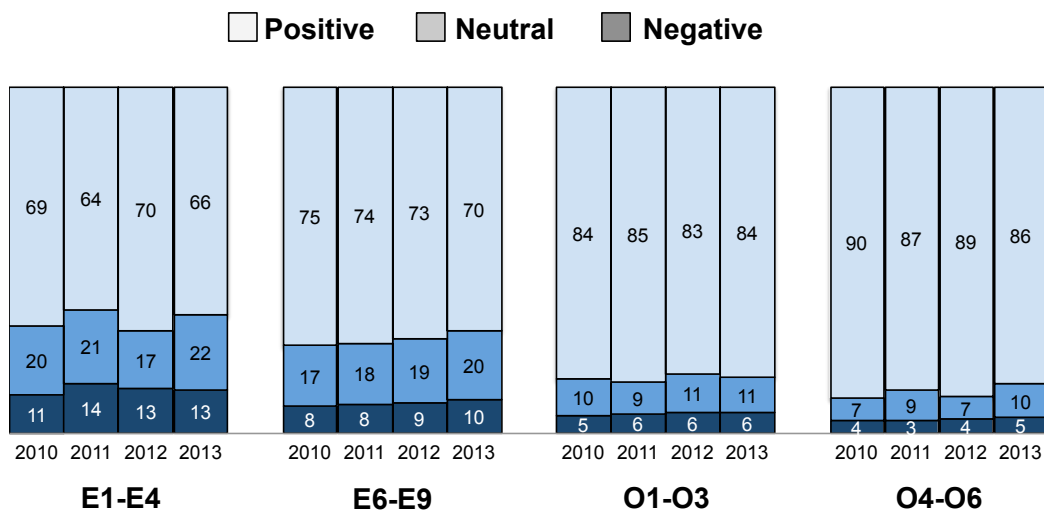
Figure 5.9. Air Force: The Quality of Your Supervisor



SOURCE: Our analysis of DMDC data, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013.

When we examined the data separately for officers and enlisted personnel, we found that only 3 to 6 percent of officers disagree that “serving in the military is consistent with my personal goals,” but 8 to 14 percent of enlisted personnel disagree with this statement (Figure 5.10). Looked at another way, while 83 to 90 percent of officers agree with this statement, only 64 to 75 percent of enlisted personnel do.

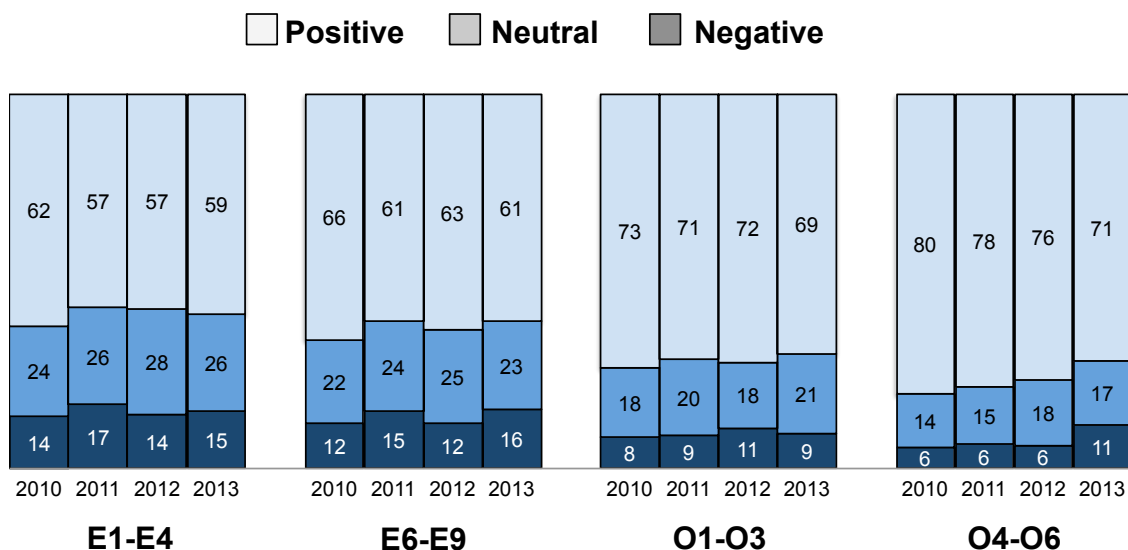
Figure 5.10. Air Force: Serving in the Military Is Consistent with My Personal Goals



SOURCE: Our analysis of DMDC data, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013.

If embracing military values is important for behaving appropriately as an Air Force professional, then it is noteworthy that only 57 to 66 percent of enlisted Air Force personnel agree with “the military’s values are my own” (Figure 5.11). For officers, the percentage who agree with “the military’s values are my own” ranges from 69 to 80 percent.

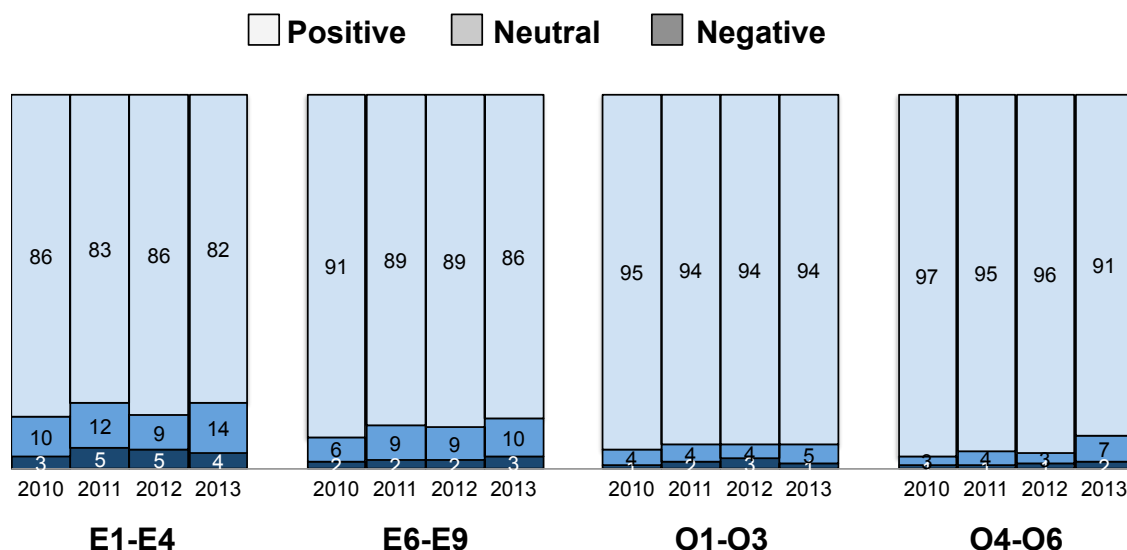
Figure 5.11. Air Force: I Really Feel as If the Military’s Values Are My Own



SOURCE: Our analysis of DMDC data, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013.

On the other hand, more than 82 percent of Air Force personnel agree that, on a day-to-day basis, they are proud to be in the military (Figure 5.12).

Figure 5.12. Air Force: Generally, on a Day-to-Day Basis, I Am Proud to Be in the Military



SOURCE: Our analysis of DMDC data, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013.

Conclusion

For the Air Force, the FEVS and SOFS tell a story of a glass that is half empty, half full, or both, depending on how one interprets the results. That is, these trends and results for a recent number of years can be seen both as identifying increasing cause for concern and as room for improvement. Federal employees are positively inclined toward their supervisors but increasingly less positive about their leaders. Military personnel are generally proud to be in the military, although this sentiment has been declining slightly in recent years, but less than two-thirds of enlisted Air Force personnel agree that the military's values are their own.

As the key underpinning of professionalism in the Air Force, acceptance of and adherence to the core values by all Air Force personnel is critical. The relatively low levels of agreement that “the military's values are my own” could reflect either that uniformed members of the Air Force do not agree with the military's values or that they do not understand them clearly enough to agree with them. In either case, these results point to the need for the Air Force to both gain a deeper understanding of why its uniformed members do not endorse the military's values as their own and do a better job of explaining the meanings and importance of its core values and of infusing the core values into all members of the Air Force.

Although these data map imperfectly to the criteria for professionalism mentioned in Chapter 2, they do provide preliminary insights. Identification of metrics that more fully represent the attributes of service, morals and ethics, and expertise would provide a more comprehensive view.

6. A Snapshot of Learning Opportunities Related to Air Force Professionalism

In Chapters 4 and 5, we examined data that reflect failures of professionalism and attitudes toward professionalism. In this chapter, we examine a small selection of Air Force learning opportunities intended to train and educate its members on Air Force professionalism. These learning opportunities are important because they embody deliberate messaging delivered to Air Force members. Through training and educational offerings, the Air Force has the opportunity to teach and/or reinforce information and values the organization considers important. Therefore, we examined a selection of learning opportunities to understand the extent to which they aligned with the professionalism goals in the Air Force strategic road map for professionalism.¹ In this chapter, we describe these exploratory analyses and their implications for the continued effort to enhance Air Force professionalism.

When we met with AETC staff, they shared their view of professionalism-related education and training as critical “touch points,” during which Air Force trainers and educators have the opportunity to instill and then reinforce the Air Force core values, ethics, expectations, and desired mind-sets among uniformed members of the Air Force. To inform this chapter, we reviewed a small selection of available learning opportunities at AU, USAFA, and PACE to gain a preliminary understanding of the essential characteristics of these courses and how they address the key goals of first developing and then reinforcing and sustaining professionalism in members of the Air Force. We attended a daylong series of meetings with various individuals at AU who are responsible for enlisted and officer PME and had telephone discussions with faculty and staff from USAFA. Finally, we attended a daylong seminar, which was, at the time of our research, currently the central offering of the recently created PACE within AETC. We also requested and received course syllabi and end-of-course evaluations for a selection of courses from USAFA and AU. Hence, this chapter represents a broad perspective on how precommissioning and PME contribute to Air Force professionalism. We raise a few points that are worth emphasizing about the state of Air Force education, writ large, with regard to creating, reinforcing, and sustaining professionalism within the Air Force. Given the scope of the overall effort, we kept our exploration of the learning opportunities broad rather than deep.

Learning opportunities related to Air Force professionalism exist in many forms. While many focus on technical expertise and warfighting, the current Air Force professionalism efforts also encompass a broad range of behavioral topics, such as leadership, character, core values, critical

¹ PACE, 2015.

thinking, team building, communication, sexual assault prevention, and resilience.² These behavioral topics all relate in some way to the key concepts of professionalism—expertise, service, and morals and ethics—called out in Chapter 2. As we discussed in that chapter, one of the challenges the Air Force faces is that there is not a widely shared understanding of the meaning of Air Force professionalism, and the definition that was recently developed (and documented in the Air Force strategic road map) is not yet widely known. In our meetings with Air Force educators and trainers, a common question was “What do you mean by *professionalism*?” This highlights the lack of an established, shared understanding of the term, and this lack of shared understanding across the Air Force was a recurring theme throughout our discussions.

Without a clear, *shared* definition of *professionalism* guiding their design, the learning opportunities that contribute to instilling, reinforcing, and sustaining professionalism in members of the Air Force will almost necessarily vary greatly in their targeted outcomes. In a sense, each institution within the Air Force education enterprise has had decades of time and experience to develop and hone its educational messages, and each institution targets the needs of a specific subpopulation and at specific points in time (e.g., officers versus enlisted, precommissioning versus commissioned, and junior versus senior ranks). For example, AU course developers commonly align their course goals with items on the Air Force Institutional Competency List,³ while course developers at USAFA align their goals with those of the Officer Development System, which incorporates the Air Force institutional competencies and USAFA outcomes.⁴ Besides the resources that could directly influence curriculum development, many other resources exist that could indirectly influence curriculum development, such as the AFIs on Air Force standards (AFI 1-1) and commander’s responsibilities (AFI 1-2) and the latest version of the Air Force’s Little Blue Book.⁵ In addition, during this study, the Air Force finalized and published its strategic road map for the Air Force profession of arms,⁶ which states the Air Force vision, mission, and goals for Air Force professionalism.

In 2014, AETC staff members conducted a preliminary investigation of professional-development learning opportunities related to professionalism and identified more than 220, including both mandatory and voluntary offerings. They found that the greatest number of opportunities exist for enlisted members, and the fewest were for civilians.⁷ These learning

² Patrick Penland, “AETC Professional Development Baseline,” unpublished briefing, October 2014.

³ Air Force Doctrine Document 1-1, *Leadership and Force Development*, Washington, D.C.: Secretary of the Air Force, November 8, 2011, Appendix C, p. 53.

⁴ USAFA, *Outcomes*, 2009.

⁵ Air Force Instruction 1-1, *Air Force Standards*, Washington, D.C.: Secretary of the Air Force, August 7, 2012, incorporating change 1, November 12, 2014; Air Force Instruction 1-2, 2014; and U.S. Air Force, *America’s Air Force: A Profession of Arms* (“*The Little Blue Book*”), July 2015.

⁶ PACE, 2015.

⁷ Penland, 2014.

opportunities are distributed across many institutions and activities within the Air Force. For example, officer candidates can be commissioned through Officer Training School, the ROTC, or USAFA. For officers, the basic, intermediate, and senior developmental education opportunities take many different forms in different locations. Enlisted personnel similarly access a varied continuum of training across their careers. Because a complete analysis of the more than 220 offerings would have been prohibitive in the time frame of this study, we chose to examine a small sampling of courses from AU, USAFA, and PACE.

In the following sections, we look at selected learning experiences primarily for officers by briefly examining a small number of courses from precommissioning through senior developmental education. As we explain below, the emphasis on officers was based on our access to relevant data.

Approach

Practical considerations drove the selection of learning experiences examined in this study. To gather information about learning opportunities, we communicated with relevant offices and individuals at AU, USAFA, and PACE. Although we were provided a wide array of materials and data, the data were not always enough to support a systematic analysis. As a result, many of the course materials we examined for this study are not discussed in this report, even though we used them as background to increase our understanding of the learning opportunities offered to enlisted personnel, officers, and civilians.

Although we examined a wide variety of course materials, we focus here on opportunities in officer developmental education and a seminar that is offered to various groups of personnel, including officers, enlisted personnel, and civilians. While significant precommissioning learning opportunities exist through USAFA, ROTC, and Officer Training School, we focused on a small selection of postcommissioning learning opportunities—those offered to individuals who have already taken the oath of office because of the practical considerations mentioned above. Regarding learning opportunities for commissioned officers, we chose to look at three of the major touch points for officers from the beginning level through senior developmental education—specifically, Squadron Officer School (SOS), Air Command and Staff College (ACSC), and Air War College (AWC). In addition, we examined a seminar that PACE offers to officers, enlisted personnel, and civilians alike. Table 6.1 describes the learning opportunities we examined and the target audiences, data sources, and type of analysis for each.

Table 6.1. Learning Opportunities Examined

Target Audience	Learning Opportunities	Data Sources	Analysis
Officers	SOS ACSC AWC	Course objectives	Exploratory analysis of alignment with professionalism goals stated in the strategic road map
Officers, enlisted, civilians	Human Capital Seminar	Surveys of course attendees	Analysis of feedback on the course

As mentioned earlier, the examination of these courses was limited by the data available within the time period of this study and by the time and resource constraints of the study itself. The scopes of the respective analyses reflect the types of data available; no comparison between the PME courses and the Human Capital Seminar is intended or implied.

The professionalism goals from the Air Force strategic road map for professionalism to which we referred were the following:

- Promote the *right mind-set* to enhance effectiveness and trust.
 - Connect Air Force core values with mission accomplishment.
 - Foster habits that lead to moral courage and ethical judgment.
 - Foster mental agility, adaptive behavior, and diversity of thought.
- Inspire strong *commitment* to the profession of arms.
 - Commit to oath of service.
 - Adhere to laws of armed conflict and code of conduct.
 - Adhere to ethical and legal conduct.
 - Have moral courage to hold one another accountable.
 - Build pride, perspective, and ownership to meet challenges.
 - Link Air Force heritage to current topics, and communicate current victories.
- Enhance a *culture* of shared identity, dignity, and respect.
 - Leaders train and enforce core values.
 - All Airmen understand core values.
 - All Airmen hold each other accountable for core values.
 - Build pride, and identify as Airmen.
 - Treat everyone with respect.
- Foster *relationships* that strengthen an environment of trust.
 - Leaders create opportunities for professional interaction and development.
 - Peer-to-peer behavior remains professional on and off duty.
 - Prepare to appropriately deal with negative peer pressure.⁸

⁸ PACE, 2015.

Officer Developmental Education Courses

If the Air Force is to align its training and education with its strategic road map for professionalism, a reasonable first step is to examine the extent to which major touch points in PME for officers relate to and advance the goals in the strategic road map. We conducted an exploratory examination of the targeted and measured outcomes for a small number of courses that constitute critical elements of basic, intermediate, and senior developmental education to consider how these major touch points relate to the strategic road map professionalism goals. Specifically, we looked at the learning objectives of SOS, ACSC, and AWC. For each one, we reviewed the targeted outcomes and identified those that most closely relate to the professionalism goals in the strategic road map. We also noted any differences in the targeted outcomes for the resident version of each course compared with the distance-learning version. We selected these courses not only because they are major touch points but also because they reach relatively large numbers of students. In Table 6.2, we list the courses with the numbers of students who attended in 2013–2014, the most recent year for which data were available.

Table 6.2. Number of Students Who Completed Courses in 2013–2014

PME	Resident or Distance	Number of Students
SOS	Resident	4,200 estimated
	Distance	Not available
ACSC	Resident	506
	Distance	3,500 estimated
AWC	Resident	223
	Distance	1,467

SOURCE: AU.

NOTE: Near the end of this study, changes were made to the guidelines for student enrollment that increased the numbers of students attending courses in residence and reduced distance learning.

Table 6.3 shows the targeted outcomes of the three courses, along with the professionalism strategic road map goals (listed earlier) they relate to. The marks in the columns show the professionalism goals that appear to be addressed by the course objectives, based on the concepts and wording represented in the objectives.

Table 6.3. Selected Courses, Learning Objectives, and Professionalism Goals

Course	Objective	Professionalism Goal			
		Right Mind-set	Commitment	Culture	Relationships
SOS resident	Lead at the tactical level employing the full range of leadership behaviors necessary to achieve success	x		x	x
	Exercise leadership that reflects the Air Force core values and employs concepts of accountability, diversity, and coaching or mentoring to facilitate effective mission execution	x	x	x	
	Employ problem-solving, decisionmaking, and process improvement tools to meet mission challenges at the tactical level	x	x		
	Explain the broad capabilities and roles airpower plays in joint and coalition operations to achieve national objectives		x		
	Forge professional relationships to facilitate teamwork at the tactical level			x	x
SOS distance	Describe the challenges of leading Airmen in a dynamic, resource-constrained environment	x			
	Understand the application of introspection and theoretical leadership constructs as leadership tools	x			
	Identify the responsibilities of an Air Force officer leading Airmen at the flight or team level		x		
	Describe systematic approaches to decisionmaking and continuous process improvement				
	Summarize the broad capabilities and roles airpower plays in joint and coalition operations to achieve national objectives		x		
ACSC resident	Lead and command in complex, dynamic, and ambiguous operational environments	x			
	Apply military theory in general and airpower theory in particular to the development of operational-level strategies				
	Plan for the integration and employment of joint forces at the operational level in whole-of-government operations across the spectrum of war and conflict				
	Articulate capabilities and limitations of service and joint organizations in the conduct of war at the operational level	x			
	Apply research methodologies and critical thinking skills to analyze issues of concern to the warfighter and/or broader defense community	x			
	Forge professional relationships which facilitate efficient, effective, and collaborative accomplishment of assigned tasks				x

Table 6.3—Continued

Course	Objective	Professionalism Goal			
		Right Mind-set	Commitment	Culture	Relationships
ACSC distance	Critically analyze leadership and command skills required to lead and command in complex, dynamic, and ambiguous operational environments	x			
	Apply military theory in general and airpower theory in particular to operational problems across the range of military operations	x			
	Plan for the integration and employment of joint forces at the operational level in whole-of-government operations across the spectrum of war and conflict	x			
	Articulate capabilities and limitations of service and joint organizations in the conduct of war at the operational level				
AWC resident	Lead successfully as senior officers in joint, coalition, and interagency environments, exhibiting the traits essential to the profession of arms and promoting the proper employment of airpower capabilities	x	x		
	Analyze complex political-military situations to influence senior-level decisionmaking by clearly articulating critical thought through written and oral communication	x			
	Develop and shape military strategies that, in concert with other instruments of national power, achieve national security strategy objectives				
	Capitalize, as senior leaders, on diverse personal and professional relationships forged from the broader AWC educational experience			x	x
AWC distance	Illustrate the skills required to lead successfully at the strategic level in a joint and coalition environment and distinguish the requirements for the proper strategic employment of airpower capabilities	x			
	Identify the elements of successful military strategies that, in concert with other instruments of national power, achieve national security strategy objectives				
	Critically analyze complex political-military issues and clearly articulate strategic thought from a joint perspective	x			

From our review of these materials, three key observations emerged:

1. Objectives explicitly relating to the strategic road map goals were more limited in two of the three PME offerings—ACSC and AWC.
2. The objectives of the distance-learning version of each of the three courses differed from the resident versions and focused more heavily on cognitive rather than affective learning.

3. As a result of the heavier emphasis on cognitive rather than affective learning in the distance versions of each course, the objectives of the distance courses gave less attention to strategic road map goals.

Although three of the SOS objectives appear to relate strongly to professionalism goals, the objectives for ACSC and AWC, which are key touch points in intermediate and senior developmental education, suggest only limited treatment in comparison. For example, although the resident version of SOS is designed to enable students to *lead, exercise leadership, employ problem-solving, explain capabilities, and forge professional relationships*, the distance version is designed to enable them to *describe, understand, identify, and summarize*. Although these goals of a more-passive, intellectual understanding might reflect the limitations of any distance-learning opportunity and although the limitations of distance learning are well known, the discrepancy between the two types of programs merits further consideration if there is a goal of leveraging these courses to increase professionalism behaviors. This concern applies not only to the courses named here but also to any courses intended to strengthen professionalism as the Air Force currently defines it.

We examined the results of surveys administered to attendees of all three courses—SOS, ACSC, and AWC—and found that all three surveys indicated high proportions of attendees (more than 90 percent) agreed that the courses increased their understanding of the topics addressed and thus met the stated objectives. This finding suggests that the courses have the potential to increase students' understanding of professionalism as well, especially if the courses were to expand or modify their objectives to address professionalism topics.

Because all of these courses were developed before the strategic road map, we did not expect that they would be directly aligned with its goals of right mind-set, commitment, culture, and relationships at the time of this study. We examined the courses with relation to the strategic road map as a starting point. Further analysis will be needed to determine what steps, if any, should be taken to further align courses, such as these, with professionalism efforts.

Alternatively, supplementing these courses with additional, professionalism-building learning experiences might be a viable solution. Options might include small, local meetings of students who are participating in distance learning or real-time conferencing of instructors and students.

Enhancing Human Capital Seminar

Unlike the other learning opportunities mentioned above, which are parts of established institutional curricula, this seminar developed organically over time outside of the usual institutional curriculum planning.⁹ It addresses topics related to critical thinking, interpersonal dynamics, self-discipline, and human psychology, which relate to the goals stated in the strategic

⁹ We use the term *seminar* to differentiate this learning opportunity from a *course*, for which there might be explicit targeted learning outcomes, tests, grades, and credit. A seminar is a learning opportunity without such formal requirements.

road map for professionalism.¹⁰ It was developed by Col Jeffrey Smith, stemming from his interests, as well as perceived needs in the Air Force community.¹¹ Over time, the seminar evolved from a multiday event to either a one-day or half-day event. In its current form, Enhancing Human Capital is provided through PACE to groups of participants across the Air Force on request. There is a heavy emphasis on reaching squadron commanders, but many groups from other demographics have received the course, including first sergeants, Pentagon staff, entire fighter wings, and military spouses. Within the past two years, the pool of instructors has grown from one to four or five, with more instructors being added at the time of this writing.

PACE staff reported that a recurring comment in the feedback is that the seminar is different from other Air Force learning opportunities they have experienced. In this section, we examine data from participant exit surveys to identify the factors that might explain this response. To do this, we examined five randomly selected batches of exit surveys from the Enhancing Human Capital seminar in 2014. AETC and PACE staff designed and administered these surveys and shared the data with our research team. Three batches corresponded to squadron commanders ($n = 81$), and the other two batches to first sergeants ($n = 92$). The surveys collect information on what participants liked best about the course, what can be improved, whether they would recommend it, and open-ended comments. For this analysis, we focused on two questions. We analyzed the responses to “What did you like best about this course?” to understand what needs the seminar is meeting that might differentiate it from other offerings. We also analyzed the responses to the question, “Where do you think the course could be improved?” for squadron commanders and the similar question, “What would you change about the course?” for first sergeants. Using the themes that emerged from the responses to these open-ended questions, we organized the findings into the categories of *who*, *what*, and *how*. *Who* refers to people associated with the course; *what* refers to course content; and *how* refers to the way in which the material is delivered. We discuss the themes in order of prevalence.

Squadron Commanders’ Responses

Regarding the *who* of this course, three themes were most prominent. The first was the opening of the seminar by Gen Robin Rand, then-commander of AETC. Participants commented on the importance of his attendance and opening of the seminar. The second theme was the presenter. The third theme was peers. Participants commented that they valued the opportunity to do the training with other squadron commanders and share ideas. Regarding improvements, the participants recommended offering it to members of the Air Force at all levels, and some commented that officers who are about to assume command should attend the seminar.

¹⁰ PACE, 2015.

¹¹ We acknowledge that the seminar developer was also, in effect, a cosponsor of the research. Given that, we took deliberate steps to avoid conflicts of interest in the conduct of the research. We randomly selected the batches of surveys to analyze, and we chose to analyze responses to survey items that would bring to the surface both strengths and needs.

In the category of *what*, again, three main themes emerged as positives. The first was the content on the brain and human psychology. The second was the focus on human capital, people, relationships, and leadership. The third was that the participants viewed the content as practical. Some participants commented that they could implement some of the principles with minimal time or cost. To improve the seminar, participants suggested reducing introductory material and adding content on organizational culture, change, and leadership. They also called for more real-world examples, as well as spending more time on the tools to increase professionalism and how to use those tools.

In the category of *how*, once again, three main themes emerged as positive characteristics. The first was that the seminar was interactive: The participants appreciated the ability to discuss the material during the seminar. The second theme was honesty and candor related to discussing what is currently happening in the Air Force. Finally, the third theme was that the seminar had a positive, rather than negative, tone. Participants commented that they had expected the tone to be negative, as seen in other trainings, but this one was not. To improve the seminar, many participants recommended lengthening it. They suggested increasing the time spent on discussion and reducing the amount of time in lecture. They also recommended teaching the material early in careers and integrating it into PME.

Table 6.4 summarizes the key themes from the squadron commanders' responses.

Table 6.4. Themes from Squadron Commanders' Exit Surveys

Theme	Positive Characteristics	Areas for Change or Improvement
Who (people involved in the seminar)	Engaged senior leader Engaging presenter Peers	Offer to members of the Air Force at all levels, not only certain ranks Offer to all officers before they assume command
What (content of the seminar)	Human psychology and the brain Human capital, people, relationships, and leadership Practical, useful content	Less introductory material More material on organizational culture, change, and leadership More real-world examples More on tools and how to use them
How (how the seminar is delivered)	Interactive Honest and candid Positive tone	Lengthen seminar Increase discussion, reduce lecture Integrate the material into PME Teach the material early in Air Force careers

First Sergeants' Responses

For the first sergeants' responses, we again categorize them into *who*, *what*, and *how*. Regarding the *who* of this course, three responses were most prominent regarding positive characteristics, and they differed slightly from those of the squadron commanders. They were the presenter, the AETC Commander, and a guest speaker, who is not always part of the seminar. Participants commented on the perceived attributes of the presenter, as well as the personal elements brought

to the seminar by General Rand. Although the squadron commanders highlighted the interaction with peers, the first sergeants focused on the speakers. Regarding ways to improve the seminar, first sergeants were similar to squadron commanders in recommending that the seminar be offered to members of the Air Force at all levels, not only to those in certain ranks. They also recommended offering it early in careers and including a mix of ranks within class offerings to allow discussion of what the concepts mean at different levels.

In the category of *what*, four themes emerged as important positives. The first theme focused on human behavior, leadership, relationships, and seeing people as individuals. A second prominent theme among this group was that the participants found the material practical and relevant to their lives. A third and important theme that emerged from this group's responses was self-reflection, introspection, and seeing one's own biases. The fourth theme in this category of seminar content, or *what*, was that the speakers incorporated personal stories that made the material relatable.

Regarding improvements to the *what* of the seminar (the content), like the squadron commanders, the first sergeants recommended more content on the tools to build professionalism and how to use them. They recommended giving preparatory reading and reducing the amount of time spent on introductory material. They also recommended handouts and more support for note taking.

Finally, in the category of *how*, three themes emerged that are interestingly different from those of the squadron commanders' comments on positive characteristics. The first was that participants commented positively on the fact that the seminar was delivered in person rather than via distance learning. The second theme was honesty and candor, similar to that of squadron commanders. The final theme was the interactive nature of the course.

Regarding how to improve the delivery of the seminar, they recommended increasing the length from one day to two or three days. Some commented that it felt rushed, and they wanted more time for discussion, and especially small-group discussion. A number of respondents also suggested integrating the material into PME or finding some other way to provide it throughout careers.

Table 6.5 summarizes the key themes from the first sergeants' responses.

Table 6.5. Themes from First Sergeants' Exit Surveys

Theme	Positive Characteristics	Areas for Change or Improvement
Who (people involved in the seminar)	Engaging presenter Engaged senior leader Inspirational guest speaker	Offer to members of the Air Force early in careers Offer to all levels, not only certain ranks Include mix of ranks within classes
What (content of the seminar)	Human behavior, relationships, leadership, people as individuals Practical, relevant content Self-reflection Personal stories	More material on tools and how to apply them Give prereading and reduce time on introductory material Give handouts and more support for note taking
How (how the seminar is delivered)	In person, not distance Honest and candid Interactive	Lengthen seminar to 2–3 days Increase small group discussion Integrate material into PME, or offer it throughout careers

The similarities and differences between the two groups are striking in a few respects. First, there is some consistency in the *who* with respect to General Rand and the seminar presenter, but it is noteworthy that the squadron commanders' responses highlighted the presence of their peers, but the first sergeants did not. Both groups recommended that the seminar be provided to members of the Air Force at all levels, not only certain ranks. In the category of *what*, there were subtle differences in that the squadron commanders commented on the human psychology and the science of how the human brain works, while the first sergeants did not. But both groups expressed the theme of people, relationships, and leadership. Similarly, both groups had numerous responses focusing on the practicality, relevance, and general usefulness of the content, but the first sergeants also highlighted the self-reflection involved in the seminar and the personal stories that the speakers shared. Both groups called for more material on the tools to build professionalism and how to use them. Regarding the *how*, both groups liked the interaction in the seminar, but the first sergeants' responses—pointing out that it was in person and not distance—suggest distance-learning fatigue as an area for further examination. The honesty and candor of the seminar were important characteristics to both groups. To improve the delivery of the seminar, both groups called for increasing the length to make it less rushed and allow for more discussion. Both groups also recommended integrating the material into PME.

Taken together, these responses suggest that the following are the characteristics of this learning opportunity that the participants surveyed found most valuable:

- participation by a senior leader who is personally engaged in the topic
- presentation by an instructor who is passionate, candid, and knowledgeable
- the introduction of material on human psychology
- the focus on people, relationships, and leadership
- interaction among the instructor and participants
- candid discussion about the strengths and weaknesses of individuals and the Air Force.

The responses also point to the following as directions for improvement, according to this group of participants:

- Offer the training to Air Force members at all levels, beginning early in careers.
- Provide practical tools and guidance on how to use them.
- Increase the amount of time spent teaching the material.
- Look for ways to further integrate professionalism learning into PME and repeatedly throughout careers.

Conclusions

In this chapter, we conducted exploratory analyses of a small selection of learning opportunities that reach officers and, to a limited extent, enlisted personnel and civilians. We looked at officer developmental education and found limited treatment across three key points on the developmental education spectrum—and even more-limited treatment of professionalism-related topics in the distance versions of the same courses. Finally, we looked at survey feedback on the PACE Enhancing Human Capital seminar and identified perceived strengths and areas for improvement.

Taken together, the findings from these exploratory analyses, combined with the insights gathered from meetings with Air Force educators and trainers, point to a few conclusions. First, they underscore the need to promote a shared definition of *professionalism* across the Air Force. This definition should serve as part of the foundation for any learning opportunity that is designed to enhance professionalism. It stands to reason that Air Force educators across the organization cannot be expected to work toward a common goal without a clear, shared understanding of Air Force professionalism. Further, the definition and the behavioral expectations associated with it must be used to directly shape learning opportunities.

Second, these learning opportunities should be aligned with the Air Force's stated goals. From a very preliminary, exploratory analysis, we saw that key courses varied in their alignment with the stated professionalism goals. Again, it stands to reason that courses cannot be expected to strengthen Air Force professionalism if the course objectives do not align with professionalism goals. The goals in the strategic road map for professionalism could serve as reference points to help shape course content. Further, courses should be delivered in ways that maximize the potential for lasting effects. Those ways are likely to include teaching in ways that accomplish affective learning,¹² in addition to cognitive learning. The most productive activities to achieve that outcome would be interactive and might include self-reflection, discussion, and

¹² Benjamin S. Bloom, Max D. Engelhart, E. J. Furst, W. H. Hill, and David R. Krathwohl, *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals*, Handbook I: *Cognitive Domain*, New York: David McKay Company, 1956.

experiential learning.¹³ On this point, we observed somewhat predictable but substantial differences between resident and distance-learning programs, whereby the distance programs contained fewer objectives and learning activities related to professionalism goals.

The survey findings suggest that professionalism-related learning activities are likely to be well received when they allow personal interaction and involve instructors and leaders who are engaged with the topic and willing to speak candidly. Participants also expressed that they valued practical tools and guidance on how to use them, as well as the opportunity for interaction and discussion as part of the learning experience. Some of the survey responses suggest the possibility of distance-learning fatigue. Further, feedback surveys suggest that students place a high value on material that focuses on people, relationships, leadership, and self-reflection. Although these generalizations might apply broadly, we found subtle differences between groups of students that suggest that individual audiences will benefit from tailoring to their particular needs and interests (as is the case with most learning experiences).

Finally, the survey findings suggest that students would like to see professionalism taught throughout careers, beginning early, and reinforced over time through PME. This aligns with insights from the literature, which point to the importance of continuous messaging to reinforce cultural norms.

¹³ R. W. Picard, S. Papert, W. Bender, B. Blumberg, C. Breazeal, D. Cavallo, T. Machover, M. Resnick, D. Roy, and C. Strohecker, "Affective Learning: A Manifesto," *BT Technology Journal*, Vol. 22, No. 4, October 2004; Robert M. Gagné, *The Conditions of Learning and Theory of Instruction*, 4th ed., New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1985; Robert G. Main, *Integrating the Affective Domain into the Instructional Design Process*, Brooks Air Force Base, Tex.: Air Force Human Resources Lab, Training Systems Division, AL-TP-192-04, 1992; Dale H. Schunk, *Learning Theories: An Educational Perspective*, New York: Merrill, 1991.

7. Applying Themes from Organizational Culture and Change to Strengthen Professionalism

The preceding chapters each surfaced potential challenges to the Air Force's efforts to improve professionalism. As reported in Chapter 2, the Air Force definition of professionalism is: "A personal commitment and loyalty to Air Force standards and expectations framed within an environment of shared trust, guided by Air Force Core Values."¹ Because this definition of professionalism relates strongly to organizational culture and because making improvements involves some degree of change, this chapter highlights themes from the extensive literature on those topics and relates them to the Air Force professionalism effort. We use the themes to identify recommendations that could serve the Air Force in its effort to enhance the level of professionalism. While some of the literature is likely to be familiar to many in positions of leadership, it bears further consideration in the context of enhancing professionalism. Further, we recognize that many efforts have already been launched that build on these principles.

We acknowledge that views varied among the Air Force stakeholders we interviewed as to whether the current state of professionalism is truly a problem. However, they agreed that there is room for improvement. Accordingly, this chapter explores the organizational factors that would support (or fail to support) efforts to improve the level of professionalism throughout the organization. As stated in Chapter 2, taken broadly, *professionalism* refers to the behavior expected of a person in accord with the standards of the specific profession and organization to which the person belongs. Therefore, any attempts to strengthen professionalism first require an understanding of the ways people experience and describe their work settings and the factors that support change, whether large or small.

Urgency

Perhaps the single most important theme from the literature is the importance of establishing urgency as a foundation for change—the sense that the matter is an important priority that requires action. In fact, organizational change expert John Kotter states that the primary reason change efforts fail is *not* establishing a great enough sense of urgency: Change efforts fail when people are not motivated to change.² He estimates that about 75 percent of an organization's management must be convinced that "business as usual" is unacceptable. It stands to reason that urgency cannot be created unless there is a perceived problem. Consistent with that premise, management researchers Smets, Morris, and Greenwood argue that crisis precipitates

¹ PACE, 2015, p. 4.

² John P. Kotter, "Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail," *Harvard Business Review*, January 2007.

organizational change.³ They define a *crisis* as a situation that includes novel institutional complexity (a new problem an organization is facing), urgency (a sense that the problem cannot be allowed to continue over time),⁴ and consequence (the perception that the problem, if not addressed, would incur a substantial cost or create further serious problems, including failure).⁵

Applying these concepts to U.S. military professionalism, it is possible that the U.S. military leaders whose initiatives are represented on the timeline in Chapter 3 perceived the growing number of highly publicized transgressions as a problem that, if left unexamined, could grow into a crisis. For example, when former Defense Secretary Hagel established the role of senior adviser for military professionalism and made the topic of military professionalism a priority for all of the services, he commented:

Some of our people are falling short of these high standards and expectations. We need to find out: Is there a deep, wide problem? If there is, then what is the scope of that problem? How did this occur? Was it a constant focus of 12 years on two long land wars taking our emphasis off some of these other areas? I don't know. We intend to find out.⁶

Consistent with Hagel's mix of concern and uncertainty with respect to DoD, Air Force stakeholders with whom we met for this research also expressed differing views about whether a serious problem exists and, relatedly, the extent to which change is needed. Some believed that Air Force members, including both military and civilians, needed to display a higher level of professionalism in their behavior and that substantial changes to the culture would be required. Others expressed that the Air Force currently embodies a high degree of professionalism, and they did not perceive a serious problem.

While this study was launched under the assumption that the need to improve Air Force professionalism, as already defined, was serious enough to warrant action, the lack of consensus in the Air Force about whether a problem exists is itself a challenge to improvement. Essentially, if Air Force members do not perceive a reason to improve, they are unlikely to be motivated to do anything differently. Therefore, those seeking to enhance Air Force professionalism must first communicate an important, if not urgent, reason for members to improve.

Cultural Leadership

A second relevant theme from the literature is cultural leadership within an organization. The premise that an organization's leaders play a large role in shaping its culture is widely accepted.

³ Michael Smets, Tim Morris, and Royston Greenwood, "From Practice to Field: A Multilevel Model of Practice-Driven Institutional Change," *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 55, No. 4, August 1, 2012.

⁴ To clarify, urgency is conceptualized as requiring immediate action to *address* the issue, not necessarily to resolve the issue.

⁵ Smets, Morris, and Greenwood, 2012.

⁶ Tilghman, 2014.

The culture encompasses the shared assumptions, values, and beliefs of an organization and provides a general understanding of how, when, and why members behave in certain ways. For Air Force professionalism, this would be the shared assumptions, values, and beliefs that shape the behavior of “personal commitment and loyalty to Air Force standards and expectations framed within an environment of shared trust, guided by Air Force Core Values.”⁷

Regarding the shaping of an organization’s culture, prominent scholars repeatedly emphasize the importance of leadership, a concept deeply familiar to those in the Air Force. Social psychologist and management scholar Schein wrote, “culture is ultimately created, embedded, evolved, and ultimately manipulated by leaders . . . leadership and culture are two sides of the same coin.”⁸ Management researchers Armenakis, Brown, and Mehta point to the need for a *cultural leader*—one who can articulate beliefs and values and who plays a major role in orchestrating the practices and beliefs that define the culture.⁹ Sirkin, Keenan, and Jackson state that visible backing by the organization’s most-influential leaders is an essential element to change.¹⁰ According to these experts, though, influential cultural leaders need not be those in the top positions, but they do need to be highly visible on the topic of improving professionalism. During stakeholder meetings and our review of documentation (discussed in Chapter 3), General Fogleman was credited with the effort to establish the core values that were created in the 1990s and that remain the core values of the Air Force today. Some interviewees’ comments pointed to him as the cultural leader for Air Force core values at that time.

As the current Air Force professionalism effort concerns ethical norms and standards within the organization, it is critical that leaders throughout the organization are themselves perceived as displaying ethical leadership consistent with Air Force standards, expectations, and core values. Organizational research reinforces the common-sense notion that leadership—whether ethical or unethical—influences the organization by cascading downward from senior leaders through subordinate leaders and ultimately to followers, as well as permeating across hierarchical levels.¹¹ Furthermore, leaders can directly affect subordinates’ decisionmaking or indirectly affect subordinates’ ethical behavior through ethical climate,¹² role-modeling, and

⁷ PACE, 2015.

⁸ Schein, 2004, p. 3.

⁹ Armenakis, Brown, and Mehta, 2011.

¹⁰ Harold L. Sirkin, Perry Keenan, and Alan Jackson, “The Hard Side of Change Management,” *Harvard Business Review*, October 2005.

¹¹ David M. Mayer, Maribeth Kuenzi, Rebecca L. Greenbaum, Mary Bardes, and Rommel Salvador, “How Low Does Ethical Leadership Flow? Test of a Trickle-Down Model,” *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, Vol. 108, No. 1, January 2009.

¹² David M. Mayer, Maribeth Kuenzi, and Rebecca L. Greenbaum, “Examining the Link Between Ethical Leadership and Employee Misconduct: The Mediating Role of Ethical Climate,” *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 95, No. 1, September 2010.

enforcing organizational policies.¹³ Recognizing that these leadership concepts are woven into many aspects of the training and daily lives of Air Force members, we highlight these concepts here simply as reminders of their importance and as a reference point for the recommendations to come.

Communication

Organizational change scholars (such as Sirkin, Keenan, and Jackson) consistently highlight communication as an important element in any change process. Similarly, Kotter recommends using every means possible to constantly communicate the vision and strategies for change.¹⁴ The Air Force has many measures for such communication in place. We note, for example, the reissue of the Little Blue Book,¹⁵ which provides quick access to Air Force core values, codes, and creeds, as well as speeches made by Air Force top leaders that address professionalism and a need to refocus on the profession of arms. Such communication, however, is unlikely to be enough. To accomplish and support change, Kotter asserts that leaders and change agents will need to *repeatedly* communicate the professionalism vision through all available means (e.g., speeches, conversations, meetings, publications, and personal behavior).¹⁶ This applies not only to the organization's top leaders, but also to midlevel and lower-level supervisors who must translate the message and communicate clearly that professionalism matters at all levels. This communication can be considered as one means to exert the cultural leadership discussed above.

In addition to communication through leadership, communication through education and training is also critically important. Because individuals come to the Air Force from varied backgrounds, they may enter with varying standards for moral and ethical conduct. As a result, this diversity creates the need for added emphasis on educating and training members of the Air Force on moral awareness and what behavior is acceptable.¹⁷ Military management scholars Galvin and Clark at the U.S. Army War College refer to this strategy as normative-reeducative—shaping one's personal norms, which include knowledge, habits, attitudes, skills, and relationships.¹⁸

¹³ Patrick E. Murphy, "Implementing Business Ethics," *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 7, No. 12, December 1988; John M. Schaubroeck, Sean T. Hannah, Bruce J. Avolio, Steve W. J. Kozlowski, Robert G. Lord, Linda K. Treviño, Nikolaos Dimotakis, and Ann C. Peng, "Embedding Ethical Leadership Within and Across Organization Levels," *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 55, No. 5, October 1, 2012.

¹⁴ Kotter, 2007.

¹⁵ U.S. Air Force, 2015.

¹⁶ Kotter, 2007.

¹⁷ Thomas M. Jones, "Ethical Decision Making by Individuals in Organizations: An Issue-Contingent Model," *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 16, No. 2, April 1991, pp. 366–395.

¹⁸ Thomas P. Galvin and Lance D. Clark, "Beyond Kotter's Leading Change: A Broad Perspective on Organizational Change for Senior U.S. Military Leaders," Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, July 16, 2015.

Therefore, we recommend gearing education and training toward informing members in meaningful and practical terms about the conduct they are expected to uphold according to Air Force standards, values, and expectations and motivating them to do so. Although this would necessarily include some rules (such as the nature of the professional relationship between officers and enlisted personnel), we recommend going beyond a rules-based approach to more fully educate members of the Air Force about how abstract values, such as “integrity first,” would manifest behaviorally. Although there are Air Force–wide expectations, the most-meaningful behavioral displays of integrity may be specific to the context of one’s technical expertise. Thus, efforts aimed at (1) identifying and (2) discussing ethical dilemmas that are commonly encountered in certain career specialties may yield tremendous value because these activities will better prepare members of the Air Force to act appropriately when these more-probable situations occur. Understanding the implications and consequences of certain courses of action, as well as which behaviors are deemed “correct” and why they are correct, is likely to build scripts and action plans, which individuals can then enact when prompted by the situation. Efforts along these lines are already under way. For example, Airmen’s Week, which follows BMT, includes discussions of ethical dilemmas and how best to respond. Others may have been in place on a small scale, but we did not find evidence of widespread use of such practices at the time of this study.

Other examples of communications that make ethical dilemmas concrete are DoD’s *Encyclopedia of Ethical Failure* and the USAFA’s “Cadet X letters.”¹⁹ The *Encyclopedia of Ethical Failure* provides short narratives of DoD personnel’s ethical failures. The stated purpose is for training, and the goal “is to provide DoD personnel with real examples of Federal employees who have intentionally or unwittingly violated the standards of conduct. Some cases are humorous, some sad, and all are real.”²⁰ These entries are organized by offense type (e.g., bribery, fraud, gambling violations, travel violations) and include all DoD personnel, both military and civilian. The “Cadet X letters” are letters describing violations of the USAFA’s honor code, which are used in the institution’s character development and honor education. These examples could be reference points for future efforts specific to career specialties. For example, there might be an “encyclopedia of ethical failure” for pilots, for security forces, for aircraft maintainers, etc. These communications could be incorporated into education for individuals in each specialty.

Empowerment

Another important facilitator to enabling change is to empower action through formal and informal management practices. This concept is present in guidance from change expert Kotter

¹⁹ DoD, Standards of Conduct Office, *Encyclopedia of Ethical Failure*, September 2016.

²⁰ DoD, Standards of Conduct Office, 2016, p. 3.

and researchers Armenakis, Brown, and Mehta.²¹ The Air Force has long recognized this principle, as demonstrated by the original Little Blue Book of 1997:

Our first task is to fix organizations; individual character development is possible, but it is not a goal. {If a culture of compromise exists in the Air Force, then it is more likely to be the result of bad policies and programs than it is to be symptomatic of any character flaws in our people. Therefore, long before we seek to implement a character development plan, we must thoroughly evaluate and, when necessary, fix our policies, processes, and procedures.}²²

KPMG’s 2013 Integrity Survey of more than 3,500 employees across the United States elaborates on this point by finding that one of the most commonly cited drivers of misconduct is a perceived pressure to do “whatever it takes” to meet business goals.²³ Other commonly cited causes included not taking the organization’s code of conduct seriously, having in place systems that rewarded results over means, and the fear of job loss if targets are not met. Identifying and addressing formal policies, processes, and procedures that can foster undesirable behavior, as well as informal pressures and perceptions (e.g., “whatever it takes” mentality), will remove barriers (however small) to foster an ethically conducive climate. Further, Wong and Gerras, researchers at the U.S. Army War College, found that rationalizations—such as mission accomplishment and supporting the troops—were often used to justify dishonesty in an environment that requires compliance with a large number of strict requirements.²⁴ To mitigate this, they recommend using restraint in creating new requirements and encouraging leaders to be truthful.

Indeed, there are precedents for processes to identify and remove structural impediments that might interfere with Air Force members’ ability to behave according to the values and standards of Air Force professionalism. For example, the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2007 (Public Law 109-364) instructed DoD to establish a panel on contracting integrity comprising senior leaders across DoD who report to Congress.²⁵ The panel’s purpose was twofold: (1) Review progress made by DoD to eliminate areas of vulnerability of the defense contracting system that allow fraud, waste, and abuse to occur, and (2) recommend changes in laws, regulations, and policies to eliminate the areas of vulnerability. The panel publishes annual reports on their findings. Following this example, the Air Force could establish a working group to identify and address regulations and policies that inadvertently put its members in difficult

²¹ Kotter, 2007; and Armenakis, Brown, and Mehta, 2011.

²² Department of the Air Force, “United States Air Force Core Values” [The Little Blue Book], January 1, 1997, p. 12.

²³ KPMG, *Integrity Survey 2013*, 2013.

²⁴ Leonard Wong and Stephen J. Gerras, *Lying to Ourselves: Dishonesty in the Army Profession*, Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: United States Army War College Press, 2015.

²⁵ Public Law 109-364, John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007, October 7, 2006.

situations. The findings could be used to reduce situations in which Air Force members, whether military or civilian, feel that policies or required procedures pose challenges to professionalism.

Measurement

A final important theme from the literature is measurement. It is widely accepted that effective improvement requires an ongoing cycle of measurement, review, and correction. Scholars of organizational culture and change (such as Schein and Sirkin, Keenan, and Jackson²⁶) commonly identify measurement as a critical component of successful change. As we mentioned earlier in this report, one of the greatest challenges to the current Air Force professionalism efforts is the lack of metrics to reliably assess the current state of professionalism and any changes resulting from current efforts. Without them, how can the Air Force know the extent to which its members are behaving according to its standards, values, and expectations? As seen in this study, no specific metrics exist for the purpose of assessing Air Force professionalism. As a result, we examined proxies for such metrics—such as UCMJ data, attitude surveys, and data on learning opportunities. These types of indicators are consistent with those used for civilian professions. For example, the agencies that license psychologists and physicians report violations committed by members of these professions. Further, researchers have used attitude surveys of members of professions as indicators of the degree to which members ascribe to values specific to the profession.²⁷

We recognize that measurement, especially for a construct as encompassing as professionalism, is complex. Nevertheless, we assert that identifying measurable outcomes is absolutely critical to the advancement of professionalism within the Air Force. This may involve leveraging existing metrics, as we did, or developing new metrics. Reference points for such metrics are likely to be available in existing documents. For example, AFI 1-2 identified some professionalism-related dimensions under the duties and responsibilities of “lead people,” which might offer some insight into the development of professionalism metrics.²⁸ Carefully selected metrics will enable ongoing reviews of progress and help identify any needed modifications to the change efforts.

Conclusions

In this chapter, we highlighted five themes from the literature on organizational culture and change that are relevant to the Air Force effort to improve professionalism as the Air Force has defined it: urgency, cultural leadership, communication, empowerment, and measurement. We recognize that views among Air Force leaders and stakeholders vary as to the extent of change

²⁶ Schein, 2004; and Sirkin, Keenan, and Jackson, 2005.

²⁷ For example, see Campbell et al., 2007.

²⁸ Air Force Instruction 1-2, 2014.

needed and a definitive answer is not available without better measurement, but these themes are worth considering whether the desired changes are small or large. Whether the effort to improve Air Force professionalism is seen as an organizational change or simply a reinvigoration of existing values, it requires actions that are different from the status quo. Further, while these themes may be well known to many in the Air Force, we encourage considering them further in the specific context of Air Force professionalism efforts.

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

In this report, we have taken a broad approach to answering the overarching question, “How can the Air Force best improve the professionalism of Airmen?” We did so through the research questions articulated in Chapter 1, and each chapter of this report has addressed one of those questions or a subpart. First, we examined the definition of professionalism and what it means in the Air Force. Then we examined past actions the Air Force, DoD, and other U.S. military services have taken dating back to the last substantial Air Force initiatives related to professionalism. In the absence of objective metrics specifically intended to measure professionalism, we looked at statistics of cases in which professionalism was lacking, as evidenced by documented violations of the UCMJ. For subjective metrics, we examined trends in attitudes related to professionalism from surveys of civilian federal employees and uniformed service members. Then, we examined a selection of courses and seminars to understand the Air Force learning opportunities currently being offered and how they relate to the Air Force strategic road map for professionalism and instructional practices more conducive to building Air Force professionalism. Finally, we examined the literature on organizational culture and change to identify how the Air Force might effect changes in this dimension. In this chapter, we highlight the key findings and conclusions from these investigations and provide recommendations for further actions to support the effort to enhance professionalism across the Air Force.

Key Findings and Conclusions

The Definition of Air Force Professionalism Needs Clarification

Our analysis surfaced two concerns. First, the definition of *Air Force professional*, in its use of the term *Airman*, fails to distinguish between civilian employees and uniformed members of the Air Force. This distinction is important because uniformed members are members of the profession of arms and thus have agreed to be willing to sacrifice their lives in service to the nation, while civilian employees do not bear the same burden of sacrifice. Second, in our meetings and interviews, we found little shared understanding of the meaning of *Air Force professionalism*. This means that there are many differing interpretations of the term, which may lead to differing standards of behavior.

The Past Reveals Patterns and Highlights the Role of Senior Leadership

To learn from the history of core values and professionalism efforts in the military and DoD, we reviewed a large pool of government documents and related literature and interviewed senior

leaders in DoD and the Air Force. From these data, we assembled a timeline of major ethical incidents, military conflicts, and institution-level professionalism efforts and identified important characteristics of past initiatives that enabled progress. We identified patterns of oscillation that suggest that the presence of ethical incidents and absence of military conflicts are associated with professionalism efforts.

Our findings also underscore the critical role of senior leadership—that an organization’s senior leadership must personally endorse and promote professionalism efforts. This aligns with concepts from our literature review. Secretary Hagel summed up this premise:

In any institution, nothing happens unless the leaders of that institution put emphasis on it. Every leader of every institution has to maintain a focus on ethics and standards. It is the soul, the heart, the fiber of the institution.¹

And beyond personally championing the efforts, senior leaders must ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place so that the values and standards are universally known, unconditionally embraced, and uniformly applied to all levels of the chain of command. In the Air Force, senior leadership begins at the top with the Chief of Staff and includes all general officers. However, as mentioned elsewhere in the report, leaders and supervisors at all levels are also responsible for supporting and communicating the importance of professionalism.

Reports of Ethical Violations Reveal Positive and Negative Trends

As a preliminary, objective indicator of professionalism (or, more specifically, failures of professionalism), we analyzed data from the annual reports pursuant to the UCMJ for the past 25 years to identify the extent of professionalism violations serious enough to reach the level of court-martial convictions and compare the statistics for the Air Force with those of the other U.S. military services. For the most serious offenses, we found the Air Force to be similar to the other services through 2005, but, since then, the Air Force rates have been lower than those of the other services. Considering less-serious offenses, the Air Force trend for NJPs has also been lower than that of the other services. Both of these trends reflect positively on the Air Force in comparison with the other services.

Although those are positive, another trend reveals an important area of possible concern. Under Article 138 of the UCMJ, any member of the military who believes that he or she has been wronged by his or her commanding officer may request redress. Although complaints under Article 138 have declined in other services, they have increased in the Air Force, and this level has remained higher than those of the other services since 2009. We cannot say whether the rates of these complaints reflect increases in actual offenses, higher levels of reporting of actual offenses, or increases in unsubstantiated complaints; however, the increase highlights an important area for investigation. If the increases are found to be based on greater numbers of

¹ Interview with Hagel, 2015.

substantiated complaints, this would be an important area for action, given commanders' important role in setting the tone for those they lead.

Attitude Surveys Reveal Items of Concern

Again, in the absence of specific metrics for professionalism, we turned to indicators that collect the views of civilian employees and members of the military on dimensions that have some relationship to workplace culture, military values, or professionalism. Thus, we analyzed data from the FEVS (2010–2014) and SOFS (2010–2013). Although these surveys do not focus directly on professionalism, they do include items on specific relevant topics, such as integrity, values, and leadership. Our FEVS analysis revealed that civilian employees are positively inclined toward their supervisors but increasingly less positive about their leaders.

The SOFS analysis revealed that military personnel are generally proud to be in the military but that this sentiment has been declining in recent years. More than one-third of uniformed military personnel do not agree that the military's values are their own, and the responses from Air Force members were slightly lower than those of the other services. These findings point to decreasing faith in leadership, declining pride in military service, and a substantial proportion of Airmen who do not identify with the military's values. Each of these items is a challenge to professionalism.

Current Learning Opportunities Vary in Relevance to Professionalism Goals

To understand how the Air Force is currently training and educating its members on professionalism, we conducted an exploratory analysis of a small selection of courses and seminars that reach officer candidates; officers; and, to a limited extent, enlisted personnel and civilians. Our findings identify important considerations for future education and training offerings that are intended to improve professionalism. We found that Air Force educators and trainers do not currently have a shared understanding of the concept of professionalism. Without a shared understanding, it is unreasonable to expect them to work toward a common goal. As one might expect, we also found limited alignment between current learning activities and the goals stated in the recently published strategic road map for professionalism.

When we looked at selected key touch points in officer developmental education (SOS, ACSC, and AWC), we found that the course objectives provided only light treatment of professionalism goals in two of the three touch points examined. We also found differences in the objectives between the resident and distance versions of the courses; specifically, the distance version had less content related to professionalism and fewer of the types of learning activities that would be more likely to foster professionalism behaviors.

Finally, when we examined a very different source of data, exit surveys from a seminar specifically intended to teach professionalism, we identified the characteristics that made it well received. They included involvement by a senior leader who is highly engaged with the topic; an

interesting instructor; a focus on people, psychology, leadership, and self-reflection; delivery in person, rather than at a distance; and interactivity that allows discussion.

Improving Professionalism Requires Several Key Ingredients

Understanding that improving Air Force professionalism relates to its culture and involves some degree of change, we identified important themes from the literature on organizational culture and change that relate to the Air Force's effort to improve professionalism. They are urgency, cultural leadership, communication, empowerment, and measurement. The recommendations that follow incorporate each of these themes.

Recommendations

Based on the findings from this study, we offer the following recommendations.

1. Actively promote a clear definition of what professionalism means for Air Force personnel to create a shared understanding of behavioral expectations.

Our meetings and interviews with stakeholders underscored the need to devote more attention to ensuring that Air Force members have a shared understanding of the meaning of Air Force professionalism. This may be the most important starting point for any actions based on this research. Materials to support the definitions should provide behavioral descriptions of the standards and expectations of professionalism. Defining the complicated and multifaceted nature of professionalism in terms of concrete and observable components will increase the likelihood that all members will develop a shared understanding of professionalism.

To do this, the Air Force should begin by developing, publishing, and promulgating widely accessible narrative examples of both professional and unprofessional behaviors. The *Encyclopedia of Ethical Failure*,² which reports and categorizes actual ethical failures, could serve as one example. Further, commanders' calls might provide opportunities to further highlight the importance of Air Force professionalism.

Those leading this effort should also consider leveraging existing resources, such as the Air Force Institutional Competencies List and the USAFA *Outcomes*, and existing bodies, such as the Air Force Professionalism Working Group, to shape the efforts. Members of the Professionalism Working Group could be tasked with drafting professionalism competencies and targeted outcomes that could later be integrated into the Institutional Competencies List and USAFA *Outcomes*.

2. Ensure that Air Force senior leaders consistently embrace and hold themselves and others accountable to the institution's standards and expectations for professionalism—regardless of media exposure and/or level of military activity.

² DoD, Standards of Conduct Office, 2015.

The analysis of past events, examination of learning opportunities, survey findings, and management literature all pointed to the important role of senior leaders in influencing professionalism in an organization. As a first step, senior leaders must all themselves serve as examples of the level of professionalism expected of them and those they lead. Second, their behavior and expectations should be consistent across time and varying circumstances. We found that professionalism receives more attention in times of lower military activity and after negative publicity for ethical violations. It stands to reason that consistent—rather than episodic—attention to professionalism will be more likely to produce consistent results over time. Professionalism must be treated as a priority under all conditions at all times, whether or not the nation is at war and even when misdeeds are not spotlighted in the media.

As a first step, the Air Force, through its Professionalism Working Group and PACE, should ensure that leaders and commanders fully understand the goals of the current professionalism efforts, as outlined in the strategic road map. This could take place through a combination of written communications, videos, and interactive meetings, to establish common points of reference in addition to the strategic road map. Next, senior leaders must become personally engaged in activities that promote professionalism (e.g., storytelling, role modeling, holding themselves and others accountable for ethical behavior) and personally ensure that appropriate action is taken when violations of standards occur. In addition to attention to individuals' behaviors, leaders must seek out and remove organizational barriers that may be systematically creating unnecessary ethical dilemmas for Air Force members or situations that present individuals with only unethical options. These barriers should be identified and addressed through changes in policy and practice. As mentioned above, these actions should be consistent regardless of the level of military activity to reinforce the message that professionalism is an ongoing expectation in Air Force culture and not something to pay attention to only when convenient or when there is a highly publicized crisis.

3. Establish a sense of urgency for enhancing professionalism by increasing the visibility, engagement, and communication of senior leaders on the topic to reinforce its importance within Air Force culture.

Kotter found that the biggest reason that change efforts fail is *not* establishing a great enough sense of urgency; efforts fail when people are not motivated to do something differently.³ Because improving Air Force professionalism represents some degree of organizational and cultural change from the status quo, the Air Force should leverage senior leaders who are committed to displaying professionalism to serve as cultural leaders and change agents who inspire and motivate others to behave in accord with high standards of professionalism.

The Air Force should do this by encouraging senior leaders to consistently discuss the importance of professionalism in all activities (ranging from formal speaking engagements to

³ Kotter, 2007.

informal interactions). This continued engagement and communication will increase the visibility of the topic and strengthen the perception that it is an important part of Air Force culture. A critical caveat to this recommended course of action depends on the senior leaders' moral authority. That is, senior leaders and leaders at every level must conduct themselves according to the standards expected of their subordinates. Without this consistency between words and actions, the increased engagement and communication on the topic of Air Force professionalism may produce the opposite effect from that intended.

4. Establish goals and standards for learning opportunities intended to foster professionalism.

While the Air Force strategic road map for professionalism lays out general goals, the Air Force should establish agreed-on professionalism goals and standards for education and training and better align the content of professionalism learning opportunities with them. We recommend that the Air Force involve its experts in adult learning, instructional design, curriculum design, and organizational psychology from across AETC to develop clear operational goals and standards for professionalism education and training that are aligned with the strategic road map for professionalism. These standards should also encourage the use of instructional methods that are more conducive to instilling professionalism knowledge and behaviors as defined by the Air Force. Learning opportunities should be interactive, positive in tone, and foster discussion and self-reflection.

Those designing learning opportunities intended to increase professionalism should also consider the limitations of distance learning compared with in-residence training. We recommend that the Air Force pursue options to increase the effectiveness of professionalism learning opportunities for all students, whether in residence or at a distance, and to address the discrepancies between resident and distance-learning objectives. Options might include increasing resident-learning opportunities or supplementing distance learning with in-person, interactive seminars.

For efficiency and consistency, these efforts could be coordinated with those mentioned earlier regarding the refinement of the definitions for professionalism.

5. Establish a dashboard of professionalism metrics to support ongoing monitoring of progress and needs.

Finally, we strongly recommend that the Air Force identify metrics to inform its efforts to improve professionalism. To begin, the Air Force should take an inventory of existing metrics related to professionalism to better understand what data are available and identify remaining gaps, which may call for new metrics to be integrated into existing tools, such as climate surveys. Metrics representing the most critical behaviors and attitudes should be selected and monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure that professionalism standards are being met and the

desired outcomes are sustained over time. The fact that this study had to rely on indirect indicators of professionalism underscores the need for specific and deliberately selected professionalism metrics.

The effort to do this should begin with a careful inventory of data already collected that either directly or indirectly indicates changes in the levels of professionalism. We understand that the initial stages of such an effort have already begun. For example, indicators from the Air Force General Counsel, IG, and Judge Advocate offices may represent a useful starting point. In addition, modifications to regularly administered climate surveys that query Airmen about ethical dilemmas they face could prove valuable in pointing toward policy changes that would support professional behaviors. Those leading this effort should establish the key dimensions of professionalism to be represented in the dashboard and populate it with the smallest number of metrics that would be effective in representing the state of professionalism of the organization over time. Keeping in mind the principle that what is measured changes, one should carefully consider the implications of each metric selected to avoid unanticipated negative consequences and identify those metrics which, when tracked over time, are most likely to lead to positive change.

Closing Thoughts

The effort to increase professionalism across the Air Force is clearly a large, ongoing, and potentially boundless endeavor. One of our Air Force interviewees described it as “climbing a mountain without a top.” It involves a number of challenges, including defining and promulgating concepts that may seem difficult to define, leading and motivating hundreds of thousands of individuals to behave and perform as their better selves, and tracking behaviors that may seem difficult to measure. However, while there is an interpretation of Air Force professionalism that is purely aspirational, there is also an interpretation that is practical and attainable that would include concrete examples of professionalism to guide the everyday behavior of Air Force personnel. It is that latter interpretation that we sought to address in this report. We hope the results will foster reflection among Air Force leaders and useful direction for further efforts that build on the strong foundation already in place.

A. Ethical Incidents and Professionalism Efforts

Chapter 3 presented a review and analysis of major professionalism-related events, which included three variables: highly publicized ethical violations, military conflicts, and efforts to strengthen professionalism. The purpose of this appendix is to provide the background information and references that support Figure 3.1. Table A.1 reviews major ethical violations, and Table A.2 reviews professionalism efforts. These lists are not intended to represent a comprehensive collection of incidents, conflicts, and efforts, but they do provide an overview of ethical violations that rose to public attention and the actions that followed from DoD or individual military services. Further, while we cannot draw causal conclusions based on these data, we can observe associations between ethical violations and professionalism-related efforts as well as their relation to military conflicts.

Table A.1. Description of Ethical Incidents

Incident	Date	Summary	Source
Tailhook scandal	September 5–7, 1991	The incidents that occurred at the 35th annual Tailhook Association Symposium in Las Vegas, Nevada, were arguably as problematic as “post-Tailhook management.” Following a series of allegations, the U.S. Department of the Navy launched an investigation led by RADM Duvall M. Williams, Jr., and RADM John E. Gordon. The initial report largely attributed the poor behavior to lower-ranking enlisted personnel. Among other issues, however, subsequent interactions caused concern. Specifically, in the presence of Assistant Secretary of the Navy Barbara S. Pope, Admiral Gordon made comments to the effect that a lot of female Navy pilots are “go-go dancers, topless dancers, or hookers.” The Assistant Secretary later demanded that Secretary of the Navy Henry Garrett III reopen the investigation. On June 18, 1992, Secretary Garrett assigned the DoD IG to review the events and tendered his resignation over his “leadership failure” of the scandal. The DoD IG’s <i>Tailhook 91</i> Part 1 concluded “collective management and personal failures” of several senior-ranking officials involved in the investigation. The DoD IG’s <i>Tailhook 91</i> Part 2 found that 90 victims were assaulted.	DoD, Office of the Inspector General, <i>Tailhook 91</i> , Part 1: <i>Review of Navy Investigations</i> , Arlington, Va., September 21, 1992. DoD, Office of the Inspector General, <i>Report of Investigation: Tailhook 91</i> , Part 2: <i>Events of the 35th Annual Tailhook Symposium</i> , Arlington, Va., April 12, 1993. Defense Equal Opportunity Council, <i>Report of the Task Force on Discrimination and Sexual Harassment</i> , Vol. I, May 1995.

Table A.1—Continued

Incident	Date	Summary	Source
Black Hawk incident	April 14, 1994	On April 14, 1994, two Air Force F-15s, operating under the control of an Air Force Airborne Warning and Control System aircraft in northern Iraq, misidentified two U.S. Army UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters as Iraqi Military Mi-24 “Hind” helicopters and destroyed them. All 26 military personnel aboard were killed. An Aircraft Accident Investigation Board report, released on May 27, 1994, found that a “chain of events” led to the fratricide. Informed by this report, the Secretary of Defense directed commands to determine whether UCMJ violations occurred. As a result, 14 officers were under investigation. Outcomes included a court-martial acquittal, Article 15 charges, and letters of reprimand. The primary reason for including this incident as an ethical transgression is the subsequent evaluation reports for these 14 officers. None of the reports mentioned the Black Hawk incident. Air Force Chief of Staff Gen Ronald R. Fogleman was “appalled” and subsequently released a short video in mid-August 1995 that he required every Air Force officer, Senior Executive Service civilian, and noncommissioned officer in the top three grades to view. The video reviewed the Black Hawk incident, as well as actions taken against the people involved in the incident and the officers who wrote their evaluation reports. The purpose was to emphasize Air Force core values and personal accountability. A final report from GAO was released in November 1997.	GAO, <i>Operation Provide Comfort: Review of U.S. Air Force Investigation of Black Hawk Fratricide Incident</i>, Washington, D.C., GAO/OSI-98-4, November 5, 1997. Aircraft Accident Investigation Board, <i>Report: U.S. Army UH-60 Black Hawk Helicopters 87-26000 and 88-26060</i>, Vol. 14: <i>Tabs V-038 thru V-066</i>, undated. Richard H. Kohn, ed., “The Early Retirement of Gen Ronald R. Fogleman, Chief of Staff, United States Air Force,” <i>Aerospace Power Journal</i>, Spring 2001.

Table A.1—Continued

Incident	Date	Summary	Source
B-52 Fairchild crash	June 24, 1994	On June 24, 1994, Czar 52, a B-52 Stratofortress based in Fairchild AFB, Washington, launched to practice maneuvers for an upcoming airshow. On preparing to land, the pilot in command, Lt Col Arthur “Bud” Holland, exceeded operational capabilities: The aircraft banked past 90 degrees, stalled, clipped a power line, and then crashed. There were no survivors among the crew of four. The horrific crash was captured on video. This crash and the events leading up to the crash are especially significant because they highlighted Air Force leaders’ delayed and inadequate reactions to previous incidents involving Holland. For instance, Lt Col Mark McGeehan recommended that his superiors ground Colonel Holland based on many and blatant air discipline violations; however, they rejected this recommendation. As one B-52 crewmember later said about the accident, “You could see it, hear it, feel it, and smell it coming. We were all just trying to be somewhere else when it happened” (Anthony T. Kern, <i>Darker Shades of Blue: The Rogue Pilot</i>, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1999). An accident investigation board report was completed in 1994.	Aircraft Accident Investigation Board, <i>B-52H Aircraft S/N 61-0026</i>, Vol. 3: 92 <i>BW 325 BS</i>, Fairchild Air Force Base, Wash., June 24, 1994. Anthony T. Kern, <i>Darker Shades of Blue: The Rogue Pilot</i>, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1999.

Table A.1—Continued

Incident	Date	Summary	Source
Khobar Towers	June 25, 1996	On June 25, 1996, terrorists detonated a massive truck bomb outside Khobar Towers, an eight-story building that housed coalition forces serving in Operation Southern Watch, in Saudi Arabia. Nineteen service members were killed and hundreds more were injured. In the ensuing investigations, reports arrived at conflicting conclusions. An initial Pentagon report by U.S. Army GEN (ret.) Wayne Downing faulted Air Force leadership, including Brig Gen Terryl Schwalier, Commander of the 4404th Wing (Provisional), for security oversights. An internal Air Force report found that Army standards were misapplied to an Air Force officer and exonerated General Schwalier and other officers. CSAF Gen Ronald R. Fogleman, “concluded that Brigadier General Schwalier had done everything that could be expected of a commander and had no culpability in the tragedy; punishing him would have a chilling effect on commanders around the world who might then infer that protecting their forces outweighed accomplishing their missions.” Nevertheless, pressure from the Pentagon and Congress mounted to conduct another investigation. General Fogleman indicated that he would resign if General Schwalier was found guilty. Prior to the report being released, in an unprecedented move, General Fogleman submitted his request for an early retirement—a year prior to the end of his term. This incident provoked many conversations of accountability and responsibility.	Wayne A. Downing, <i>Force Protection Assessment of USCENTCOM AOR and Khobar Towers</i>, Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, August 30, 1996. Richard Swope and Bryan G. Hawley, <i>Report of Investigation</i>, Vol. I, <i>Khobar Towers Bombing, Dharan, Saudi Arabia</i>, Washington, D.C.: The Inspector General of the Air Force and the Judge Advocate General of the Air Force, April 1997. U.S. House, National Security Committee, “The Khobar Towers Bombing Incident,” staff report, August 14, 1996. James F. Record, <i>Independent Review of the Khobar Towers Bombing</i>, Washington D.C.: U.S. Air Force, October 13, 1996. Richard Swope and Bryan G. Hawley, <i>Report of Investigation</i>, Vol. I, <i>Khobar Towers Bombing, Dharan, Saudi Arabia</i>, Washington, D.C.: The Inspector General of the Air Force and the Judge Advocated General of the Air Force, April 1997. Richard H. Kohn, ed., “The Early Retirement of Gen Ronald R. Fogleman, Chief of Staff, United States Air Force,” <i>Aerospace Power Journal</i>, Spring 2001.
Aberdeen rape scandal	November 1996	In November 1996, the U.S. Army began an investigation after receiving complaints from young female soldiers that their instructors at Aberdeen Proving Ground, a U.S. Army base in Maryland, had sexually assaulted or harassed them. Investigations revealed that drill sergeants had created “the GAM,” which was a contest to see who could have sex with the most trainees. Twelve soldiers were charged with a range of sexual improprieties. In July 1997, reports from the Secretary of the Army implicated multiple leadership and human-relations failures.	Secretary of the Army, <i>Senior Review Panel Report on Sexual Harassment</i>, Vol. 1, July 1997a. Secretary of the Army, <i>Senior Review Panel Report on Sexual Harassment</i>, Vol. 2, July 1997b. Robert D. Shadley, <i>The GAMe: Unraveling a Military Sex Scandal</i>, Edina, Minn.: Beaver’s Pond Press, 2013. Danielle Christenson, <i>Chain of Command: The Barriers of Reporting Sexual Assault in the Military</i>, honors thesis, Bridgewater, Mass.: Bridgewater State University, May 13, 2014.

Table A.1—Continued

Incident	Date	Summary	Source
USAFA sexual-assault scandal	January 2, 2003	On January 2, 2003, the Secretary of the Air Force, the chief of staff of the Air Force, and other U.S. congressional and media representatives received an email that USAFA had a serious sexual-assault problem that the academy's leadership was ignoring. In February, the secretary instructed the IG to initiate two parallel reviews. Conclusions published in a report on September 14, 2014, suggested that there was no intentional mishandling or willful neglect of previous cases; however, the report did make observations that could improve the academy's response to sexual assault.	Air Force Inspector General, <i>Summary Report Concerning the Handling of Sexual Assault Cases at the United States Air Force Academy</i> , September 14, 2004.
Abu Ghraib	April 27, 2004	On November 1, 2003 the Associated Press published a lengthy report on inhumane treatment, beatings, and deaths at Abu Ghraib and other American prisons in Iraq; however, the story did not appear to gain widespread attention until <i>60 Minutes II</i> broadcasted "Abuse of Iraqi POWs by GIs Probed" on April 27, 2004 (Rebecca Leung, "Abuse of Iraqi POWs by GIs Probed," CBS News, April 27, 2004). The incidents that transpired on the night shift of tier 1 at Abu Ghraib from October through December 2003 garnered the most attention; however, subsequent investigations revealed allegations throughout Afghanistan, Iraq, and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Although the abuses varied in severity and occurred under differing circumstances, they were widespread enough to cause concern. The DoD Detention Operations report published in August 2004 found that the abuses were not just a failure by some people but also a failure of certain leaders to enforce proper discipline.	James R. Schlesinger, Harold Brown, Tillie K. Fowler, and Charles A. Homer, <i>Final Report of the Independent Panel to Review DoD Detention Operations</i> , August 2004. Rebecca Leung, "Abuse of Iraqi POWs by GIs Probed," CBS News, April 27, 2004. U.S. Department of Defense, Independent Panel to Review DoD Detention Operations, <i>Final Report of the Independent Panel to Review DoD Detention Operations</i> , Arlington, Va., August 2004.

Table A.1—Continued

Incident	Date	Summary	Source
Unauthorized movement of nuclear weapons	August 30, 2007	On August 30, 2007, the Air Force moved, without authorization (i.e., accidentally), nuclear warheads from Minot AFB, North Dakota, to Barksdale AFB, Louisiana. Movement of such weapons requires specific processes, which, among many requirements, necessitates multiple verifications from different stakeholders. The error was not discovered until after the plane had reached its destination. A report from the Defense Science Board Permanent Task Force reported systematic problems suggesting a declining focus within the nuclear enterprise environment. This incident provoked discussions about “the need for clearly understood and competently executed responsibilities and accountability at all levels in the enterprise” (Defense Science Task Board Permanent Task Force on Nuclear Weapons Surety, <i>Report on the Unauthorized Movement of Nuclear Weapons</i> , April 2008). This incident contributed to the early termination of many careers, including those of Air Force Chief of Staff Gen T. Michael Moseley and Secretary of the Air Force Michael Wynne.	Defense Science Task Board Permanent Task Force on Nuclear Weapons Surety, <i>Report on the Unauthorized Movement of Nuclear Weapons</i>, April 2008. Air Combatant Command, “Commander Directed Report of Investigation,” September 2007. Air Force Nuclear Task Force, <i>Reinvigorating the Air Force Nuclear Enterprise</i>, Washington D.C.: Headquarters, U.S. Air Force, October 24, 2008. James R. Schlesinger, <i>Report of the Task Force on DoD Nuclear Weapons Management</i>, Phase I: <i>The Air Force’s Nuclear Mission</i>, Arlington, Va.: Secretary of Defense, September 2008. James R. Schlesinger, <i>Report of the Task Force on DoD Nuclear Weapons Management</i>, Phase II: <i>Review of the DoD Nuclear Mission</i>, Arlington, Va.: Secretary of Defense, December 2008. Kirkland Donald, “Report of the Investigation into the Facts and Circumstances Surrounding the Accountability for, and Shipment of, Sensitive Missile Components to Taiwan,” Washington D.C.: Department of the Navy, Report N00N/08-0051, 2008.
Marine’s defiling the dead YouTube video	January 11, 2012	On January 11, 2012, a video showing four combat U.S. marines urinating on the bodies of deceased enemy combatants in Afghanistan was posted on YouTube. This anonymously posted video sparked outrage from Pentagon officials and around the world. An investigation was immediately ordered, which resulted in the five marines directly involved (including the marine recording the video) receiving criminal, as well as nonjudicial administrative, punishments.	DoD, Office of the Inspector General, <i>Report of Investigation: General James F. Amos, United States Marine Corps</i>, July 23, 2014. Luis Martinez, “Criminal Charges for Marines in Taliban Urination Video,” ABC News, September 24, 2012.

Table A.1—Continued

Incident	Date	Summary	Source
Lackland BMT scandal	June 20, 2012	On June 24, 2011, a female trainee at Air Force BMT at Lackland AFB in San Antonio, Texas, notified her military training instructor (MTI) that another MTI had assaulted a fellow trainee. Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI) began an investigation soon after. Further examinations by AFOSI and the Security Force Office of Investigations revealed more allegations. On June 20, 2012, Gen Edward Rice, commander of AETC, commissioned an independent commander-directed investigation (CDI) to better understand how the widespread sexual misconduct developed between October 2010 and June 2011. The outcome of the investigations revealed 59 victims or alleged victims. Charges against MTIs ranged from sexual assault to inappropriate contact with students after they graduated from BMT. The CDI resulted in 46 actionable recommendations.	Department of the Air Force, <i>Developing America's Airmen: A Review of Air Force Enlisted Training</i>, August 22, 2012. Barbara Salazar Torreon, <i>Military Sexual Assault: Chronology of Activity in Congress and Related Resources</i>, Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, R43168, July 30, 2013. U.S. House of Representatives, 113th Cong., 1st Sess., Committee on Armed Services, A Review of Sexual Misconduct by Basic Training Instructors at Lackland Air Force Base, Tex., hearing held January 23, 2013. "House Armed Services Committee Holds Hearing on Sexual Misconduct at Lackland Air Force Base, Panel 1," <i>Congressional Quarterly</i>, January 23, 2013. "House Armed Services Committee Holds Hearing on Sexual Misconduct at Lackland Air Force Base, Panel 2," <i>Congressional Quarterly</i>, January 23, 2013.
"Fat Leonard" corruption scandal	November 2013	In November 2013, the owner and chief executive officer of Glenn Defense Marine Asia (a Singapore-based firm providing services) was arrested in San Diego. In January 2015, Leonard Glenn Francis (also known as "Fat Leonard") pled guilty to bribery and fraud charges, admitting that he presided over a decadelong conspiracy involving "scores" of U.S. Navy officials, tens of millions of dollars in fraud, and millions of dollars in bribes and gifts. Some high-ranking Naval officers have been convicted and, as of mid-2015, investigations were ongoing.	James W. Weirick, "The Cash, Bribery, and Prostitution Scandal That Continues to Haunt the Navy," <i>Task and Purpose</i>, March 26, 2015. U.S. Department of Justice, "Defense Contractor and Its CEO Plead Guilty to Corruption Conspiracy Involving 'Scores' of Navy Officials," press release, Washington, D.C., January 15, 2015. Christopher P. Cavas, "'Fat Leonard' Scandal Jams Up Dozens of U.S. Navy Flag Moves," <i>DefenseNews</i>, February 8, 2015.

Table A.1—Continued

Incident	Date	Summary	Source
Malmstrom cheating scandal	January 15, 2014	On January 15, 2014, Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James announced that, as part of an unrelated AFOSI investigation, 34 missile-launch officers at Malmstrom AFB in Montana were discovered to be involved in the compromise of answers to a proficiency test. Later reports found evidence implicating up to 98 junior officers. Brig Gen Kevin Jacobsen recommended that 88 of the suspected officers would be better evaluated in an independent CDI because the test involved unclassified material. The CDI report released on February 26, 2014, substantiated allegations against 79 of the officers with varying offenses (ranging from knowledge of compromised test materials to sending test material). In March 2014, nine officers in leadership positions at Malmstrom were charged and removed.	Jon Harper, “34 Nuclear Launch Officers Involved in Air Force Cheating Scandal,” <i>Stars and Stripes</i>, January 15, 2014. James M. Holmes, <i>Report of Commander-Directed Investigation Prepared by Lt Gen James M. Holmes Investigating Officer Concerning ICBM Test Compromise at Malmstrom Air Force Base, Montana, and Assessment of Twentieth Air Force ICBM Training, Evaluation, and Testing Culture</i>, February 26, 2014. Deborah Lee James and Stephen Wilson, “Defense Department Press Briefing by Senior Air Force Officials on Results of the AFGSC Commander Directed Investigation into Allegations of Compromised Test Materials, and an Update on the Force Improvement Program in the Pentagon Briefing Room,” Arlington, Va., March 27, 2014.
Army Recruitment Bonus Program fraud	February 4, 2014	In 2005, the Recruiting Assistance Program was initiated to increase the number of recruits during the Iraq and Afghanistan wars because the Army National Guard was having difficulty meeting its recruitment numbers. The National Guard’s Recruiting Assistance Program, known as G-RAP, would provide incentives (payment) to National Guard soldiers and civilians to act as informal recruiters or recruiting assistants. Similar programs emerged for the other Army components (reserve and regular). On February 4, 2014, Army officials appeared before a Senate hearing titled “Fraud and Abuse in Army Recruiting Contracts” to report on a criminal investigation implicating more than 1,200 recruiters in the Army Recruitment Bonus Program of fraud. Best-guess estimates, at the time, projected that the Army was defrauded \$50 million. Senator Claire McCaskill, subcommittee chair for Financial and Contracting Oversight, said, “This criminal fraud investigation is one of the largest that the Army has ever conducted, both in terms of sheer volume of fraud and the number of participants.”	U.S. Senate, 113th Cong., 2nd Sess., Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, Subcommittee on Financial and Contracting Oversight, Fraud and Abuse in Army Recruiting Contracts, Senate Hearing 113-277, February 4, 2014. National Guard Association of the United States, “The G-RAP Program: The Investigations and an Injection of Reality,” undated.

Table A.2. Professionalism Efforts

Effort	Reference
Marine Corps identifies three core values	Carl E. Mundy, Jr., "The Core Values of the Corps," White Letter 10-92, June 18, 1992.
Air Force introduces six core values	Merrill A. McPeak, "McPeak: No Clear Mission Statement, Until Now," speech delivered at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala., June 19, 1992.
Navy adopts the Marine Corps core values	John F. Leahy, <i>Honor, Courage, Commitment: Navy Boot Camp</i> , Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2013.
Center for Character & Leadership Development	Cynthia S. Cycyota, Claudia J. Ferrante, Steven G. Green, Kurt A. Heppard, and Dorri M. Karolick, "Leaders of Character: The USAFA Approach to Ethics Education and Leadership Development," <i>Journal of Academic Ethics</i> , Vol. 9, No. 3, September 2011.
Air Force adopts USAFA's three core values	Sheila E. Widnall and Ronald R. Fogleman, "Core Values," article prepared for <i>Concepts for Air Force Leadership (AU-24)</i> , undated.
Air Force core values ("The Little Blue Book")	Department of the Air Force, "United States Air Force Core Values" [The Little Blue Book], January 1, 1997.
Army introduces seven core values	Secretary of the Army, <i>Senior Review Panel Report on Sexual Harassment</i> , Vol. 1, July 1997a, p. 14.
Sustaining the Transformation (MCRP 6-11D)	Marine Corps Reference Publication 6-11D, <i>Sustaining the Transformation</i> , Washington, D.C.: U.S. Marine Corps, Department of the Navy, June 28, 1999.
Army codifies seven core values (Field Manual 22-100)	Field Manual 22-100, <i>Army Leadership: Be, Know, Do</i> , Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, August 1999.
Secretary of Defense memorandum on ethics and integrity	Donald Rumsfeld, "Ethics and Integrity," memorandum for Secretaries of the Military Departments et al., Washington, D.C., September 7, 2005.
DoD establishes panel on contracting integrity	"Panel on Contracting Integrity," Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy website, undated.
Center for the Army Profession and Ethic	Center for the Army Profession and Ethic, "History of CAPE," web page, undated.
Deputy Secretary of Defense memorandum on ethics, integrity, and accountability	William J. Lynn, III, Deputy Secretary of Defense, "Ethics, Integrity and Accountability," memorandum for Secretaries of the Military Departments et al., Washington, D.C., December 21, 2010.
CJCS	CJCS, "America's Military: A Profession of Arms," white paper, February 2012.
Secretary of Defense memorandum on ethics, integrity, and accountability	Leon Panetta, Secretary of Defense, "Ethics, Integrity, and Accountability," memorandum for Secretaries of the Military Departments et al., Washington, D.C., May 2, 2012.
Secretary of Defense orders review of military ethics training	GAO, <i>Military Personnel: Additional Steps Are Needed to Strengthen DOD's Oversight of Ethics and Professionalism Issues</i> , Washington, D.C., GAO-15-711, September 2015.
Secretary of Defense appoints senior adviser for military professionalism	Jennifer Hlad, "Hagel Appoints Top Ethics Officer," <i>Stars and Stripes</i> , March 25, 2014.

Table A.2—Continued

Effort	Reference
Navy Leadership and Ethics Center	U.S. Naval War College, “New Center Imparts Ethical Command Leader Development,” Newport, R.I.: Public Affairs Office, NNS140506-13, May 6, 2014.
Secretary of Defense memorandum on fostering professionalism	Chuck Hagel, “Guidance on Fostering Professionalism Within the Department of Defense,” memorandum for Secretaries of the Military Departments et al., Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, February 12, 2015.
PACE	Officially activated March 2, 2015, it focuses on studies, analysis, and assessment for command strategic priorities associated with the professionalism of Air Force personnel.

B. Airmen's Ethical Transgressions in the *Air Force Times*

A critical component of the Air Force's public image is represented by the behavior of its members. Unfortunately, there are cases when Airmen's behavior does not meet the standards and expectations of the Air Force and may even receive media attention. As described in Chapter 3, major ethical incidents garnering widespread media attention can impact the initiation of professionalism efforts. In this appendix, we examine ethical incidents committed by Airmen and reported in the popular press.¹ Specifically, we selected the *Air Force Times* as our data source because this outlet is a public news organization (i.e., external to the Air Force) focused on the Air Force. These data allowed us to track individual transgressions over time. We note that the *Air Force Times* is not affiliated with the Air Force and may be considered a controversial source.

Method

We identified and retrieved 197 *Air Force Times* articles from the ProQuest Military Collection from January 1, 2001, to December 31, 2014.² To do so, we first identified articles that contained *Air Force* in the title, abstract, or lead-paragraph field. Next, we selected articles using the following set of keyword stems with wild-card endings reflecting ethical transgressions:

A List of Search Terms

acquit	convict	fabricat	marijuana	punish
adulter	court	fake	misconduct	scandal
affair	crime	guilty	mishandl	sham
alcohol	criminal	illegal	mismanag	transgress
appeal	deceit	indict	obscen	verdict
arraign	deceptive	indiscret	offen	violat
arrest	disciplin	investigat	pornograph	wrong doing
assault	dishonest	jury	probe	wrongdoing
bribe	drug	larceny	probing	
case	drunk	lied	promiscuous	
cheat	ethic	lying	prosecute	

¹ Collectively, we refer to this more inclusive category of ethical incidents as *ethical transgressions*.

² ProQuest, "ProQuest Military Database," undated.

(see list of search terms). Two researchers independently reviewed and coded the articles. For each article, coders evaluated the type of ethical transgressions, ranks of Airmen involved, and the degree of involvement by Airmen.

First, coders assessed the nature of the ethical transgressions as a violation of the UCMJ and therefore used the UCMJ's list of punitive articles. UCMJ violations are broad and diverse, including common civil and serious crimes (e.g., theft, murder), crimes specific to military settings (e.g., disobeying a superior officer), and violations traditionally thought of as personal behaviors (e.g., contempt toward officials).³ To facilitate interpretation, we then grouped UCMJ violations into seven broad categories: (1) personal misconduct, (2) sexual misconduct, (3) corrupt conduct, (4) violent misconduct, (5) child abuse, (6) property crime, and (7) espionage. Category definitions are provided under "Results" in this appendix.

Next, coders identified all the ranks of Airmen involved: (1) general-officer level, (2) officer level, (3) enlisted level, (4) civilian, (5) officer candidate, or (6) unknown. The highest rank that was mentioned in the articles as allegedly or actually committing an ethical transgression (i.e., UCMJ violation) was documented. Then, coders assessed the degree of involvement by others: (1) isolated incident or (2) pervasively unprofessional culture. The coder made this assessment from the article author's description of the situation. For example, usage of such words and quotations as *culture*, *atmosphere*, and *climate* indicated a pervasively unprofessional culture.

To standardize the two raters' assessments, coders independently examined the same 25 articles (12.69 percent), then met to assess their agreement and evaluate the current coding scheme. Coders reached 91.67-percent agreement for the types of ethical violations in each article, 100-percent agreement for the highest rank reported in the article, and 83.33-percent agreement in assessing whether the ethical violation was an isolated incident or reflected a pervasive culture. Coders discussed these discrepancies and reached consensus for final codings. As indicated by the high levels of agreement, the current coding scheme was deemed acceptable; however, the rater standardization process highlighted certain situations that required additional coding rules.

First, some articles merely summarized unrelated incidents (e.g., yearly summaries, reports about quarterly sexual assault prevention and response, overviews of current policies [with no incidents], and situations in which Airmen were reported as *victims* rather than *perpetrators*). These instances did not capture the intent of our analyses; therefore, these 54 articles were eliminated (27.41 percent). Second, coders also identified articles that reported the same ethical transgression across multiple articles (i.e., over time). To ensure that we identified singular incidents that were reported multiple times across articles, each coder reviewed the titles and summaries of all articles, then reviewed the other coders' grouped incidents to identify any remaining duplicates. This distinction was used as a rough metric to control for whether ethical

³ U.S. Code, multiple dates.

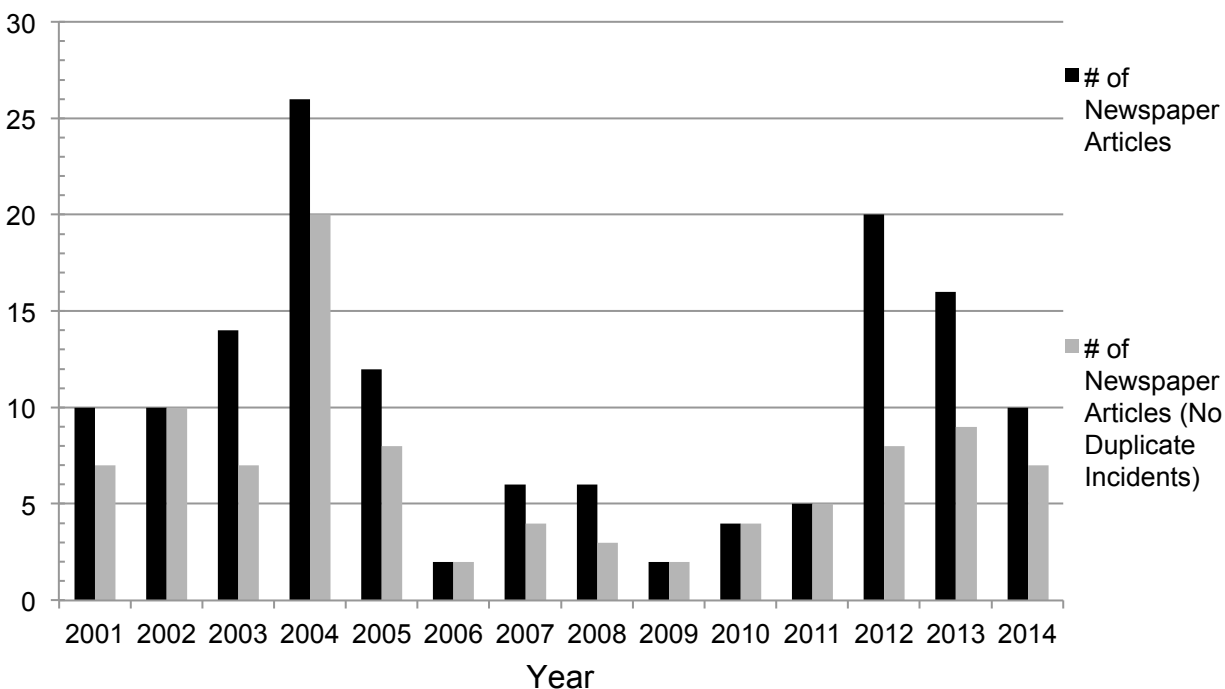
transgressions are increasing over time or whether the same ethical transgressions are simply receiving increasing media coverage over time.

After the rater standardization process, the two coders divided the remaining articles for each year (January 1, 2001–December 31, 2014) in half, such that a coder reviewed every other article (i.e., evenly splitting the articles within each year) to avoid confounding possible systematic rater biases with time.

Results

Figure B.1 displays the *Air Force Times* articles reporting an Airman of any rank engaging in at least one type of UCMJ violation. Because high-profile cases were often reported multiple times, we examined both the absolute rate of incidents and the frequency of articles. Here, black bars represent all articles, and gray bars represent the total number of incidents that were reported on, rather than every article (controlling for reporting of the same incident repeatedly).

Figure B.1. Frequency of *Air Force Times* Articles Reporting Airmen's Ethical Transgressions



NOTE: Black bars represent all articles that reported an Airman engaging in at least one type of unprofessional conduct. Gray bars represent the total number of incidents that were reported on, rather than every article.

During the 14-year period, reporting of unprofessional conduct reached its height in 2004. This was characterized by incidents involving ranks ranging from general officer to cadets, including a corruption scandal in contracting for Boeing refueling tankers for the Air Force, an extensive investigation into the climate of Sheppard AFB following a rash of sexual-assault

complaints, and a cadet cheating scandal at USAFA. In recent years, the highest rate of reported ethical transgressions occurred in 2012, although more than one-half of these reflected the same two incidents. The first high-profile case was uncovering a climate of mishandled remains at Air Force Mortuary Affairs Operations, as well as accompanying reports of retaliation against whistleblowers. Reports of this developing scandal occurred in parallel with uncovering yet another climate of unprofessionalism at Joint Base San Antonio, Texas, where more than one dozen MTIs were indicted for various forms of sexual misconduct with recruits. Accounting for multiple reporting of the same incident does statistically significantly reduce the apparent frequency of Airmen's ethical violations (one-way, dependent sample $t [13] = 3.50, p < 0.01$), but does not dramatically alter the underlying trend or eliminate the increasing trend from 2010 to 2013.

Specific Types of Ethical Transgressions

After coding ethical transgressions according to the UCMJ list of punitive articles, each transgression was assigned to one of seven categories: (1) personal misconduct, (2) sexual misconduct, (3) corrupt conduct, (4) violent misconduct, (5) child abuse, (6) property crime, and (7) espionage. See Table B.1 for the categorization of UCMJ's list of punitive articles.

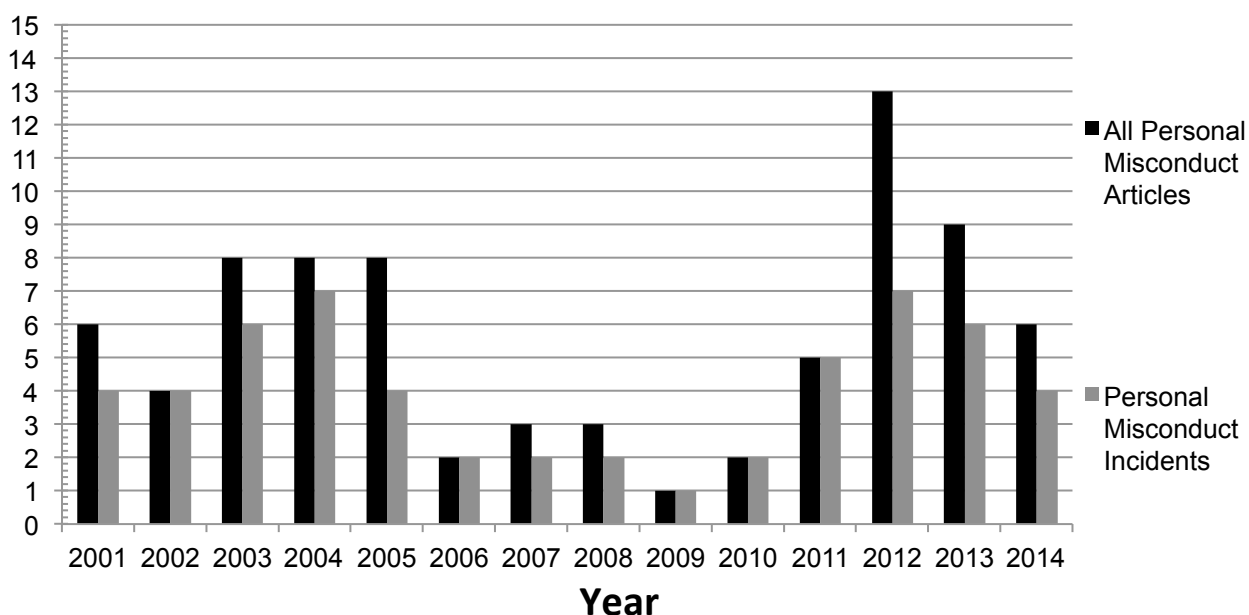
Table B.1. Specific Types of Ethical Transgressions Reported

Type of Ethical Transgression	UCMJ Punitive Articles
Personal misconduct	Absence without leave; adultery; conduct unbecoming to an officer and gentleman; contempt toward officials; drunk on duty; drunken or reckless operation of vehicle, aircraft, or vessel; failure to obey order or regulation; wrongful use, possession, etc., of controlled substances
Sexual misconduct	Cruelty and maltreatment (sexual harassment); fraternization; other sexual misconduct; rape and sexual assault generally; sodomy
Corrupt conduct	Bribery and graft; burning with intent to defraud; conspiracy; false official statements; false swearing; frauds against the United States; fraudulent conduct; obstructing justice; perjury; subornation of; soliciting another to commit an offense
Violent misconduct	Assault; assault with intent to commit murder; voluntary manslaughter; rape; robbery; sodomy; arson; burglary or housebreaking attempts; cruelty and maltreatment (all others); kidnapping; manslaughter, murder; communicating a threat
Child abuse	Child endangerment; child pornography; death or injury of an unborn child; rape and sexual assault of a child
Property crime	Larceny and wrongful appropriation; military property of the United States—sale, loss, damage, destruction, or wrongful disposition
Espionage	Espionage

Personal misconduct refers to any violations of the UCMJ that are contrary to the interests and expected behavior of the Air Force as a professional organization, the Airman as an individual professional, and the standing of the profession in the eyes of the U.S. public. Personal misconduct, even specific charges of conduct unbecoming, can include a broad swath of unprofessional behaviors (see Table B.1). In one example from 2013, a two-star general (and former commander of the Air Force’s nuclear-missile arsenal) was rude, was publicly intoxicated, and repeatedly made inappropriate political statements to his hosts while he led a U.S. delegation to Russia. In another example from 2012, a one-star general was reassigned after burning Korans that were incorrectly believed to contain extremist messages, which subsequently incited protests that led to 30 deaths.

Figure B.2 displays the frequency of *Air Force Times* articles reporting instances of personal misconduct from 2001 to 2014: Black bars represent the total number of articles reporting personal misconduct, and gray bars represent only the total number of incidents. A noticeable lull in personal-misconduct reports occurs from 2006 until 2010, but incidents have escalated in recent years. After controlling for multiple articles reporting the same incident, this trend appears similar to the levels of personal misconduct exhibited from 2003 to 2005. Higher trends in reports of personal misconduct (both in terms of articles and absolute incidents) were primarily affected by the cheating scandal among the nuclear personnel at Malmstrom AFB.

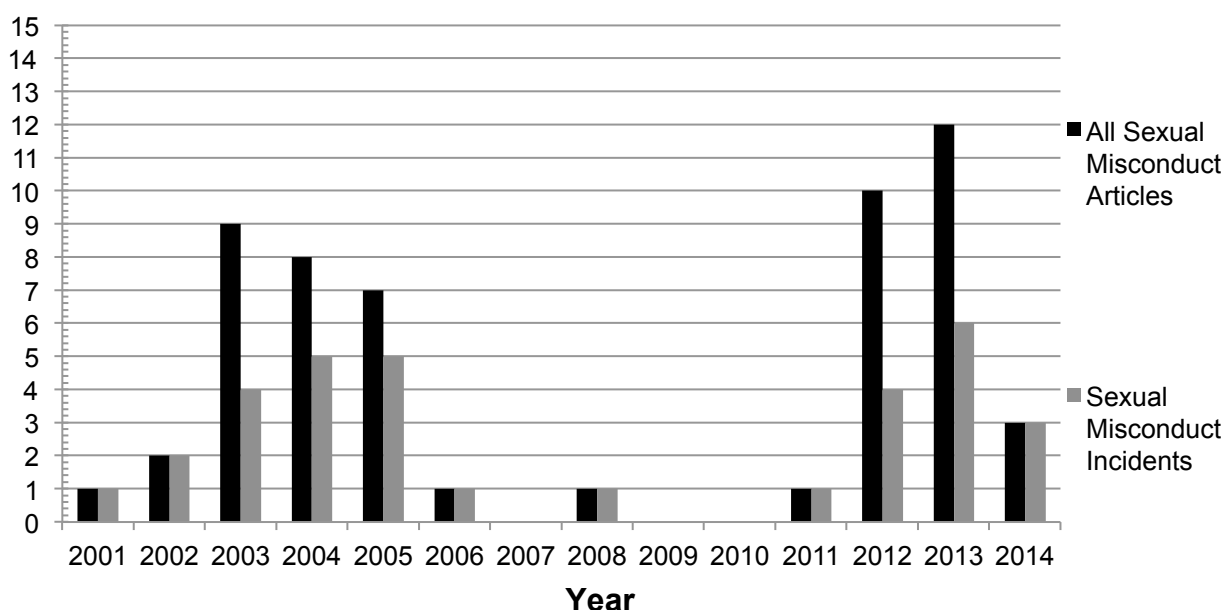
Figure B.2. Frequency of *Air Force Times* Articles Reporting Airmen’s Personal Misconduct



NOTE: Black bars represent the total number of articles reporting examples of personal misconduct. Gray bars represent only the total number of incidents that were reported on multiple times.

Sexual misconduct refers to any violations of the UCMJ consisting of unwanted, aggressive, or violent sexual advances or behaviors, as well as personal relationships considered inappropriate. Figure B.3 displays the trend of sexual misconduct as reported by the *Air Force Times*, and it would appear that sexual misconduct has risen considerably in recent years. The bulk of these articles reported two primary incidents: the pervasive climate of sexual harassment and assault at Joint Base San Antonio, Texas, and the high-profile sexual-assault case of Lt Col James Wilkerson (through both 2012 and 2013). Even after accounting for singular incidents of sexual misconduct reported multiple times, these numbers appear to have returned to the relatively high rates of sexual misconduct during the 2003–2005 era.

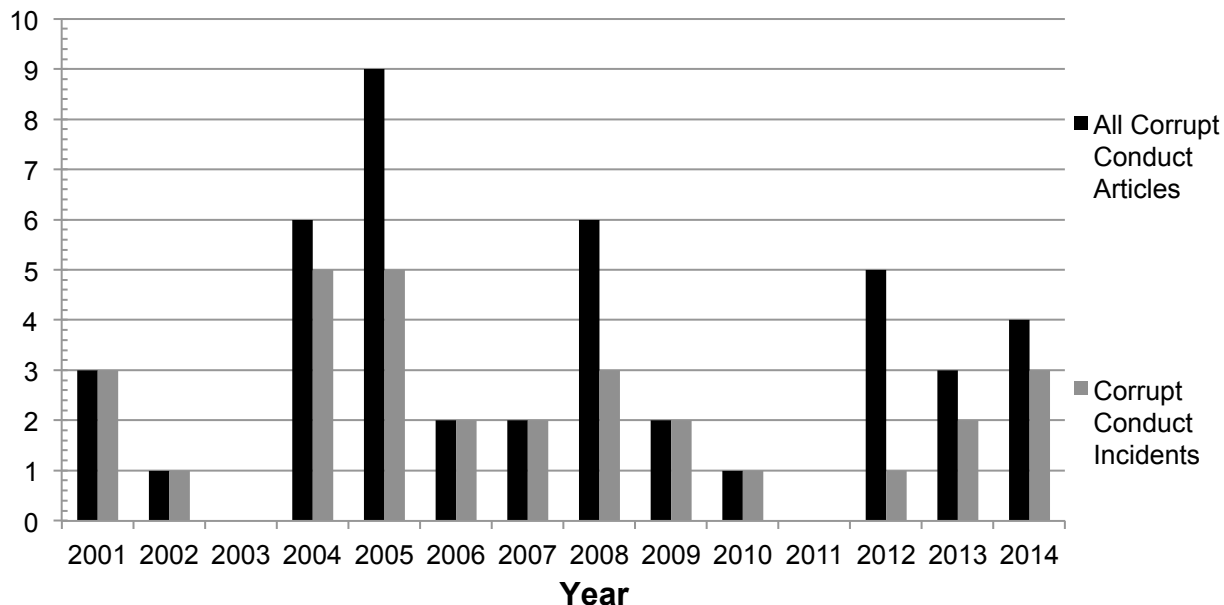
Figure B.3. Frequency of *Air Force Times* Articles Reporting Airmen’s Sexual Misconduct



NOTE: Black bars represent the total number of articles reporting examples of sexual misconduct. Gray bars represent only the total number of incidents that were reported on multiple times.

Corrupt conduct refers to any violations of the UCMJ with the intent of financial or personal gain through the use of criminal deception or to obtain inappropriate information or to suppress information that would lead to criminal charges. Figure B.4 reports the frequency of *Air Force Times* articles reporting Airmen’s corrupt conduct. Reports of Air Force corruption reached their highest level in 2005 primarily because of transgressions related to the Air Force–Boeing refueling tanker scandal. Although recent years do not show numbers as high, they do denote a recent upward trend. Given the nature of corruption scandals, particularly in terms of the contracting scandal, these articles are more frequently associated with top Air Force leadership.

Figure B.4. Frequency of *Air Force Times* Articles Reporting Airmen's Corrupt Conduct

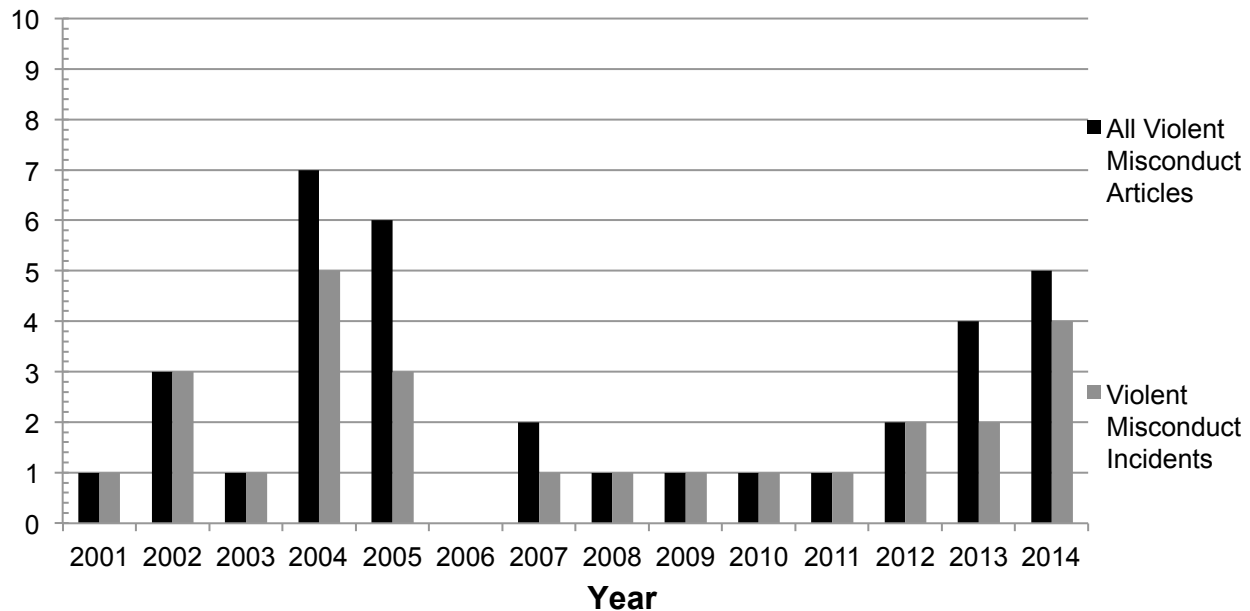


NOTE: Black bars represent the total number of articles reporting examples of corrupt conduct. Gray bars represent only the total number of incidents that were reported on multiple times.

Violent misconduct refers to any violations of the UCMJ in which an Airman uses, or threatens to use, force on a victim. Violent misconduct entails both crimes in which the violent act is the objective itself and crimes in which violence is the means to another end (e.g., arson).⁴ Figure B.5 reports the frequency of *Air Force Times* articles reporting Airmen's violent misconduct. Although recent years do not reach the high point of reports of violent crime from 2004 or 2005, articles reporting violent misconduct by Airmen appear to be rising in recent years, even after controlling for reporting.

⁴ We do not include underage victims here but we do under child abuse. We do not include crimes against victims selected on the basis of sex or gender but we do under sexual misconduct.

Figure B.5. Frequency of *Air Force Times* Articles Reporting Airmen's Violent Misconduct



NOTE: Black bars represent the total number of articles reporting examples of violent misconduct. Gray bars represent only the total number of incidents that were reported on multiple times.

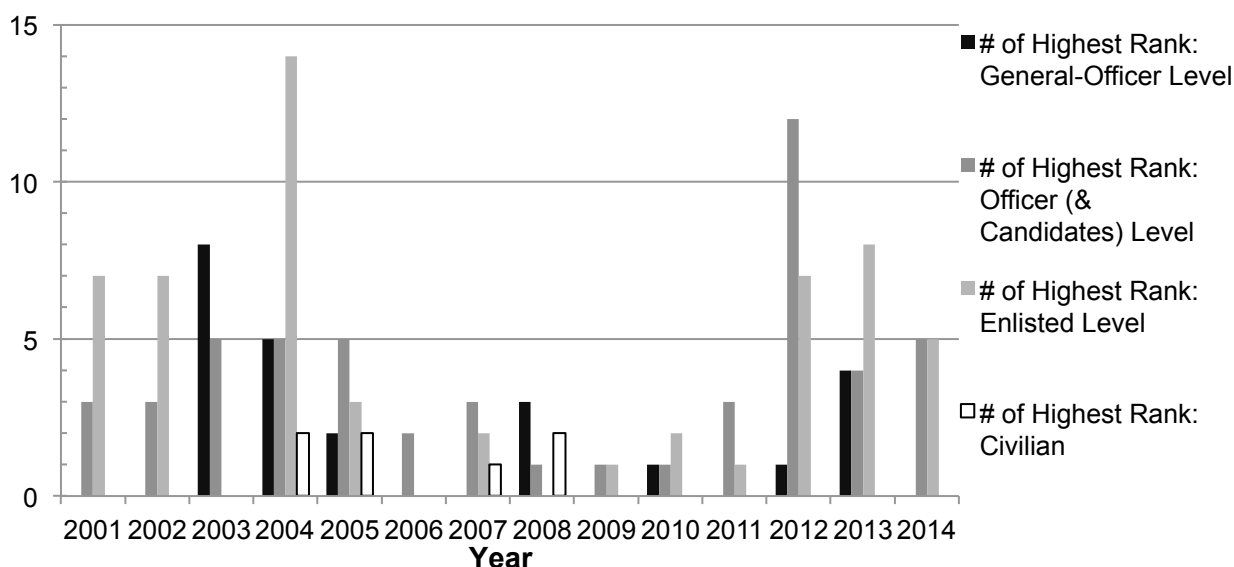
Three UCMJ violations occurred so infrequently that we did not further examine these categories: child abuse, property crime, and espionage. *Child abuse* refers to any violations of the UCMJ reflecting criminal negligence in the care of a child, as well as physical or sexual abuse of a child ($M = 0.79$ articles per year).⁵ *Property crime* refers to any violations of the UCMJ that result in the damage or loss of personal or government property through an Airman's negligence or willful behavior (e.g., larceny and damage to U.S. military property; $M = 0.71$ articles per year). *Espionage* refers to UCMJ violations reflecting the sale or improper disclosure of classified information for personal gain ($M = 0.36$ articles per year).

Ranks of Involved Airmen

Although the counts are small when disaggregated, there are some evident spikes in the number of ethical transgressions reported by rank (Figure B.6). Nevertheless, there do not appear to be consistent patterns of certain ranks committing more or fewer ethical transgressions.

⁵ We distinguish these violations from violent crime and sexual misconduct if the primary victim is a child. UCMJ violations reflecting child abuse include child endangerment and sexual assault of a child.

Figure B.6. Frequency of *Air Force Times* Articles Reporting Airmen's Ethical Transgressions, by Air Force Ranks



Degree of Involvement

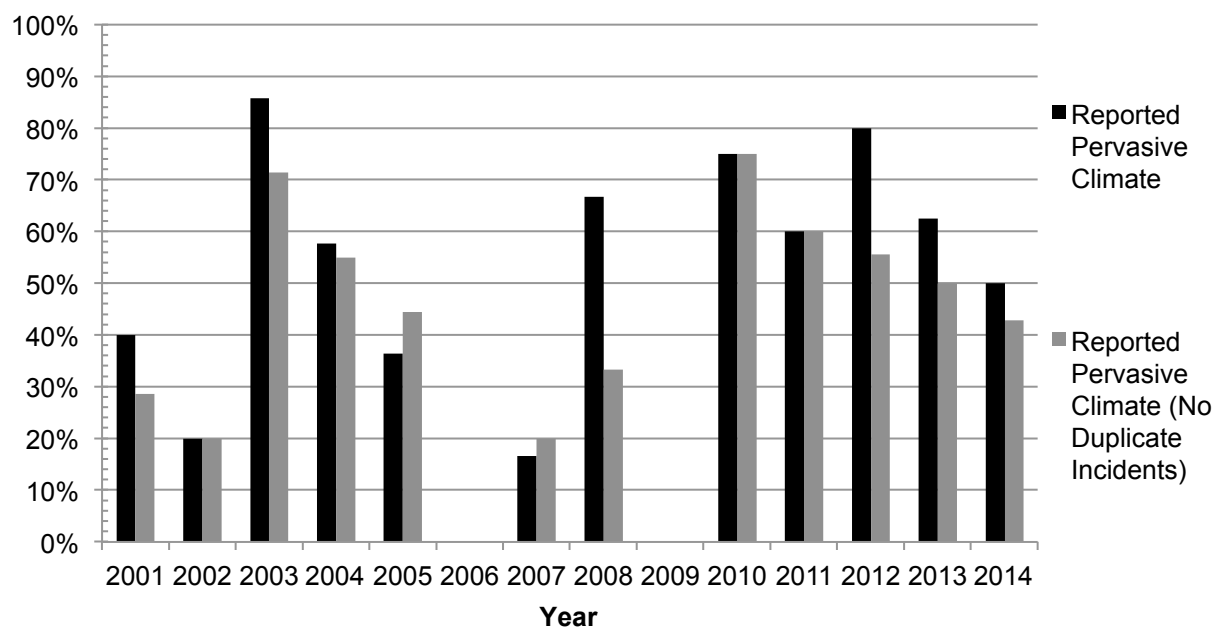
Given that professionalism reflects a climate, isolated incidents are less concerning to Air Force leadership than pervasive climates of UCMJ violations. For the 14 years examined, Figure B.7 shows that as much as 46.47 percent of articles portrayed the incident as reflecting some type of pervasive climate of unprofessionalism.

Considering the proportion of high-profile incidents described as pervasive cultural problems, it appeared plausible that pervasive climates of unprofessional behavior were simply overreported. In some years, this certainly appears possible. For example, in 2008, improper collusion among the Defense Contract Management Agency, contractors, and the Air Force dominated the Air Force news cycle.⁶ Overall, however, accounting for duplicate incidents resulted in very little difference. After controlling for incidents reported multiple times, 39.4 percent of these incidents still reflected a pervasive climate, compared with the original proportion of 46.5 percent. Thus, it does not appear that incidents reflecting pervasively unprofessional climates are simply overreported compared with isolated incidents but that almost one-half of the ethical violations were described as representing a pervasive climate. For example, the pervasive climate of mishandling soldiers' remains and retaliating against whistleblowers was considered acceptable at the Dover mortuary, and MTIs at Joint Base San Antonio considered the pervasive climate of sexually harassing trainees acceptable. Clearly, pervasive climates of unprofessional behavior may differ based on the types of ethical

⁶ Neither the Defense Contract Management Agency nor the individual contractors are organizations within the Air Force chain of command. However, Air Force leadership collusion for personal gain during the contracting process certainly reflects a violation of professionalism.

transgressions accepted, geographic location, and expectations regarding professional conduct among ranks and may therefore require unique considerations.

Figure B.7. Proportion of *Air Force Times* Articles Reporting Airmen’s Ethical Transgressions as Evidence of a Pervasive Climate



Conclusion

This appendix sought to examine whether a news outlet—read by many in the Air Force—would indicate that the Air Force exhibits both isolated and cultural ethical transgressions that appear troubling. From these analyses, two primary findings emerge. First, there appears to be a distinct reduction in reports of ethical transgressions that begins in 2005 and continues until 2009, with a gradual increase beginning in 2010 and then spiking in 2012 (see Figure B.6). As discussed in Chapter 4, there may be various explanations for this decrease; however, regardless of the reason, it is notable. Second, approximately half of the incidents are indicative of a pervasively unprofessional climate, as opposed to an isolated event. Isolated events are far less concerning than pervasive unprofessional climates because the solution in the first situation is to address an individual Airman, which is comparatively straightforward; whereas, the solution in the latter situation is to address a pervasive problem that extends across individuals and is affected by leadership, climate, and policy. For similar reasons, pervasive climates reflecting particular categories of ethical transgressions likely require unique considerations. As discussed in Chapter 3, the solution in the second situation requires much more investigation as to why the climate is entrenched and what social and policy mechanisms may change it. These analyses suggest that

the Air Force encounters both situations and therefore, each situation will likely require different solutions.

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This report takes a broad approach to answering the overarching question, “How can the U.S. Air Force best improve the professionalism of its personnel?” The authors examine the definition of professionalism and what it means in the Air Force. They then look at past actions the Air Force, the U.S. Department of Defense, and other U.S. military services have taken dating back to the last substantial Air Force initiatives related to professionalism. In the absence of objective metrics specifically intended to measure professionalism, the authors examined statistics of cases in which professionalism was lacking, as evidenced by documented violations of the Uniform Code of Military Justice. For subjective metrics, the authors looked at trends in attitudes related to professionalism from surveys of civilian federal employees and uniformed service members. They then examined a selection of courses and seminars to understand the Air Force learning opportunities currently being offered and how they relate to the Air Force strategic road map for professionalism and instructional practices more conducive to building Air Force professionalism. Finally, the authors examined the literature on organizational culture and change to identify how the Air Force might effect changes on this dimension. The report offers key findings and conclusions from these investigations and provides recommendations for further actions to support the effort to enhance professionalism across the Air Force.



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